

# Stollen Moments – Nitzavim – September 24, 2022

## PARASHA SUMMARY FROM WWW. REFORMJUDAISM.ORG

- Moses tells the assembled people that God's covenant speaks to them and to all of the generations who will follow. (29:9–14)
- God warns the Israelites that they will be punished if they act idolatrously, the way the inhabitants of the other nations do. (29:15–28)
- Moses reassures the people that God will not forsake them and that they can attain blessings by following God's commandments. (30:1–20)

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### Deuteronomy Chapter 29

9 You stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God — your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel, 10 your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to waterdrawer — 11 to enter into the covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God is concluding with you this day, with its sanctions; 12 to the end that He may establish you this day as His people and be your God, as He promised you and as He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 13 I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, 14 but both with those who are standing here with us this day before the Lord our God and with those who are not with us here this day.

15 Well you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we passed through the midst of various other nations through which you passed; 16 and you have seen the detestable things and the fetishes of wood and stone, silver and gold, that they keep. 17 Perchance there is among you some man or woman, or some clan or tribe, whose heart is even now turning away from the Lord our God to go and worship the gods of those nations — perchance there is among you a stock sprouting poison weed and wormwood. 18 When such a one hears the words of these sanctions, he may fancy himself immune, thinking, “I shall be safe, though I follow my own willful heart” — to the utter ruin of moist and dry alike. 19 The Lord will never forgive him; rather will the Lord’s anger and passion rage against that man, till every sanction recorded in this book comes down upon him, and the Lord blots out his name from under heaven.

20 The Lord will single them out from all the tribes of Israel for misfortune, in accordance with all the sanctions of the covenant recorded in this book of Teaching. 21 And later generations will ask — the children who succeed you, and foreigners who come from distant lands and see the plagues and diseases that the Lord has inflicted upon that land, 22 all its soil devastated by sulfur and salt, beyond sowing and producing, no grass growing in it, just like the upheaval of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His fierce anger — 23 all nations will ask, “Why did the Lord do thus to this land? Wherefore that awful wrath?” 24 They will be told, “Because they forsook the covenant that the Lord, God of their fathers, made with them when He freed them from the land of Egypt; 25 they turned to the service of other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not experienced and whom He had not allotted to them.

26 So the Lord was incensed at that land and brought upon it all the curses recorded in this book. 27 The Lord uprooted them from their soil in anger, fury, and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as is still the case.” 28 Concealed acts concern the Lord our God; but with overt acts, it is for us and our children ever to apply all the provisions of this Teaching.

Hezekiah ben Manoah

"You stand this day, all of you" -- all of you regardless of your social standing in the community are equally standing facing God, in order to enter into the new covenant... "woodchopper", i.e. male servants; "water drawer", i.e. female servants... from the leader of the wood choppers to the most lowly of the water drawers.

Ovadia ben Jacob Sforno

"To enter into the covenant" - you are all arranged in this order in order to signal your acceptance of the forthcoming covenant. It is clear from Moses' addressing all the assembled, that they were of one mind at the time, all willing and eager to accept the covenant.

Abraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra

"Not with you alone" - but rather, with you, and with those who shall come after you: your children, and your children's children.

Ovadia ben Jacob Sforno

"Those who are not here this day" - a reference to future, as yet unborn generations. You will therefore have to explain to these unborn generations in due course that you yourselves only received this land on the understanding that subsequent generations of Jews would remain loyal to the terms of your acceptance. They will continue to inherit the land from you only on that basis.

Rabbi Mordechai Leiner

You are standing here...your wood chopper your water drawer etc. ... the way of a person in the world, that is, the preferred way of a Jewish person is to complete the Will of the Holy One of Blessing, that is, even the smallest one of Israel in the world - and this is the meaning of "you are standing": you are connected to the Holy One of Blessing. "Your heads": those are the ones in the higher level, "up to your water drawer" that is, the ones in the lower level - all of you are connected to the Holy One of Blessing. "Wood chopper": the ones who have a small sense of reverence [to Heaven]; "water drawer": [the ones who have] a small sense of love [to Heaven].