

Introduction to Parsha #53: Ha'azinu¹

READINGS: ***Torah Ha'azinu:*** Deuteronomy 32:1-52
 Haftarah: II Samuel 22
 B'rit Chadasha: Revelation 14 - 15



You ears, O Heavens!
Deuteronomy 32:1a

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #8, *Mishpat* [The Petition for Judgment]

Ha'azinu ha-shamayim va'adaberah –Your ears, O Heavens - I will speak! ***V'tishma ha-aretz imrei-fi*** – and Earth, tune into/resonate the sayings of my mouth! **Deuteronomy 32:1.**

The Days of Awe are here. *Yom Kippur* – the great *yom tov* upon which we rehearse our own deaths and appearances before the Judgment Seat of our King – looms ahead of us. So, in order to help us prepare for our date with destiny, is rehearsing the events of his own dramatic, prototypical ‘death rehearsal’ day in our ears.

Moshe's Last Day Journeys – Our Pattern ***For Rehearsing the Day of Our Own Death Each Yom Kippur***

Moshe has been teaching, rebuking, encouraging, and prophesying to one generation or other of B'nei Yisrael for four decades now. Initially he declared the messages of the Universe's Creator to a mixed multitude. He spoke oracles of life, health, and peace to the sons and daughters of all nations and ethnicities. More

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recently his audience has consisted of the children and grandchildren of that first sheepfold. But this phase of the assignment has run its course as well. Moshe has *worked himself out of a job*. His allotted epoch as prophet of the Most High God has reached its end. He has taught us everything he knows. Every Divine message and every prophetic empowerment that he ever received from the Holy One he has now imparted. His ‘watch’ is thus over. Today will therefore be the last day of Moshe’s life. He is about to graduate to an even higher calling; may it be so for us as well.

So, Moshe decides to bid us farewell with a song. He will sing us a minstrel song that will take us on a whirlwind journey through human history. He will leave us with an epic Kingdom anthem that addresses three primary subjects: 1. the Patience, Discipline, and Confidence of the Bridegroom-King; 2. the Petulance, Distractibility, and Curiosity of the Chosen Bride-People, and the Premature, Grossly Disproportionate, and 3. the wildly Over-Enthusiastic Judgmentalism of the Nations.

I’ll Have to Say I Love You in a Song

As one of his final acts on the plains of Moav Moshe sings a prophetic song into the ears of the *q’hal* – or called-out *witness throng* - standing before him on the plains of Moav. This is the epic ‘transcender’s ballad’ known in Holy Script as the ‘song of Moshe’. Our assignment will be to learn it, live it, teach it to our children, and sing it in the courts of Heaven as a prelude to the glorious and climactic song of the Lamb. See **Revelation 15:1-5**.

Moshe knows this is no ordinary song. He is not just crooning. He lets us know very quickly that audience for which he is singing this song is a much more distinguished group than the three million or so mortal humans who had assembled in front of him on the plains of Moav. He is *singing to the two witnesses of the covenant* – i.e. the Heavens [Hebrew *sh’mayim*], and the Earth [Hebrew, *eretz*].

Ha’azinu ha-sh’mayim v’adaberah

Your ears, O heavens! I will speak!

v’ti sh’ma ha-aretz imrei-fe

And Earth – tune into/sh’ma the sayings of my mouth!

[Deuteronomy 32:1]

Ha’azinu [“Give ear”] he says to the *sh’mayim*; *I will speak* He who at his first meeting with the Holy One on Mount Sinai described himself as ***not a man of words ... for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of speech*** [Exodus 4:10], now finds poetic parallelism pouring forth from his lips.

Let This Song Be Sung!

What is the essence of Moshe's song? It is a summation, sung from Heaven's perspective, of man's entire *season of influence* on this planet. It is the chronicle of the past, the placing in context of the present, and revelation of the future for two distinct groups of human beings. In one corner are the widely dispersed sons of Noach; in the other corner sit the fascinating sub-group known as B'nei Yisrael. the past, present, and future of these two groups will be narrated, minstrel style, from *a perspective* outside 'time' – and which therefor can see what this little adventure has really been all about from the beginning, and how it therefore must inevitably end.

