

# *Shiur L'Yom Shenit*<sup>1</sup>

[Monday's Study]

READINGS:     ***Torah Vayalech:***             **Deuteronomy 31:1-8**  
                  ***Haftarah:***                         **Isaiah 55:6-7**  
                  ***B'rit Chadasha:***             **Romans 7:7**

*The Holy One Himself Will Cross Over Before You ....*

[Deuteronomy 31:3a]

Today's *Nitzavim* Meditation is Ezekiel 34:11;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 6<sup>th</sup> Petition, *B'racha* [The Prayer for Blessing]

*Vayelech Moshe* – And Moshe walked/went out walking ... *vayedaber et-ha-devarim ha-ehel el-kol-Yisra'el* – and he spoke all these things unto all Israel. Deuteronomy 31:1.

*Yalak* - the Hebrew verb at the root of the phrase *Vayalech* - can refer to walking, crawling, running, or skipping. The essence of this verb is not the *form* of ambulation, but the *intentionality* of it. The key is breaking free, overcoming the crippling power of inertia, getting up, going, and engaging with the world.

Moshe is our example. He has been giving speeches long enough. He senses that his vanishing point is rapidly approaching, and he has a lot that he still wants to do. He thus gets up from the bema of learning and teaching and launches out on a tour the camp. As he goes, he give final exhortations to those who will succeed him in leadership roles. He knows that wherever we go, whatever we do, and in whatever generation we live in, at this time of changing seasons Creation will always bring his final public challenge – the exhortation to ‘choose life’ - back to our remembrance. He knows that every time the first cool mornings of pre-Autumn appear in the Northern Hemisphere, and every time the spring storms start to pop up in the Southern Hemisphere, we will hear the earth – and all its species - groaning in eager expectation for the sons of the Holy One awaken, arise, return to the Pathway the Bridegroom has blazed for His Bride-People<sup>2</sup>. He knows that this time of year our studies in Torah and the stirrings of the Creation ecosystem will demand our answer to the ultimate challenge. The pendency of the ‘choose life’ challenge will add a sense of urgency to the *shofar* blasts of *Yom T'ruah*, to our observance of *Yom Kippur*, and to our taking in hand of the myrtle, the palm, the willow and the citron on the first day of *Chag ha-Sukkot*.

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<sup>2</sup> The Bridegroom's Pathway - the narrow road He has blazed for His model nation to display His Goodness and Shalom – is none other that the ‘Torah’ He delivered to us through Moshe. It is the deep channel of wisdom and revelation in the midst of which the King's Life-Breath flows like water.

You see, Beloved, ‘choose life’ is the essential theme of the seventh Biblical month. It is completely right that the ‘choose life’ challenge be weighing heavily on our minds as we begin our studies in *Vayalech*. May each of us approach this study and this season in a spirit of *t’shuvah* [return]. May our gaze be fixed upon our Divine Bridegroom. May adoration of Him infuse our souls with new life. May we surrender our members again to His Precious Gift of Torah. And may this be the season when we embark afresh on the pathway to the destiny and purpose for which we were created!

### ***Moshe’s 120<sup>th</sup> Birthday Epilogue***

Though Moshe’s last formal *download-from-Heaven discourse* – the *Choose Life in the Superlative Discourse* – is now in the books, the old fellow still has more *devarim* to release. After all the wondrous stories, stunning narratives, and glorious Heavenly Downloads that he has poured out before, what more can Moshe possibly have to say? Welcome to *Moshe’s Epilogue*.

The first thing Moshe does in epilogue mode is *get a little personal*. He acknowledges that he is ‘*one hundred and twenty years old today*’. Wow! Was it really 120 years ago this very day that Yocheved, the Levite slave woman, snuck off to a secret place in the reeds alongside the Nile and gave birth to a piece of human contraband? Was it really four score years ago now that the royal household of Pharaoh was rocked by a *murder and cover-up scandal* that resulted one of its princes’ fleeing to the desert in disgrace? Was it really four decades ago now that his world was turned upside down by the sound of a Voice crying out ‘***Moshe! Moshe!***’ from deep within a burning thorn bush?

A lot of time has passed since those events. And as a result of what has happened in those intervening decades, the world will never be the same. But Moshe wants us to know that, as epically eventful as it has been, his allotted time is now over:

