

Shiur L'Yom Shishi¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: *Torah Vayalech*: Deuteronomy 31:14-30
Haftarah: Isaiah 63:7-9; 55:6 – 56:8
B'rit Chadasha: Romans 7:9-12

The Holy One appeared in the Tent, in a pillar of cloud ...

[Deuteronomy 31:15]

Today's Meditation is Job 40:1-14;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 5th Petition, *Rofei* [The Prayer for Healing]

Vayomer Adonai el-Moshe – And then the Holy One said to Moshe ... ***Hen karvu yameicha lamut*** – Behold, your day of death draws near ... ***q'ra et-Y'hoshua*** - call Y'hoshua Deuteronomy 31:14a.

Moshe has known for some time that his appointed season of mortal life would soon draw to a close. He knew that all his breaths and heartbeats had been scripted; all his sunsets and sunrises choreographed. *All flesh is like grass, and its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, and the flower fades* Isaiah 40:6b-7a. Knowledge of that reality does not, however, make the Divine pronouncement with which the concluding aliyah of *Vayalech* begins – i.e. ***Hen karvu yameicha lamut*** [Behold, your day of death draws near] – any less unsettling. Today will be 'it' for the last remaining child of Amram and Yochebed. Just a few hours remain ... and then well, then respiration ceases, circulation stops, organs quit responding to stimuli, muscles relax, the lights go out, rigor mortis attaches, then putrefaction sets in.

Do You Fear Death? For You, Does Death Still Have its Sting?

Hen karvu is not just a message sitting in the in-box of the prophet of the Exodus: it is an admonition addressed to every son or daughter of Noach. It applies equally to celebrities and to slaves; to leaders, to followers, and to rebels; to beggars and to tycoons; to heroes and heroines and to patsies and pariahs; to wise men and to fools; to capitalists and to socialists; to liberals and to conservatives; to our friends and to our enemies; and to us, our spouses, and our children. Our days on earth are numbered. The physical bodies in which our spirits reside each have an expiration date – and that date is always drawing near. Have you prepared against that day? Have you rehearsed your

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passage through the vanishing point? Have you seen what lies beyond? And when you exit this phase of life, will your bloodline – and your world – be better for your having been here – or worse? Have you been careful to leave a legacy of light, salt, wisdom, and *shalom* for those who pass through this world behind you? Will your life be a testimony to the greatness of your King – or will it constitute just one more backhand tribute to the destructive power of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of *tov v'ra*?

Choosing Life – Even in the Face of Death

Torah is not about death – it is, instead all about *life*. It is about *the purpose of life*. It is about the *possibilities* and the *potentialities* and the *panoramas* of life. It is about the *pathways* to life. That is why Moshe just summed up the entirety of Torah by powerfully challenging us to ‘*choose life*’ – *that both we and our seed may live and flourish*. But alas, to everything – including death – there is a season. And to every facet of life – including death - there is an appointed time. That is why, amidst all the special Covenant times of the Holy One in which we celebrate life, there is one day a year reserved for us to change our celebratory focus, stop in our tracks, and stare death right in the face. On that day we discover if and/or to what extent we still, despite knowing our King’s sovereignty over all things, *fear death*. We discover if we have – or have not - finally reached the point in our Beautifully Choreographed Divine Romance Novel where we are content to either live or die – as long as in so doing we continue to walk with and do the will of the Holy One². What day each year do we consider such heavy questions? It is, of course, *Yom Kippur*. *Yom Kippur* – which is, of course, just over the horizon - is the most awesome day of the entire year. On *Yom Kippur* each human being is called forward for a dress rehearsal of his or her own death. We empty ourselves of ourselves. We eschew all normal activities. We take neither food nor drink. We make no pleasant conversation. We abhor creature comforts. We deny every physical appetite, urge, and drive. We deafen ourselves to earthly consolation. We anesthetize ourselves against earthly pleasure. We wrap ourselves in burial cloth.

As *Yom Kippur* approaches each year, so does our appointed time to come to grips with the Temporal Nature of life in the flesh. The Holy One’s ***Hen karvu*** reminder to Moshe is our cue, every year, to remember that every single breath, every heartbeat, and every brain wave we experience is on loan to us from, and

² See Galatians 1:21-24: *For to me, to live is Mashiach, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Mashiach, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.*

is for the sole purpose of serving, our Creator. We take the *Hen karvu* to heart, recognizing that we are not really the collection of faces, voices, ethnicities, brains, moods, opinions, and physiques that men perceive us to be, but are instead eternal spirits - on temporary assignment in physical bodies stamped by their Designer from the onset with a predetermined expiration date. We realize that we are here on earth, in physical form, for a purpose - and not at all a fleshly, self-serving, pleasure or comfort oriented one. What is our purpose? Our purpose is to join forces with the Holy One as He unveils His Grand Plan for the redemption of Mankind as a species and for the restoration of Creation to its intended state of beauty, fruitfulness, and shalom. We accept that our King has assigned to each of us a *specific range of days* to accomplish our purpose. Choices we make while here can affect the timing to a degree: we know that we can increase the number of days somewhat if we walk the earth in the flesh by following His Torah and serving our fellow man; and we know that we can decrease the number of our days somewhat by eschewing His directives, and following instead the corrupt dictates, desires, appetites, and impulses of our flesh, pseudo-intellect, and self-will. We know our King loves us, and that He has great plans for each of us to effectuate some level of *tikkun* in our bloodlines and spheres of influence while we occupy these mortal bodies; but we also know that He chose the moment to bring us into the world in bodily form, and that He and He alone gets to choose when we are removed from it ... as well as in what manner and with what degree of trauma that removal will take place. We know that He holds all our days in His Hands – and, hopefully, we are at *shalom* with that. If we are, we do not fear death. If we are, death has lost its sting.

Hen Karvu ... Now What?

Upon hearing the Holy One's *Hen karvu* warning, Moshe had some important decisions to make. He had to decide how most effectively to 'finish the race'. It is the same with us. We, too, must decide how we will respond to *Hen karvu*. Let us draw strength and inspiration from the story of Moshe's final days. Our first assignment in the wake of *Hen karvu* - as was his - is to consider:

1. If I died today, what part of the purpose for which the Holy One gave me the breath of life and the powers of thought, speech, and social and geographical influence would remain unfulfilled? and
2. In whatever time the Holy One determines I have left, how can I bless and serve my King, my family, and my assigned spheres of influence most meaningfully, honorably, and effectively?

Why does the Holy One have us rehearse the day of our death annually? To help us face and overcome death's 'sting'; to train us to live in constant awareness of

the shortness of time and opportunity; and to inspire us to dedicate ourselves urgently to the task of living well lived, fruitful, world-enhancing lives. As dead men do not eat, we are not to eat. As dead men do not drink, we are not to drink. As dead men do not dress in finery, but are dressed in a burial shroud, we are not to dress in finery, but in our burial shroud. And, most importantly, as dead men fall silent, awaiting whatever fate is decreed for them, we are to fall silent and await whatever fate is decreed for us.

