

Parashah #52

(Updated for 10.01.11)

Vayelekh ~ וָיֵלֶךְ ~ He went

Torah: D'varim/Deuteronomy 31:1-30

Haftarah: Hoshea/Hosea 14:2-10; Mikhah/Micah 7:18-20; Yo'el/Joel 2:15-27

B'rit Hadashah: Ivrit/Hebrews 13:5-8

Vayelekh (vah-yeh-lehk) means *he went* and refers to *Moshe's/Moses'* continued conversation with *B'nei Yisra'el/Children of Israel* just prior to the appointment of *Yehoshua/Joshua*, Moshe's death and the crossing the *Yarden/Jordan* River. In the first half of this chapter, Moshe calls on B'nei Isra'el to be brave and courageous since the time for them to do battle with the Canaanites is coming soon. He charges them to be diligent in obedience to Yehovah's laws. In the last half of the chapter, Moshe recalls how The Almighty directed him to write a song for the Israelites to remind them to remain loyal to the powerful Elohim who brought them out of slavery and sustained them in the wilderness.

CHAPTER 31

Some believe from the use of the word “**today**”, in **verse 2**, **that** day was Moshe's birthday. It was on **that** day he was born and on **that** day he would die. I can believe Moshe was born on **that** day but I'm not sure it means he would die **that** day. He knew he would not be allowed to go into *Eretz Isra'el/Land of Israel*. But he assured B'nei Israel it didn't make any difference who their leader was. Yehovah, Himself would destroy the enemy **BUT** Israel was to destroy the idols and monuments as they had been commanded many times.

In **verse 6** “. . . He will neither fail you nor abandon you.” is spoken to *B'nei Yisra'el/Children of Israel*. They would soon suffer the loss of the first and only leader they had ever known. Shortly afterwards, they would embark upon the campaign of destiny which would forever define their existence as a nation. Yehovah had proven Himself faithful to an entire generation time and time again. He displayed His power and strength in their sight. Now, (pah-neem l'pah-neem) *panim l'panim/face to face* with the future they had been waiting for, *Yisra'el / Israel* was prepared to surge forward in faith and victory. Moshe stood before them in his final address to encourage and exhort the people, telling them they would have complete and total success.

Hebrew tradition teaches a person's income for the year is predetermined as Rosh HaShanah. The writer of the book of (Eve-reem) *Ivrim/Hebrews* quotes **D'varim/Deuteronomy 31:6** to encourage his readers to rely on The Almighty to provide for all their needs. He tells them to avoid greed and avarice because Yehovah has already promised not to forsake us: “Keep your lives free from the love of money; and be satisfied with what you have; for Yehovah himself has said, “I will never fail you or abandon you.” Therefore, we say with confidence, Yehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid – what can a human being do to me?” (**Ivrim/Hebrews 13:5-6**)

In **verse 8** Moshe speaks the very same words over *Y'hoshua/Joshua* and passes his baton of leadership to Joshua in the presence of the people.

Verse 10 speaks about the Sh'mittah of *Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles*. Every seventh Sukkot, in the Temple, the king or leader is to read Torah to **ALL** Israel; the men, women, children and the foreigners so they will *shema/hear*, learn, fear Yehovah, and obey. The Chumash commentary says the king would read to them *D'varim/Deuteronomy*, from the beginning to the first paragraph of the Shema (**D'varim/Deuteronomy 11:13-21**) as well as **14:22-28:69**, which covered . . .

- allegiance to Yehovah,
- the covenant
- reward and
- punishment.

This gathering is called (hahk-ehl) *Hakhel*, which comes from a root word meaning *a large public building* such as a palace or temple.

It is reported the purpose for bringing the small children and infants to “Hakhel” gives reward to those who bring them because they have demonstrated Torah is precious to them. (**verse 12**) One of the teachings, passed down through the ages, tells of a mother who would bring her son’s cradle to the study hall, so he could absorb the sounds of Torah study from infancy. In modern times, it has become known this is the time to instill values in children ~ from their earliest years; especially by the example of parents and others who are sincere about their ideals.

