

Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: Torah Va'etchanan: Deuteronomy 4:9-40
Haftarah: Isaiah 40:6 - 8
B'rit Chadasha: Mark 12:29

Know this day, and ponder in your heart

[Deuteronomy 4:39]

Today's Meditation is Ezekiel 33:21-33²;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 2nd Blessing, the Gevurot *[The Prayer of His Powers]*

Rak hishamer lecha – Only take heed to yourself ... ***ush'mor nafshecha me'od*** - and diligently guard your soul ... ***pen-tishkach et-ha-devarim asher-ra'u eyneicha*** - lest you forget all the things that your eyes have seen **Deuteronomy 4:9a.**

The Divinely empowered virtual tour of the land that Moshe Rabbeinu recently experienced has his spirit soaring. His alertness, engagement, and energy levels are off the charts. His prophetic impetus has gone into overdrive – and as a result, *Devarim* are pouring out of his mouth and off his pen like spring rain off a tin roof. He is briefing us on our next great ‘to do’ list – 1. *cross* the Jordan [see **Numbers 35:10**], 2. ‘*go into*’ Eretz Yisrael [see **Deuteronomy 4:1a**], and 3. Actively ‘*possess*’ that land as your own. [See **Leviticus 20:24**]. He even tells us what we need to be thinking about as we go about these tasks. Hear, O Israel:

Hishamer lecha

take heed to yourself

Ush'mor nafsheicha me'od

and diligently guard your soul

Pen-tishkach et-ha-devarim asher ra'u eyneicha

lest you forget all the things your eyes have seen

Take Heed ... Lest You Forget All The Things Your Eyes Have Seen

No matter what issue we may face in the approaching season of engagement, or what other people around us focus on or talk about, we are to keep the high points of Torah's Narrative cued up in the forefront of our minds. For us, the *Stories of our Patriarchs*, of the *Exodus*, of the *miracles at the Sea*, of the Great Sinai Season of *Matan Torah*, and of the Divine infilling/indwelling of the Tabernacle – all remembered in the context of all the hard life-lesson experiences we had with ‘*lie*

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² This meditation contains the word that the Holy One spoke to Ezekiel on the day he heard the news that Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians, and the Temple (Solomon's Temple) had been destroyed.

to stay alive' syndrome, with 'do whatever it takes to get the father's blessing' syndrome, with 'wipe out a city for the sin of one man' overkill syndrome, with 'hate your own kinsman enough to sell him into slavery' syndrome, with 'kill the bothersome Egyptian and bury him in the sand' syndrome, with 'self-righteously meddle in other people's petty disputes of interpersonal drama' syndrome, with 'murmur and complain constantly about living conditions and menu options' syndrome, with 'making and worshiping a golden calf image isn't a bad thing if you call it by the right 'name' syndrome, with 'there are giants in the land' syndrome, with 'progressive ideology/Korach's Rebellion' syndrome, and with 'the daughters of Midyan sure are pretty' syndrome – actually function like a kind of 'secret weapon'. Such 'things our eyes have seen' are always supposed to be in the forefront of our minds and on the tip of our tongues. They are to frame our worldview. They are to inspire us, encourage us, and embolden us. And, most of all, the sound of a Great Shofar that called us up on Mount Sinai to *become betrothed to the Creator of the Universe* is supposed to constantly ring in our ears. Moshe highlighted this event as 'THE DAY':

*... the day you stood before the Holy One your God at Choreb,
when the Holy One said to me, 'Gather the people to Me,
and I will let them sh'ma My words, that they may learn to fear Me
all the days they live on the earth,
and that they may teach their children.*

[Deuteronomy 4:10]

We are to always be finding ways to talk to our children about *that very special day* – the day the Beautiful Voice of our Bridegroom-King filled the air. We are to remember – and tell our children – everything that happened that day. What we saw. What we heard. How it sounded. How it felt. How it changed us forever.

