



“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ and upon finding a single pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Mathew 13:45

22/09/2018

Ha'azinu Give Ear

Deuteronomy 32:1–52

II Samuel 22:1–51

Romans 10:14–11:12

Day of the Week	Psalm of the Day	The theme of the Psalm of the Day	The Segment of the Ha'azinu Song	The theme of the Segment of the Ha'azinu Song
One (Sunday)	Psalm 24: “the earth is God’s...”	Creation belongs to God.	Deuteronomy 32:1-6 “...He is your Father, who acquired you...”	The children of Israel belong to God.
Two (Monday)	Psalm 48: “God is great...”	God divided and ruled creation	Deuteronomy 32:7-12: “He established the boundaries of the peoples...His people is God’s portion.”	God divided the nations and ruled over the children of Israel.
Three (Tuesday)	Psalm 82: “God stands [to judge] the congregation...”	God revealed the dry earth and concealed Himself in creation, creating self-awareness and the possibility of sin.	Deuteronomy 32:13-18: “[You] became fat and kicked...you forgot God who made you.”	Israel people sinned, causing God to conceal Himself.
Four (Wednesday)	Psalm 94: “God is a God of vengeance...”	God created the heavenly bodies, potential objects of idolatry, and punishes idolaters.	Deuteronomy 32:19-28: “God saw and was provoked...He said, ‘I will hide my favour from them...”	God punished the children of Israel for their sins.
Five (Thursday)	Psalm 81: “Sing to the God of our strength...”	God is lauded by His creation (with the creation of fish and birds that sing to Him).	Deuteronomy 32:29-39: “He will relent regarding His servants...”	God comforts His people, who then laud Him.
Six (Friday)	Psalm 93: “God reigns...”	God completed His work and was proclaimed King over creation (by Adam).	Deuteronomy 32:40-43: “He will bring retribution on His enemies, and appease the land and His people.”	God will bring humanity to the messianic era, manifesting His rule over all creation.

Our journey through the Torah has almost finished, with one more parashah left after this one. This week's Parshah recounts the Song of the LORD which YHVH gave to Moses, for the children of Israel to learn, to remember and to pass on to future generations.

The song is very sombre in the fact that it informs the children of Israel how they will turn away from YHVH and the subsequent actions He will take when they do so. In Parshah Vayelekh we read how YHVH instructed Moses to write down the song and teach it to the children of Israel so that it too would stand as a witness against them. Can you imagine, being informed by YHVH that you and your descendants will in days to come turn away from Him and of the subsequent actions, and then still rejecting and turn away from Him? If we are honest we have all at times in our lives turned away or failed to keep the instructions YHVH has given us, I know in my life, in my youth I turned my back on the upbringing I had, the things of God and did many things I am not proud of, yet, praise YHVH, He forgives and seeks reconciliation. That is what Yom Kippur is about, reconciliation through repentance, made possible through the grace and mercy of God.

During the Temple periods, the Ha'azinu song was recited over a six-week period by the Levites who would sing a portion every Sabbath while the priests offered up the additional, weekly sacrifice. The reciting of the Ha'azinu was done at this time because the song in the most part deals with the falling away of the children of Israel and the retribution for rejecting YHVH and turning away from His Torah. However, even though it is forbidden to be sad during Shabbat, for the Sabbath is the joy of the week, when Israel meets with YHVH as a bride meets her husband. The song was recited while the special Sabbath sacrifice was being offered up because it was a joyous expression towards YHVH.

Furthermore, the Ha'azinu is split into six parts, so that it is not entirely recited in its entirety on any given Sabbath. Yet, could it have been split this way because YHVH declared six millenniums for sin and His grace and mercy to be poured out, concluding with the Day of the LORD, when YHVH will judge creation in righteousness and truth, prior to the Messianic era?

Thus, on Shabbat when the additional weekly offering is offered up, and the Song of the LORD is recited, Israel is reminded not to turn away from YHVH, but to remain faithful and steadfast in their faith, otherwise YHVH will hold them to account.