“. . . their children, who have not known, can hear and learn to fear Yehovah your God, for as long as you live . . .” (**verse 13**) The goal is to see to it observance remains throughout one’s generation. Or is it about the quality of our observance of Torah? There is a saying, “Children learn what they live.” So is our quality of Torah observance a daily thing? Many instructions / commandments are meant to be performed daily. Nevertheless, many people have ebbs and flows. Sometimes we give it our best and other times we backslide. Even though it might be very “human”, it isn’t the preferred way.

If we are not consistent in important matters, it is a reflection on our entire performance. The Almighty wants our performance of His commandments to be done with consistent effort, enthusiasm and forethought. If not, it is a statement about the true nature of our devotion to Him and His commandments.

I believe there is another important point to emphasize here. The topic of the passage is conveying the essence of what loyalty to The Holy One is all about. It’s not something which can be done in one day with a good speech, or an inspiring seminar. It is a process! We convey it to our children **DAILY**. They see what we consider important.

So, what do we do enthusiastically on a daily basis? Most of us never forget to come to the dinner table. Many people would say a day is not a day without watching TV or “chatting” on the internet. This is what we are conveying to those who emulate us. ***The things we do every day “religiously” are the things which are most important to us.*** By examining what we think is really important, we may find we need to make some changes. We might even place new emphasis on things we do, knowing our children and perhaps our grandchildren are watching and will imitate us, for better or for worse.

Before (Yome Kip-poor) ***Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement***, it is customary to introspect. Let us ask ourselves if the example we set is one which we would be proud to see in the next generation. What should we continue doing? What should we eliminate? What is the approach to take to self-improve? “In order “. . . they will hear and learn . . . all of the days.”

Again, Yehovah reminds Moshe his days are coming to an end (**verse 14**). Moshe is told to call Joshua and both of them are to appear in the Tent of Meeting where “I (Yehovah) shall instruct him”. Although Joshua has spent many years in Moshe’s shadow and has learned much from his leadership. I believe, at this juncture, Yehovah wants Joshua to become accustomed to hearing His voice and taking instructions from Him since Moshe will no longer be available.

Following Moshe’s discourse of encouragement and anticipation, The Holy One gives him the deflating news. After forty long and tireless years of intercession, teaching and preparation, the people will go in and possess The Land only to commit adultery with the gods of the foreigner. The covenant will be shattered and they will turn their back on Yehovah who loves them.

Moshe warns the people about their coming days of lawlessness and in **verses 16-18** Yehovah tells Moshe “this people” will . . .

- Offer themselves as prostitutes to foreign gods
- Abandon me
- Break covenant with me

And because of such . . .

- My anger will flare up against them
- I will abandon them
- I will hide my face from them.

Although these words are very harsh, because Israel is Yehovah’s chosen people/nation, we know He will never let Israel fall. He will always protect His people; He will always be present. For those who have been taught the “church” has replaced Israel, it would be advantageous to really read the Word of God for the **TRUTH** of this matter. And, by the way, “lawlessness” is also translated “iniquity” or, for those of you who search for deeper understanding “without Torah”.

The fate in **verses 16-18** is the very same fate we all face if we turn away from Yehovah our God. Though He cares for us, loves us and raises us as His children, He will leave us and hide His face from us for all the evil we do. Yehovah pours out His blessings on us, providing abundantly for our every need. So when we have eaten from His hand and been satisfied, let us not become fat and despise the One who nourishes us. May we be a surprise to The Holy One and walk not according to our natural predisposition. Instead, let us go in the way we have been instructed in His Torah, guarding the integrity of the covenant He keeps faithfully with us. Let us not commit adultery against The Almighty, by choosing to celebrate pagan holidays not even in His Word. Instead let us acknowledge His (moe-ehd-deem) *moedim / appointed times/the Feasts of the Lord*. Let us commit our lives to serving Him and Him alone. Then we will have full assurance He will not fail nor leave us.

