



Project: Sermon Resource for Shluchim  
 Distribution Date: September 4, 2007 / כ"א אלול תשס"ז  
 Parsha: Nitzavim - Vayeilech / נצבים-וילך

בי"ה

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1. The origins and reasons for different customs.

Ashkenazi: Torah is covered in velvet and read while laid out on a bimah.

Sephardic: Torah is kept in a case and read while upright.



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2. It's an argument between two Ashkenazim: Rashi and Rabeinu Tam.

Rashi: The Torah must be kept upright; both during reading and in the Ark.

Rabeinu Tam: The Torah must be laid down, both for reading and in the Ark.

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3. The point of their argument?

We honor the Torah as we would an honorable person.

So: Which is more respectful for an honorable person, to stand or sit?



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4. We've seen both

- The President stands and his audience sit (Rashi)
- The Rebbe would sit and we would stand (Rabeinu Tam)

Both are out of respect.



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5. This argument applies to Teffilin...  
 Everyone follows Rashi.  
 [In Israeli they dug up Teffilin with  
 horizontally laid parchment!]



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6. ...and to how we affix a mezuzah.  
 Sephardim put their mezuzahs  
 upright.  
 Ashkenazim compromise: we put the  
 mezuzah on a slant.

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7. Compromising-following both  
 views:  
 For the Torah scroll is kept on a slant  
 inside the ark and the bimah is on a  
 slant.



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בי"ה

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8. מ'קען ניט טאנצען אויף אלע חתונות"  
 We certainly try:  
 [We only scratch the Challah before  
 reciting the blessing in order to,  
 a) Blessing a full loaf  
 b) Cutting the bread before reciting  
 the blessing.]



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9. Why follow more than one view?  
 The more doctors you listen to the  
 better your chances for recovery.



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10. The more sages you listen to the  
 better your chances of *hidur mitzvah*.  
 Go ahead, dance at every wedding!

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