We have a covenant with the Creator of the Universe. We have a high calling - to model His Grand Redemptive Plan and More Excellent Way to the people of the raging nations. We have a glorious history! We have a world-changing heritage! We have an amazing *love story*! We have a series of atmosphere-shifting testimonies! We have a storehouse of precious memories! And part of our Covenant obligation is to keep the memory of the things we have witnessed in the course of our Divine Romance *fresh in our minds* and *pulsing in our hearts*. As Moshe puts it:

Why must we be so diligent to guard the memory of Sinai? First of all, if we forget, or get hazy on, the events that transpired there, we lose our identity, our mission, and our purpose on earth. We are here *as witnesses* to these things – not just *beneficiaries* of them. We are here to shed light, and the redemptive events of our individual and national lives constitute the wicks of our lamps. If we try to use

theology or morality, halakah or sacrament as our wick instead, we lose the awe, the wonder, the power of our calling. The Holy One knows that the people of the nations do not need a religion – they need to become part of a great love story! That – not being moral policemen, opinionated analysts, prosecutors, or judges – is where we come in. Secondly, to keep this great love story going – even growing in intensity, generation after generation - we need to joyfully and excitedly tell the great stories of our Covenant Journey to our children and to our childrens' children. We must do so with delight, with passion, and with at times a *twinkle* and at times a *glistening tear* in our eyes. We must be consistently enthusiastic about our history – as the precious thing it is. We must be diligent to describe what the Holy One has done for us in creative ways that will cause the events of those stories to become as real and meaningful – or over time *even more* real and meaningful - to them as they are to us. The events of our Redemption Song are never to be relegated to old scrolls, lost journals, or dust-covered *memoirs*. They are not to be allowed to become nostalgic ramblings of the mind, or wishful thinking about a 'simpler time' – much less bittersweet sentiments about 'days gone by'.

To assure that these things happen, Moshe is about to talk to us about what our ancestors saw and heard under the Chuppah of fire and cloud at Mount Sinai, on 6 Sivan in the year of the Exodus.

***What Does the Great Betrothal Ceremony at Sinai Mean to You?
How Much Influence Does it Have on Your World View, Your Self-Talk, Your Attitude, Your Priorities, Your Interactions
and Relationships With Your Fellow Men?***

Has your soul been *Sinai-ed*? Are the *Aseret HaDibrot* [i.e. the 'ten words' of Betrothal the Holy One spoke over us at Sinai to arouse the dormant *neshama* sparks in us] alive and working in you?

Moshe is going to remind us what the essence of the Torah we received on Mount Sinai really is – and exactly how it is supposed to change us and the world, forever. Pause a moment, dear one, and think about it. What does the Holy One's giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai mean *to you*? How important a part does it play in *your testimony*? What impact would those who know you say it has on *your daily life* – and on the way you interact with family members, with neighbors, with strangers in the marketplace, and even with enemies? If Sinai had never happened – *how would your life – and your impact upon your spheres of influence - be different?*

Okay - is your tongue becoming as the pen of a ready writer yet?

What Exactly Is Torah? And What Was the Reason for

the Matan Torah Experience of Sinai?

Contrary to popular opinion, the Torah is not a book of either *religion* or *ethics*. Neither is it a ‘moral code’ a digest of *halakah*, or a textbook on how to manipulate either the Creator or any other spiritual being in the universe in such a way as to *get our way*. What the Torah is instead is *pure wisdom from Heaven*. *It is the true tone frequency of Heaven to which we are to tune our hearts, minds, and wills*. It is *healing balm, life-bread, and living water*. As a result of what happened on Mt. Sinai, powerful tsunamis of Divine Wisdom were loosed on the surface of our planet, to move in waves through the atmosphere of earth forever. We have the inestimable honor of being the ones programmed to harness the energy of these waves, and turn them into world-changing energy and action. We are the ones the Holy One has called to let the Divine life force inherent in the Words spoken at Sinai take on human form and play out in real time interactions, conversations, and circumstances. Through *Matan Torah* the Holy One downloaded the details of Heaven’s Brilliant Plan for the Redemption for Mankind and the Restoration of Creation. *Selah! May that Plan come to pass in fullness speedily, in our day!*