Moshe's song focuses its lyrics primarily on the "history" of the descendants of Avraham, of Yitzchak, and of Ya'akov; but *Ha'azinu* is by no means the song of, for, or pertaining to people who carry Hebrew DNA only. It is ultimately a *ballad of the entire human species, a canticle for all peoples, ethnic groups, cultures and nations*; and an *aria for the planet on which we live*. The Hebrew bloodline it turns out, is just the *canary in the coal mine*. As go the Covenant People, we find, so goes all mankind as a species. There are, it turns out, two crucibles that determine how well – or badly – things go for the Jewish people, for humanity as a species, and for the planet as an ecosystem.

The First Crucible

The first crucible is *how the Covenant people choose to relate to the Holy One and respond to His Covenant Calling upon their lives*. If, as, when, and to the extent the Covenant People *sh'ma* the Voice of the Bridegroom-King, love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength, *sh'mar* His Covenant, and asah His *mitzvot, mishpatim, and chukim*, and thus fulfill their assigned purpose as a kingdom of priests, *they thrive, the earth flourishes and yields its bounty, and every family on earth who wishes is offered the opportunity to share in the abundance*. On the other hand, if, as, when, and to the extent the Covenant people *lo sh'ma* [*i.e.* tune out, ignore] the Bridegroom-King's Voice; if, as, when, and to the extent they reject their Covenantal Directives and invest their time, assets, energy, creativity, and passion pursuing other interests, passions, loves, and lovers; if, as, when, and to the extent they forsake the Way of the Holy One spelled out in the Torah, and walk instead in the ideologies, philosophies, religions, follies, perversions, outrages, and drama-narratives of the nations around them, the 'brook starts to go dry', so to speak. The earth travails. Paranoia and greed, fear and hate, cruelty and despair, start to control first the narratives of men. then begin to color their interactions. Nations, cultures, and ethnicities turn on one another – and/or start to implode with self-hatred. And ultimately, all the families of the earth either suffer or perceive themselves as victims – and look around for someone to blame.

That always activates the second crucible.

The Second Crucible

The second crucible, of course, is how the peoples of the world choose to relate and respond to the seed of Avraham. If, as, when, and to the extent the people, ethnicities, cultures, and nations of the earth *value, bless, and show favor to the Covenant People* – whether or not the Covenant People they know are walking in the Covenant as they should – those people, ethnicities, cultures, and nations are blessed; their land is fruitful; they prosper; and they maintain their sovereignty – even though they remain immersed in paganism, superstition, cultural perversions, or the ubiquitous folly of pseudo-intelligence. If, as, when, and to the extent any individual, ethnic group, culture, or nation devalue, disrespect, demean, persecute, oppress, slander, or commit acts of violence against the Hebrew people, however, those individuals, ethnicities, cultures, and nations begin to deteriorate - whether or not the Covenant People they know are walking in the Covenant as they should. Their marriages and families disintegrate. Their economies struggle. Their education and information systems turn into paranoid propaganda machines, turning their populations into crazed mobs – easily manipulated by hatemongers, fearmongers, scandalmongers, gossipers, offense-peddlers, race-and-class envy inciters, pseudo-science and conspiracy theorists, drama-spreaders, perversion-purveyors, hypochondria-whisperers, and mind- and/or mood-altering substance-hawkers.

The rest, as they say, is history. And it is all described in the song. Moshe lays out the “history” of all the nations and peoples of the world as those nations and peoples relate to the people the nations of the world tend to think of as ‘the Jewish People’. Moshe’s song is therefore a song describing *the human condition* on the one hand, and *the Holy One’s redemptive plan* on the other. So it is with good reason that our B’rit Chadasha passage for this week declares that, when history is over, those - from all the nations, tribes, and tongues - who overcome will ***sing the song of Moshe, the servant of God ...*** Revelation 15:3.

Let all with ears to hear the prophetic voice of God “give ear” to this song. The heavens and the earth hear and understand Moshe’s message very well. Do *you*?