Because **verse 19** begins with “so now, write this song . . . and teach it to the Children of Israel . . .”, there are some who believe the entire Torah was meant to be sung. I’m not sure I believe this but then on the other hand . . . remember when we were children . . . how did you learn your “ABC’s”? In song format, probably!

Here is an interesting commentary from the Artscroll Chumash, on **verse 19**. “Ramban (the well-known Sage) notes that the commandment “to write” (in Hebrew) is in the plural, referring to Moses and Joshua, but the commandment to teach it is in the singular, and the actual writing was done only by Moses (**verse 24**). He explains that as Moses wrote, Joshua stood at his side, watching and reading aloud. Although both of them were to teach – and after this day the responsibility to do so passed to Joshua – Moses was the primary teacher as long as he was alive, because the nation would accept his teachings more readily than anyone else’s.”

The Almighty tells *Y’hoshua/Joshua*, in **verse 23**, he is to “bring the people of Isra’el into the land . . .” But, in **verse 7** Moshe said Joshua was to go “with this people into the land”. What’s up with the disparity here? I believe Joshua was to be “with” the people as Moshe had been. He was their leader but he was also their friend. This reminded me of a “saying” which goes something like this . . .

“Don’t walk in front of me, I may not follow.
Don’t walk behind me, I may not lead.
Just walk beside me and be my friend.”

Nevertheless, Moshe’s mantle of leadership was passed on to Y’hoshua because of his leadership skills.

In the Hebrew legends concerning his death, Moshe does not go passively or willingly. Instead, he argues vociferously for life. He implores The Holy One to spare him the indignity of death. He asks Yehovah for mercy and attempts to counter the heavenly decree. It seems strange the traditional stories would paint Moshe – the hero of heroes – as reluctant to accept death. Wouldn’t we expect Moshe to boldly stride into the dark night? But Moshe is an example for all

of The Almighty's people. From His example, we learn we are not to accept death passively. Moshe tell us, "Choose life in order that you may live" (verse 19).

In some religious circles, there is an unhealthy and morbid fascination with death. Since "to be absent from the body is to be home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). It might seem natural to look forward to death and embrace it when it comes. But death is the enemy, the last enemy according to 1st Corinthians 15:26. Though death is an inevitable certainty, it is never our hope. Our hope is in life and the only reason we find comfort in death is because we have seen life overcome it.

Finally, (verses 24-26) when Moshe was through writing the entire Torah, he gave it to the Levites for placement next to or in the Ark to make sure no one could "add to or subtract from" the Divine text. Even if people were to disobey Torah, no one would be able to falsify what Torah said. A friend asked about the placement of the Torah in the Ark. They understood it had already taken place after Torah had been given on *Har Sinai/Mount Sinai*. My response is this: I believe what was given at Har Sinai was placed in the Ark at that time. The **final** copy was placed in the Ark at this time. The closest I can come to explaining the placement of the instructions is this: when my children were toddlers, there were certain guidelines. As they became older, there were additional guidelines, and, when they were teenagers, there were definitely more guidelines!! All of these were meant for their best interest. I believe Israel was given their original instructions at Har Sinai (toddler-hood). As they began their trek across the desert, it became necessary for their Father to give additional instructions, all in their best interest. By the time they reached the Yarden (adulthood), Yehovah knew He had given Moshe as many instructions as necessary for Israel's own protection. It is this final documentation which takes place here.

Vayelekh ~ וַיֵּלֶךְ ~ He went

Haftarah: Hoshea/Hosea 14:2-10; Yo'el/Joel 2:15-27; Mikhah/Micah 7:18-20

Once again, our Haftarah isn't necessarily connected to our Torah portion but rather to the time of the year. Often these readings are on the Sabbath which falls between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, but it is not the case this year. However, each of these Prophets delivers essentially the same message to the Northern Kingdom also known as the House of Israel and/or (Ehf-rah-yeem) *Efrayim/Ephraim*.