#### ***Lo-uchal od latzet v'lavo***

*I cannot go out and come in [from the Hebrew verb bo]*

#### ***v'Adonai amar elay Lo ta'avov et-ha-Yarden hazeh***

*Also the HOLY ONE has said to me, ‘You will not cross over this Jordan.*

**[Deuteronomy 31:2]**

What is preventing Moshe from ‘going out’ and ‘coming in’? It is not the ravages of advanced age. A couple of parshot from now, in Deuteronomy 34:7, we will be told that at the time of his death ***Moshe’s eyes were not dim, not his natural strength/vigor diminished***. Basking in the Manifest Presence of the Holy One regularly, and being renewed in his mind and spirit day after day by the pulsing energy of the Creator’s Voice, has apparently enabled Moshe to complete his journey through life without any physical disability whatever. He is suffering no

dementia. He is experiencing zero episodes of senility. His hearing, sight, energy level, reflexes, and long- and short-term memory are probably every bit as strong as they were back when he was an up-and-coming prince in Egypt. So what could the prophet possibly mean when he says ‘*I can neither ‘go out’ or ‘come in’?*’ It is just that *his allotted time is up. His assigned work on earth is done. His mission is accomplished. His destiny is assured.* He is fully capable of going through the Camp of the Redeemed to say his last goodbyes, singing the greatest prophetic song ever released on the earth, reciting a blessing over each tribe, and then climbing Mount Nebo to engage in one last conversation with His Creator while in this body of flesh. But he no longer has permission or authorization – or even the desire, much less the need - to do anything else.

***Moshe Introduces the Theme of His Farewell Tour:***

***V’imtzu al-tir’u [Be strong; Have No Fear]***

The first thing Moshe does after ‘going out’ of his tent on the day of his death is to remind every man, woman, and child that their destiny lies across the Jordan River - in the Land the Holy One had promised to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov, and their seed forever. He wants them to understand that soon they will hear a *shofar* telling them it is time to cross the River, enter into the Land, and dispossess the Kena’ani who had been polluting that land with innocent blood and perversion. He wants them to know that the Kena’ani have no intention of leaving. He wants us to know that that the cities of the Kena’ani are fortified. He wants us to be aware that they have large, powerful armies. He wants us to know that in our confrontations they will always have every possible natural advantage on their side. They will occupy the high ground. They will have far superior numbers. They will also have more sophisticated types of weaponry. But Moshe also wants to make it clear that none of those things matters one whit – because we serve a mighty God. Against all odds, the Divine mandate of possession of the Land will be fulfilled. As he puts it:

***Adonai Eloheicha hu over l’faneicha***

*The Holy One your God, He will go over before you;*

***hu-yash’mid et-ha-goyim ha-eleh milefaneicha v’rishtam***

*He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them:*

***Y’hoshua hu over l’faneicha***

*[and] Y’hoshua, he will go over before you,*

***ka’asher diber Adonai***

*as the Holy One has spoken.*

***V’asah Adonai lahem ka’asher asah l’Sichon ul’Og***

*The Holy One will do to them as he did to Sichon and to `Og,*

***malchei ha-Emori ul'art'zam asher hishmid otam***  
*the kings of the Amori, and to their land; whom he destroyed.*

***Unetanam Adonai lifneichem***

*The Holy One will deliver them up before you,*

***v'asitem lahem k'chol-ha-mitzvah***

*and you are to do to them according to all the mitzvah*

***asher tziviti etchem chizku v'imtzu al-tir'u***

*With which I have enjoined you. Be strong and do not fear*

***v'al-ta'artzu mipneihem***

*don't be afraid, nor be scared of them:*

***ki Adonai Eloheicha hu ha-holech imach***

*for the Holy One your God, He it is who goes with you;*

***lo yarpeicha v'lo ya'azveika***

*He will not fail you, nor forsake you.*

**[Deuteronomy 31:3-6]**

Let's break down these prophetic declarations one by one.

### **Prophetic Declaration #1:**

#### ***The Holy One Will ... Go Before You***

The critical first wave of any assault is always the one most fraught with danger. The first boots on the enemy's territory are always the ones at the greatest risk. The advance forces absolutely must be strong, wise, disciplined, and fearless if a campaign is to be effective. Not to worry. The Holy One will Himself be the advance force. He will personally take up Sword and Shofar and establish every beachhead we will need for the campaign.

Just as with the Egyptians it was the Holy One Who threw the horse and the rider into the sea, so it will be with the Kena'ani. As we sang prophetically on the Eastern shore of the Sea of Reeds after the great deliverance of that day, so we will sing again: ***The Holy One is a man of war; the Holy One is His name ... . Your right hand, O Holy One, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O Holy One, has dashed the enemy in pieces.*** Exodus 15:3.

If the Holy One does not go before us, we are not to go. But if He goes before us, we can be assured He will clear the way for us to follow.

### **Prophetic Declaration #2:**

#### ***The Holy One will ... Destroy the Nations Before You***

The battle for the Promised Land is ultimately our Bridegroom-King's battle, not

ours. He is the One Who promised this land to our Fathers, knowing full well the Kena'ani had no intention of leaving voluntarily, no matter how many encouragements He gave them to do so. He has had this entire campaign planned out to the last detail since the foundation of the world. He has poured the counsel of Heaven into the wisest of strategies. He has chosen the perfect timing. He has orchestrated everything from the weather to the phase of the moon. He will lead the charge – and He will **destroy** – Hebrew **shamad**, meaning to *lay waste to and exterminate* – every single serpent-controlled soul who refuses to either run away at the sound of His Shofar or tremble in fear at His Presence and humbly surrender to His Will.