For us, therefore, the reading of the Torah must never be allowed to become a mere exercise in literature or history, or even a form of “Bible study”. What the Holy Writ of Torah is designed to do, you see, is not to *legislate morality to us* or *educate us*, or *inform us*, or even *establish us in good doctrine*. What the Holy Writ of Torah is specifically designed to bring about is *an encounter between the reader and the Creator of the Universe*. The Divine Bridegroom wants us to *hear Him singing to us*, and to *see Him dancing over us*, in the pages of the Torah. Torah is, for us, not ever to be considered *a set of rules to follow* or *a list of things we are ‘commanded’ to ‘fulfill’ or ‘be cursed’*. It is instead the genetic blueprint that describes, in form and in function, our Bridegroom-King is calling and promising to empower us to become. Its words do not create a works-based plan of salvation or reward; they instead describe the only reasonable behavior pattern of worship and service for a people who are sublimely grateful that they have already been, are being, and will in the future be, gloriously loved, embraced, and redeemed.

Pausing to Remember Our Betrothal Day

Moshe has reached a momentous place in his first farewell message. He is indeed about to bring that first message to a *stunning conclusion*. For three chapters he has recounted in our ears a condensed history of the wilderness wanderings of our fathers, with a primary focus upon the sins our fathers committed, and the consequences of those sins. But that has all been preliminary. Now he is ready to get to the *main point*.

What is the *main point* of the aging prophet’s message? Today Moshe will speak

to us of what even more than our dramatic deliverance from Egypt makes us *who we are*, and determines our destiny and purpose on earth. He focuses our attention on *the climactic event* of Biblical history – *Matan Ha-Torah* – *i.e. the giving/entrustment* of the Torah³. Concerning the fateful events of that world-changing day Moshe reminds us:

Yom asher amadeita lifnei Adonai Eloheicha b'Chorev
... *the day that you stood before the Holy One your God in Horev,*

b'emor Adonai elay ha-k'hel-li et-ha-am
when the Holy One said to me, "Call together for Me the people,

v'ashmi'em et-devarai
and I will make them hear My words

asher yilmeidun l'yir'ah oti
that they may learn to fear Me

kol ha-yamim asher hem chayim al-ha-adamah
all the days that they live on the eretz,

v'et-b'neihem yelameidun
and that they may teach their children.'

Did you notice that 'teach their children' thing, Beloved? That's the second time in this aliyah that the Holy One has mentioned that. I think He's *serious*.

Torah Totally Rewires Our Individual and Collective Nefesh – i.e. Our Soul

Today's aliyah is a perfect example of what I am talking about. It is so full of the wooing of the Divine Bridegroom and of prophetic passion that I *pause in trepidation* at the threshold of this study. I pray that all the readings for today – from the meditation through the Torah, Haftarah and Apostolic Scripture readings – will bring you into *fresh revelation and a new level of fellowship with our Divine Bridegroom* that will stun the soul and stir and revive the spirit. If you have already read the aliyah therefore I highly recommend that you stop now, say the *Sh'ma* with reverence, and go back and reverently read the aliyah again.

Tune into the Holy One's wavelength. Get in rhythm with the beating of His heart. He has some very, very important things to say to you today. Things He wants you

³ I know, even as I type this, that Christian tradition teaches that the 'climactic event' of Biblical History is the death of Messiah on the Roman execution stake that has come to be called 'the Cross'. That was truly a momentous, defining event that changed life on planet earth – and beyond - forever. But without *Matan Ha-Torah* at Sinai Yeshua's death on the executions stake would have been all for nothing. It is *because the Torah was given on Sinai*, you see, that Messiah was Messiah, and it is because of the revelation of Torah that His death, burial, and resurrection has meaning. Messiah was not just a 'good man' or 'good teacher' with a 'good philosophy'. He was the LIVING TORAH. Messiah and Torah are inseparable.

to remember *all the days of your life*. Things He wants you to know well enough that you can *teach them to your children, and to your children's children*. You Beloved. Not some rabbi or preacher. Not some Sunday School teacher. Not some children's minister. Not some Youth Director. You.