The Precious Legacies Moshe Left For the World

Moshe is going to leave both mankind and physical Creation far better off for being born. His entire life story – from his ignoble birth and violent youth to his mysterious death - radiates hope. The vast treasures of revelation he received His in the Beauty Realm of the Creator of the Universe – and then patiently imparted to *B'nei Yisrael* – inspire the soul to soar with *emunah*. No matter what age one may live in, Moshe's passion for life and love for his/our King prove to be wildly contagious. His steadfast perseverance in the face of every challenge; his honesty about his own epic failures, personal tragedies, and fleshly shortcomings; his gradual, school-of-hard-knocks maturation in humility; his faithful service to the Kingdom of Heaven; these things all constitute wonderful legacies left by Amram and Yocheved's son. But there are three elements of legacy that over-ride even these. The first is his *circumcision-of-the-lips-and sanctification-of-the-gift-of-speech* legacy – *i.e.* the Torah. The second is his *circumcision of the flesh and sanctification-of-human-bloodline* legacy – *i.e.* the awakening of *Kohanim, Levi'im, B'nei Yisrael*, and *the mixed multitude of the goyim*. The third is his *circumcision-of-the-heart-and-sanctification-of-physical-time-and-space* legacy – *i.e.* the design and court-protocols of the *Mishkan [Tabernacle]*. Moshe's last day on earth will be spent putting the finishing touches on each of these three very special areas of legacy.

Moshe's Last Visit to the Mish'kan – The Sanctification-of-Physical-Space Aspect of His Legacy

Moshe's last day of mortal life begins with a farewell visit to the earthly replica of Heaven's Throne Room that he introduced to the world. Four decades ago Moshe found himself caught up in the clouds atop Mount Sinai. For forty days and nights he was given a breathtaking tour of the Heavenly reality after which the *Mish'kan*, or Tabernacle, was patterned. The Holy One sought a physical port-of-entry through which His Kingdom could come, His will could be done, on earth as in Heaven. He sought to have a finite replica of His infinite Beauty Realm on this planet, where His Manifest Presence and glory could abide in the midst of, and inspire awe, reverence, and goodness in, ordinary men. His

instructions to Moshe at that time were: *According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, exactly like that is how you are to build [it]. Exodus 25:9.* With a little help from two to three million redeemed souls, he built it indeed! As Exodus 39:42-43 describes it: *According to all the Holy One had instructed Moshe, so the children of Israel did all the work. Then Moshe looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the Holy One had instructed, just so they had done it.*

The *Mish'kan* – with all its prophetic shapes and images, its essential ‘wax-on, wax-off’ training protocols for approach, *kippurim*, and communion, and its eternal, unmistakable ‘surely goodness and mercy will follow me, and I will dwell in the House of the Holy One forever’ message – constitutes Moshe’s ‘sanctification-of-physical-space’ legacy. For the last 4 decades of Moshe’s life – and well beyond – fallen, flawed, and broken human beings had the inestimable privilege of walking in and out of the sanctified space of this Embassy of the Kingdom of Heaven, and receiving healing, every single day. But there was one place – the innermost chamber where the Holy One’s Manifest Presence dwelt – that Moshe alone had a standing invitation to daily pass through the great linen veil bedecked with to converse face-to-Face with the King. The time has come, however, for Moshe to turn over this rite of passage to another man. Who is that man? He is the prototype of the Messiah who will come. The Holy One tells Moshe:

Q'ra et-Y'hoshua v'hityatzvu b'ohel mo'ed

Summon³ Y'hoshua and let him stand⁴ in the Communion Tent,

v'atzaveinu

where I will instruct/enjoin Him.'

[Deuteronomy 31:14]

³ The word our English Bibles translate as ‘call’ or ‘summon’ is *qara* (*kaf, resh, alef*), Strong’s Hebrew word #7121, pronounced *kaw-raw*’. Its first Biblical usage is in Genesis 1:5, where Elohim ‘called’ [Heb. *qara*] the Light *day* [*yom*], and called [Hebrew *qara*] the darkness *night*. To summon, or subpoena – *i.e.* to call forth by the sheer force of one’s words – is the meaning.

⁴ The word our English Bibles translate as stand in this verse is the Hebrew verb *yatzab* (*yod, tzade, beit*), Strong’s Hebrew word #3320, pronounced *yaw-tzawb*’. The first Biblical usage of this verb is found in Exodus 2:4, where we are told that Miryam, as a little girl, stood [Hebrew, *yatzab*] a distance away from the ark in which her baby brother Moshe was placed in the Nile, to watch over him. This verb is the root of the word *Nitzavim*, ‘standing ones’, which described everyone participating in the covenant renewal ceremony of Deuteronomy 28-30. As discussed in that context, the Hebrew verb focuses not on the act or posture of standing [*i.e.* being on one’s feet], but upon the purpose of standing – *to be of service, to pray, to participate in a covenant act, etc.*

Y'hoshua's First Experience of the Holy One's Manifest Presence

As soon as Moshe and Y'hoshua arrive at the *Mish'kan* the Holy One joined them in grand style. The Holy One chose this venue and this appointed time to share with Y'hoshua, as He has previously shared with Moshe, the revelation of what is going to happen in the years that follow the conquest of the Land of Promise. What the Holy One has to say could not have been welcome news to a man like Yehoshua. The Holy One did not mince words:

V'kam ha-am hazeh

... this people will rise up

v'zanah acharei Elohei nechar-ha-aretz

and go whoring after the strange gods of the land,

asher hu v'shamah b'kir'bo

where they go to be among them.

v'azavani v'hefer et-briti asher karati ito

They will forsake me, and they will break my covenant that I have made with them.

[Deuteronomy 31:16(b)]

Wow! Before Y'hoshua's official tenure as HaNavi even begins, he is told the people that will go with him across the Jordan are going to *apostatize*. He is plainly told that they will *rebel*, will *forsake the Holy One*, will *worship other gods*, and will *abandon the sh'ma/sh'mar/asah lifestyle* for which they were created. And the Holy One makes it clear that THERE IS NOT ONE THING Y'HOSHUA OR ANYONE ELSE CAN DO ABOUT IT!!!!

The Holy One did not want Y'hoshua – or any of us – to be RESULT ORIENTED, or RESULT DRIVEN. We are to be *sh'ma* people – people who respond as a Bride – not people who need to see, or judge their value based upon – physical results. Contrary to popular opinion the Holy One did not create us to 'win our cities' or our world. The Holy One - the Omnipotent One - is quite capable of doing that Himself. Hence He arranged quite without our help for a Lamb to be slain *before the foundation of the world*. **Revelation 13:8**. We cannot claim much credit for that, now can we?

