

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

[Friday's Study]

READINGS:      ***Torah Vezot:***                      **Deuteronomy 33:26-34:12**  
                      ***Haftarah:***                                      **Joshua 1:14-18**  
                      ***B'rit Chadasha:***                      **Matthew 24:36 – 25:13**

***This is the land I promised . . . .***

**[Deuteronomy 34:4a]**

**Today's Meditation is Psalm 106:13-48;**

**This Week's Prayer Focus is the Aleinu [Our Purpose in life . . . ]**

***Eyn k'El Yeshurun - There is none like God, Yeshurun . . . rochev shamayim b'ezrech***

*Who rides the heavens to help you . . . uvega'avato shechakim - and shows His majesty in the clouds. Deuteronomy 33:26*

We have come a long way since ***B'reshit bara Elohim . . .***, haven't we, Beloved? We met and gotten to know the Creator as He intended for us to meet and get to know Him. Well, at least we were offered the opportunity! We rediscovered the eternal covenant callings of the Avrahamic, Yitzchakian, Ya'akovian bloodline. Well, at least we caught a whiff of those callings! We walked with the Creator of the Universe down the narrow but well-lit path of salt, light, life, health, and peace. Well, at least we tentatively stuck a toe in the sand of that path to check out its viability! We played the role of 'Daughters of Jerusalem' to the Bridegroom-King and His gloriously redeemed but *ever-so-slow-maturing* Shulamite Bride-in-training. Well, at least we stood in the wings and watched the drama unfold! And now here we are – at the end of the blazed portion of the path. We have completed the well-lit, well-worn portion of the course. We have been apprehended; we have been splashed with the waters of sanctification; but we have by no means been perfected. We know that there is much more ahead, awaiting us in the fascinating realm of the Unseen. We know that we have really just begun the great adventure. We have merely responded to the great Avrahamic call to break free from fleshly, sensual, sentimental, synchronistic, sympathetic, semantic, systemic, cynical, and pseudo-intellectual deception. We have only begun to see the brilliance and trustworthiness of the disciplines and protocols of the Kingdom of Heaven. We have only begun the process of adjusting to the perspective, the priorities, and the plan of the King. We have only begun to see, experience, and acclimate to true beauty, true wisdom, and true goodness. We have barely begun to retune our ears, our hearts, our minds, and our wills to true tone. We are just beginning to recognize and resist – much less overcome - the challenges of *Serpentine*,

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*Kayinistic, Yish'maelian, Esavian, Lavanian, Pharaohic, Yitroian, and Bila'amic dark energy* – i.e. self-will, lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, pride of life, greed, sloth, fear, anger, envy, worry, anxiety, discontentment, guilt, shame, manipulation, and deception. We have so much more to learn. So we know that though this is the last aliyah of Torah, it is just a passageway to another level of the game.

### ***So . . . Where Do We Go From Here***

We must still learn to lay down with our Good Shepherd-King in – instead of rushing to gorge ourselves on – green pastures. We must still learn to walk with Him beside – instead of plunging headlong into – still waters. We must still learn to fear no evil, even in the valley of the shadow of death. And we are better for it in so many ways. Torah is changing us – and we are loving it! The wisdom of Heaven is restructuring the way we think about our Creator, our fellow men, ourselves, our reason for existing, our lives, our times, and our spheres of influence.

Before we start the next phase of our journey with the Holy One, however, Moshe has a few more words of encouragement to give us. He has one more aliyah up his sleeve. We need to finish the scroll back before we roll it back and start afresh. We need to let Moshe remind us Who, and how faithful and wonderful, our Covenant Partner is – and what that means for us in regard to the challenges of life.

Moshe begins the final movement of his *Magnum Opus* by reminding us:

***Me'onah Elohei kedem umitachat zro'ot olam***

*The eternal God is a shelter [above], and holds [His] everlasting arms beneath.*

The awestruck prophet then declares what the Holy One has in mind for us:

***V'yegaresh mipaneicha oyev***

*He will drive the enemy before you,*

***vayomer ha-sh'med***

*and will decree the laying waste!*

***Vayishkon Yisra'el betach badad eyn Ya'akov el-eretz dagan ve'tirosh***

*Israel will thus dwell securely, like Ya'akov, in a land of grain and wine,*

***af-shamav ya'arfu-tal***

*Your heavens will drip with dew.*

**[Deuteronomy 33:27-28]**

Moshe wants us to know how blessed we are to have an eternal covenant relationship with the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving Creator of Heaven and Earth.

