

Drash on HaAzinu (Deuteronomy 32:1-52)

Ahavat Yeshua DC Service

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Parashat [HaAzinu](#) (הַאֲזִינוּ) is the next to last parashat of the entire Torah, in the Book of *Devarim* (Deuteronomy in English meaning *Repetition of The Law*), the book which in many ways summarizes the first four books of the Torah. Named for the first word of the portion, *haazinu* in English means *listen*, and, like *shema* (שְׁמַע) which means *hear*, often signifies taking to heart the meaning of what is heard. This suggests parashats so named are even more noteworthy than usual.

The summary in HaAzinu's Wikipedia article states:

The parashah sets out the [Song of Moses](#)—an [indictment](#) of the [Israelites'](#) sins, a prophecy of their punishment, and a promise of [God's](#) ultimate redemption of them.

For this drash, The LORD led me to focus on Moses' last command to the Israelites.

Yah-a-mod, Elaine bat Benjamin Moshe. Elaine will read for us Deuteronomy chapter 32, verses 45 through 47 in English [CJB] after reading most of verse 46 in Hebrew, verses that tell us what Moses said following his delivery of the song:

⁴⁵ When he had finished speaking all these words to all Isra'el, ⁴⁶ he said to them, "Take to heart all the words of my testimony against you today, so that you can use them in charging your children to be careful to obey all the words of this Torah." ⁴⁷ For this is not a trivial matter for you; on the contrary, it is your life! Through it you will live long in the land you are crossing the Yarden to possess."

Thank you, my bride.

Following these verses, The LORD tells Moses to go up on Mount Nebo, look over at the Promised Land, and die; then Moses blesses all of Israel (with specific blessings for each tribe except Simeon), goes up on Mount Nebo, looks over at the Promised Land, and dies. While there *are* imperative statements in the blessings, they are within the context of stating what the future should bring; i.e., meaning not "Do this," but rather, "May you do this." So the blessings are Moses' last *words* to Israel, but not his last *command*.

It is important to understand a command becomes effective when it is issued, never before, and issuance of a subsequent command can modify and even completely supersede, nullify, or deactivate an earlier command. The history of God's commands becomes less well documented the earlier in history we focus, notably before Moses' life and especially before The Flood. Many commands during the

time covered by Genesis are not recorded, yet, as it is clear people were aware of them, The LORD must have issued them; for example, what Cain and Able knew about sacrifices to God.

You may remember [my drash about remembering](#) for Parashat V'et'channan thirteen months ago in which I looked closely at Deuteronomy chapter 3 verse 9 [CJB]:

Only be careful, and watch yourselves diligently as long as you live, so that you won't forget what you saw with your own eyes, so that these things won't vanish from your hearts. Rather, make them known to your children and grandchildren –

I was struck by the parallels between Moses' last command and this verse. Please consider my son Joseph's learned response to what that drash said about that verse in three points:

1. We can see the danger of not remembering accurately by comparing Genesis 3 against Matthew 4:1-11. Satan uses confusion, fuzziness, and perhaps laziness to make us forget. Eve did not remember God's command accurately, and Satan seized that to tempt Eve by calling the lie a lie, setting off a chain of events that allowed death and sin to enter the human condition. Yeshua, however, remembered the Law accurately, even catching Satan out when he quoted Scripture out of context. His obedience enabled him to pass the test and begin His ministry. []

2. Hisshamer is niph'al imperative masculine singular. The Nif'al case seems to almost always have a voice that indicates that the subject is primarily a recipient of the verb, and possibly to some extent the actor. Hisshamer l'cha seems to be most naturally assessed as the reciprocal voice, meaning that the subject [...] is both fully performing and receiving the act (keep/watch/preserve). I do not know how sound it is to do so, but it seems poetic to say that we therefore are commanded to keep ourselves for our own good - almost like it means "(you) keep yourself for yourself". English's imperative tense often seems, well, imperious. Reading it like this conveys to me a love I never saw in the commandments before.

3. I would need to research this next point to be certain (without knowing where to start), so take it with a grain of salt. I had been taught that doubling a sh'resh indicates the physical realm's superlative, and tripling a sh'resh indicates God's superlative (e.g., kadosh, kadosh, kadosh Adonai Elohim Tz'vaot). I also know that Hebrew culture of the period used saying the same concept twice to emphasize the point, even without repeating a sh'resh (you see this commonly in poetry and wisdom literature). M'od is also an adverb that increases the intensity of the verb used. One might even say it indicates "utmost"-ness. So, here we [...]

see doubling of the shresh, repeating the same idea in two different ways, and an utmost-ness adverb. It seems almost that this has been intensified up to a threshold just shy of tripling the shresh. Perhaps it hints that this keeping is beyond our best efforts? Perhaps it foretells of partnering with God in our walk, that God will meet us an[d] multiply our efforts if we seek to obey Him?