What we see in the singing and declaring of the Ha'azinu as praise towards YHVH is that the highest form of praise is Teshuva (returning back to YHVH through repentance) which gives birth to and in some way is routed and motivated by joy, because joy focuses on the end result of reconciliation through the actions and work of YHVH in a person's life. That YHVH will complete the good work He has started, for He is faithful to do so.

Yet, the Ha'azinu is a stern reminder that we must endeavour to keep the Torah of YHVH and the covenant in the forefront of our conscience. That our whole being, every part of our lives, past, present and future have their meaning, fulfilment and focus on and in YHVH. For our goal is that we transcend this body affected by sin to a life grounded and maintained by and in YHVH. As we look forward in anticipation with all of creation for the Messianic era when Messiah Yeshua will reign from Zion.

It is only through Teshuva that the flow of our lives run into that of the Messiah and thus towards Zion and ultimately the reconciliation of all things through the returning back to YHVH.

So, after that introduction let us examine the Ha'azinu song.

Moses commences the song stating ***Listen, you heavens, and I will speak; hear, you earth, the words of my mouth.*** (Deut. 32:1) Isaiah makes a similar statement saying, ***'Hear O heavens, and listen O earth.'*** (Isaiah 1:2) What we see in these two statements is that Moses instructs heaven to listen while Isaiah instructs the earth to listen. The Sages state regarding this that you inform those closest to you to listen, while those far off to hear. Thus, Moses was able to instruct heaven to listen because he was closer to the things of YHVH, to heaven than the things of the earth. While both Moses and Isaiah address the heavens and the earth, how they speak to them reflects the difference in their calling. Moses was tasked to bring heaven to earth, which he did when he received the Torah from YHVH and passed it down to Israel. Isaiah's role as a prophet was to elevate Israel's behaviour and spiritual consciousness of YHVH towards heaven through them adhering to the Torah. Thus, bringing life back to earth, as humanity returned to the relationship it had with YHVH in the garden.

It is the duty of all of Israel to seek to walk along the path of righteousness, Torah and rise to a new level of divine consciousness. Thereby maturing in one's faith through moving closer to YHVH by faithfully observing His Torah, while sacrificing their own desires. However, as we focus wholeheartedly on the things of YHVH, we must understand that we cannot negate the earth. For YHVH did not create us in heaven and then bring us down to earth and place man in the garden in Eden, but instead created us out of the carbon elements of the earth. Thus, our focus must primarily be on YHVH, but at the same time, we must remain grounded on earth, knowing that one day our Messiah will return and transform this earth into a paradise. Then we will dwell with YHVH for eternity on the earth, one that has been transformed into a paradise/heaven. For just as YHVH has promised to finish the good work He has started in us, He will also complete the good work He has started in all of creation. Have you ever thought about that? It is not God's plan to jettison His people of the earth and leave it, but He will transform the earth into a paradise for His people to spend eternity with Him.

Returning once again to what the rabbis say regarding why Moses instructed the earth to hear because it is only when something is far off they hear, but when close they listen. In the sages understanding, we see something profound, something the sages fail to comprehend. That in the Shema which Messiah quotes part of it in His reply when questioned what the greatest commandment is (Mark 12:24). It states ***Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: ⁵ And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*** Duet. 6:4-5

Thus, what we see here in the Shema and in Messiah's reply, to Israel that they are to *Hear*, because they are still earthly focused and thus far off from YHVH. However, as Israel loves the LORD with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, they will become Kingdom/heavenly focused, as they take on the yoke of the Messiah. Therefore, as Israel does this, they will take on the image, the identity of YHVH whose image man was originally created in. For it is as Israel 'Shema' hear and do, trust and obey that Israel takes on the image of YHVH and returns back to how He created us. Once this happens, YHVH will be able to speak, and Israel will listen and know what He says. For Israel will know Him and will walk with Him as in the garden (when I say Israel here, please note I am speaking to believers in Messiah here as well).

The Ha'azinu is also connected to Yom Teruah, the Days of Awe and Yom Kippur, let me explain. The reference to heaven and earth is also made when Moses states, I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day, Deut. 4:26 and in Deuteronomy 30:19-20 ***This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now***

choose life, so that you and your children may live²⁰ and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him.