This is personal. His honor is at stake. His promises to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov - and to us – hinge upon this. This is not a theological battle. This is not an argument over doctrine or beliefs. Unlike the battles men choose to fight, this is not even a battle over morality, over 'good' and 'evil, or over 'right' and 'wrong'. This battle is to *secure the Homeland of the Messiah*. This battle is to *prepare a Bridal Chamber for His Bride*. This battle is to *establish a command, communications, and operations center for the invasion of earth by Heaven*. This battle is thus an *essential component of the Creator's Long-Range Plan of Redemption for Mankind and the Restoration of Creation to its intended Edenic State*.

The Promise of the Land for His Beloved to use as a headquarters from which to model His righteousness to the nations and to teach His Wisdom, His Will, and His Ways to the world is non-negotiable. He is therefore not only going to lead the first charge of this essential confrontation – He is going to fight this battle all the way to its conclusion. We are not here to conquer anybody or anything – we are just here to serve as His adoring throng of Awestruck Witnesses, His humble and eternally grateful cleanup crew, His loyal Palace Guards, and His Official Kingdom Diplomats and Spokespersons. That is the way it is with all His battles. That is why we must never allow each other to think too highly of ourselves – or ever even think about putting our trust in our own strength, in numbers, in plans, programs and strategies hatched in the human brain, in the seductive sophistication of weaponry and armaments, in earthly allies, or indeed in anything or any One besides Him.

### **Prophetic Declaration #3:**

***The Holy One will ... Do to Them as He did to Sichon and Og***

The Holy One has already shown us what His battles look like – and how they turn out for His enemies. The pattern is established in the wars with Sichon and Og, the Emori kings who attacked us viciously when we sought to pass peacefully through the land of Moav. The first of these prototypical enemies - *Sichon* - refused to

allow Israel to pass through his territory. Moshe has explained to us that the Holy One actually *hardened Sichon's spirit and made his heart obstinate* in order that He might deliver him into our hand. **Deuteronomy 2:30**. Sichon attacked us on the plain, and the Holy One delivered him over to us and gave us his land. The second of these prototypical enemies – Og the giant – also came out with an army intent on destroying Israel. But the Holy One told Moshe ***“Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you are to do to him as you did to Sichon king of the Amorites.”*** **Deuteronomy 3:2**. And sure enough the Holy One delivered Og, with all his people, into the hand of Israel, who continued to attack his army until he had no survivors remaining, then took possession of his land.

We do not have to redesign the wheel. The Holy One has showed us exactly how this is going to work.

#### **Prophetic Declaration #4:**

***The Holy One ... goes with you, and He will not leave you nor forsake you.***

The Holy One will be not only be our benefactor as we go forward on the Pathway of Life, He promises to be both our *guide* and our *constant companion*. If we choose the Bridegroom-King's narrow but beautiful pathway there will never be even one moment when we are alone, left to our own devices, or dependent upon our own strength. He will be *with us*. And if you want to know what the 'withness' of the Holy One looks like, consists of, and might mean in your life, just ask *Yosef* [see **Genesis 39:3, 21-23**] and *Sh'muel* [see **I Samuel 3:19**] and *David* [see **II Samuel 5:10**] and *Sh'lomo* [see **I Chronicles 1:1**] and *Asa* [see **II Chronicles 15:8-9**] and *Yochanan the Immerser* [see **Luke 1:66**] and *Yeshua* [see **Acts 10:38**]

Our King is a *Jealous* as well as *Zealous* Bridegroom. He will not let us out of either His *Sight* or His *Presence*. He will not ask us to do anything independent of Him. He recognizes, as Yeshua taught, ***I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; but without Me you can do nothing.*** **John 15:5**. He will not leave us twisting in the wind. Ever. Period. End of story. Choose life – and you will get the not only the *Creator of Life*, but all things that appertain to life. That includes, without limitation, the *Breath of life*, the *Tree of Life*, the *River of Life*, and as we will discover later in this very study, the *Book of Life*.

***Okay - So the Holy One Will not Leave or Forsake Us;  
But Will We Have a MAN, Like Moshe, to Speak His Words to Us,  
And Mediate With Him on our Behalf?***

Moshe has been pouring out streams of revelation to us for many, many years. But

alas, the prototypical prophet of the Bridegroom-King's allotted time on earth is drawing to a close. His days of leading the nation are almost at an end. No, the son of Amram and Yocheved has not fallen ill. No, he is not the target of an assassination attempt. He is by no means going to become the victim of a terrorist attack. Nor will he fall prey to a beast of the night or the plot of an adversary. The prophet is not even going to find himself in the wrong place at the wrong time. His health will not fail. His strength will not abate. Neither his eyes nor his ears nor his limbs will suffer deterioration. Why, then, will he leave us? It is simple. His work on earth is almost done. The climax of his mission came last week, in parsha *Nitzavim*, when he finally uttered the words that his heart had longed for decades to say, namely: ***I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live, and that you may love the Holy One your God, that you may sh'ma His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days.*** Deuteronomy 30:19-20.