Guard your *nefesh* – your soul - diligently. Guard your mind. Guard your will. Guard your emotions. Do not let any of these operate under the influence of the philosophies, appetites, or passions of this world. That is the ‘wisdom’ from below. You have *a higher purpose in life*. You are here on earth at such a time as this for *a reason*. And Moshe wants you to know very well *what that reason is!* But I digress. Moshe continues to refresh our memory, as follows:

Vatikrevun vata'amdun tachat ha-har

You came near and stood under the mountain;

v'ha-har bo'er ba'esh ad-lev ha-shamayim

and the mountain burned with fire to the heart of the sky,

choshech anan va'arafel

with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.

Vayedaber Adonai aleichem

The Holy One spoke to you.

mitoch ha-esh kol d'varim atem shom'im

Out of the midst of the fire you heard the Voice of words,

utmunah eynechem ro'im zulati kol

but you saw no form; only [you heard] a Voice.

v'yaged lachem et-brito

And he declared to you his covenant,

Note that Moshe does not describe the Words spoken by the Holy One in the hearing of the people as ‘*commandments*’. He instead calls those Words ‘*et brito*’ – *His [i.e. the Bridegroom-King's] covenant*.

asher tzivah etchem la'asot

To which He instructed you to apply all your creative energies⁴,

aseret ha-d'varim

even the ten prophetic announcements⁵;

⁴ The Hebrew verb I have so translated is *asah*, *ayin*, *shin*, *hey*, Strong's Hebrew word #6213. This verb paints the picture of a potter fashioning something recognizable and useful from a lump of clay. To *asah* the *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* of Torah means to apply creative energy toward them, to “build” something useful with them – to take them out of the realm of the theoretical and into the world of the practical. It means to conform one's human thoughts, priorities, values, words, and conduct to the shape of the Torah the way a potter conforms clay to the blueprint he has in his mind or on his drafting table.

⁵ For a discussion of the “Ten Prophetic Announcements” usually mislabeled the “Ten Commandments” see the Rabbi's Son Commentary to Friday's Shiur from parsha *Yitro*.

vayichteivem al-shnei luchot avanim

and He wrote them on two tables of stone.

[Deuteronomy 4:10-13]

The events Moshe is recounting are recorded in the first instance in Exodus 19-20 [parsha *Yitro*]. They are *pivotal, life-changing events*. Moshe recounts them here because the new generation standing before him on the plains of Moav – and indeed each new generation which be given the breath of life by the Holy One – must know much more than what it means to *come forth from bondage*. Every generation must also understand what it means to *enter the Holy One's chuppah*, to *gaze into His Holy Fire*, and to *stand silent before Him, letting His Living Word pierce their souls, reconstitute their DNA, and completely restructure their destiny*.

Matan Torah and 'Grace'

Moshe does not want us to become arrogant, thinking we *merited* receiving the Torah. He does not want us to ever take the Torah for granted. He wants us to understand what a *precious gift* it truly is. In his *magnum opus*, therefore, Moshe brings up *Matan Torah* [the giving of Torah] in the context of his teaching on *chanan* [which, as was discussed earlier this week, is the Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'grace']⁶. He wants us to understand that, whatever men may say or think, the giving of the Torah was *the epitome – and highest expression - of chanan*.

Ki she'al-na leyamim rishonim asher-hayu l'faneicha

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you

l'min-hayom asher bara Elohim adam al-ha-aretz

since the day that God created man on the eretz,

ulemiktzeh ha-shamayim v'ad-ketzeh ha-shamayim ha-niheyah

and from the one end of the sky to the other,

k'davar ha-gadol hazeh

whether there has been [any such thing] as this great thing is,

o ha-nish'ma kamohu

or has been heard like it?

Ha-shama am kol Elohim medaber mitoch ha-esh

Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire,

ka'asher-shamata atah vayechi

as you have heard, and live?

Atah hor'eita l'da'at ki Adonai hu ha-Elohim

To you it was shown, that you might know that the Holy One He is God;

eyn od mileivado

there is none else besides Him.

⁶ *Chanan*, the root word of the name of our present parsha, was the subject of yesterday's shiur.