***Ashreicha Yisra'el mi chamocha***

*Happily on course, on task, and on time are you Israel! Who is like you?*

***am nosha b'Adonai magen ezreicha***  
*[You are] a nation delivered by God, the Shield who helps you,*

***v'asher-cherev ga'avateicha***  
*and your triumphant Sword.*

***v'yikachashu oyveicha lach***  
*Your enemies will come bowing/cringing to you,*

***v'atah al-bamoteimo tidroch***  
*and you will crush their high altars underfoot.*

### ***Moshe Arrives at the Great 'Vanishing Point'***

Many times in the course of describing the revelation he has received from Heaven, Moshe has never hesitated to take us to places **where angels fear to tread**. He has described for us not only things he has seen – hence the narratives beginning with Exodus 2 - but things he could not possibly have seen - hence, the accounts of Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, and the history of the Holy One's dealing with the patriarchs. In today's aliyah he will do something new – writing an account of events that will transpire *after his own death*. In the final passage of Torah we read a brief but beautiful statement of both Moshe's *death* and his *legacy*. Moshe will climb one last mountaintop. And on that mountaintop he will have one final close encounter with the God he met at the thornbush of Sinai so long ago. For Torah tells us:

***V'ya'al Moshe me'arvot Moav el-har Nevo***  
*Moses climbed up from the western plains of Moab to Mount Nebo,*

***rosh ha-pisgah asher al-penei Yericho***  
*to the top of the cliff facing Jericho.*

***V'yar'eihu Adonai et-kol-ha-aretz et-ha-Gil'ad ad-Dan***  
*The Holy One showed him all the land of the Gilead as far as Dan,*

***V'et kol-Naftali v'et-eretz Efrayim uMenasheh***  
*all of Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh,*

***v'et kol-eretz Y'hudah ad ha-yam ha-acharon***  
*the land of Y'hudah as far as the [Mediterranean] Sea,*

***V'et-ha-Negev v'et-ha-kikar bik'at Yerecho***  
*the Negev, the flat plain, and the valley of Jericho,*

***ir ha-t'marim ad-Tzoar***  
*city of dates, as far as Tzoar.*

***Vayomer Adonai elav zot ha-aretz asher nishbati***  
*And the Holy One said to him, 'This is the land regarding which I made an oath*

***L'Avraham l'Yitzchak ul'Ya'akov l'emor***  
*to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, saying,*

***l'zar'acha etneinah her'iticha***

*'I will give it to your descendants.'*

***v'eyneicha v'shamah lo ta'avor***

*I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you will not cross to enter it.'*

***Vayamot sham Moshe eved-Adonai be'erezt Moav al-pi Adonai***  
*It was there in the land of Moab that God's servant Moshe died at God's word.*

***Vayikbor oto vagay b'erezt Moav mul beyt Pe'or***  
*[God] buried him in the depression in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor.*

***V'lo-yada ish et-kevurato ad hayom hazeh***  
*No man knows the place that he was buried, even to this day.*

***UMoshe ben-me'ah ve'esrim shanah bemoto***  
*Moses was 120 years old when he died,*

***lo-chahatah eyno v'lo-nas lechah***  
*but his eyes had not dimmed, and his natural powers had not left him.*

***Vayivku v'nei Yisra'el et-Moshe b'arvot Moav sh'loshim yom***  
*B'nei Yisrael mourned Moshe in the western plains of Moav for thirty days*