Having laid down the ultimate challenge to every human being who would ever be born, Moshe's leg of the great relay race of the Bridegroom-King's Grand Redemptive Plan is almost complete. The only questions now are who will take the baton for the next leg of the great race – and how will the prototypical prophet of Israel's legacy be passed on to posterity.

### ***Preparing for Departure***

Almost four decades ago, at Mount Sinai, Moshe had left the camp of the Redeemed hastily, with little preparation or explanation. The people who followed him out of bondage in Egypt did not handle his absence well at all. They had chosen, on the day of the Great Betrothal to make him – Moshe - their sole point of connection with the Holy One. When he left, they therefore immediately experienced a sense of prophetic disconnection. Their spiritual cell phones suddenly had no service. Their spiritual *Wi-Fi* hot spot was suddenly unavailable. They grew restless. They were uncertain about their future. And the vast hierarchy of '*leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers*' that Moshe had painstakingly appointed at Yitro's suggestion were simply not up for the task assigned to them. Neither was Aharon. Neither was anyone else. The people felt cut off - from not only the sweet revelation stream they had been experiencing, but from the Bridegroom-King Himself. They saw themselves as being in a perfect storm of a missing prophet, an invisible God, and the absence of any effective human leaders they could trust. The result, of course, was the infamous golden calf debacle.

*Oy veh!* Moshe wants to make sure that nothing like that happens again! This time before he leaves he wants the people to know that everything is under control – i.e. that there is a well thought-out and carefully scripted Divine plan in place.

Moshe wants to reassure everyone that *the Holy One does not work through him alone*. He wants them to know that the Holy One is not to ever be thought of as his God, but as their God, and that the Covenant under which the Grand Redemptive Plan is going forward is not his Covenant, but is theirs, their children's, and children's children's forever. He wants them to know that it is good for them that he goes away. '*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*', he basically said. He wants them to know that the Holy One will provide them *another comforter*. *You do not need me*, Moshe wanted to scream. *You have a covenant with the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and Ya'akov!* He will be true to His Covenant! He is your strength! He will always be with you. He is for you. He will always be there for you! He will not abandon you! He will not leave you defenseless! He will not leave you comfortless! He will not forsake you!

Do you understand these things, Dear Reader? Do you understand that you also have a covenant with the Holy One your God? Do you understand that He has committed to be your King, your Defender, and your Kinsman-Redeemer forever? Do you understand that He watches over you? Do you understand that He neither slumbers nor sleeps? Do you understand that He gives his angels charge over you? Do you understand that He will always be there for you? Do you understand that He will never leave you, never abandon you, never forsake you, and never for a moment leave you defenseless or comfortless? Are these precious promises more than just words on a page to you? Do you know the One Who made the promises? Do you know the His Voice? Do you know the sweetness of His touch? Take a few moments and just let Him confirm all these things to you!

### ***He Will Provide Another Comforter***

This time Moshe wants there to be no question about what human leader is the Holy One's choice to assume the position when he is gone. He doesn't want a prophetic disconnect to take place. He does not want to leave a power vacuum – or room for a power struggle. He did not choose Y'hoshua as the next human being to lead Israel – the Holy One did. But he is one hundred percent on board. And so, we are told:

***Then Moshe called Y'hoshua, and said to him in the sight of all Israel,  
“Chazak! [i.e. Be strong by being bound together (with the Holy One)]***

***V'ematz! [i.e. be swift to and bold for the battle].***

***For you are to go with this people to the land  
that the HOLY ONE has sworn to their fathers to give them,  
and you are to cause them to inherit it.***

***And the HOLY ONE, He is the One who goes before you.  
He will be with you; He will not leave you nor forsake you;  
do not fear nor be dismayed.***

## ***The Prophetic Empowerments of Y'hoshua: Chazak v'ematz Calling Forth a Deliverer***

The next thing the Holy One has Moshe do before paying his last respects to each of the tribes is to publicly commission his successor. Please remember that Moshe did not choose his successor. That choice was made – and announced by - the Eternal One long ago. The details of that Divine announcement were memorialized way back in chapter 27 of the Book of Numbers. In the 18th verse of that chapter the Holy One instructed Moshe who he was to lay hands upon and commission to lead the Redeemed Community into *Eretz Yisrael*. This was in partial fulfillment of the Eternal One's promise to *Yosef* [Joseph] – in his controversial dream – that *he* [Yosef] would lead his brothers. Y'hoshua, you see, was a descendant of Efrayim – one of Yosef's sons.

