



**There is still time
to make reservations for the High Holy Days!**
www.synagoguehamptons.org

Candle Lighting Friday, September 11th 6:48 pm

Shabbat Morning, Services 9:30am
Old Whaler's Church

Parashat Nitzavim-Vayeilech

Annual: Deuteronomy 26:1 – 29:8 (Etz Hayim, p. 1140)
Triennial: Deuteronomy 26:12 – 28:6 (Etz Hayim, p. 1142)
Haftarah: Isaiah 60:1 – 22 (Etz Hayim, p. 1161)

Torah Thoughts on Nitzavim-Vayeilech

The *parsha* Nitzavim begins as Moses says to the Israelites: "You stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God." With these words which appeal to memory and wisdom, he catapults everyone's heart into opening to the personal responsibilities for each person, adult and child alike, past and future generations, too, about how to live according to the Covenant with God. Moses offers them a choice between the blessing and the curse with these magnanimous words: "...and you take them to heart ... and you and your children heed His command with all your heart and soul..." (Deuteronomy 30:1-2). In this Third Discourse, Moses transmits a legacy for all times through an orally delivered Ethical Will by focusing on the heart, the seat of memory and wisdom, which is mentioned ten times in this *parsha* .

Then, in Vayeilech, God tells Moses to "write down this poem and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths ... since it will never be lost [forgotten] from the mouth of their offspring" (Deuteronomy 31:19-21). In other words, if the Israelites will know the poem *by heart*, they will have this great advice-filled wisdom to guide them always. The expression, "to learn *by heart*," usually means to recite from memory by rote, that is, with unthinking repetition and without necessarily having full comprehension. However, according to the Torah, the heart is considered the seat of memory and recollection, "along with one's secrets" (Schroer and Staubli, 2001, p. 44).

There is nothing routine about memory and it certainly is fluid, much like the waves in the sea. So that when we find the term *by heart* in Torah, I believe it means that the message comes from a deep place within us with bridges to associations, feelings, and connections, and secrets - along with sense memories - that we make and keep in our memory.

Peninnah Schram is Associate Professor of Speech and Drama at Stern College of Yeshiva University and author of ten books of Jewish folktales, including 'Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another'. Peninnah is a recipient of the prestigious Covenant Award for Outstanding Jewish Educator (1995) awarded by The Covenant Foundation and the National Storytellers Network 2003 Lifetime Achievement Award "For sustained and exemplary contributions to storytelling in America." <http://www.limmud.org/publications/tasteoflimmud/5767/Nitzavim-Vayelech/>

ELUL MUSINGS

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean--
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down--
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is your plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

Mary Oliver

Remembering 9/11

If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.
If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.
[6th century B.C.E. Taoism, Lao-Tse]

Quote of the Week

“The Great Creator has put us into the world, given us the gift of an instant of life within the vast stretch of eternity, and called upon each of us to respond by creating something of value with it. The privilege of living is great, but the demand is overwhelming, fearsome. Blessed is the One who confronts us with that demand.”
Rabbi Arthur Green ([EHYEH: A Kabbalah for Tomorrow](#))

“I think the bottom line of a spiritual journey is to be able to experience yourself as someone of real worth...” — Merle Feld (“Women Who Dared”)

Shabbat shalom

Stacy