As the Betrothed Bride and co-regent-in-training of the Creator of the Universe, the Covenant People are ordained to have a very important role in the Great Harvest of the Bridegroom-King's fields and vineyards – but that role is not to make the harvest happen. Our assigned tasks in the process are: [1] to let Him use us as He pleases to sow Seed [i.e. the Seed of His Word] into our various spheres of influence [see **Deuteronomy 6:6-9**] and [2] to cooperate with Him in

maintaining an atmosphere within those spheres of influence which is conducive to the operation of the *Ruach HaQodesh* [see the entire Book of Leviticus, which containing the Protocol for the Ultimate Divine Bridal Makeover].

The Holy One created us to *respond to Him*, and to *let Him direct our actions* in a way that would accomplish on earth, in the realm of time in which we live, the eternal results He ordained before we were born. There may or may not be results we can see or appreciate with our human eyes in our lifetimes. That is the way it is supposed to be. The Holy One does not, you see, want us to do *mitzvot* – or ministry – for the satisfaction of *seeing results*. The need to ‘see results’ is a trap into which we who are in covenant to the Holy One are never supposed to fall.

Like Y’hoshua, we all need a dose of reality from time to time. We all need to know the Holy One *does not need us, or our ministries, or our churches, synagogues, home fellowships, programs, meetings, gifts or anointings*. We should never think of ourselves so highly that in our minds the Holy One starts to become our servant and dependent – instead of *the other way around*. We all need to keep in mind that *whatever we do* on earth we are to do *as a sh’ma response* to the guiding lead of the Holy One, not out of a fleshly desire to either have *an impact on the world* or to *make a name for ourselves*.

If you will recall, desiring to *have an impact on the world* and *make a name for ourselves* is the essence of *Babel*. See **Genesis 11:3-4**. And this Babylonian system is the exact opposite of – and antithetical to - the Holy One’s kingdom. It is out of this mindset and worldview that the Holy One called Avram – and all Avram’s ‘children’ forever!

Y’hoshua Is Given a Preview of ‘World History’

The Holy One then shares Y’hoshua His long-range plan to purge and redeem His people of waywardness. The methodology through which the Holy One intends to do this involves empowering humankind to transcend and overcome a series of *increasingly intense trials, tribulations, disasters and calamities*. The Holy One’s explanation of this methodology commences with what is to us a very strange statement. The Holy One indicates that when human beings abandon Him and the Torah lifestyle – as He knows they inevitably will - His response will not be to send prophets chasing after them to beg them to come back to Him. Instead He says: ***V’histarti fanai mehem*** – *I will surely hide My Face from them Deuteronomy 31:18*.

Histar P'nei – the Hiding of the Face

The concept of the *histar p'nei* – the *hiding of the Face* - of the Holy One is very important – crucially important – to the plan of the Holy One to redeem mankind. When the Holy One says He will hide his Face [Hebrew *satar asatir p'nei*] He does not mean that He will utterly reject His People. He does not ever abandon His covenant; with Him there is no shadow of turning. He does not, will not, would never, leave or forsake His People. What the Holy One *does do* from time-to-time however is to strategically *conceal Himself* from our *sight and senses*. See e.g. **Romans 11:7-8**, where Shaul quotes from **Deuteronomy 29:4** and **Isaiah 29:10**. This means He actually chooses, for the ultimate good of the people involved and their progeny, to *allow sin to blind the eyes of His people* so as to make Himself and His blessings invisible to them.

Why does the Holy One do this? What is this seemingly disingenuous strategy all about? Torah tells us. It is in order that there will arise in His people a hunger and thirst – a famine, as it were – for the Presence and the Word of the Holy One. He hides His Face – and the light of His Countenance – from men so that, sensing their great loss, His People will say:

Ha-hu ha-lo al ki-eyn Elohai bekirbi

Is it not because our God is not near to us

metza'uni ha-ra'ot ha-eleh

that these disasters come upon us?

[Deuteronomy 31:17]

Even when disasters and calamities strike, you see, the Holy One will never leave or forsake His People. He will never turn his back on either His Covenant with Noah and his progeny or His Covenant with Avraham and his. The separation we experience is therefore not due to His leaving us – but is solely attributable us declaring independence and walking away from Him! The prophetic question of Deuteronomy 31:17 is designed to call forth an introspection – an analysis of *when* and *how* and *why* the Holy One's People have strayed from our Divine Bridegroom and wandered from His ways. The real question - the one that matters most - is how soon the Holy One's Redeemed People will “miss” the *al-Panei* [face-to-Face] intimate relationship with the Holy One, within which His voice was ever present and near to *sh'ma* and His *mitzvot* were ever present and near to be *sh'mar*-ed and *asah*-ed.

In each individual's life the answer to this ‘real’ question depends upon *what level of calamity, hardship, disaster, or loss it will take before he or she is willing to abandon “the work of their hands” - the product of their own*

religious efforts - and return to intimate relationship with - and total dependence upon - the Holy One.

How about you, Beloved? If you have stepped off the Torah pathway onto a *derech rasha* [crooked way], the best possible time to turn and run into the arms of the Bridegroom-King is *right now*. If you have allowed your mind to be polluted by *mach'sheivotav aven* [thoughts of evil] - toward another being created in the Holy One's image, toward yourself, or toward the Holy One – the best time to seek cleansing, and a renewing of the mind, is this very moment.

The Hebrew phrase at the end of the last quote - *ki-yarbeh l'sloach* - literally means “*He will be great to forgive*”. Forgiveness, you see, is a large part of what makes the Holy One a great God.

Hide and Seek

In this poignant season of *t'shuvah* [turning back to the Holy One and His covenantal path] we are told by the sages to read Psalm 27 daily. Near the end of that Psalm we find the following words:

*When you said, "Seek My face," My heart said to you,
"I will seek your face, O Eternal One." Don't hide your Face from me.
Don't put your servant away in anger.
You have been my help. Don't abandon me, neither forsake me, God of my salvation.*

[Psalm 27:8-9]

Why do ‘*enemies and foes*’ come upon us ‘*to eat our flesh*’ [v.2]? Why does a ‘*host encamp around us*’ [v.3]? Why does ‘*war rise against us*’ [v.3]? Why is there a ‘*time of trouble*’ [v.5]? Why do ‘*false witnesses rise against us*’ [v.12], and *breathe out cruelty* [v. 12]? Why does our King *hide His Face*? There is a very good reason, Dear Ones - it is *so we will stop what we are doing, realize the depth of our great loss, and seek His Face!* He creates in our soul a vacuum – so we have a compelling reason to return to Him. And when we return to Him, He not only heals us, and delivers us – He allows us to gaze upon His Beauty [v. 4]. When we gaze upon His Beauty we are enraptured, and He becomes our Beloved forever. All else *pales in insignificance* and *fades into His magnificence*. And miracle of miracles, the moment we put aside our ‘*idols*’, stop our flurry of activities, bow before His Throne, and gaze up into His Face in wild-eyed wonder, He says to us:

*You have captured My Heart, My sister, My Bride!
You have stolen My heart with one glance of your eyes!*

*You are beautiful, My darling, as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem,
Majestic as troops with banners.*

Turn your eyes from Me; they overwhelm Me!
[Song of Songs 4:9, 6:4-5]

Have **you** gazed upon His Beauty lately? Have you sought it?