What happened in the lives of the patriarchs is by the Eternal One's decree destined to be repeated over and over again throughout history in the lives of their descendants. Get to know the historical narratives of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers very well, Beloved! They repeat and amplify themselves over and over, forming an ever-widening circle of ripples on the face of history. They constitute the prophetic wallpaper for *your story and mine* – and for the stories of all our children and children's children in all generations. To the Eternal One, you see, Who lives outside of what we know as 'time', history and prophecy are simply two different sides of the same coin. Torah tells us therefore that on the final day of his fleshly life Moshe called *Y'hoshua* [Joshua], son of Nun, apart from the rest of the assembled masses and charged him '*in the sight of all Israel*'. The opening words of that charge were: ***Chazak v'ematz*** - *i.e. be strong and of good courage*.

Before Moshe tells Y'hoshua what he is to do – *i.e.* what tasks he is to perform – he does something very important. He prophetically empowers him with words of blessing. This is the way it almost always works in the Kingdom of our Bridegroom. He almost always provides empowerments before he gives assignments. And He almost always releases empowerments through prophetic words of blessing.

### ***The Tasks to Which Y'hoshua Was Assigned***

Moshe gave Y'hoshua two separate assignments in today's aliyah. First, he told him that he was to '*go with this people to the land*'. Then, he was to *cause them to inherit it*'. Y'hoshua was not to act like a Lone Ranger. He was to go WITH this people. Even if they rebelled. Even if they were afraid. Even if they spoke negatively about him or behaved badly toward them. Even if he did not like them. He was to consider himself *of, for, and part of* the people, not in any wise above or separate from – much less *better than* – anyone else. This was not to be about him

or about his ministry. It was not to be about his beliefs or his opinions. It was not to be a matter of agreeing on matters of theology, ideology, or even *halakah*. It was to be about the Covenant the Holy One made with all sons and daughters of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov and about the Holy One's Grand Redemptive Plan for the entire species of mankind. It was to be about nothing else. There is, you see, no room for self-advancement, self-promotion, or self-interest in the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no room for tribalism, clannishness, cronyism, or cliques in the Kingdom, either. There is no brand or label or title that we are to cling to but the King's brand, the King's label, and the King's title. No leader in the Redeemed Community can possibly succeed in any meaningful way in the enterprises of the Kingdom by promoting his or her own, or his or her tribe's or movement's, agenda or interests. It is a Kingdom that the Holy One is establishing, and it is only the King's interests that we are to promote and advance. We are not to promote any man's, movement's or organization's agenda or interests.

The Second task assigned to Y'hoshua, after *going with* the people, was to *cause the people of Israel to inherit the land*. This would turn out to be Y'hoshua's most significant challenge. It would take him the rest of his life. All other priorities would have to be subordinated to this one. It was not just himself and his family he was to cause to inherit the land. It was not just his own tribe of Menashe he was to cause to inherit it. It was every man, every family, of every clan, and of every tribe. Some would be more cooperative and helpful than others – it did not matter. His job was not over until every single family of every single tribe was established in the next phase of Covenant life. That is what leadership in the Kingdom is all about, Dear One. That is why the empowerment for every position of leadership in the Community of the Redeemed must be supernatural empowerment. Education is never enough. Skill is never enough. Charisma is never enough. The favor of the rich and the powerful is never enough. All those wrapped together would still be woefully insufficient. Only the Holy One's Breath – His Ruach HaQodesh – working through and with His Words of Torah – can advance the Kingdom of Heaven's agenda on earth. Receive the Breath of the Holy One afresh, Dear One! Be empowered from on high! And do not stop – or allow yourself to be distracted by anything else - until every person the Holy One places within your sphere of influence has been established in the next phase of Covenant life.

It should be kept in mind that Y'hoshua is given to us to establish the *Messianic pattern*. His strength was to come from the fact that his will was completely subordinated to the Holy One's Will. As it was only through Y'hoshua's Torah-submissive leadership that the Redeemed Community of his day was able to obtain their inheritance, so it is through Yeshua and His abiding presence that we are able to inherit the things of the Holy One. It is through and in Yeshua alone that we can

walk out Torah for the world to see. And that is exactly as the Holy One planned and ordained it.

### ***Coming Soon: One Less Set of Footprints In the Moavian Sand***

Moshe knows that the next time the pillar of fire and cloud arises from the Tent of Meeting, signaling the next leg of the journey, he will not be the one who organizes the pulling up of stakes and who stands at the head of the procession to sing: ***Rise up, O Holy One! May Your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate You flee before You!*** He knows that the next time the Voice of the Holy One calls out from the Holy of Holies with a message for *B'nei Yisrael* or for the peoples of the nations, he will not be the one that responds to that call. He knows, you see, that when the daily manna shower with which the Holy One has graced the Camp of the Redeemed for four decades falls tomorrow morning, that shower will contain one less portion of daily bread – and that when the light of the day next falls upon the sandy pathway leading to and from the Holy One's manna download, clearly visible on the pathway will be one less set of footprints. Ah, but Moshe is just fine with all that. He has no regrets. He has no bucket list. He has come a long way since Yocheved laid him in a basket of straw and set him adrift on the waters of the Nile. Since that day six score years ago he has seen and heard and experienced things no living, breathing human being has ever seen, heard, or experienced before. How could he complain? How could he ask for more?