***vayitmu yemei vechi evel Moshe***  
*Then the mourning for Moshe came to an end.*

***ViHoshua bin-Nun male ruach chochmah***  
*Y'hoshua son of Nun was filled with a spirit of wisdom,*

***ki-samach Moshe et-yadav alav***  
*when/because Moshe had laid his hands on him.*

***V'yish'mei'u elav b'nei-Yisra'el***  
*B'nei Yisrael therefore sh'ma-ed him,*

***vaya'asu ka'asher tzivah Adonai et-Moshe***  
*and built/made as God had enjoined Moshe..*

### ***The Immaculate Reception***

Moshe's *nefesh* – the soul breathed into him by the Holy One - is now gone, departed to another realm, to a realm where he will experience sights and sounds and experiences even beyond those things he saw, heard and experienced on Mount Sinai and in the Holy One's most holy place. But though the *nefesh* of the prophet is gone, the physical temple in which that *nefesh* resided for the past 120 years remains earthbound. What will become of his body? Torah tells us:

***Vayikbor oto vagay b'erezt Moav mul beyt Pe'or***  
*And he buried him in the depression in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor.*

***V'lo-yada ish et-kevurato ad ha-yom hazeh***  
*And no man knows the place that he was buried, even to this day.*

Now wait a minute. Just a minute ago, Moshe and God were alone on the mountain called Nebo, carrying on a conversation. Then Moshe dies. Now we learn he is buried. So who buried Moshe? Who is the ‘*he*’ Torah is talking about in the above verse? And how can it be, though some ‘*he*’ buried Moshe, *no man knows the place he was buried?* Hmmmnn. Good questions, Beloved.

One of the traditional daily prayers of the Jewish people, read when the Torah is studied, translates into English something like this:

*These are the mitzvot whose fruit a person enjoys in this world  
but whose principal remains intact for him in the World to Come.  
They are: the **honor due to father and mother,**  
**acts of kindness,**  
**attendance at the house of study, morning and evening,**  
**hospitality to guests, visiting the sick,**  
**providing for a bride, escorting the dead,**  
**absorption in prayer, bringing peace between man and his fellow,**  
**and between a man and his wife -**  
**and the study of Torah, which is equivalent to them all.***

Did you note the inclusion of ‘*escorting the dead*’ in the laundry list of special ‘*good deeds*’ that supposedly generate crowns/rewards in the World to Come? *What’s that all about?* We generally tend to think in terms of *ministering to the living – not the dead*. Let me explain. There is a tradition, derived from the grammar in the original Hebrew contained within the verse that describes Moshe’s burial, that Moshe’s body was buried *by the Holy One Himself*, as a special act of love toward His friend Moshe, with whom He spoke face to Face, as a man speaks to his friend.

How did the ancients come to this conclusion? In Hebrew the verse begins “*vayikbor oto . . .*”, which is best translated ‘*and he buried him . . .*’ The Hebrew verb used is not in a plural form as it would be if the burial was conducted by the people in the camp, but is in a singular form, as if the burial was effectuated by one ‘person’. Thus it has been traditionally interpreted – especially in light of the following verse saying no man knows the place where the burial occurred - to mean that Moshe’s body was laid to rest by none other than the Holy One, who thereby demonstrated the depths of His tender love – far beyond any covenant responsibility He had undertaken – for His beloved servant.

The same idea is echoed in Psalm 116, where we are told: “***Precious in the sight of the Holy One is the death of his holy ones.***” Psalm 116:15. To the Hebrew mind, therefore, to *escort* the dead [i.e. to sit with, keep watch over, and bury with honor the body of a deceased person] is to emulate the Compassionate One just as much as *to visit the sick* [as the Holy One visited Avraham when he was recovering from his circumcision]. Hence

when a homicide bomber strikes in Israel, if you watch the news reports carefully you will see crews immediately assemble and begin to meticulously comb the scene with plastic bags, searching for any trace of the bodies of the victims they can recover for burial. And they then appoint one or more persons to remain with and keep constant watch over whatever remains they are able to retrieve until the person can be given a decent burial.

Do not think it strange, or morbid Beloved. They are just trying to emulate the Holy One, and what Torah tells us that the Holy One did for his servant – and friend – Moshe.

### ***The Epitaph***

Meanwhile, back in the camp of the Holy One's redeemed, second generation, the truth finally sinks in – Moshe will not be coming back down Mount Nebo the way he came back down Mount Sinai. What can be said about what Moshe has meant to this people? What will be his epitaph?

