



NITZAVIM-VAYELECH

This Shabbat we read, together, Parshiot Nitzavim and Vayelech, the two shortest Parshiot in the Torah (and even together, they make a short reading).

While they may be short, they contain some very important advice from Moshe Rabeinu, as he comes to the climax of his farewell address to the nation of Israel on this, the last day of his life.

"That which is hidden is for Hashem, our G-d, but that which is revealed is for us and our children forever, to carry out all the words of this Torah." Rashi, as well as other commentaries, explains that once the Jewish people accepted the blessings and curses found in last week's Parsha, they accepted upon themselves the concept of "arvut," responsibility for one another.

If a person will keep his sins or his problems hidden, we cannot be held responsible, G-d says that he will "take care of these things." But those things which are revealed to us become the responsibility of ALL of us. If we know of a person sinning, we must try and put a stop to it. If we are aware of somebody's problems, we must try to help DO something about it. We should feel others' pain in times of suffering, and share in their joy in times of happiness.

Moshe urges us at the end of Nitzavim to "Choose Life." If we practice this concept of taking responsibility for others, we are choosing life not only for ourselves, but for all of those around us as well. "Being there" for others is a major part of what "life" is all about.

SHABBAT SHALOM,
Rabbi Cohen