Min ha-shamayim hishmi'acha et-kolo l'yasreika

Out of heaven He made you to hear His voice, that He might instruct you:

v'al ha-aretz her'acha et-isho ha-g'dolah

and on eretz He made you to see His great fire;

udvarav shamata mitoch ha-esh

and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire.

[Deuteronomy 4:32-37]

Moshe's conclusion is a passionate exhortation to the people to *sh'mar* – to *cling to*, and *cherish*, and *keep watch over*, and to *guard as their most precious possession* - the “words” the Holy One spoke to us at Sinai. He calls upon us never to forget, and never to let our children or our children's children forget, that the Holy One, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, met with us, and made covenant with us, and spoke to us *as a nation*, out of the fire and out of the cloud.

Why did the Holy One choose US? Moshe makes that clear as well:

V'tachad ki ahav et-avoteicha

Because He loved your fathers

vayivchar bezar'o acharav

therefore He chose their seed after them,

vayotzi'acha b'fanav

and brought you out with His presence,

b'chocho ha-gadol miMitzrayim

with His great power, out of Mitzrayim;

L'horish goyim g'dolim v'atzumim mimeicha mipaneicha

to drive out nations from before you greater and mightier than you,

l'havi'acha latet-lecha et-artzam nachalah k'yom hazeh

to bring you in, to give you their land for a stewardship as at this day.

[Deuteronomy 4:38]

No other nation, no other people, have been selected for such an experience. Moshe declares with passion that since Israel is *blessed above* any other nation, we should - must - *act* like no other nation. *Sh'ma*, Yisrael! Never forget! Teach your children! Be a *holy nation*, a *royal priesthood*! Fulfill your destiny!

I cannot emphasize enough how essential Torah is. *Matan Torah* is the ultimate demonstration of *chanan*. We were of course redeemed from Egypt solely by *chanan* – we did nothing to merit it, and could do nothing to repay it. This was amazing in itself, but some could say the Holy One just stepped in to help out the “underdog”. But for the Holy One to then bring us into His Very Presence, and *take us as His Betrothed* – that is *unimaginable* and *inexplicable*! He not only set

us *free from Pharaoh* - He *committed Himself to us forever*. The Holy One made us not just into freed slaves – He formed us into a *new creation*. The imagery is that of the Holy One’s creation of Chava from the ‘rib’ of Adam⁷. The Holy One took us from the ‘rib’ of mankind [Egypt] and formed us [as He formed Chava] into a ‘helpmate’ who would, like Chava, give birth to ‘all living’/all who are ‘quicken⁸ed’.⁸ And then at *Sineh* He took the ‘rib’ He had pulled out of mankind and *breathed His very life into her/us*.

Tell your children! Tell your children’s children. Tell anyone and everyone who will listen. Sing of His Love forever!

Veyadata hayom v’hashevota el-levavecha

Know/realize therefore this day, and ponder it in your heart

ki Adonai hu ha-Elohim

that the Holy One He is God

b’shamayim mima'al v'al ha-aretz mitachat

in heaven above and on the eretz beneath;

eyn od

there is none else⁹.

[Deuteronomy 4:39]

The ‘Greatest’ Of All Mitzvot

In today’s reading from the apostolic accounts of Yeshua’s life on earth, Yeshua answers the question of the *sofer* (scribe) regarding what is the “greatest” (fundamental, primary, most essential) *mitzvah* [Divine Life-Instruction] ever given (or that will ever be given) by God for men to follow. The question asked by the *sofer* was a good one. The *sofer* was not asking – as do many today - what is the bare minimum to “get to heaven”. He was not asking for a “shortcut” to eternal life. *He was asking what the focus, or center of gravity, of our lives is supposed to be.*

Note however that he was not in any way asking Yeshua to *change* the Torah. He was asking for Yeshua to *interpret* Torah in light of its deepest essence. This was indeed a *weighty matter*. Yet Yeshua did not flinch. He did not even hesitate in answering that question. He had longed for such an opportunity. I mean, here was Yeshua’s opportunity to declare the essence of what is important in a man’s walk

⁷ The narrative is found at Genesis 2:20[b] –25.