Moshe – A Man on an Eternal Mission

Armed with the confirmation of his deepest fears about the people he has led for these many years, Moshe is about to give voice to a *shir* [i.e. minstrel's ballad] - the Song of Moshe. Awash in the Spirit of the Holy One Moshe will testify on behalf of the Holy One in this Song and will call the Holy One's People of all generations to *t'shuvah* [return to the Holy One's Covenant path]. The Holy one instructs him:

V'atah kitvu lachem et-ha-shirah hazot
Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves

velamdah et-b'nei-Yisra'el
and teach it to the children of Israel
[Deuteronomy 31:19a]

A song? Yes, Dear One, a song. A song of *deliverance*. A song of *redemption*. A song of *hope*. A song of *love*. An *epic ballad*. An *eternal anthem*. Yes, the Creator of Heaven and Earth wants to say 'I love you' – in a song. The song is to be sung for eternity. [See Revelation 15:1-3 - "... ***And they sang the song of Moshe, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.***"]. We will have to wait for next week and parsha *Ha'azinu* to study the content of the song of Moshe in depth. But by now, because of the revelation of the Holy One given to us thus far in our study of Torah, we know instinctively what the song of Moshe will contain, don't we Beloved? It will be a song of *the passionate and unquenchable love of our Divine Bridegroom*, and of *His relentless caring for – and endless dedication to - His people*. It will be a song where tragedy and disaster are turned to hope and joy, and where deep darkness is turned to glorious light. That is what it *must be*. That is *the eternal inheritance of the People of God*. This is the fruit of our covenant with the Holy One our God.

This should, of course, come as no surprise to anyone. After all, the Holy One is not only the *Ultimate Lover*; He is the *Immaculate Songwriter*. He writes *the songs that make the whole world sing*. He delights to choose as spokespersons those who will joyfully – and faithfully - sing His songs. Songs speak to and inspire a part of the human being that neither ordinary conversation nor oratory can reach. Songs give voice to messages that the spoken word cannot communicate. They unlock emotions oratory cannot penetrate. They *stir the heartstrings*. They *activate the 'phonological loop'* in the auditory cortex of the human brain, making the combination of melody and words 'lodge in your

head’. Songs therefore promote *memorization and education* – hence we teach children the *alphabet song*. Songs *stimulate relationship building* – hence young lovers select and cherish *‘their song’*. Songs *speed up culturalization* – hence every school has an *‘alma mater’* and every nation has a *‘national anthem’*. And in the process of all these things, songs are an essential element of every *transformative movement the earth has ever known*.

When the Holy One chooses spokesmen, therefore, He often chooses minstrels and balladeers. He chooses instrumentalists and singers. He chooses people like Moshe, Miryam, Ezra, David, Asaf, Heman, and the sons of Korach. He shines the spotlight of the age on people like Sh’lomo. Yeshayahu. Yechezkiel, Yirmayahu, and Yochanan the Revelator. And every time He wants to introduce a new phase or aspect of His Grand Redemptive Plan for Mankind and Creation, and/or effectuate a transformation, He just writes and releases to one of his prophetic minstrels a *new song*.

The account of the Seven Days of Creation reproduced in Genesis 1 – 2:3 is such a song. The account of what transpired in the Garden of Eden is such a song. The story of the Flood is a song. The ballad of Yosef and his brothers is such a song. The story of the Exodus is such a song. The narrative of the *Aseret HaDibrot* [*i.e.* the so-called ‘Ten Commandments’] is such a song. The story of the collaboration of all Israel and the mixed multitude in the erection of the Tabernacle is such a song. The ‘blessings and curses’ of Leviticus 26 is such a song. And now, as we stand on the threshold of another phase of the Grand Redemptive Plan, the Holy One has written – and wants Moshe to transcribe and teach His People – yet another such song. Will you sing the Bridegroom-King’s new song, Beloved?

***With Our Lives We Are to
Write the Songs That Make The Whole World Sing***

The Hebrew word that our English Bibles translates as ‘song’ throughout this passage is *shir*. A *shir* is a particular kind of song - the kind of song one sings as he or she is taking a journey. It is a traveling song – a song such as a pilgrim or band of pilgrims, or a minstrel or band of minstrels, or perhaps an army, would sing as they walk or march along. Such a song is designed not only to *provide a cadence and rhythm for and a pace of movement*, but also to *keep the attention of both the singers and any spectators focused squarely on the purpose of the journey*. Think of the world’s most famous marching songs – songs like *‘We Are Marching To Pretoria’*; the *‘GarryOwen, ‘Rocky Road to Dublin’, ‘When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again, Hurrah, Hurrah’, ‘Glory, Glory*

Hallelujah, *Dixie*, *Over There*, *Halls of Montezuma*, *Bridge Over the River Kwai*, etc. When the Holy One releases a *shir*, He intends for it to hit the auditory cortex of man like these songs *on steroids*. He intends for the songs He writes to get stuck permanently in your brain's 'phonological loop'. He intends for both the melody and the words to *haunt you*. He intends for them to become part of your natural rhythm and worldview. He intends for them to stir emotions – and cause chemical reactions - in you. He intends for them to change you.

What Are We To Do With This Song?

The Holy One makes it clear what Moshe is supposed to do with the prophetic *shir* that He is getting ready to release. He specifically tells Moshe to do three things: 1. ***kitvu lachem*** - *i.e. write it for yourselves*; 2. ***lamdah et-b'nei-Yisra'el*** – *i.e. teach it to the children of Israel* and 3. ***simah b'fihem*** - *put/plant it [i.e. the shir] in their mouths*'. Deuteronomy 31:19b.