The Main Character of the Song: The Eternal Rock of Creation

Ultimately, the song is not about the ‘Jews’ or ‘the nations’. It is about the Creator of the Heavens and the earth – and His Grand Redemptive and Restorative Plan for His Creation. The Holy One – not Israel, nor any Anti-Messiah – is the Leading Man of the song. So, how does Moshe, the inspired minstrel of the song, describe this Leading Man? Of all the poetic terms Moshe could have used in his song to describe the All-Powerful One by Whom he was apprehended at the burning bush

80 years ago, the prophet wearing a minstrel's hat chooses to employ the prophetic phrase *ha-Tzur*² - i.e. the "Rock." Do you know Him that way, Dear Reader? Is He *ha-Tzur* – to you and your family?

Why, of all the descriptive names Moshe could have used to describe the Creator - especially the descriptive labels Moshe had used before like *Elohim, El Shaddai, El Elyon, El Gibor, El Roi, El, Adonai* - why does he now choose 'the Rock'? The key to what Moshe means when he refers to the Holy One as '*ha-Tzur*' is found in the first usage of the word *tzur* in Torah. The passage is found in the 17th chapter of Exodus. At that point, the miracle at *Yam Suf* [the Sea of Reeds] has occurred, and the Redeemed Community is in route to Mount Sinai to receive the revelation of the Torah. The people grow thirsty and cry out for water. Moshe does not know what to do. Torah tells us:

*Moshe cried out to the Holy One, saying,
"What am I to do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"
And the Holy One said to Moshe, "Go on before the people,
and take with you some of the elders of Israel.
Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the [Nile] river, and go.
Behold, I will stand before you there on **ha-Tzur** [the rock] in Horeb;
Strike **ha-Tzur** [the rock],
and water will come out of it that the people may drink."
[Exodus 17:4-6]*

Describing the Holy One as *ha-Tzur* – the Rock - signified much more to Moshe than power, or protection, or eternity, or a hiding place. Moshe wanted those who heard his song to know the Holy One as the Source of life-giving *mayim hayim* [living water] – i.e. as the sustainer of human life. Moshe wants all men to recognize the Holy One as *the One Who meets all our needs* – whatever the physical source appears, to our limited vision, to be.

But wait! Might there be more on Moshe's mind than even this? Think about it! Moshe had more than one 'water from a Rock' experience. In Numbers 20 we read the story of how, years later, after the sin of the spies, as the people were

² The Hebrew word *Tzur* [*tzade, vav, resh*, Strong's Hebrew word #6697] is usually translated into English as either 'rock,' or as 'bedrock', or as referring to an overhanging rock formation under which a person can hide from an enemy and/or take shelter from a storm. Some commentators see this phrase as indicating that God is permanent like a rock. Others interpret the phrase *ha-Tzur* as denoting that the Holy One is the *bedrock* of our existence. The difference between these views turns upon a linguistic issue, namely from which Hebrew verb root the noun *tzur* is derived. *Tzur* is derivative either from the verb root *yatzar*, [meaning 'to form,' denoting that God is the creator], or from the verb root *tzayar*, [meaning 'to draw'], or from the verb root *tzarar* [meaning 'to bind together'], indicating that He is the unifying force in the universe, and the one to whom all are bound. Since Hebrew is a verb-based language the ultimate meaning and correct interpretation of any noun is dependent upon the verb root from which the noun was derived.

wandering in the desert, disillusioned and dying, they clamored for water a second time. Again the Holy One instructed Moshe to climb up on a rock. Again the Holy One promised that, if Moshe would follow His directions, He Himself would cause water to come from the rock for the people. The second time, however, Moshe's instructions were not to strike the Rock as had been the case at Horev. This time the Holy One instructed His prophet to *speak* to the Rock, in such a manner as to assure that the honor would go to the Holy One. In a fit of offense toward the people he had been assigned to lead however, Moshe rebelled against the '*speak to the Rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water*' instruction. When the dramatic moment of truth came, instead of doing what the Holy One had instructed him to do, Moshe took the opportunity to vent. He stood defiantly, screaming at the people the Holy One had called him to lead. He resorted to *lashon hara*. He labeled all the people '*morim*' – *i.e.* rebels, saboteurs, opposition forces. He then went so far as to suggest that he and Aharon, rather than the Holy One, were supplying water. Finally, as if to punctuate this self-indulgent rant, Moshe brought his rod down on the Rock with all the force he could muster. *Ouch! Epic fail!* Be not deceived – the Holy One is not/will not be mocked. Whatever a man sows, of such shall he reap!³