Who was Moshe, anyway? He was just an acorn, released from the fragile twig on which it sprouted into a raging storm. His very existence is a miracle. He not only survived the fall, he spouted in a palace. Against the most improbable odds imaginable, he weathered storm after storm. Uprooted time and again, he still managed to grow. Once introduced to the good soil of the Presence of the Creator – Who became his personal Friend, Rabbi, and Mentor - he began to flourish. He spread forth both roots and branches. He put on glorious leaves. Season after season he began to bring forth good fruit. He wound up spawning a forest – which he provided with shade and nourishment until it became an ecosystem that held the potential to change the atmosphere of the world. He has now brought that ecosystem to a point of viability. He knows that he now needs to be taken out of the way, in order to let that the smaller oaks that have grown up around him can reach their potential, and actually start to provide shade and nourishment to their own ecosystems.

### ***Never, Ever Alone***

Moshe knows that he is cherished by Israel – and that he will be forever. He knows that his leadership at the most critical stages of Israel's national emergence is appreciated. He knows that his many years of faithful service both to the Bridegroom-King and to His Chosen Bride-People/Forerunner Nation - are

respected and honored. He knows, in fact, that he is assured to be nothing short of revered and beloved for a thousand generations. He knows that he will be eloquently grieved, passionately mourned, and greatly missed. But that is not what is driving him on the last day of his life. He is driven by the fact that he knows his moment of departure is near – and that his departure will open far better doors for the people he has served than his continued presence ever could. He prophesies, therefore, that his departure does not mean the Holy One will not leave Israel as orphans. Oh no, not by any stretch of the imagination. For he proclaims with confidence:

***Adonai Eloheicha hu over lefaneicha***

*The HOLY ONE your God Himself will cross over before your faces*

**[Deuteronomy 31:3a]**

Moshe knows that, even in his absence, the Community of the Redeemed will never have to approach or face any situation, challenge, or circumstance alone. He is fully confident that the One he personal now knows better than he knows any man will ever and always be there with His Beloved - orchestrating, choreographing, encouraging, clearing the path, leading the way, and providing the direction and the vision. He knows that Israel will always have both a WITNESS – and a Witness. He therefore says that not only will the Holy One lead them to their destiny, but that Y’hoshua will also be with them all the way:

***Yehoshua hu over lefaneicha ka'asher diber Adonai***

*Joshua, he will also cross over before you, just as the Holy One has declared.*

**[Deuteronomy 31:3b]**

Do you sometimes feel alone? Outnumbered? Outmanned? Outgunned? Overwhelmed? Moshe would say ‘***Lift up your head’; open your eyes and re’eh! The Holy One is a man of war; YHVH is His name<sup>3</sup>. Exodus 15:3. Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the HOLY ONE your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:8.***

***What Kind of War, With Whom, and For What ...  
Are We Called to Fight?***

The Holy One is neither *afraid of* nor *angry at* – much less *at war with* - the peoples, nations, kings, or oligarchs of planet earth. Though these may refuse to know Him, or even believe in Him - much less serve Him – He is patient and kind. He created them. He lovingly sustains, protects, and provides for them one and all – individual by individual, family by family, bloodline by bloodline, culture by culture, day after day, generation after generation. He knows all the challenges, temptations, head issues, heart issues, appetites, urges, drives, biases, and flesh-

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<sup>3</sup> This is from the opening lines of the Song of the Sea.

obsessions with which they have to deal. He is patient. He is kind. He is passionately committed to give them all chance after chance to rethink their situation and choose His Beautiful Path of redemption and restoration over the poison of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In every crowd of Syrians he sees at least a Na'aman if not an Eleazar. In every cadre of Kena'ani he sees a Rachab. In every mob of Moabites he sees a Ruth. In every bevy of Babylonians he sees a Cyrus. In every invading or occupying army corps he sees a Cornelius. With regard to each ethnic group on the planet, He would much rather play the role of *Blessed Redeemer* than *Fearsome Man of War*. He does not want us hate, fear, or consider ourselves at war with the nations or cultures of the world either. The world is designed to be our mission field, not our battleground or killing field. Our King does not, therefore, want us as His people sallying forth as Crusaders to attack people we do not like or trust, or who say and do really bad things about or to us, or who oppress others, anywhere but in the very special place Eretz Yisrael. He does not want us declaring war in His Name on, or hating, or fearing Russia, or China, or the Arab world, or any part of the Americas, Europe, Asia, or Africa. Heaven forbid!<sup>4</sup> To the contrary, He wants us to love - and serve – the people of the nations. The only exceptions – two of which are temporary - are:

1. the *Amaleki* of the world wherever they may be found fomenting trouble;
2. the *Midyani* tribes of the world whenever they aggressively conspire against us with other nations and send seductions our way try to tempt our young men to abandon their assigned role in the Great Redemptive and Restorative Plan the Holy One has designed;
3. and the various *Kena'ani* nations of the world when they have possession of, are bringing corruption to, and are trying to exclude us from the Land of Promise.

