

## To deny yourself, take up your cross, and the Torah

In this week's reading from [Parashat Haazinu](#) (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:1-32:52*), Moshe writes a song to Israel and reads to them the words of the song. Moshe opens calling out to heaven and earth to be witnesses for remembering what the Lord has done. This draws in the Torah concept of the creation and God's awesome power. Moshe parallels his teaching to the rain and the dew. Moshe says God is great, He is our Rock, His work is perfect, all His ways are just, He is a God of faithfulness and without injustice, He is Righteous and upright. ([32:4, NASB](#)) Moshe then speaks of God's people, and of those who have acted corruptly, and the Lord who is their redeemer ([32:5-6](#)). He speaks of the Lord God's inheritance being His people ([32:9](#)), and how He took care of His people, cared for them, and spread his wings over them for protection ([32:10-11](#)). Moshe describes the Lord taking care of the people by giving them milk and honey in the wilderness ([32:12-14](#)). Some of the people grew fat and "*Scorned the Rock of their salvation.*" ([32:15](#)). They neglected the Lord God in heaven and forgot about Him ([32:16-18](#)). Because of these things, the Lord hid His face from them ([32:19-20](#)), and he brought other nations against His people for the purpose of recognizing that it is not by their own hand they gain their victory over their enemies ([32:21-30](#)). Moshe describes the enemy as having a rock they trust in, and their vine is from Sodom and Gomorrah, their grapes are poison ([32:31-33](#)). He writes that the Lord will save His people, the Lord will ask "*where are their gods*" ([32:34-38](#)), and that there is no god besides the Lord God in heaven ([32:39-40](#)). In the Lord's deliverance of His people, he will sharpen His sword and take hold of justice ([32:41-42](#)) and the Lord will avenge the blood of His servants and make atonement for the Land and His people. ([32:43](#)) Note, according to Parashat Massei (*Bamidbar / Numbers 35:33*) atonement for the land is connected to the injunction of justice and the death of the murderer.

Moshe begins his song speaking of his teaching that is like the rain and the dew. How is instruction like rain and dew? What Moshe is trying to illustrate here is the progression, from heaven to earth, when he says, "*Let my teaching drop as the rain*" (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:2*). Rain falls from heaven to earth, in a sense, connecting both heaven and earth

which is paralleled then to the heavenly instruction that comes from God, from heaven to earth according to His Torah.

**ספר דברים פרק לב** *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:44-47*

מד ויבא משה וידבר את-כל-  
דברי השירה-הזאת באזני העם  
הוא והושע בן-נון: מה ויכל  
משה לדבר את-כל-הדברים  
האלה אל-כל-ישראל: מו ויאמר  
אלהם שימו לבבכם לכל-הדברים  
אשר אנכי מעיד בכם היום אשר  
תצו את-בניכם לשמר לעשות  
את-כל-דברי התורה הזאת: מז  
כי לא-דבר רק הוא מכם כי-הוא  
חייכם ויבדד הזה תאריכו ימים  
על-האדמה אשר אתם עברים את-  
הירדן שמה לרשתה:

*32:44 Then Moses came and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he, with Joshua the son of Nun. 32:45 When Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 32:46 he said to them, 'Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. 32:47 'For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.'* (NASB)

In the opening of the song of Moshe, the rabbis compare the Torah to rain falling from heaven to earth in the *Talmud Bavli Taanit 7a*.

***Talmud Bavli Taanit 7a***

*Rab Yehudah said, "The day when rain falls is as great as the day when the Torah was given, as it is said (Deuteronomy 32:2), 'Let my teaching drop as the rain.' When Moses said "teaching," he meant Torah, as it is said of the Torah (Proverbs 4:2) 'For I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my Torah.'"* אמר רב יהודה גדול יום הגשמים כיום שניתנה בו תורה שנא' (דברים לב, ב) יערף כמטר לקחי ואין לקח אלא תורה שנא' (משלי ד, ב) כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם תורתִי אל תעזבו

The sages compared the Torah to water. As water descends from a higher to a lower level, so too, the Torah descended from its place of glory, from before the creation of the world even, from the presence of God, to the

realm of men. The idea that the Torah originated from before the creation of the world follows through from logic, that God's holiness, righteousness, justice, and truth is a permanent aspect of who He is (His character) which is eternal and unchanging. The rabbi's conclusion is that the Torah, God's wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and truth, was put into written form which was received by Moshe from heaven (on the mountain of Sinai). In the Talmud, the discussion continues with Rabbi Chanina ben Ida saying the following.