1. Kitvu Lachem – Write it for Yourselves

Every *shir chadash* [new song] of the Bridegroom-King is designed as a beautiful, extremely meaningful gift to mankind. It is intended to have every bit as deep and lasting an impact on the *singer* as it is on the hearer. The minstrel is not an author of a *shir chadash* – he is just the one the Holy One has chosen to receive, steward, and release it. He is not the revelation source – just the revelation processor. As soon as he hears the *shir* that Heaven is releasing He is to write it down. Word-by-word, phrase-by-phrase, verse-by-verse, chorus-by-chorus, measure-by-measure, note-by-note, transition-by-transition, and movement-by-movement, He is to meditate on both its message and its emotion. He is to laugh - or weep - with it, as appropriate. He is to embrace it. He is to tune his *heart, soul, and emotions* as well as his instrument and voice to it. It is to become revelation to him - not just a set of words set to a melody. The minstrel is to feel it, and live it, breathe it, and be changed by it long before he ever sings it.

2. Lamdah et-b'nei Yisrael – Teach it to the Children of Israel

The Hebrew verb *lamad*, which is translated in this instance as 'teach', actually means to strike, to beat, or to pound. The minstrel is to 'pound' the song into the hearers with emphasis and repetition. As Charles Fox, Norman Gimbel, and Lori Lieberman wrote, and as Roberta Flack famously sang many years ago, the task of a minstrel is to *'kill [the hearer] softly with his song'*.

2. Simah B'fihem – Put/Plant it in their Mouths

The third thing that Moshe is told to do with the *shir chadash* that is being downloaded to him is to *'put/plant it in their mouths'* The Hebrew verb used, *sum*, is the same word used to describe what the Holy One did to create the

Garden of Eden. Our English Bibles say He ‘planted’ it. **Genesis 2:8**. To sum something means to do the hearers’ souls what a gardener does to a plot of ground to turn it into a garden. First the gardener pulls up the weeds, thorns, rocks, and roots. Then he breaks up the sod and makes furrows. Then he adds organic mix. Then he plants that which he wants to grow, waters it in, and tend it. The Holy One does not just want to activate the auditory cortex or engage the phonological loop of those who hear this song. He wants them to know it as THEIR SONG. He wants them to do more than just *hear it* – He wants them to *sing it*. He wants it to be their song of remembrance. He wants it to be their anthem. The Holy One puts it thusly:

***Let this song be a witness/testimony for Me
in relation to the children of Israel.***

***It will come to pass, when many evils and troubles have come upon them,
that this song will testify against them as a witness;
for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants.***

[Deuteronomy 31:19c, 21a]

Of what is this *shir chadash* to be a witness? It is a song of forgiveness, a song of covenant, and a song of love. The Holy One wants us to know that, even knowing we will turn away from Him, He chose us, and betrothed Himself to us, anyway. He wants us to know His Covenant with us – and His Promises to us - are not dependent upon us. They are not dependent upon our perfection – or even our fidelity. They are not dependent upon our obedience in any given situation. They transcend all that. They are based in His Eternal Plan, not our performance. As He puts it:

***For I know the inclination of their behavior today,
even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore to give them.***

[Deuteronomy 31:21b]

Wow. Do you get it? Before He entrusts the Land to us – or puts *anything* of value under our stewardship, for that matter – He knows full well how undeserving we are, how unappreciative we will be, and how unfaithfully we will behave. He knows the majority of the people that he is preparing to lead in the next phase of the Grand Redemptive Plan will eventually ‘grow fat’, will ‘turn aside to other gods’, and will break away from the Holy One and the Glorious Covenant. He is going to do what He promised anyway. He is committed to us as the sons and daughters and spiritual offspring of Avraham *no matter what*. He is faithful to His Covenant with Avraham even if we are not. He has a plan to redeem mankind and Creation that does not depend upon our obedience. It does not depend upon our merit. In most instances, it does not even

depend upon our cooperation. It is solely dependent upon His Character, His Greatness, the Purity of His Heart, and the Power of His Word.

The Holy One also knows that there will always be a remnant who remains faithful to Him. Are you part of that remnant? Sometimes it may seem that everyone else is turning aside from the Holy One, His Covenant, His Plan, and His ways. But what is that to *you*? Your assignment is to follow the Bridegroom-King anyway. Even if your father and your mother, your son and your daughter, succumb to a great falling away, your assignment is to *adhere to the covenant anyway*. You are here at such a time as this to provide a faithful example for the remnant who will love Him no matter what their peers – and even their family members - do.

**Moshe's Circumcision-of-the-Lips-and-
Sanctification-of-the-Gift-of-Speech Legacy:**

***He Who Holds the Scrolls of Torah in His Heart and Keeps Them
On His Tongue Holds the Future of Mankind and Creation In His Hands***

Moshe's physical body is now 120 years of age. It will not see 121. In fact, it will not see the dawning of another day. This is the day his eternal spirit will cease to inhabit that vessel. The dust will return to dust. The spirit will be free at last. So what is Moshe focusing on in his last day to know corporeality and visibility? He is focusing on preserving for posterity by far the most precious gift any man - indeed the species of humanity - has ever received. I am talking about the revelation stream of Torah. The Creator of Heaven and earth has spoken to man. He has given man His wise instructions as to how life on earth was designed to be lived. He has provided mankind His insight on how all the most significant challenges that arise in the course of human life on a fallen earth should be faced, approached, and overcome. ***How sweet are your words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*** Psalm 119:103. ***Let him kiss me with the kisses of His Mouth!*** Song of Songs 1:2.

The Torah is a precious gift from the Creator to all mankind. It is, however, designed to be a gift that keeps on giving. It is not for one man alone. It is for all men. Hence it is not enough that the Holy One once, many generations ago, gave the Torah to Moshe. It is not even enough that Moshe, as the prophet of the Holy One, taught the Torah to our forefathers. In order for the gift of Torah to have the effect on the world intended for it by the Holy One it absolutely must be *recorded, preserved for, made accessible to, and studied by*, all generations of B'nei Yisrael. That is what Moshe has on his mind on the last day of his physical life. He wants to find the safest depository for his most precious

possession – so the Divine Light of the wisdom download he had been chosen to receive would never go out. Hence Torah tells us:

So it came to pass, when Moshe had completed writing the words of this law in a book/scroll [Hebrew sefer (i.e. inscription)], when they were finished, Moshe charged the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Holy One, saying: Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Holy One your God, that it may be there as a witness against you.
[Deuteronomy 31:24-26]

Ever since he received the revelation at Sinai, Moshe has been the sole custodian and steward of the oracles of the Great King. That is a heavy responsibility. Who will be responsible for the safekeeping and dissemination of the scrolls when Moshe dies? Today we find out. The responsibility for the safekeeping of the scrolls and the dissemination of the wisdom of Torah is going to fall upon Moshe's fellow tribesmen, *the Levi'im*. From one man the responsibility of safekeeping the oracles of Divine Wisdom will pass to a tribe. But the Holy One will not stop there. As He arranges to broaden the circle of dissemination of the Torah He will simultaneously expand the responsibility to extend to all men. Foreshadowing this, Moshe says:

Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words [Hebrew, d'varim] in their ears and call the heavens [Hebrew et-ha-shamayim] and earth [Hebrew et-ha-aretz] to witness against them.

