

TEMPLE BETH-EL SHABBAT AM TORAH STUDY 5782
NITZAVIM...Deuteronomy 29:9-14

KOSHI:

Verse	JPS	HEBREW
9	You stand this day, all of you, before your God Adonai —your tribal heads, your elders, and your officials, every householder in Israel,	אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם רְאִשֵׁיכֶם שְׂבֻטֵיכֶם זְקֵנֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
10	your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to water drawer—	טַפְּכֶם נְשֵׁיכֶם וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶרֶב מַחֲנֶיךָ מִחֹטֵב עֵצִים עַד שֹׂאֵב מִיַּמֵּיךָ:
11	to enter into the covenant of your God Adonai, which your God Adonai is concluding with you this day, with its sanctions;	לְעַבְרָךָ בְּבְרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּבְאַלְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּרַת עִמָּךְ הַיּוֹם:
12	in order to establish you this day as God's people and in order to be your God, as promised you and as sworn to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.	לֹא לְעַם וְהוּא יְהוָה לְמַעַן הִקִּים אֶתְךָ הַיּוֹם לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּךְ וְכַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב:
13	I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone,	וְלֹא אֶתְכֶם לְבַדְכֶם אֲנִכִּי כָּרַת אֶת־הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֵּאת:
14	but both with those who are standing here with us this day before our God Adonai and with those who are not with us here this day.	כִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֹו פֹה עִמָּנוּ עַמְּד הַיּוֹם לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר אֵינְנוּ פֹה עִמָּנוּ הַיּוֹם:

REMEZ...The Hint

Searching for clues that give us greater insight into the world of our ancestors

V.9 *You stand this day, all of you, before your God Adonai —your tribal heads, your elders, and your officials, every householder in Israel,*

RASHI...*you are standing this day [all of you before Adonai] ...This teaches that Moses assembled them in the presence of the Omnipresent on the day of his death, in order to initiate them into a covenant with Him.*

RAMBAM...Every person can be as Moses, and this is not dependent on his lineage or wealth. It depends solely on his desire to serve God. Thus Moses said, "You stand this day"--- all of you, both great and small, are worthy of this.

RAMBAN....The meaning thereof is that you are standing and ready before God to be initiated into His covenant. For, in order to accept the Torah with its interpretation, they had gathered before Moses, or they may have stood before the ark of God. The covenant was the oath and imprecation which he mentioned — *that thou shouldst enter into the covenant of the Eternal thy God, and into His oath.* It is possible that he made another covenant with them like the first covenant which he made with them at Mount Sinai, namely, that he offered a burnt-offering on their behalf, and took half of the blood to sprinkle upon the altar and he sprinkled half of the blood upon the people, but it was unnecessary for him to mention this.

SFORNO... the people Moses describes as *rosheichem*, are those who are heads of their tribes, elsewhere referred to as *nisiim*, “princes”. The term *rosh* always includes the people who wield authority. *Zekneichem* your judges, *v’shotreichem* the law enforcers, empowered by the judges to enforce their judgments. Each one of these categories of people have the duty to teach the people (within the parameters of their special competence) how much better it is for them to accept Torah law than to defy it or neglect it.

RABBI ANDREA WEISS...*this day*...The first part of Moses’ speech (29:1-8) at the end of Ki Tavo looked back on key events in the past and the lessons to learn from them; now the focus shifts to the present moment and even to the future. The leitmotif “this day” (here and in vs. 14) functions as a message to the double audience of Deuteronomy, namely, the implicit audience at the time of Moses and the audience contemporary with the author(s) of the book of Deuteronomy centuries later. The ceremony validates the covenant’s power to obligate the descendants to the treaty and to abide by its stipulations.

V.10 *your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to water drawer—*

RABBI ANDREA WEISS...*your children, your women*...Within the groups enumerated in this verse, “children” appear prior to “women”. Women are likewise mentioned last in the common triplet of socially marginal people: stranger, fatherless, widow.

SFORNO... *from the leader of the wood choppers to the most lowly of the water carriers*. The construction here parallels comparisons as “infants as well as sucklings,” (Samuel I 15:3) i.e. the highest ranking within its category to the lowliest ranking. Similar expressions are used when the Torah speaks of “*oxen as well as lambs*,” meaning the most expensive animals of your livestock to the least expensive. Similarly, “*from the camels down to the donkeys*.”

RABBI ANDREA WEISS...*from woodchopper to water drawer*...These two types of laborers exemplify specific tasks performed by resident non-Israelites (the “stranger” included in the covenant).

V.13-14 *I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before our God Adonai and with those who are not with us here this day.*

IBN EZRA... Neither with you only...But with you and with those who come after you, namely, your sons and your sons’ sons.

RABEINU BACHYA...*and not only with you*...Moses means that although God concludes this covenant with the present generation of Jews as well as the oath warning against non-performance, seeing that you are standing here this day, the fact is that even future generations of Jews unable to stand here today are included in this covenant. The reason that Moses is able to make such a statement is that the trunk of the tree is viewed as the father, i.e. “the root ” of all subsequent branches. All the branches are only the offshoots of the original roots. Concerning how it’s possible to include unborn generations in this covenant, i.e. reciprocal undertaking, our sages in Tanchuma Yitro 11 comment that all souls ever created since the days of the creation of the earth were present at this assembly. They are not all described as “standing,” as souls without bodies cannot “stand.” The words “*who are not*

here,” refer to the bodies of such souls. The words *imanu hayom* refer to their souls, which are present even today. The word *imanu*, “with us,” refers back to the word *omed*, “standing,” in verse 14. It is as if the Torah had written: “and all those not standing here with us this day.” The reason Moses uses the word “standing,” is because the angels in [Zechariah 3,7](#) have been described as “among these who are standing.”

DRASH...The Interpretation

How do Ancient Truths Impact our Modern Reality?

NOAM MEGADIM...*You are standing this day, all of you, before Adonai your God....Stand up straight, as pure and pious individuals, “before Adonai your God” —before the day that God holds you accountable for your sins.*

RABBI ABRAHAM TWERSKI...It is often stated that angels are “*omdim*—standing” whereas people are “*holchim*- moving”. Angels are stationary because they cannot improve, they need not strive to be better. Human beings, by contrast, have great potential and need for self-improvement. Here then, Israel “stands” but, in response to covenant offered, they do not say or do a thing...Moses, in effect, tells them, “Look, you are still just standing there! No one is making any effort to reach higher, to move forward. Do you want nothing more than to find your niche and be comfortable?” It is human nature to idealize the status quo...but “standing before God” cannot mean standing still.

SOD...The Secret

What deeper knowing do we take away from spending time with the Torah text?

DR. LOIS J. ZACHARY...The theme of collective responsibility that emerged as the people stood together to hear Moses’ last oration...summons up a profound sense of awe. Perhaps it is because of the moral imperative it places squarely on our shoulders. Perhaps it is because “standing together” is reenacted every day: as parents teach children the value of mitzvot; as lay leaders sit together perplexing and planning for a Jewish future; as Jews interact within and in the name of community; and as individual citizens live on the planet earth together....If we believe that we create the future through our present actions, then we are obligated to continuously choose Torah. Choosing Torah is a conscious decision of affirmation, study and action. Choosing Torah is an act of holiness. In choosing Torah, we honor our relationship with God.....Without knowledge there can be no commitment. Without commitment there is no future. We cannot wait for others to do it for us nor should we. We are each a link in the chain of generations. Thus, our fate is bound up together as a people. The responsibility for Jewish continuity is fulfilled in standing together, creating Jewish communities that learn and that choose Torah together, from one generation to another.