

Parsha Questions - Nitzavim

Part of this sheet is based on Nechama Liebowitz's gilayon of 5722.

Parashat Nitzavim centers around two mysterious absences - "those who are not here today" in 29:13, and "the hidden things" in 29:25.

"Those who are not here today" - may refer to

- a. past generations
- b. future converts
- c. future generations.

If c, it may mean that they are bound by the oaths of the present population, or that their souls were present.

"The hidden things" may refer to

- a. sins committed by individuals that the community has no means of discovering
- b. sins committed absentmindedly, of which even the sinner is unaware
- c. punishments that occur naturally, i.e. Divine punishments with no overt explanation, as opposed to punishments administered by human courts
- d. sins of thought rather than deed
- e. purposes of the commandments, as opposed to the actions themselves.

The verse states that "the hidden things" are for G-d, whereas the "revealed things" are for us and our children. If e, most commentators take this as a caution against delving too deeply into either mystical or philosophic rationales. However, some simply warn us not to assume that the reasons we discover are the only rationales, and Ibn Kaspi takes a very different approach, suggesting that this verse reminds us not to disregard the acts even though the rationales are much more directly connected with the Divine.

For each phrase - which explanation seems to work best in context, and why?

Do these phrases connect to one another in any way?

Shabbat Shalom - and don't forget to come Saturday Night at 10 for great learning!

RK