Hoshea/Hosea 14:2-10 Here Hosea is encouraging Israel to return to Yehovah and to Shema – hear and obey the words of His Torah. Prophetically, both Chapters 13 and 14 speak to *Efrayim/Ephraim*. The Northern Kingdom in exile is exhorted to return to Torah. Today, the Northern Kingdom is still in exile. Many believers in Yeshua are descendants of the House of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and most are not following Torah because they "have inherited lies from their ancestors" (Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 16:19). It is important to keep scripture in context to understand its true meaning. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you rejected knowledge, I will also reject you as *cohen/priest* for me.

Because you forgot the **Torah** of your God, I will also forget your children” (Hoshea/Hosea 4:6). Consequently, believers in Yeshua (kings and priests of 1st Peter 2:9-10) have other criteria to meet in order to qualify. So, what lies have the believing descendants of the House of Israel inherited? Simply, believers can ignore Torah even though Yeshua/Jesus said “If you love me, keep my commandments”!

Yo’el/Joel 2:15-27 More of the same from Yo’el! Return to Yehovah with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and lament. Blow the shofar, call an assembly, and repent. When you do, Yehovah will take pity on His people.

Mikhah/Micah 7:18-20 “*Micha mocha!*”/”Who is like you, O Lord?” (verse 18a) Micah tells Israel (Efrayim, Northern Kingdom descendants) Yehovah will again be merciful to them when they repent and turn from their idolatrous ways. “He does not retain His anger forever because He delights in grace” (verse 18b). Oh my goodness! There it is again, **GRACE** in the Old Testament!!! So it really isn’t a “new” thing after all!!!

Vayelekh ~ ך״ל ~ He went
B’rit Hadashah: Ivrit/Hebrews 13:5-8

Ivrit/Hebrews 13:5-8 Verse 5 “. . . I will never fail you or abandon you.” is a direct parallel to **D’varim/Deuteronomy 13:6**.

While we are in these verses, I would like to address **verse 8**, which says, “Yeshua the Messiah is the same yesterday, today and forever.” Before I began my “Hebraic Roots” walk, I heard these words used over and over but never really knew the depth and truth of them. Yeshua being the same yesterday, today and forever means He is **STILL** Jewish and will return as a Jew! The Messiah has not been transformed into a Christian, instead, the word “Christian” refers to people who are being transformed by Him. Yeshua was born a Jew, lived as a Jew, died a Jew, and was resurrected a Jew. He is **still** a Jew, serving in heaven as a Jewish **cohen gadol/high priest**. He will return as a Jewish King to sit on the throne of His Jewish ancestor King David. His humanity makes Him the Savior of all, both Jews and non-Jews. But He has not been made into a Gentile!!! He was not and is not some fair skinned, blonde headed, blue-eyed, wimpy, pimpy, ethereal being. He is Jewish, with olive skin, dark hair and, is a man’s man. That’s my opinion and I’m sticking to it!

The designated Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 65

Friday (9/30) is: Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah)

Torah: B’resheet/Genesis 21:1-34; B’midbar/Numbers 29:1-6

Haftarah: Sh’mu’el Alef/1st Samuel 1:1 ~ 2:10

B’rit Hadashah: 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18

Should you be interested, following are Scripture readings for the 10 Days of Awe (the 10 days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur).

Scripture readings for the Ten Days of Awe

Day 1	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:1-2	Genesis 21:1-21; 22:1-19
Day 2	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:3-5	Job 1-14
Day 3	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:7	Jonah
Day 4	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:8-11	Job 15-21
Day 5	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:12	Job 22-31
Day 6	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:13	Job 32-37
Day 7	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:14	Job 38-40:2
Day 8	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:15	Job 40:3-41:34
Day 9	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:16	Job 42:1-17
Day 10	Psalm 145	Exodus 20:17	Yom Kippur

FOR ROSH HASHANAH ~ SIN OFFERINGS

On the Hebrew New Year, Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashanah, there is a ceremony called Tashlich.