***Talmud Bavli Taanit 7a***

*Rabbi Chanina ben Ida said, "Why are the words of the Torah likened unto water (Isaiah 55:1), 'Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters?' This is to teach you that just as water flows from a higher place to a lower place, so too the words of the Torah descend from a high place to a low place."*

Here we find the concept of ascending and descending, but in the sense that the instructions of God descended, indicating the Torah's source of origin, from heaven. The illustration of water is very important. Water (H<sub>2</sub>O) exists in the heavens in the vapor phase, which forms clouds. Water vapor in the clouds still have its basic molecular structure H<sub>2</sub>O. The water condenses and the rains fall, it is still water (H<sub>2</sub>O). When the water hits the earth, it pools into rivers and streams, and yet it still remains as water (H<sub>2</sub>O). Note how though water takes different forms, as vapor in the clouds, or as rivers or streams here on earth, it remains as water (H<sub>2</sub>O). It is within this sense, and the parallel of the divine instruction (the Torah) which descended from the heavens, the Torah remains in the same form here on earth as it did in heaven, nothing has been added to or taken away. (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:2*)

At the end of the song, we are told that Moshe spoke these words in the hearing of the people, with Joshua the son of Nun. It is interesting to note how in this text, we find Joshua's name written differently as compared to previously. According to the Torah, Joshua's name was Hoshea (הוֹשֵׁעַ) the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, however, throughout the Scriptures Moses calls him Yehoshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, Joshua in English) (*Bamidbar / Numbers 13:16*) the name by which he is commonly known. The

following is a list of occurrences of the different spellings in the Torah, Hoshea versus Yehoshua. (*search results obtained from Judaic classics software*)

**Yehoshua (יהושע)**

*Shemot / Exodus 17 (4x), 24 (1x), 32 (1x), 33 (1x),  
Bamidbar / Numbers 11 (1x), 13 (2x), 14 (4x), 26 (1x), 27 (2x),  
32 (2x), 34 (1x),  
Devarim / Deuteronomy 1 (1x), 3 (1x), 31 (5x), 34 (1x)*

**Hoshea (הושע):**

*Bamidbar / Numbers 13 (2x),  
Devarim / Deuteronomy 32 (1x)*

A statistical analysis of the names Hoshea and Yehoshua, according to the Torah, reveals a much higher frequency of occurrence of the name Yehoshua as opposed to Hoshea. It seems as if Moshe had changed Hoshea's name to Yehoshua (Joshua). In addition, it is also interesting to note that in the Septuagint, in all the occurrences of the words "*Yehoshua*" and "*Hoshea*" we find the rabbis rendered the name as "*Ἰησοῦς*" (Iēsoūs, Jesus). According to the Septuagint, this appears to be the Greek way to write the name of Jesus (Yeshua), Joshua, and Hoshea. The following examples illustrate this from Deuteronomy:

**Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:44, Hoshea (הושע):**

καὶ ἔγραψεν Μωσῆς τὴν ᾠδὴν ταύτην ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἐδίδαξεν αὐτὴν τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ εἰσήλθεν Μωσῆς καὶ ἐλάλησεν πάντα τοὺς λόγους τοῦ νόμου τούτου εἰς τὰ ὦτα τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτὸς καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ναυη

מד ויבא מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה-הַזֹּאת בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם הַזֶּה  
יהושע בן-נון:

**Devarim / Deuteronomy 34:9, Yehoshua (יהושע)**

καὶ Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Ναυη ἐνεπλήσθη πνεύματος συνέσεως ἐπέθηκεν γὰρ Μωσῆς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ ἐπ' αὐτόν καὶ

εἰσήκουσαν αὐτοῦ οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐποίησαν καθότι ἐνετείλατο κύριος τῷ Μωϋσῆ

ט ויהושע בן-נון מלא רוח חכמה כִּי-סִמַּךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדָיו עָלָיו  
וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה:

Note that this is where one derives the idea that Joshua (Yehoshua) is the Hebrew name for “Jesus” in the Hebrew Roots movement. There may also be a reason Moshe chose to change the spelling of the name back to Hoshea (הוֹשֵׁעַ) the son of Nun, as opposed to Yehoshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) was to place an emphasis upon the name. In this heaven and earth context of Parashat Haazinu, the name Yehoshua as opposed to Hoshea has a heavenly and earthly meaning. The use of the name Yehoshua may have had a more spiritual meaning as opposed to a more tangible (earthy) name Hoshea which may be adding a particular context to the song in Parashat Haazinu. According to the rabbis, both Rashbam and Rambam both have a couple comments concerning Joshua’s name change.

