

SIDRA OF THE WEEK : נצבים

1. The majority of *Sefer Devorrim* is made up of the written reports of the speeches of Mosheh our Teacher which he delivered in the last weeks of his life on this world and this Sidra is the record of one such speech. Afterwards, HaShem dictated to Mosheh, word for word, letter by letter exactly what words He wanted to be recorded in the Torah for us for all time. The central theme that runs through all these speeches is the warning that our existence as the Chosen People of HaShem depends only on our adherence to the Torah and Mitzvos.

2. The Sidra begins with Mosheh telling us to take heart and to remain loyal to HaShem and His Torah. Previously (in last week's Sidra) Mosheh had described for us the terrible consequences that will follow if we should turn away from the Torah, consequences so horrific that the people were in a state of shock at what they heard. Mosheh points out that terrible though it is, the punishment warned of by HaShem is also to preserve us and it ensures our survival as HaShem's People. For we have been taken to Him to be His People and we will always be His People — there is no opting out: not only those who were physically present at the making of the Covenant, but all future generations of the Jewish People, too.

3. Let no one think that he is not included amongst the rest of the People of HaShem, warns Mosheh. Let him not imagine for a moment that he can go his own way; for HaShem will single him out for terrible retribution. Indeed, if his wayward behaviour is evident to the Jewish Nation, then punishment — so remarkable that strangers will wonder at its severity — will follow upon the entire Nation, for each person is responsible for the other, and the Nation as a whole must shoulder the collective responsibility for the open disloyalty of the individual.

4. Nevertheless, says Mosheh, when the banished and scattered people resolve in all sincerity to return to HaShem, He will gather all the exiles and return them to His holy Land, each one individually if need be, from wherever they have been cast, once again to shelter and dwell in security under His care. If they will but repent from their aberrant ways, HaShem will take them back and cause them to enjoy all His blessings.

5. Mosheh our Teacher impresses upon us that this Torah which HaShem today commands us to obey is not beyond our reach: it is not in the heavens that we must go up to fetch it, nor is it on the other side of the sea that we must cross the oceans to bring it to us to fulfil its teachings. But it is very near indeed — it is ours already: it has been taught to us and it is known to us. All that we need to do is to revert back to our spoken traditions and resolve in our hearts to follow the Torah and its teachings.

SIDRA OF THE WEEK: נצבים

6. Mosheh urges us to realize that our happiness and fulfilment depends upon nothing else than our faithfulness to HaShem and His Torah; again and again Mosheh warns us of the perils that will follow if we should choose to ignore our destiny as HaShem's People. Only by following the Torah of HaShem can we expect to dwell peacefully and in security in the Land which HaShem promised to our forefathers Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, for the Torah is our very life.

For the explanation of the Haftorah of Sidra נצבים please go to HAFTORAS.