⁸ We are told in Genesis 3:20 that Adam called the woman the Holy One had given [Hebrew, *matan*] him Chava [*chet, vav, hey*, Strong’s Hebrew word #2332], because she would be the *mother of all living* [Hebrew *chai, chet, yod*, Strong’s Hebrew word #2416]. This word means not only “living” but “born”, “reborn”, “resurrected”, or “made to live again”.

⁹ This last verse, “***Know therefore this day ...***” has become part of the daily prayer service, incorporated into the *Aleinu* prayer, which discusses our purpose in life.

with God. He wanted the *sofer*, and everyone else, including us in the 21st Century, to know beyond a shadow of a doubt what the very essence of relationship with the Holy One is.

To most of today's organized Christian world the answer Yeshua gives to this question is *scandalous, shocking, and heretical*. Why do I say that? How could His response be scandalous? Well, let's look at what Yeshua does not say – though He is given the perfect opportunity. Yeshua does not say that: “*Bring ye the tithes into the storehouse ...*” is intended to be the essence of interaction with the Holy One. Yeshua does not say “*Go ye therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them ...*” is the most important instruction God has to offer. Yeshua does not say that “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved*” is to be the cornerstone of our spiritual lives. Yeshua does not say “*Receive ye the Holy Ghost ...*” or “*earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy ...*” is the *sine qua non* of being a friend of God. Yeshua does not say “*build churches' (or synagogues, or mosques, or shrines)*”. Nor does He say, “*give money to preachers and churches, rabbis and scholars, imams, or gurus*”; or “*go forth and kill-the-infidel so you will be blessed*”. Nor indeed does Yeshua answer the most important question ever asked by man with *any* of the things upon which today's institutionalized forms of Christianity (or Judaism, or Islam, or any of the world's institutionalized religions) have chosen to focus.

Here was Yeshua's golden opportunity to declare Torah a superseded covenant, and start a new religion based upon the things 21st Century churches focus on. But the inconvenient truth is Yeshua was not a *Christian*. He would not have made a good ‘Christian’ at all. He is not inclined at all, it appears, to declare His Father's ways or instructions for human life obsolete. He is not out to start a new religion. What He is instead is a *very good* Son. He is a *very good* Messiah. So what did He say?

*Yeshua answered, "The greatest is 'Sh'ma, Yisra'el!
The Holy One our God, the Holy One is One."
Love the Holy One your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'
This is the first [i.e. primary, foundational] mitzvah."*

As most of you know, this is by no means a “new” instruction. It is what the Torah has always said. It is a simple declaration every Jewish child knows. It is the opening section of the *Sh'ma*, quoted directly from parsha *Va'etchanan* [this week's parsha]. Hebrews have recited this passage three times a day at least since the time of the Babylonian captivity. And it starts with a passionate desire and commitment to “*sh'ma*”.

While a full discussion of the Hebraic concept underlying the English word *sh'ma*, usually translated as “hear” will have to wait for tomorrow’s *d’rash* on Torah *Va’etchanan*, for now suffice it to say that one can only “hear” that to which one is willing to *listen*, and *pay attention to*, because one considers it *important*. Yeshua has told us, once and for all, what is important. What a *precious gift!* What a *Messiah-like thing to do!*

Moshe’s Stunning Prophecy of the Great Distraction, Deception, and Apostasy To Come

In Deuteronomy 4:25-31 Moshe ceases being a historian and lapses into pure *prophecy*. At a time when his focus is on preparing the “Joshua generation” to enter the land of Israel, to act as the Holy One’s agents for the judgment against the *Kena’anim* [Canaanites], and to claim the inheritance the Holy One promised to their fathers, he interrupts his instructions to tell them how they will, in the future, do some things that hurt our hearts to hear. They will, he says, ultimately *turn away from Torah and from God*. As a result, he says, they will be *dispossessed* of the very land they are about to enter. They will, he says, then *be scattered* by the Holy One like seeds among the nations. But then, he says, one day far in the future, they will *make t’shuvah en masse*, will *return wholeheartedly to the Holy One*, and will *be regathered to Eretz Yisrael*.