Moshe's behavior vis-à-vis both the people and the 'Rock' that day at *Meribah* was as far from a *sh'ma*-response as the east is from the west. Everything he said and did reeked with toxicity. His attitude reeked with toxicity. His words reeked with toxicity⁴. And his actions reeked with toxicity. And worst of all, he did all these things 'in the Name of the Holy One', while wearing the 'prophet of the Most High' mantle. He completely misrepresented the Holy One's heart – and tried to turn a gift from Heaven into a lecture on the necessity of supporting his ministry. It was for this transgression of the Holy One's instructions that Moshe was denied the privilege of personally leading the people into Eretz Yisrael. Even today those who misrepresent the heart of the Holy One, and choose instead to glorify themselves and their own ministry, cannot be trusted to shepherd the sheep of His pasture into the deeper levels of blessing the Bridegroom-King has prepared for His Beloved.

Moshe understands now; and he wants us to make it clear to all who will ever hear, read or sing his song - that it was never him that brought forth water from the Rock. He knows – and wants us to know - that he had no magical powers. He knows – and wants us to know - that neither his rod nor Aharon's was ever any kind of *magic wand*. He knows – and wants us to realize - that he could have smitten a thousand rocks in the desert with that rod, acting on his own volition, and

³ See Galatians 6:7.

⁴ Remember, it is *out of the overflowing contents of the heart that the mouth speaks*. **Matthew 12:34.**

absolutely nothing would have happened. He knows – and wants us to be aware - that the power to bring forth life-giving water was never in him – or in his rod. He knows – and wants us to understand - that he had merely been given, for a brief moment in time, the inestimable privilege of being *the Holy One's doorman* – an ordinary and very fallible human being who was chosen not because of merit but purely out of grace to receive the honor of getting to announce to the world the Holy One's entrance into the physical realm. He knows now – and wants us to know - that he was never responsible to produce any of the stunning results we associate with his prophetic ministry. He knows now – and wants us to know - that he deserved neither one iota of *credit if water poured forth from the Rock in abundance* – nor one ounce of *blame if it did not*. He knows now – and wants us to understand - that it is not and never will be any man's job or calling to produce living water for anyone. He wants us to know now, before he leaves us, that he never had the power or the authority, by himself, to produce even a single drop of water for anyone – no matter how much he might have wanted to, or how hard he had tried to.

Moshe knows now that he was just raised up by the Holy One at such a time as this *to point people to the True Source of water*. He knows he was just there *to point people to Ha-Tzur* [the Rock].

A Parsha Ha'azinu/Days of Awe Travelogue

The final prophetic song of Torah begins with a courtroom scene fitting for the season of the holy season of *Yom Kippur*.

***The Calling of Witnesses to Harken to the Song* [v. 1]**

Everything that is established in Heaven must be confirmed by two or more witnesses, so Moshe begins the *shir* by calling his witnesses. The first witness he calls will be *ha-shamayim* [*i.e.* the heavens]; the second will be *ha-aretz* [*i.e.* the earth]. Moshe knows that all elements of Creation must hear this song, be awakened to – and called forth from - their present state of *Hevel-ness* [*i.e.* vanity, futility, inability to reach and maintain sustained fruitfulness because of fallen mankind's short-sighted, narcissistic abortion-fixation]. Creation must absorb this song into its DNA. The song constitutes a critical prerequisite for the ecosystem to be delivered from the bondage of *Nimrodian* corruption and reborn into the glorious freedom B'nei Yisrael is called to inaugurate in the earth.