Yet, what does it mean, I call heaven and earth as witnesses? This is a reference to the heavenly divine council of YHVH that sits in judgment over creation. It is this council HaSatan appears before and presents his case against humanity that sits during Yom Teruah, when the books are opened. The topic of the divine heavenly council is a fascinating one, one I encourage you to study further. However, due to time, I will not be able to examine this further in this study.

After Moses has addressed the heavens and the earth he states ***My doctrine will drip as the rain, my speech will be like the dew, like the small rain upon the tender herb, and like the showers upon the grass.*** Deut. 30:2

Peter in his letters to Timothy urges him to guard his doctrines for a time will come when people will turn away from sound doctrines, choosing to follow teachings that tickle their ears. Paul writes further stating to Timothy ***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*** (2 Tim. 3:16) yet, what is the sound doctrine scriptures speak about?

Proverbs 4:2 states ***For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law***

Matthew writes regarding Messiah ***And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:*** (Matthew 7:28). Yet, what had Messiah been speaking? If you read the preceding chapters and verses regarding this section, Messiah was teaching the Torah, as He brought the fulfilled meaning of what was prophesied about Himself by Moses. That the Messiah would come and teach Israel regarding the Torah, that He would bring clarity, the fulfillment of the text. However, just like ancient Israel, the “church” in most part and to various degrees has forsaken the doctrines of YHVH for the teachings of men, thus fulfilling what the prophets spoke. ***But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*** (Matthew 15:9)

The Sages teach that the phrase “flows as rain” is a reference to Israel’s future Redemption and the Messianic era, when the dead will be resurrected both physically and spiritually as the rain of YHVH through the Messiah falls upon Zion and goes forth into the nations. A symbol of the Torah of YHVH that nourishes our souls and brings life. What we must understand is that the Torah is life when connected through the Messiah, what does that mean? If we keep the commandments for salvation, then we will live a good life but will not have salvation, for salvation is only through the Messiah. Yet, once we accept the free give of salvation through Messiah, then we are to live a life according to the word of YHVH and observe His Torah, thus receiving life to its fullness.

The song proceeds to state ***I will proclaim the name of the LORD.***

Oh, praise the greatness of our God!

***⁴He is the Rock, his works are perfect,
and all his ways are just.***

***A faithful God who does no wrong,
upright and just is he.*** Deut. 32:3-4

Here we see how prior to YHVH stating His case against Israel, the Ha’azinu declares the name of YHVH, then states YHVH is the Rock who is perfect and upright, the one who does no wrong. The problem is we miss vital aspects of this text in the English translation. The statement “I will proclaim the name of YHVH” is making reference to crucial characteristics of God. To understand this, we

need to briefly examine scriptures. We read in Exodus 3:15 when God spoke to Moses regarding what His name is saying.

“Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’

***“This is my name forever,
the name you shall call me
from generation to generation.***

In summary, God was saying, *state to Israel YHVH, YHVH, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of the patriarchs, which this is my name forever.* What we note here is that God says first YHVH, YHVH then that He is the Elohim of their fathers. Elohim is a reference to God as the creator and judge of all of creation. YHVH focusses on the mercy and grace of God. We see this in the account when God passed in front of Moses, proclaiming his name. ***And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”*** Exodus 34:6-7

Here we see that the characteristics of YHVH that of compassion, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin, while not leaving the guilty unpunished are aspects of YHVH, the LORD. It is these aspects of YHVH which abound, for He is a gracious God, who judges in truth and righteousness, without showing partiality. This is why it states in both of the passages from Exodus, the LORD, the LORD, to emphasises these characteristics over His judgment, for mercy triumphs over judgement. That does not negate the reality that God will and does judge.

Thus, prior to YHVH through Moses declaring what He will do to Israel for turning away from Him, He makes known His name once again, to remind the children of Israel who He is, of His character. That if they would only return, Teshuva, He would forgive them. This is why the Ha’azinu is recited during the Sabbath sacrifice, over a six-week period, to remind the people of His grace and mercy for creation. Just as we are reminded during the period of Yom Teruah, the Days of Awe and Yom Kippur, which lead up to Sukkot.