It appears that Moshe may well have written his epitaph before he ever left. For the Torah – of which Moshe is the only known scribe - tells us:

***UMoshe ben-me'ah v'esrim shanah b'moto***

*Moses was 120 years old when he died,*

***lo-chahatah eyno v'lo-nas lechah***

*but his eyes had not dimmed, and his natural powers had not left him.*

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***V'lo-kam navi od b'Yisra'el keMoshe***

*No other prophet like Moshe has arisen in Israel,*

***asher yeda'o Adonai panim el-panim***

*who knew the Holy One face to face.*

***L'chol-ha-otot v'ha-moftim***

*For all the signs and miracles*

***asher shlach Adonai la'asot b'ereetz Mitzrayim***

*that God let him display in the land of Egypt,*

***l'Far'oh ul'chol-avadav ul'chol-artzo***

*to Pharaoh and all his land,*

***Ul'chol ha-yad ha-chazakah ul'chol ha-mora ha-gadol***

*or any of the mighty acts or great sights*

***asher asah Moshe l'eynei kol-Yisra'el***

*that Moshe displayed before the eyes of all Israel.*

With these words the Torah of the Holy One concludes. From the Divinely created seed of Torah, the inspired writings of *Y'hoshua* [Joshua] and *Ezra* the Scribe,

*David, Shlomo* [Solomon] and the prophets will sprout forth as branches. In due time, from the branches formed by the inspired writings of the men just mentioned, the precious fruit of the B'rit Chadasha will come forth. When you eat the fruit – think of the seed from which it came. Then look inside the fruit, and see if the seed you will find inside it – at its essence - is not an exact duplicate of the seed that started it all. **Selah.** Pause and meditate quietly on that.

### ***Until We Meet Again***

The annual cycle of Torah readings is now over, Beloved. But it is not time to stop reading and studying Torah. It is merely time for beginning anew. See you back at the gateway of Genesis 1:1 - the Holy One of Israel willing, of course.

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

1. With regard to verses 25-29 of Deuteronomy 33:

[A] List the descriptions/praises Moshe gives of the Holy One in these verses.

[B] List the blessings which Moshe says, in these verses, will be Israel's because of Israel's relationship with the Holy One.

2. With regard to chapter 34, verses 1-6:

[A] Where does Moshe go after blessing Israel for the last time?

[B] What did the Holy One show to Moshe at this time?

[C] Do you think all the things referenced in these verses are visible to the human eye from the physical location where Moshe went after blessing the tribes?

[D] The author of this chapter says Moshe died and was buried, but that no one knows where his grave is. Who buried him?

[E] Read Jude verse 9. Do you have any idea what he is talking about? Explain.

[F] What was Moshe's physical condition when he died?

[G] How old was he when he died?

[H] How long did the Israelites mourn for Moshe?

3. Imagine you are Y'hoshua [**Joshua**] on the day it is discovered that Moshe is dead. Write a journal entry describing what happened (from Y'hoshua's perspective) and how he felt.

4. In the concluding Haftarah reading of the annual cycle we read words spoken by Y'hoshua:

***Nesheychem tapeichem umikneichem***

*Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle*

***yesheivu ba'aretz asher natan lachem Moshe b'ever ha-Yarden***

*will stay in the land beyond the Jordan that Moshe entrusted to you in stewardship,*

**v'atem ta'avru chamushim lifnei acheichem kol giborei**  
*but all your mighty men of valor will pass over before your kinsmen,*

**ha-chayil v'azartem otam**  
*to strengthen and help them,*

**Ad asher-yaniach Adonai la'acheichem kachem**  
*until the Holy One has given your kinsmen rest, as you already have,*

**v'yarshu gam-hemah et-ha-aretz**  
*and they also have taken possession of the land*

**asher-Adonai Eloheichem noten lahem**  
*that the Holy One your God is entrusting to them in stewardship.*

**v'shavtem l'erezt yerushatchem virishtem otah**  
*Then you are to return to the land of your possession,*

**asher natan lachem Moshe eved Adonai**  
*that Moshe, as the Holy One's servant, entrusted to you in stewardship*

**b'ever ha-Yarden mizrach ha-shamesh**  
*beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, and occupy it.'*

The people respond favorably, as follows:

**Kol asher tzivitanu na'aseh**

*'All that you have enjoined us we will do/make/build/cause to come to come to pass,*