***Setting the Tone and Mood for the Song* [v.2]**

Moshe wants to set the tone and mood for his *shir* right up front. He wants you know from the opening lines that this *shir* is neither an spurned lover's *accusation*

nor an angry prosecutor's *indictment*. Nor does he want us to think of it as a *lament*, a *battle anthem*, or a *protest song*. It is merely another means of rabbinic instruction. It is merely another element of performing his assigned 'Friend of the Bridegroom-King' mission. The Song of Moshe is designed to impact one who hears (or reads/studies) it at one of four levels, depending on the quality of that person's relationship with the Holy One. To anyone who is walking closely to the Holy One and faithfully sh'ma-ing His instructions for living the song is designed to fall upon the person's heart like a gentle, growth-stimulating spring rain. To anyone who loves the Holy One, and walks in His Ways, but is tender of heart because of personal or familial trauma or tragedy, the song is designed to fall upon the person's heart like gentle morning dew. To anyone whose love for the Holy One and commitment to the mitzvot of Torah is waning due to fleshly distraction or pseudo-intellectual seduction/deception, the song is designed to impact the person's heart like a thunderstorm. To anyone who has completely turned his or her back on the Holy One, and repeatedly rejected His calls to teshuvah and His measured disciplines, the song is designed to impact the person's heart like a hurricane.

The Declaration of the Song's Revelatory Focuses/Purposes:
To Qara and to Yahab [v. 3]

Moshe makes it clear that he has two primary purposes in releasing this song. First of all, he intends, through this song, to *proclaim/declare/act as a herald* [Hebrew, *qara*] in regard to something. What is that Moshe intends to *qara*? *He does not leave the issue open to interpretation*. He tells us plainly that what he intends to proclaim/declare/act as a herald in regard to is *the shem* [i.e. the eternal essence, nature, character, attributes, priorities, plan, agenda, purpose, and ways] of the Holy One. Moshe has learned these things well over the course of the last four decades – starting with the revelation of the thirteen *midot* that he received in the life-changing *cleft-of-the-rock* encounter of Exodus 34.

Secondly, Moshe intends, through the song he is about to release, to *accredit/attribute/ascribe* [Hebrew *yahab* – *to place, lay, and set in place as a mason places, lays, and sets in place stones in a wall*] to the Creator of the Universe, Whom he now knows not personally and covenantally as *Eloheinu* - i.e. 'our God' – what he now sees as the appropriate, deserved level of *godel* - i.e. *magnificence, majesty, the superlative status*. Moshe finally understands that not just the camp of the Redeemed but the entire atmosphere of earth needs is destined to be saturated with and inundated by the knowledge of the glory of the Holy One – in the same manner as the waters fill and saturate the sea. The release and remembrance of the song of Moshe will serve to inaugurate, promote, and provide the form, the substance, and the sequencing protocols for that glorious saturation.

Moshe's Opening Overture of Praise:
Introducing the Holy One as the Story's Glorious Leading Man [v. 4]

Who is the larger-than-life 'our God' Character Whose excellence Moshe wants to extol in this song? The prophet introduces the Holy One lyrically, and even a bit mystically, as *ha-Tzur* – the Weighty Rock/Stone. This proper noun is derived from a verb root that means *to compress*; *i.e.* to press upon something or someone with a heavy weight or great power in order to straighten out/mold/ reshape it or him. Think of a baker's rolling pin; the grindstone in an olive press; or the pestle instrument in a cook's pumice mortar.

Of the 'Leading Man' Moshe will proclaim: *All His works are perfect/complete [Heb. tamim], and all His ways [Heb. derechu] are just [Heb. mishpat].* He will extol the Holy One as 'a God of *faithfulness* [Heb. emunah], *having no evel* – *i.e. no deviation from course; no crookedness at all; One Who is altogether righteous* [Heb. tzadik – *i.e. meeting all needs and specifications necessary for the fulfillment of the Grand Plan/Design*], and *upright* [Heb. yashar – *i.e. always on target, on task, and on time*].

Introducing the Other, Less Dependable, Main Players in the Drama:

The Sons and Daughters of Avraham [vv. 5-6]

The focus of the song will then shift from the Divine, Incorruptible, and Immaculate Leading Man to the human, easily corrupted, and base leading 'lady'. Instead of a Bride making herself ready through the Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover protocols the Bridegroom-King established for her, the betrothed bride-people will 'corrupt themselves'. Instead of becoming a kingdom of royal priests, and a 'holy nation', B'nei Yisrael would wander so far from her calling that she would be known as a 'crooked and perverse generation', a 'foolish and unwise people' – a confused shrew who forgot both who and Whose she is.

