

בס"ד

דברי תורה ד' צבי אליהו
DIVREI TORAH

נצבים - וילך

Nitzavim - Vayelech

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on His Yahrtzeit

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EMMA

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Team Member



We Are So Proud of You!

Love

US

Insurmountable

Rabbi Adam Singer

The following is a short poem I learned from Rabbi Noach Orlowek, Shlita, of Jerusalem, I believe he is the author of the poem as well:

For every problem 'neath the sun,
there's an answer or there's none.
If there's one, find it!
If there's none, then never mind it!

So much stress and worry can be alleviated by taking these words to heart. Tasks and obstacles will probably always be a part of our lives. Some problems will be solvable, and we are responsible to solve these to whatever degree we are capable of solving them. Some problems or portions of some problems, however, will always be beyond our reach. It is our job to know that the things we cannot solve are simply not our problem.

This parsha sheet is about learning Torah and making the wisdom of Torah more a part of our lives, but it also speaks to how we must face up to the commandments in the Torah which we are truly capable of doing.

It is the grossest understatement to say that the Torah overflows with inspiration and beauty, when we examine it deeply. Yet, I need to say that it is so totally overflowing with beauty and inspiration before I say that this week's parsha contains what I think is one of the most beautiful concepts in the entire Torah. The following are the verses which discuss how Torah, the most sublime thing in our universe, is accessible to us:

"...this mitzvah that I command you today is not hidden from you, and it is not distant. It is not in the heavens that you might say, who will go to the heavens to take it for us, and let us hear it, that we may do it? Nor is it across the sea [for you] to say, "Who will cross for us over the sea and take it for us, and let us hear it, so that we can perform it?" Rather the matter is very close to you, in your mouth and in your hearts, to do it." (Devarim 30:11-14)

There is a grave mistranslation people use that I must correct. The word "mitzvah" which is mentioned in this verse, and is and has always been ubiquitous in the language of Jews, means a command. "Mitzvah" does not mean a kindness or a good deed, as contemporary language is sometimes wont to butcher it. A kindness or a good deed is a "chesed", the Hebrew often used for an act of kindness. "Mitzvah" comes from the root "tzaveh" to command, and necessarily means a commandment. A *mitzvah* can only be a commandment from the Almighty. Without Him, the term mitzvah has *no* meaning. He is the *Mitzaveh*, the Commander, without Whom a commandment (*mitzvah*), has absolutely no meaning.

That being said... this verse about the Torah not being in heavens, or over the sea, etc. appears needlessly poetic. This should always tip us off that the Torah is communicating a message which is deeper than it initially appears. The Torah is *never* needlessly poetic. Why does the verse tell us that Torah is not in the heavens? If it were in the heavens would we really say, "Let's go find a metaphysical spacecraft, go up to the heavens and get it!"

Rashi (11th century) asks these questions. What does the Torah mean when it tells us that Torah is not in the heavens? If it were in the heavens would I really have to go up after it. Rashi's answer... "yes". If Torah were in the heavens we would have to ascend through whatever means possible to acquire it.

Torah is the lifeblood of the universe. Without it, Creation lacks purpose. If Torah had not been given, and had instead remained in the heavens, we would need it so badly, that indeed we would have to overcome any obstacle, traverse any ocean, defy the limits of the universe itself only to find some means to acquire it. And here is where it gets even better...

Let's ask a few questions about this explanation by Rashi. What does Rashi mean that we would have to go up to the heavens to get the Torah if it had not already been given to us? The Maharal (17th cent. Prague) gives an amazing answer to this question. If G-d made a world where we need to go to the heavens to get Torah, *then we would be able to go to the Heavens to get Torah*. In other words, G-d has put each and every one of us in a world where we have access to learn Torah and to do mitzvahs. If there are obstacles to learning Torah and obstacles to doing mitzvahs, *He has also given us the way to solve them*. Indeed if Torah had been in the heavens, He would have given us a way to get there too.

There may always be concepts in Torah that are beyond our comprehension or abilities. And there may always be mitzvahs which we cannot do (e.g. some mitzvahs can only be done by women,

some only by men, some only by Kohanim, some only by Israelites, etc.). These mitzvahs and these sections of Torah are for us to learn, but not for us to do. But the mitzvahs that we can do, and the Torah that we can learn, are truly our mitzvahs, our commandments, and we must do everything we can to accomplish them.

At this time of year, we are each challenged to confront those places in our lives where we could be doing more to fulfill G-d's mitzvahs in our lives. As we approach Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur it is time to examine our schedules for the last year and ask ourselves where is that one small place I could be doing more? Could I spend five minutes more a day studying Torah? Could I dedicate a moment more a week to calling a friend who needs my support, a parent or loved one who would love to hear from me? Could I attend services just once more a year? A week? A day? G-d and our conscience asks us to make a change, any change that will bring us growth in the coming year. It is our opportunity to face ourselves, recognize the obstacles we can overcome, and achieve just one small step more than we did last year.

May Hashem give us the wisdom to know and understand the opportunities for growth and wisdom which surround us, and may we take advantage of every mitzvah and opportunity to learn Torah which comes our way. **GOOD SHABBOS!!!**

One man's sunset is another's sunrise.