So, remember the intensity of that verse as well as its resonance with the final command. This Song of Moses is *also* to be remembered and solemnly passed down from generation to generation, just as The LORD had stated in the previous parashat, Vayelech, [Deut 31:21-22 CJB]:

²¹ ["...] this song will testify before them as a witness, because their descendants will still be reciting it and will not have forgotten it. For I know how they think even now, even before I have brought them into the land about which I swore." ²² So Moshe wrote this song that same day and taught it to the people of Isra'el.

The LORD Himself says, "they will not have forgotten it," indicating that even if the rest of Torah can vanish from their hearts, at least this Song of Moses will be remembered from generation to generation (perhaps only by a remnant here and there).

Moses' last command likely underscored his greatest concern at the conclusion of his responsibility to lead Israel for forty years. The parallels between these two Scriptures I have highlighted suggest this teaching referring to this Song of Moses extends to the whole Torah. The command is essentially: *It is crucial to remember the Torah and ensure your progeny remember the Torah.* With such an emphasis, is it really necessary to explicitly include *obeying* Torah in this command? It is not—obedience is clearly implied.

Am I repeating myself? Certainly and intentionally. In the interest of time, if you are wondering why I am repeating myself, review the drash Joseph commented upon.

Now, I believe The LORD also wants everyone to understand Moses' final command is not The LORD's final command. The five books of Moses do not constitute the whole Teaching from The LORD that human beings have received. Moses' Torah affirms this. According to typical lists of Maimonides' [Sefer HaMitzvot](#), commandment number nine of the 613 is found within Moses' main teaching in Deuteronomy (which was likely delivered no more than a month prior to delivery of Moses' last command). Number nine is in chapter 18 verse 15 [CJB] with support in the four verses following it:

¹⁵ "ADONAI will raise up for you a prophet like me from among yourselves, from your own kinsmen. You are to pay attention to him,¹⁶ just as when you were assembled at Horev and requested ADONAI your God, 'Don't let me hear the voice of ADONAI my God any more, or let me see this great fire ever again; if I do, I will die!'" ¹⁷ On that occasion ADONAI said to me, 'They are right in what they are saying.' ¹⁸ I will raise

up for them a prophet like you from among their kinsmen. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I order him. ¹⁹ Whoever doesn't listen to my words, which he will speak in my name, will have to account for himself to me.

Within Judaism it is *not* universally accepted this refers to a particular prophet even though all of the references to *prophet* in these verses are singular, not plural. This lack of acceptance also dances around the explicit statement in the final paragraph of The Torah, in Deuteronomy [34:10 CJB] which states, referring to the life of Moses:

Since that time there has not arisen in Isra'el a prophet like Moshe, whom ADONAI knew face to face.

This begs questions like, “Did Moses write this?”, “If not, how long after Moses’ death was this verse written?” and “Did any of the prophets in the rest of Tenach after this verse was written know Adonai face to face?” But do not lose sight of *this* point: it is clear whoever *does* qualify as such a prophet like Moses *can* speak the Words of The LORD, thus adding to the Words of The LORD as recorded in the five books of Moses. This makes it extremely important to correctly identify any such prophets and all such Words of The LORD they speak, to take those Words to heart, and to impress them upon future generations.

Hands down, Yeshua is the best candidate Judaism has produced for this “prophet like Moses” office, despite all the negative press from that leadership crowd with which He has had some serious disagreements. Their motivations are clear—they do not want Yeshua’s commands recognized as authoritative for the Jewish people, let alone any Words of The LORD issued by those within His Kingdom that He and the Holy Spirit have authorized to so issue, like Peter, John, and Paul, for example. Thus, we recognize that the New Covenant is as Scriptural as the Tenach is, and that the Last Command of The LORD is yet to be issued. Indeed, it may never be.

The next parashat is for the first day of Succot, an out-of-cycle portion that is comprised of Leviticus chapter 22 verse 26 through chapter 23 verse 44 and Numbers chapter 29 verses 12 through 16.