Remembering the Sweetness of the Relationship at the Beginning [32:7-14]

Moshe's song will then grow soft and sentimental, as he recalls the early days of the Great Divine Romance. He will sing of the special relationship the Holy One has with B'nei Yisrael from the very beginning, when He used Israel as a Measuring Rod for the Nations, cultivated her as His *portion* [Hebrew *cheleq* – *i.e. a specially marked-off garden or field in which a farmer or gardener has great delight and for which he has tremendous expectations of fruitfulness*]; then delivered her from bondage in Egypt, led her through the Wilderness like a flock through the Wilderness, and doted upon her as the apple of His eye.

The Onset of Trouble In the Relationship [32:15-18]

Moshe will then describe for us the phases and stages of B'nei Yisrael's departures from its great calling as a light to the nations. First B'nei Yisrael, described with irony as *Yeshurun*, would 'grow fat', 'grow thick', and 'kick' against the Sinaitic

covenant's pricks. Growing more and more obtuse and obese, the masses of Avraham's descendants would then turn away from the Holy One and His Ways, and forsake their Maker. Though He had been for them an ever faithful *Tzur Yeshuatu* – i.e. a Rock of deliverance – they would scorn His love. They would leave His pathway of blessing to pursue ecstatic experience with the false gods of other cultures, and seek pseudo-intellectual and sensual fulfillment in the perverse ways and priorities of the nations.

The Days and Modes of Corrective Discipline [32:19-42]

In the scherzo portion of the great prophetic symphony, Moshe will sing of what is known as the 'age of the gentiles' – the epoch of human existence when the seed of Avraham is sown like seed into all the nations of the earth. The Holy One will then take up the song, speaking in the first person, declaring the reasons for, and the ultimate redemptive objective of, this Great Diaspora or 'Second Wilderness'. He makes it clear that there will come a time, in a season that seems like the culmination of every kind and level of darkness, when the tide turns and B'nei Yisrael, like its forebearer Yosef - rises from the ashes of dishonor to positions of great influence. The power of the nations to oppress will be taken away, and the Holy One's promise to Avraham to make his seed a blessing to every family upon the face of the earth will reach its ultimate level of fulfillment.

The Description of the Grand 'Endgame' [32:43]

At last Moshe reaches the grand crescendo of his song. There will be a day, Moshe makes it clear, when all the nations will finally 'get it', and will join B'nei Yisrael in a great and joyful conclusion to this age. B'nei Noach and B'nei Yisrael will then rejoice together over three things: 1. The Holy One's *naqam*-ing of the blood of B'nei Yisrael over the centuries; 2. The Holy One's rendering of appropriate judgment on the people, ethnicities, and cultures that rejected, oppressed, and persecuted B'nei Yisrael over those centuries; and 3. The Holy One's mercy and restorative covering being poured out on both the land and the people of Israel. The reference, of course, is to the *Messianic Kingdom* – also known as the 'Millennial Reign' of Messiah. *Selah!*

The Afterglow Sequence [32:44-52]

The parsha concludes with Moshe's Final Exhortation, first to Yehoshua, then to the entire nation, to embrace the *Sh'ma Lifestyle*. See **Deuteronomy 32:45-47**. This is followed by the narrative of Moshe's Final God Encounter, in the course of which the Holy One instructs Moshe to ascend the summit of Nebo to virtually tour the Land of Milk and Honey in which his revelations and teachings will be put into application. See **Deuteronomy 32:48-52**.

Haftarah Ha'azinu: II Samuel 22
Another Era, Another Shir: The Sweet Song of David Melech

This week's haftarah is from the passage commonly referred to as THE 'Song of David'. Although David wrote many inspired songs, this particular one is called THE song that he wrote. In other words, it is considered the most excellent song among – the song *par excellence* of - all David's songs. In this superlative of songs the great king of Israel acknowledges *that it is not because of his own might that his kingdom is established and nations are made subject to him*. Instead he declares:

*It is the Holy One who arms me with strength,
and makes my way perfect.*

He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;
He enables me to stand on the heights.