Then Moshe spoke into the ears of all the called-ones of Israel the words of this song [Hebrew shirah] until they were ended
[Deuteronomy 31:28, 30]

It is extremely important to Moshe that the Torah be preserved. Why? It is sometimes said that *'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.'* It could also be said: *"Whoever holds the scrolls of Torah in his heart, and keeps the words of Torah on his tongue, holds the future of mankind and Creation in his hands."* There is nothing more important to our species - or the future of the universe as we know it – than the safekeeping, dissemination, and transmission from generation to generation of the wisdom of Torah. Not carbon emissions. Not war. Not the Anti-Messiah; not his false prophet; not his mark. Torah is the Holy One's antidote for the ingestion by human beings of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Take away the Torah from the world – or stop its dissemination and implementation – and the world is thrown back once again into the pre-Flood cataclysm in which *every intent of the heart of man is only evil continually.* Genesis 6:5. So, Moshe spent part of his last day on earth making

sure the precious Torah that the Holy One entrusted to him is entrusted to faithful men who will honor and protect it as he did. He wrote the whole of Torah on scrolls, and delivered them to the safekeeping of his brethren, the Levi'im. He instructed them to *'Take this Torah scroll and place it mitzad aron brit-Adonai Eloheichem - i.e. to the side of the ark of the covenant of the Holy One your God⁵. Deuteronomy 31:26.* By the Holy One's instructions the two tablets of testimony Moshe had received inscribed from the Holy One were kept inside the ark [Exodus 25:21 and 34:1, 28; see also Deuteronomy 10:3-5]; but the scrolls Moshe wrote were kept 'to the side' of the ark, in a vessel that sat *mitzad* – i.e. *alongside* – the ark, in the Holy of Holies.

Of course, the Levi'im did not merely store the scrolls. They appointed scribes, who, by tradition, had to adhere to meticulous rules of scroll reproduction to assure complete faithfulness of each copy to Moshe's original. On the hides of *tahor* animals these scribes scrupulously copied the scrolls Moshe had inscribed in order to facilitate dissemination. All this was necessary in order that we could have the Torah today, and that the scrolls we have would be true and faithful copies of the exact words of Divine Download that Moshe received.

The Condition of Fallen Man - Why Torah is So Important

Moshe does not want anyone to think that just because the Holy One chose Avraham's descendants to be His ambassadors to the nations of the world that they were exempt from the plague upon mankind brought about by the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. All mankind is infected by the rebellion virus. The calling of the children of Avraham is to overcome the toxic effects of that virus, day-by-day, year-by-year, episode of exacerbation by episode of exacerbation. Even having been exposed to the Holy One from birth, redeemed by Him from bondage, and betrothed to Him at Sinai, we are at best flawed vessels of hope and redemption. We are no worse than any other ethnic group – but without embracing and walking in the Torah we are certainly no better than any other ethnic group either. The golden calf episode, all the whining and complaining in the wilderness, the sin of the spies, the rebellion of Korach, and the *descent into idolatrous debauchery at Ba'al Peor* are provided to us by Moshe as undeniable examples of that fact. Even with the Torah, we are imperfect healers. But despite all that, we are the vessels the Holy One has chosen to use. That alone should keep us humble. But in case it doesn't, Moshe reminds us:

⁵ According to tradition the tablets of the Testimony, but not necessarily all the scrolls that Moshe wrote, were kept inside the ark rather than beside it. See Hebrews 9:4.

*I know your rebellion and your stiff neck.
If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Holy One,
then how much more after my death?*

*For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt [Hebrew shachat],
and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you.
And evil [Hebrew ra] will befall you in the latter days,
because you will do [Hebrew asah] evil [Hebrew ra] in the sight of the Holy One,
to provoke Him [Hebrew ka'as] through the work of your hands.”
[Deuteronomy 31:24-29]*

What is it in us that we still need to let the Holy One work on? Moshe describes the fallen state of man as consisting of *five primary symptoms*: 1. ‘rebellion’, 2. a ‘stiff neck’, 3. ‘corruption’, 4. ‘doing evil’, and 5. ‘provoking’ the Holy One.

Rebellious? Riotous? Ra? Are You Talking to ME?

The first symptom universal among fallen men that Moshe points out is *rebellion*. In the Hebrew that Moshe wrote the term used is *meri* – *mem, resh, yod*. This is the same word that Moshe used in Numbers 20:10 right before he *lo sh'ma*-ed the Holy One’s instructions and struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Interestingly, *meri* is a form of the ancient verb root *marah*, meaning to *strike* or to *smite in anger or other selfish motive*. Be careful, now - what you sow, you reap. Or as Messiah taught it: ***Judge not, that you not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*** Matthew 7:1-2. The fallen human condition is to over-react, to lash out, and to smite. Some do it with icy stares. Others do it with harsh words. Some do it with bare hands; some with the power of the pen or computer keyboard. Others do it with sticks, stones, knives, or guns. But at the root of it all is *marah*. Flowing from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *meri* is the natural reaction of man’s flesh to anything that does not please it. It over-reacts. It lashes out. Do not ask for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for *me* and *for thee*! We are not to judge the *meri* in others; we are to recognize and deal with it *in us*. We are to *know the enemy within*, and anticipate his strategies. We are to learn to recognize the ‘tells’ of the *meri* in us. And we are to stay in humble submission to the Holy One and His Words in order to keep the *meri* in us in check. There is absolutely no *meri* in the Holy One. There is no *meri* in the life instructions of Torah. If we are to overcome the *meri* that thrives in our flesh, we absolutely must cling to the Holy One and walk humbly in the instructions of Torah.

The struggle against the inclination of our flesh to move toward *meri* – and lash out against others - is a continuing, daily, situation-by-situation power struggle.

The campaign against the *meri* in us is part of our calling. How are you coming with the *meri* challenge, Dear One?

Stiff Necked? Is it THAT OBVIOUS?

The second symptom universal among fallen men pointed out by Moshe is the tendency to exhibit a *stiff neck*. The Hebrew phrase we translate as ‘stiff neck’ is *oref qasheh*. *Oref* means neck. *Qasheh* is an adjective meaning hardened, firm, and difficult to work with. Picture a sheep that will not turn its head toward – or turns away from – its shepherd. Not only will it not *sh’ma* the shepherd’s voice, it resists closeness and subordination. It is *unresponsive* and *independent* – even when it would be in its best interest to respond and cooperate. It is a state of self-obsession and self-will, and of loyalty to one’s personal agenda rather than the Kingdom’s agenda. That is the default state of the human race since the Fall. Jew, Gentile; man, woman; white, black, Hispanic, Asian, Arab, it does not matter.