**v'el-kol-asher tish'lacheinu nelech**  
*and everywhere you send us we will go.*

**Kechol asher-shamanu el-Moshe ken nish'ma eleicha**  
*'Just as we sh'ma-ed Moshe in all things, so we will sh'ma you;*

**rak yiheyeh Adonai Eloheicha imach ka'asher hayah im-Moshe**  
*only may the Holy One your God be with you as He was with Moshe.*

**Kol-ish asher-yamreh et-picha v'lo-yish'ma et-devareicha**  
*Whoever rebels against your word, and does not sh'ma you*

**L'chol asher-tetzaveinu yumat rak chazak v'ematz**  
*in all that you enjoin us will die. Only be strong and of good courage.'*

[A] With whom is Y'hoshua conversing in this passage?

[B] What things must these people do before they may find rest in the land they have chosen?

5. In today's reading from the Apostolic Scriptures for ***Vezot Ha-Berachah***:

[A] Who does Yeshua say is the only one who knows "that day" or "that hour"?

[B] Are there any angels who know that day or hour?

[C] Does Yeshua know that day or hour?

[D] How will “that day” be like the days of Noah?

[E] In verses 42 and 44, Yeshua gives two instructions for us who await His triumphant return as Messiah ben David, the King. What are those two instructions?

*BEHOLD: You have completed the Torah cycle, Beloved!  
“Be Strong, be strong, and may we all be strengthened!”*

### ***The Rabbi’s son***

## ***Meditation for Today’s Study***

Psalm 106:12-48

*We soon forgot his works. We didn't wait for his counsel;  
but we gave in to craving in the desert, and tested God in the wasteland.  
He gave us our request, but sent leanness into our soul.*

*We envied Moshe also in the camp, and Aharon, the Holy One's holy one.  
The eretz opened and swallowed up Datan, and covered the company of Aviram,  
A fire was kindled in their company. The flame burned up the wicked.*

*We made a calf in Horev, And worshiped a molten image.  
Thus we exchanged their glory for an image of a bull that eats grass.  
We forgot God, our Savior, Who had done great things in Mitzrayim,  
Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and awesome things by the Sea of Suf.*

*Therefore he said that he would destroy us,  
Had Moshe, his chosen, not stood before him in the breach,  
To turn away his wrath, so that he wouldn't destroy us.*

*Yes, we despised the pleasant land.*

*We didn't believe His word, but murmured in our tents, and didn't listen to [sh'ma]  
the Holy One's voice. Therefore he swore to us that He would overthrow them in the wilderness,  
That He would overthrow our seed among the nations, and scatter them in the lands.*

*We joined ourselves also to Ba`al-Pe`or, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.  
Thus we provoked him to anger with our deeds. The plague broke in on us.  
Then Pinechas stood up, and executed judgment, so the plague was stopped.  
That was credited to him for righteousness, for all generations to come.*

*We angered him also at the waters of Merivah, so that Moshe was troubled for our sakes;  
Because we were rebellious against his spirit, he spoke rashly with his lips.*

*We didn't destroy the peoples as the Holy One commanded,  
But mixed ourselves with the nations, and learned their works.*

*We served their idols, which became a snare to us.*

*Yes, we sacrificed our sons and our daughters to demons. We shed innocent blood,  
Even the blood of their sons and of our daughters,  
Whom we sacrificed to the idols of Kana`an. The land was polluted with blood.  
Thus were we defiled with our works, and prostituted ourselves in our deeds.*

*Therefore the Holy One burned with anger against His people.  
He abhorred His inheritance. He gave us into the hand of the nations.*

*Those who hated us ruled over them. Our enemies also oppressed them.  
We were brought into subjection under their hand. Many times He delivered us,  
But we were rebellious in our counsel, and were brought low in our iniquity.  
Nevertheless he regarded our distress, when he heard our cry.  
He remembered for us His covenant, and relented  
according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.  
He made us also to be pitied by all those who carried us captive.  
Save us, O Holy One our God, Gather us from among the nations,  
to give thanks to your holy name, to triumph in your praise!  
Blessed be the Holy One, the God of Yisra'el, from everlasting even to everlasting!  
Let all the people say, "Amein." Praise the Holy One!*