In other words Moshe lays out the *entire future of Avraham’s descendants*. Here is the way Moshe puts it:

*When you father children, and children's children,
and you have been long in the land, you will corrupt yourselves,
and make an engraved image in the form of anything,
and will do that which is evil in the sight of the Holy One your God,
to provoke Him to anger.*

Moshe then prophesies of *the displacement of B’nei Yisrael from the land by foreigners* and of *the exile of the Covenant People*:

*I call heaven and erez to witness against you this day,
that you will soon utterly perish from off the land
whereunto you go over the Yarden to possess it;
you will not prolong your days on it, but will utterly be destroyed.*

Moshe then prophesies of an extended period of *Diaspora*:

*The Holy One will scatter you among the peoples,
and you will be left few in number among the nations,
where the Holy One will lead you away.*

*There you will serve gods, the work of men's hands,
wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.*

Moshe then prophesies of an ultimate redemption and restoration:

***“But from there you will seek the Holy One your God, and you will find Him,*
*when you search after Him with all your heart and with all your soul.***

***When you are in oppression, and all these things come on you,
in the latter days you will return to the Holy One your God, and sh'ma His voice:*
*for the Holy One your God is a merciful¹⁰ God; He will not fail you, neither destroy you,
nor forget the covenant of your fathers that he swore to them.***

Please take note - *everything Moshe just said has happened – or is right now in the process of happening.*

Questions For Today’s Study

1. In verses 9-10 of today’s aliyah Moshe tells the new generation of Israel-those called to go into the Land-to teach their children “*that which [their] eyes [had] seen*”. What did he tell them to “especially” teach their children about?

2. In 4:15-24 Moshe gave special warnings we would do well to heed. They deal with the sin of *forgetfulness* [the opposite of teaching your children and your children’s children]. He has reminded us of the pivotal event in history – the revelation of the Holy One at Sinai. He now tells us *we are never to forget* the essence of that revelation, and build another system of religion. We are not to forget the vows of betrothal we took under the *chuppah* [wedding canopy] at Sinai, and chase after another husband.

[A] Of what does Moshe warn us in verses 16-18?

[B] Of what does Moshe warn us in verse 19?

[C] Of what does Moshe warn us in verse 23?

[D] Of what does Moshe warn us in verse 24?

3. In 4:25-31 Moshe lapses into pure *prophecy*. At a time when his focus is on preparing the “Joshua generation” to enter the land of Israel, act as the Holy One’s agents for the judgment against the Kena’anim [Canaanites], and claim the inheritance the Holy One promised to their fathers, he interrupts his instructions to tell them how they will:

- ultimately *turn away from Torah and from God,*
- *be dispossessed* of the very land they are about to enter,
- *be scattered* like seeds among the nations,
- *make t’shuvah* en masse, and return to The Holy One, and
- *be regathered to Eretz Yisrael.*

In other words Moshe lays out the entire future of Avraham’s descendants.

¹⁰ The Hebrew word is *rachum*, Strong’s Hebrew word #7349, *resh, chet, vav, mem*, pronounced *rakh-oom’*. It is from the verb root *racham*, Strong’s Hebrew word #7355, meaning “*he acts with compassion*” or “*he loves deeply and passionately*”.

Write an essay on this prophecy, consisting of at least one page and three paragraphs, which discusses these three issues:

[A] How has Moshe's prophecy been fulfilled in the past;

[B] How is Moshe's prophecy being fulfilled in our lifetime; and

[C] How will Moshe's prophecy be fulfilled in days to come? [Consider, in this regard, Zechariah 12:8-11 and 13:1-2, 9, among other Scriptures].

4. In today's Haftarah aliyah Yeshayahu [Isaiah] continues to prophesy 'comfort' over the Holy One's people, in the day of restoration of which Moshe prophesied in today's aliyah [Deuteronomy 4:29-31]:

Kol omer kera

The Voice says, "Cry out!"

v'amar mah eikra

One responds, "What shall I cry?"