Exactly how flexible is your neck, Dear One? When the Holy One speaks, do you turn your head and incline your ear? Or is your neck too stiff?

Corrupted? REALLY?

The third universal symptom of fallen man is that he is ‘utterly corrupt’. In the Hebrew text the operative phrase used by Moshe to describe this condition is *sh’chet tash’chitun*. It is a doubled form of the Hebrew verb *shachat*. What is *shachat*? The first usage of this word in Torah is found in Genesis 6:11-12, when the Holy One describes the state of men of earth prior to the Flood. It means ‘*infected with and spreading a highly contagious and extremely toxic form of tumah [i.e. uncleanness]*’. With what are men infected? The disease takes many forms, and has many symptoms. It can take the form of violence. It can take the form of rage. It can take the form of hate. It can take the form of self-righteousness. It can take the form of out-of-control appetites – sensuality, sexuality, gluttony, wanderlust, entertainment-obsession, etc. It can take the form of isolationism and suspicion and/or hard-heartedness toward others. It can take the form of apathy and boredom. It can take the form of fatalism, materialism, legalism, or relativism. But whatever form it takes, if not held in check – or rooted out – it will infect others. Are you getting a handle on the *shachat* fountain in your flesh, Dear One?

Making Calamity?

So That is What I and People Like Me Have Been Doing!

The fourth universal symptom that Moshe identifies with fallen man is that he

'*does evil*'. In the Hebrew text the operative phrase used by Moshe to describe this condition is *asu et-ha-ra*. It means to build/make/construct a state of calamity. It means to lay the groundwork for epic failure, disaster, and ruin. In Hebrew thought, you see, *ra* – which English speakers call 'evil' – is not a matter of morality at all. It is just a matter of *attitude, thought, speech, or behavior that contains the seeds of calamity*. If left unchecked, *ra* will destroy whatever – and whoever - it touches. The natural state of man – in the flesh – is to mess up everything. It is the opposite of the 'Midas touch' or the 'healing touch'; it is the 'Serpent's touch' – a kind of bull-in-the-china-shop touch that puts everything and everyone with whom the person comes in contact on a road that – if not course-corrected by Torah – will careen toward destruction, calamity, disaster, and ruin.

Provoking the Holy One? Surely You Have the Wrong Guy!

The fifth universal symptom that Moshe identifies with fallen man is that he '*provokes*' the Holy One. The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'provoke' is *ka'as* – *kaf, ayin, samech*. Our English Bibles add the phrase 'to anger', but no word for 'anger' is present in the Hebrew text. The Hebrew text does not present the Holy One – Who is Eternal, Omniscient and totally confident in His ability to bring good out of every situation – as being 'angry'. What He does get is *ka'as*. That just means *displeased*. The Holy One looks at human lives – which He created and cares about – two ways. On the humble and contrite, He looks with FAVOR. On the rebellious, stiff-necked, calamity-making ones filling the beautiful world He created with corruption He looks with *KA'AS* - displeasure. On which of the two groups – those He looks upon with favor, or those He looks upon with *ka'as* – do you think He will pour out His *blessings*? On which of those groups do you think He will pour out wisdom and revelation? On which group, on the other hand, do you think He will release a series of disciplinary actions designed to bring them the individuals to *teshuvah*, and give them a chance at redemption?

The Holy One, you see, has a Grand Redemptive Plan for all mankind and for Creation. He has a Redeemer's Mindset, and a Redeemer's Heart. He is not a control freak. He is not angry. He is not overwhelmed. He has a plan to open up a way of redemption to all of mankind. Let's talk about where foreigners fit into that plan, shall we?

The Challenge of the Haftarah

In today's Haftarah [Isaiah 55:6 - 56:8] the Holy One speaks through *Ha-navi Yeshayahu* [the prophet Isaiah] the mystery of His end-days plan for the

restoration of His People - and the inclusion of “foreigners” in His covenant. According to this prophecy in the last days a call will go out to all mankind – to every ‘son of man’ - to “**Maintain justice, and do what is right**”. This of course, simply means to return to the Torah lifestyle. This end-times call will be heeded not only by Jews but by “foreigners” and “eunuchs” as well. Isaiah 56:1-8 therefore says:

*Thus says the Holy One, **Keep [sh'mar] justice, and do [asah] righteousness; for my yeshu`ah is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.***

Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds it fast; who keeps the Shabbat from profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.

Neither let the foreigner who has joined himself to the Holy One, speak, saying, the Holy One will surely separate me from his people;

Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Holy One, to minister to him, and to love the name of the Holy One, to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Shabbat from profaning it, and holds fast my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

The Holy One GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Yisra'el, says, 'Yet will I gather [others] to him, besides his own who are gathered.'

This particular passage has a very personal meaning to the writer of these studies. In April 1995 this author happened to be in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma for a conference. If you will recall that is when the truck-bomb destroyed the Murrah Federal Building and swept away hundreds of innocent lives. A shofar blast was sounded that day that many of us will never forget. It was especially the case for me. As emergency crews were still frantically combing the rubble for survivors of that bombing, and as the nation reeled under this first monstrous terror attack, I rose early to pray over the devastated city, over the nation, and over all Creation.

I had been reading and praying through the book of Isaiah for several months at that time. The morning of the bombing I had read and prayed over Isaiah 55. The next morning, in the course of my prayer time, I opened my Bible to Isaiah 56. I can truthfully say that my life was changed by what I read that day. Although I had read the passage many times previously I guess had never really ‘caught’ it. I had always just read words on a page. This day the words absolutely leapt off the page and accosted me. I could not believe it. Here was an ‘end-time prophet’, the prophet of ‘post-advent’ Messiah, speaking of a group of

people apparently not originally from - or who had left the fold of - Israel, who in the end-times would do something very strange. These persons, though classified by Yeshayahu as ‘foreigners’, would:

1. “*bind themselves*” unto the Holy One, the God of Israel;
2. “*serve*” Him out of passionate love for His Name, His revealed character, and His personality;
3. bow and prostrate themselves before His throne, in sincere adoration of Him;
4. keep with joy and delight, as a peculiar treasure, His glorious Sabbath [the 7th day]; and would
5. “*hold fast to His covenant*” – namely, the covenant at Sinai – TORAH.