Traditionally one goes to the ocean or a stream or river to pray and throw bread crumbs into the water. Symbolically, the fish devour their sins.

Occasionally, people ask what kind of bread crumbs should be thrown. Here are suggestions for breads which may be most appropriate for specific sins and misbehaviors:

For ordinary sins -- White Bread
For erotic sins -- French Bread
For particularly dark sins -- Pumpernickel
For complex sins -- Multi-Grain
For twisted sins -- Pretzels
For tasteless sins -- Rice Cakes
For sins of indecision -- Waffles
For sins committed in haste -- Matzoh
For sins of chutzpah -- Fresh Bread
For substance abuse -- Stoned Wheat
For use of heavy drugs -- Poppy Seed
For petty larceny -- Stollen
For committing auto theft -- Caraway
For timidity/cowardice -- Milk Toast
For ill-temperedness -- Sourdough
For silliness, eccentricity -- Nut Bread

For not giving full value -- Shortbread
For jingoism, chauvinism -- Yankee Doodles
For excessive irony -- Rye Bread
For unnecessary chances -- Hero Bread
For telling bad jokes/puns -- Corn Bread
For war-mongering -- Kaiser Rolls
For dressing immodestly -- Tarts
For causing injury to others -- Tortes
For lechery and promiscuity -- Hot Buns
For promiscuity with gentiles -- Hot Cross
Buns
For racist attitudes -- Crackers
For sophisticated racism -- Ritz Crackers
For being holier than thou -- Bagels
For abrasiveness -- Grits
For dropping in without notice -- Popovers

For over-eating -- Stuffing
For impetuosity -- Quick Bread
For indecent photography -- Cheesecake
For raising your voice too often -- Challah
For pride and egotism -- Puff Pastry
For "buttering up" your boss or others --

Brownies
For being overly smothering -- Angel Food
Cake
For laziness -- Any long loaf
For trashing the environment -- Dumplings

For those who require a wide selection of crumbs, we suggest Tashlich Mix available in three grades, (Tashlich Lite, Medium, and Industrial Strength) at your favorite Jewish bookstore.

Wishing you and yours a wonderful and PEACEFUL New Year.

As they say in Hebrew:

L'shana Tova Tikatevu (L'shah-nah Toe-vah Teak-ah-tay-vo)!!!
May your name be inscribed (in the book of life) for a good year!!!

L'shanah Tovah! Happy New Year to you and your family!

I pray as this year comes to a close and a new year begins you will be blessed in all Abba has for you. May this Rosh Hashanah mark a year of new beginnings and a close to anything which has hindered you in the past. May Hashem's shalom and love guard your hearts and may His healing flow through your hands! May His angels guard over you and your family and may you know He alone is The Almighty and The Holy One who loves you, knows you, and has redeemed you from a life of death.

*"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways.
You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessing and prosperity will be yours.
Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;
your sons will be like olive shoots around your table.
Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord.*

*May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life;
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem, and
May you live to see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel."*

-Psalm 128

L'shanah Tovah! Ahavah, Batyah

Next week's lesson is: Parashah #53

Ha'azinu ~ **הֶאֱזִינוּ** ~ Give ear

Torah: D'varim/Deuteronomy 32:1-52

Haftarah: Sh'mu'el Bet/2nd Samuel 22:1-51

B'rit Hadashah: Romans 10:14-21; 12:14-21; Ivrit/Hebrews 12:28-29

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim

The giving of Torah happened at one specific time, but the receiving of Torah happens all the time, in every generation.

Meir Alter, the Gerer Rebbe

Organize yourselves into classes for the study of Torah, since it can best be acquired in association with others.

Talmud: Berkot 63b

שבוע טוב

Shavuah tov (have a good week)!!!