He trains my hands for battle;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

David therefore dedicates his life to the praise and honor of the Holy One. Instead of bragging about the kingdom he built, the wars he has won, the worshipping he has done, or the tabernacle he established on Mount Zion, or any of the works of his own hands, he dedicates his song to the unadulterated praise of the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven. David does not seek to share any part of the glory due to the Holy One. He wants no monument built to him. Similarly, though David knew and associated with many great men of valor, at no point in his song does he exalt any of the “mighty men” among his comrades, nor does he praise any of his political or spiritual allies. David knows, you see, that the Creator of the Universe did not need him or depend upon his efforts. David knows that he was a mere shepherd boy, the least of his brethren, who has merely been allowed because of God's sovereign choice to become *a vessel in God's mighty Hand to accomplish his will*.

Do not praise *David*, he says: praise *the Holy One*. Do not honor David for the years of service to Shaul [Saul] for which he received no reward but spears and curses. Do not glorify David for going to battle against Goliath, the Philistines, or the Jebusites. Do not sing songs of praise to “David Melech” for establishing Y'rushalayim as the capital of Israel or for recovering the ark of the covenant to its rightful place.

If you look carefully you will see that the essence of what David's song proclaims is: “I am, at heart, but a lowly shepherd boy, the least of my brethren. I am just the “foolish thing” chosen to confound the wise, the “weak thing” chosen to confound the strong. *Do not praise me - I know who I am, and I do not need your praise.*

Praise, instead, the God of heaven, who directs the affairs of earth from His throne. He alone is worthy.”

Beloved, can you join David in looking at your life not as something you did “my way” [a la’ Frank Sinatra’s theme song], but as merely a series of events that the Holy One orchestrated in order that you, and all men who intersected your sphere of influence, might learn His Way? Oh dear ones, please do not aspire to be a great man or woman, or to accomplish great things “for God” [which far too often really means for oneself]. Simply dedicate your life to be *where God wants you to be*, and be *who God created you to be*, to the greatest extent possible. Only then can you possibly do that which the Holy One created you to do – and for which He has raised you up *at such a time as this* in the history of the world.

Brit Chadasha Ha’azinu:
One Last Song – The Song of the Lamb
Revelation 14 - 15

The B’rit Chadasha readings selected for study this week will also feature a song. In the book called *the Revelation* we find a great symphony of songs that are sung in Heaven. In the final song of that symphony, the song of the Lamb, we find pretty much the same theme as we have found in both Moshe’s song and the song of David. We will see that in all three songs, the Holy One is portrayed as the Unseen Actor working behind the scenes of the pages of human history.

The Lamb’s song will focus on how even as the Holy One is bringing history to a conclusion He is diligently about the business of preparing both rewards for those who are faithful to Him and appropriate punishments for all those who go their own way even despite warning after warning and loving call to repentance after loving call to repentance.

In order that this week’s passage from the Revelation – and particularly *the Lamb’s song* - not be taken out of context, we will read all of chapters 14 and 15. Be prepared for some stunning events to unfold. Gird up your loins! And keep in mind as your senses are being bombarded with stunning and sometimes wonderful, other times absolutely horrifying, images throughout the course of these two chapters of pure revelation, that it is the Holy One our God Who is behind the events about which we will be reading - and that what He is doing in and through those events is merely *bringing history to a conclusion that will bring Him the honor and glory He deserves*.

*May every heart dedicated to the Holy One find a song to sing this week, Beloved.
And may every song that the Divine Bridegroom has ordained to be sung
at such a time as this find a willing and worthy voice.*

The Rabbi's son

Amidah Prayer Focus for the Week

The 8th Petition: Mishpat - Justice

Ha-Shivah Shofteinu k'varishonah

Return judges like You gave us in years past

v'yoetzeinu k'vateichilah

and counselors as You provided in our best days

v'haser mimeinu yagon v'anochah

remove from us our sighing and our sorrow

u'm'loch aleinu atah Adonai l'vadeichah

come and reign over us; be our only ruler

b'chesed uv'rachamim

rule us in covenant love and in compassion

v'tzadikeinu b'mishpat

and rule us with righteous decrees

Baruch Atah Adonai

Blessed are You, O Holy One

Melech ahev tzedakah u'mishpat

King Who loves righteousness and justice