Kol ha-basar chatzir v'chol-chasdo ketzitz ha-sadeh

"All flesh is grass, and all the glory of it is as the flower of the field.

Yavesh chatzir navel tzitz

The grass withers, the flower fades,

ki ruach Adonai nashvah bo

because the breath of the Holy One blows on it;

achen chatzir ha-am yavesh chatzir navel tzitz

surely the nation is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades;

udevar Eloheinu yakum l'olam

but the word of our God shall stand forever."

[A] The Voice of the Holy One tells the One who is listening, and willing to cry out whatever he is told to cry out, to speak about "grass", "flower(s)", the "Breath of the Holy One", and the "Word of our God". Look at each of these concepts one-by-one. What does each of those words symbolize? See Genesis 1:24, I Peter 1:23-25 and James 1:10-12 for insight from Scripture.

[B] What, according to this aliyah, is to be the **central message** that any prophet is to proclaim? Why is this message more important than any specific word of instruction to an individual or nation?

[C] What "word of our God" is this passage talking about that shall "stand forever"?

[D] Does this verse have anything to do with Yeshua's teaching on the Torah, in Matthew 5:17-19? If Yeshua had not said those things, and meant them, could He have been the Messiah promised in Scripture? Explain your answer and your reasoning.

5. With regard to today's assigned reading from the apostolic Scriptures:

[A] What did Yeshua say was the “greatest” [most basic, foundational] commandment/life instruction ever given, or which will ever be given, by God to men?

[B] In this passage, did Yeshua announce a *new* commandment? When He finally did introduce what is referred to as a ‘new commandment’, how did He describe that ‘commandment’?

[C] What are the various meanings for the word translated as “hear” in verse 29? [**Hint**: you will have to go back to the Hebrew word translated as “hear” in Deuteronomy 6:4, and look it up in Strong’s and in Gesenius, and/or a Word study book such as Richards’ or Vine’s Expository Dictionary].

[D] What does it mean that the Holy One is “One”. See **Zechariah 14:9**; see also **Genesis 2:24**.

*May your ears hear, and may your spirit, soul and body
respond in sympathetic vibration to, the voice of the Holy One.*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Ezekiel 33:21-33

*It happened in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth [month],
in the fifth [day] of the month, that one who had escaped out of Y’rushalayim came to me,
saying, **The city has been struck.***

*Now the hand of the Holy One had been on me in the evening,
before he who had escaped came; and He [the Holy One] had opened my mouth,
until he [the escapee] came to me in the morning;
and my mouth was opened, and I was mute no more.*

*The word of he Holy One came to me, saying, **Son of man,
they who inhabit those waste places in Eretz-Yisra’el speak, saying,
‘Avraham was one, and he inherited the land:
but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance’***

*Therefore tell them, Thus says the Holy One GOD:
**You eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes to your idols, and shed blood:
and shall you possess the land? You stand on your sword, you work abomination,
and you defile everyone his neighbor’s wife: and will you possess the land?***

*Thus shall you tell them, Thus says the Holy One GOD:
**As I live, surely those who are in the waste places shall fall by the sword;
and him who is in the open field will I give to the animals to be devoured;
and those who are in the strongholds and in the caves will die of the pestilence.***

***I will make the land a desolation and an astonishment;
and the pride of her power will cease;
and the mountains of Yisra’el will be desolate, so that none will pass through.
Then they will know that I am the Holy One,
when I have made the land a desolation and an astonishment,***

because of all their abominations which they have committed.

*As for you, son of man, the children of your people talk of you by the walls
and in the doors of the houses, and they speak one to another,
everyone to his brother, saying, 'Please come and hear
what is the word that comes forth from the Holy One.'*

*They come to you as the people comes, and they sit before you as my people,
and they hear your words, but don't do them;
for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goes after their gain.*

*Behold, you are to them as a very lovely song
of one who has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;
for they hear your words ... but they don't asah [make/build] them.*

*When this comes to pass, (behold, it comes,)
then will they know that a prophet has been among them.*