The Holy One has an intricate, extremely well thought-out plan for the redemption and restoration of the land of the Patriarchs. He plans for that very special, strategically located and supremely blessed Land to serve first as the beachhead for the Kingdom of Heaven's invasion of planet earth, then as the stage upon which the greatest passion play the world will ever know will be played out, and then ultimately as the communications, supply, and operations center for Mashiach's Reign. The Holy One's entire Redemptive and Restorative Plan is dependent upon

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<sup>4</sup> This has nothing to do with America or any other sovereign nation. Sovereign nations and their governments are not B'nei Yisrael. They talk war-talk, declare war, and wage war against each other at will. That is just the kind of thing they do, and the Holy One does not get involved. His People, as agents of sovereign countries of the world, are not prohibited by Torah or any part of Scripture from participating in such wars as part of the responsible citizenship duty they owe to their host nation. When we presume to act in the Name of the Great King, instead of some sovereign nation at war with another, however, we are held by the Holy One to, and are called to live among men by, a much, much higher standard than the soldiers or diplomats of any other nation.

our presence – and at least a remnant of our number modeling the Torah lifestyle to the nations from - that land. That parcel of real estate is therefore not only the exclusive piece of *terra firma* that is to be considered worth fighting for by the sons and daughters of the Covenant, it is something we are each of us is called, charged, and ordered to love, to cherish, to pray for, and to defend against all challenges and at all costs. As Moshe nears the moment of his own death, therefore, he takes care to solemnly remind everyone within his hearing – or who will ever read his *d'varim* - of the Holy One's great call to co-labor with Him in regard to a pre-choreographed, Divinely orchestrated, campaign to redeem the Land of the Patriarchs from the Kena'ani, purify it from their abominations, and awaken its potential through the application of His Torah. Through Moshe's prophetic ministry, the Holy One has already described the mechanism through which the land will be purged. Through Moshe, the Holy One said: ***I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Kena'ani and the Emori and the Cheti and the Peritzi and the Hivi and the Yevusi.*** Exodus 33:2. ***Moshe*** wants it to be clear that the campaign for the liberation of Israel will not be an all-out holy war between cultures, much less a war aimed at genocide – but merely a campaign for the redemption and repopulation of the Land upon which Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov sojourned. It will not be a full-blown, bloody war of invasion, with regard to which Israel will have to plot military strategy; it will instead be a well choreographed, Divinely directed 'clean up' mission. Moshe has prophesied that, when we do our part, the Holy One will ***send ha-tzira'ah*** – i.e. the 'hornet', with plagues and illnesses - ***among*** [the pagan squatter nations] ***until those who are left, who hide themselves, are destroyed.*** Deuteronomy 7:20. Moshe has also prophesied that: ***The Holy One your God, the great and awesome God, is among you. And the Holy One your God will drive out those nations before you little by little. You will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. But the Holy One your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are laid waste. And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have overcome and ousted them.*** Deuteronomy 7:21-24. Now Moshe decides to expand upon those previous prophesies. He declares:

***V'asah Adonai lahem***

*And the HOLY ONE will do to them*

***ka'asher asah l'Sichon ul'Og malchei ha-Emori***

*as He did to Sichon and Og the kings of the Emori*

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***V'Adonai hu haholech lefaneicha hu yiheyeh imach***

*And the HOLY ONE, He is the One who will go before you to be with you.*

***lo yarpeicha v'lo ya'azveika***  
*He will not leave you nor forsake you;*

***lo tira v'lo techat.***  
*do not fear nor be dismayed."*

Let's conclude our meditations today by looking at the two prophetic words of blessing Moshe releases over the son of Nun.

### ***1. Chazak!***

Moshe's '*chazak*' empowerment of Y'hoshua is usually translated into English as '*be strong*'. *Be strong?* Is that supposed to be a '*commandment*' – or is it supposed to be an *empowerment*, like the Holy One's '*Light, Be!*' and/or His '*Be Holy as I am holy!*' declarations? Of course, it is the latter. But does *chazak* really just mean 'be strong'? Or is it more definitive than that? The Hebrew verb *chazak* literally means to bind or wrap things together. It is to increase strength, freedom of movement, swiftness, and impact by tightening up things that are loose and/or by combining things that are separate into a homogenous whole. Think of the English phrases 'gird up your loins', 'roll up your sleeves', 'batten down the hatches', and 'get it together'. The idea is that strength – and success in any venture - come from binding/banding things and people together. With whom is Y'hoshua to bind himself for strength? In the first instance, it is the Bridegroom-King Himself. He is to unite his heart, his mind, his thoughts, his words, his actions and reactions, and his will with the Holy One's. He is to abide in Him – the way a branch abides in the vine from which it grows. In Him he is to live, and move, and have his being. And then he is to cause others – those he mentors directly, and those he just leads and inspires – to abide in him the way he abides in the Holy One. That is strength. That is what it will take for Y'hoshua – or for us – to be truly strong.