I was stunned. Passionate, Sabbath-observant, Torah-Covenant submissive *non-Hebrews*? Blessed by the Holy One in wonderful ways? In the *end-times*? It absolutely boggled my mind. I had no grid for it. I racked my brain. I had heard of “*Jews for Jesus*”, of course. But I’d never heard of any group of “Gentiles for Torah”, or ‘Heathens for Sabbath-honoring’, or anything of the kind. My friends from the 20th Century Christian world were all 100% convinced the Torah was a ‘superseded covenant’ and that the Sabbath was of symbolic, typographic relevance only – some kind of ‘picture’ of spiritual ‘rest’, or of heaven, or something. If there was anything they were fanatic about, it was that. They were all convinced that a relationship with God revolved around signing a decision card and attending and supporting whatever ‘local church’ they attended. Was it possible, in light of what I was reading in Isaiah 56 that very important day, that these ‘good people’ ... were all wrong? Was it possible that they and those like them had for centuries been completely misreading the writings of the man they called ‘Paul’, and had in so doing completely missing the Divine Bridegroom’s Redemptive plan for the end days?

In all the churches and religious conferences at which I had spoken or which I had attended I had never seen – or even heard any gossip about - any gentiles becoming Torah-submissive or Sabbath-honoring. But on that very special April morning, in that Oklahoma City Hotel Lobby, as I read Isaiah 56 with my spiritual eyes wide open, I became convinced that such a people would in fact exist – and soon – if they did not already. And that day, right there in the shadow of the smoldering debris of the Murrah Building, I made a commitment to Creator and to myself that I would locate and bless their company – no matter how much ‘Church-ianity’ – and how many pastor-friends - I had to shed to do so. I desperately wanted, you see, to help these foreigners about whom

Yeshayahu was prophesying learn the way to the Holy One's holy mountain. I desperately wanted to help these foreigners find delight in the Creator of the Universe's house of prayer. I hungered to have these foreigners grasp what it means to have their 'burnt offerings' and 'sacrifices' accepted on His Altar – the real one in Heaven, the one after which the one on earth, in the Mish'kan and Temple, had been modeled.

It was largely out of the revelation I received on that April day in Oklahoma City that these studies was born. I began to pour more and more of my time and spiritual energy into the study – and teaching of my family - of the ancient pathways of Torah. And somewhere along those ancient pathways I began the gradual process of finally becoming who I was created to be. So I say to you Beloved - if you have been hearing the shofar blowing in this season, and it is piercing your soul - *arise!* Shake off the dust of religion, and return to the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, and the ancient pathways of His Torah. Delight in the Sabbath of the Great King. Hold fast to His covenant. And make His Holy Mountain your first priority destination. There is plenty of room on that Mountain. Yes, even for foreigners!

Questions for Today's Study

1. In what "form" of manifestation does today's aliyah record that the Holy One appeared to Moshe and Joshua? Where did this take place?
2. In verse 18 of today's aliyah of Torah what does the Eternal One say He will do to the people of Israel [temporarily] when they have forsaken Him and broken their covenant with Him? How does this compare to the Aharonic blessing (the blessing we recite at the end of each Shabbat celebration)?
3. In verses 19 and 21 of Deuteronomy 31 what did the Holy One say would be a witness on His behalf against the Israelites? In verses 25-26 what did Moshe say would be a witness on *his* behalf against the Israelites?
4. In the first part of today's Haftarah - Isaiah 63:7-9 - we read:

*I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the Holy One,
[and] the praises of the Holy One,
according to all that the Holy One has bestowed on us,
and the great goodness toward the house of Yisra'el,
which he has bestowed on them according to his mercies,
and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.*

*For he said, 'Surely, they are my people, children who will not deal falsely:
so he was their Savior.*

*In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them:
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;
and he bore them, and carried them all the days of old.*

[A] Of what three things does Yeshayahu [Isaiah] say he will speak?

[B] What two things did the Holy One say concerning Israel?

[C] Look up the Hebrew word translated as “Savior” in Yeshayahu 63:8.

Write the Hebrew word and its definition.

5. In the second part of today’s Haftarah - Isaiah 55:6 - 56:8 - the Holy One speaks Yeshayahu the mystery of His end-days plan for the restoration of His People - and the inclusion of “foreigners” in His covenant.

[A] What three things does Isaiah 56:2 say will make a man “blessed”?

[B] According to Isaiah 56:6, what 5 things will “foreigners” do in the end-times?

[C] To what “covenant” will these “foreigners” “hold fast”?

[D] What will the Holy One do for/with these “foreigners” who keep the Shabbat and who hold fast to the Holy One’s covenant?

[E] Who are these “foreigners”?

6. In today’s B’rit Chadasha passage from Romans 7 Shaul of Tarsus says some very interesting things about the Torah.

*I was alive apart from the Torah once,
but when the mitzvah came, sin revived, and I died.
The mitzvah, which was for life, this I found to be for death;
for sin, finding occasion through the mitzvah, deceived me, and through it killed me.
Therefore the Torah indeed is holy,
and the mitzvah holy, and righteous, and good⁶.*

[Romans 7:9-12]

[A] What is Shaul talking about when he says he was once “alive without the law” [KJV] - at what time in his life was that very Jewish man ever “without the law”?

[B] When is Shaul saying “the commandment came”?

[C] When is Shaul saying he “died”? What does he mean?

[D] Is Shaul saying the Torah is no longer to be the lifestyle of the

⁶ In the Orthodox Jewish Brit Chadasha this passage reads: “And in the absence of the Torah I was once alive. But when the mitzvoh (commandment) came [BERESHIT 2:16-17], Chet (Sin) became alive, and I died. The mitzvoh (commandment) intended as the Derech L’Chayyim (Way to Life) proved for me a means to mavet (death). For Chet (Sin), seizing its opportunity through the mitzvoh (commandment), deceived me and through the mitzvoh (commandment) killed me [BERESHIT 3:1-6]. So that the Torah is kedoshah (holy) and the mitzvoh (commandment) is kedoshah and yasharah and tovah.”

Redeemed? What is he saying?

*May you be inscribed and sealed in our Great King's Book of Life for a good and a sweet year.
Shabbat Shalom!*

***The Rabbi's son
Meditation for Today's Study***

Job 40:1-14

Moreover the Eternal One answered Iyov [Job]:

"Shall he who argues contend with Shaddai?

He who argues with God, let him answer it."

Then Iyov answered the Eternal One, "Behold, I am of small account.

What shall I answer you?

I lay my hand on my mouth.

I have spoken once, and I will not answer;

yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

Then the Eternal One answered Iyov out of the whirlwind,

"Now brace yourself like a man.

I will question you, and you will answer me.

Will you even annul my judgment?

Will you condemn me, that you may be justified?

Or have you an arm like God?

Can you thunder with a voice like him?

Now deck yourself with excellency and dignity.

Array yourself with honor and majesty.

Pour forth the fury of your anger.

Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low.

Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him.

Hide them in the dust together.

Bind their faces in the hidden place.

Then I will also admit to you that your own right hand can save.