Remember, it is on Yom Teruah that the final trumpet sounds, to warn the people to make ready, to fear YHVH and to repent because Yom Kippur is coming and the sounding of the Great Shofar.

For it is on Yom Kippur prior to the Great Shofar sounding that we afflict ourselves, deny our bodies physical substance, as we draw near to YHVH in repentance, seeking His mercy through the atoning sacrifice of Messiah. This is a clear picture of the time of Jacob’s trouble prior to Messiah’s return and the sounding of the Great Shofar on Yom Kippur, which one day when this Great Shofar is sounded the angels will go throughout the earth and gather the people of God, a great harvest of humanity, at the end of Jacob’s Trouble, just as scripture states.

We then read in the Ha’azinu once the name of YHVH has been proclaimed, along with the attributes of His character, it states

***“They have corrupted themselves;
They are not His children,
Because of their blemish:
A perverse and crooked generation.***

**⁶Do you thus deal with the LORD,
O foolish and unwise people?
Is He not your Father, who bought you?
Has He not made you and established you?** Deut. 32:5-6

Here it states that they are not His children, but why? It is because they have not got His characteristics, the DNA of YHVH evident in their lives. Instead, they have the characteristics of the gods they serve, rebellion, deceit, lies, murder etc. Hosea speaks regarding the House of Israel no longer being children of God. However, at a future point, they would once again be children of God. John also writes regarding this stating ***Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*** (John 1:12-13)

We read further down in the passage that YHVH will hide His face from them, for they are a perverse people who have no faith (Deut. 32:20-21). We read in the book of Hebrews regarding faith, ***But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*** (Hebrews 11:6)

To understand this passage, we need to look at it in the Hebrew, as it reveals a more profound message.

But if you do not trust Elohim, then you cannot please Him. He that comes to Elohim must first trust that He is YHVH and that He rewards those who seek to know His ways, those who walk in the Torah.

As already stated Elohim, is a reference to God as the creator and judge of the universe, YHVH to the mercy and grace of God. Thus, we come before the throne of the creator and judge of the universe, Elohim through the mercy, grace and compassion of YHVH. For to come before Elohim we must believe that He is YHVH, as we put our trust in His mercy and grace available to us through Messiah, the voice of the word of YHVH.

Paul writes regarding this in his letter to the Ephesians stating ***For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*** (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Paul writes further to the assembly in Rome, stating ***faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*** (Romans 10: 17) yet, what was Paul thinking about when he states faith comes by hearing the word of God? To a Jewish person, this would be a reference to the Torah being read to the people at Sukkot every seventh year (Deut. 31:10-11). It is only as a person hears the Torah that they will know what sin is and thus cease committing it. In doing so, they show God they love Him, by observing His Torah.

The passage also states that God will make Israel jealous with a nation that is not a nation. This is a reference to the House of Israel and the Gentiles being grafted into the olive tree, into Israel through the Messiah. Believers in Messiah should be making the House of Judah jealous through their observance of the word of God, by keeping Torah how Messiah showed us, not by doing away with it and doing what we want.

Moses then finishes the song and states to the people ***“Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. ⁴⁷ For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess.”*** (Deut. 32:46-47)

I have not gone into all of the Ha'azinu in depth, but instead picked out threads that reveal the characteristics of our God. However, I encourage you to study the parashah as it would be sung by the Levites on the Sabbath, taking one part each day throughout the week. As you do, end each part by declaring the characteristics of YHVH over Israel and then spend time praying for the reconciliation of the two houses and for love to flow from them towards each other.

This parashah like all previous ones has so many deep threads to it; one could spend aeons studying it. However, if you only take one thing from it may it be that, the mercy of YHVH outweighs His judgment and that without faith it is impossible to please and know Him. Thus, seek faith, and you will gain mercy.

May YHVH bless and keep you

Shabbat Shalom

Nathan