### ***2. Ematz!***

Moshe's second verb of empowerment – *ematz* – is usually translated into English as '*Be bold/very courageous*'. *Be bold/ very courageous?* Is that supposed to be an *order* – or is it supposed to be a *blessing*, like the Holy One's '*be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth*' declaration? Of course, it is the latter. But does the verb really just mean 'be bold/very courageous'? Or is there more to it than that in the language Moshe – and the Holy One - employed? *Ematz* literally means to be swift and run to the assigned task or battle. It takes courage, of course, but it is more than having courage. It is a very active, engaged form of courage. It is all about getting to the task at hand. It means not delaying, not analyzing, and not equivocating. Compare what B'nei Yisrael did in connection with the whole spy debacle – studying, considering, weighing factors of relativity, probability, and feasibility as they saw them, and then panicking - with what David did when Goliath advanced against him. ***When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David,***

*that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.* I Samuel 17:48. David eschewed delay. He made his feet swift. He ran to the battle. That is *ematz*. There is a time for careful thought, consideration, and analysis, of course – but that time is not when the task has already been assigned, and awaits only one to perform it. Some things – indeed, the most important things in the Kingdom - must be done against the odds, irrespective of any probabilities and feasibilities the human mind could conjure up. Sometimes the Philistine is coming - with mayhem on his mind and a life, a household, or a generation at stake. When that happens, it is time not time to think about the options; it is time to put our faith in the Holy One and the lessons of life and skills the Holy One has taught us to date, and to run to meet and engage the Philistine. The odds and probabilities and feasibilities do not matter in such a case. We just have to keep our head, stay focused on the objective, fight through the tension and the pain, and trust the Holy One with the outcome. *Chazak v'ematz, Dear One!*

### ***Questions for Today's Study***

1. What does Moshe mean that he can no longer 'go in' or 'come out'?
2. With what nations is B'nei Yisrael to engage in war – and what is the only Biblically legitimate objective for which war with those nations is permitted?
3. The *haftarah* readings this week come from Isaiah 55 and 56. In Isaiah 55:6-7 the prophet *Yeshayahu* [i.e. 'Isaiah'] exhorts all who will hear his cry:

***Seek*** [Hebrew דָּרַשׁ -*darash*] ***the HOLY ONE***  
***while He may be found*** [Hebrew מָצָא -*matza* –  
*i.e. found, attained, arrived at, encountered, engaged*]  
***Call*** [Hebrew קָרָא -*qara*] ***upon Him while He is near.***  
***Let the wicked*** [Hebrew רָשָׁע -*rasha*] ***forsake his way,***  
***And the unrighteous man*** [Hebrew אָוֵן -*aven*] ***his thoughts*** [מַחְשָׁבוֹת -*machashabah* –  
*counsel, projects, meditations, agenda, plans, plots, schemes*];  
***Let him return to the HOLY ONE,***  
***And He will have mercy*** [Hebrew רָחַם -*racham*] ***on him;***  
***and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon*** [Hebrew סָלַח -*salach*].  
 [Isaiah 55:6-7]

[A] Which of the following does the prophet exhort us to seek:

1. knowledge;
2. truth;
3. grace; or
4. the Holy One?

[B] What is a 'wicked man', and what is a 'wicked man' called to forsake?

[C] What is an ‘unrighteous man’, and what is such a man called to forsake?

[D] What does it mean to you for a person to ‘turn’ to the Holy One? What steps of ‘turning’ are essential? And what kind of changes of [i] thought, [ii] speech, [iii] reaction, [iv] priorities, [v] behavior patterns, [vi] interaction with others, and [vii] lifestyle choices should the one who has ‘turned’ expected to evidence?

[E] two things does the prophet say the Holy One will do if a ‘wicked man’ or an ‘unrighteous man’ forsakes these things and returns to Him?

5. In our reading from the apostolic Scriptures today Shaul asks a question: ***What shall we say then? Is the Torah ‘sin’*** [i.e. a departure from the prescribed Covenantal pathway]? Shaul then immediately answers his own question: ***Certainly not!*** And then he proceeds to give one of the reasons the knowledge of the Torah is so crucial for the people of the Holy One. He says: ***On the contrary, I would not have been acquainted with ‘sin’ except by reason of the Torah. For I would not have recognized covetousness unless the Torah had said, “You will not covet.”***

What, in your life, do you think Torah’s instruction can help you to understanding – and avoid - ‘sin’?

*May your obvious love for the Holy One, your servant’s heart,  
your uplifting conversation, and your wise and compassionate actions  
bring peace, joy, and hope into each of your spheres of influence.*

***The Rabbi’s son***

### ***Meditation for Today’s Study***

**Ezekiel 34:11**

*This is what the Holy One Elohim says:  
“Truly I Myself will search for My sheep  
and will seek them out.*