### ***Rashbam on Numbers 13:16***

*(1) And Moses called Hoshea son of Nun Joshua: This does not mean that the people, from then on, called this man Joshua. It means that the man who had been referred to as Hosheah son of Nun in his father’s house was the one whom Moses now referred to as Joshua. The change had occurred already at the time when Moses appointed this man to be his personal valet. It was customary to change the names of people who were promoted in rank. We find this the first time when Pharaoh changed Joseph’s name to Tzofnat Paneach (Genesis 41:45) We find it again in Daniel 1:6 when Nevuchadnezzar’s chief officer changed Daniel’s name to Belteshazzar. This had been a reference to a Babylonian idol so named. The first time Joshua’s name had been changed was in Exodus 24:13.*

רשב"ם על במדבר י"ג:ט"ז

(א) ויקרא משה להושע בן נון יהושע - לא עתה קרא אותו כן,

שהרי כבר קודם לכן נקרא יהושע אלא כך פירושו: הושע בן  
נון שאמרנו למעלה שנקרא כן בבית אביו הוא אותו שקרא משה  
[יהושע] כשנעשה משרתו והפקידו על ביתו, שכך היה מנהגם כמו:  
ויקרא פרעה שם יוסף צפנת פענח. ויקרא לדניאל די שמיה בלט-  
שצר כשם אלהיה

### **Ramban on Exodus 17:9**

*Moses said to Joshua: Apparently Moses called him Joshua from the day when he first began to serve him; evidently “Moses changed the name of Hoshea son of Nun to Joshua” (Numbers 13:16) is telling us that the Hosea selected to be among the spies is the one whose name Moses had changed. The Midrash says Moses changed his name to make it a prayer, “May God preserve you from the counsels of the spies,” which tells us that Moses knew about the incident in advance. Or perhaps at that time Moses made the name change public so that from that time on everyone would call him Joshua instead of Hoshea.*

### **רמב"ן על שמות י"ז:ט'**

(א) ויאמר משה אל יהושע נראה מכאן כי משה מיום היותו לפניו  
היה קורא אותו יהושע, וכן כתוב (להלן לב יז) וישמע יהושע את  
קול העם. והכתוב שאמר בענין המרגלים ויקרא משה להושע בן  
נון יהושע (במדבר יג טז), למבראשונה ידבר, הודיענו כי זה הושע  
בן נון אשר בחרו במרגלים הוא אשר קראו משה יהושע. וכדברי  
רבתינו (סוטה לד): שאמר יהושעך מעצת מרגלים, להגיד כי  
בעבור זה המעשה שהיה משה יודע שהוא עתיד ללכת עם המרגלים  
קרא לו השם הזה. או נאמר כי אז קבע לו משה אותו השם בפני  
העדה שלא יקרא שמו עוד הושע ויהיה שמו יהושע:

Rashbam says the name change was the result of taking on a new position. Note that Joshua's name means “*salvation*,” and so the new position as leader to the people might be interpreted as God's “*salvation*” is leading the people. Remember what God said about Joshua, this man has a different spirit, one that continually trusts in Him. So we have salvation leading the people and the concept of the changed or different heart.

Rambam states that Moshe changed Joshua's name to make it a prayer. Interestingly, Rambam the rationalist takes a more spiritual meaning to the meaning of the name change. The context to Moshe's use of the name Hoshea is found in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:48-52*.

***Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:48-52***

*32:48 The Lord spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, 32:49 'Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. 32:50 'Then die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, 32:51 because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel. 32:52 'For you shall see the land at a distance, but you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel.'* (NASB)

**ספר דברים פרק לב:מה-נב**

מח וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶצְמוֹ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר: מִט עֲלֵה אֶל-  
הַר הָעֵבְרִים הַזֶּה הַר-נֶבֹו אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי יְרִיחוֹ וּרְאֵה  
אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶחְזָה: נ וּמַת בְּהַר אֲשֶׁר  
אָתָּה עֹלֶה שָׁמָּה וְהֶאֱסַף אֶל-עַמִּיךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר-מַת אֶהְרֹן אֶחִיךָ בְּהַר הַהָר  
וַיֵּאֱסַף אֶל-עַמִּיו: נֹא עַל אֲשֶׁר מְעַלְתֶּם בִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמִי-  
מְרִיבַת קֹדֶשׁ מִדְּבַר-צֹן עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא-קִדַּשְׁתֶּם אוֹתִי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
נב כִּי מִנְּגִד תִּרְאֶה אֶת-הָאֶרֶץ וְשָׁמָּה לֹא תָבוֹא אֶל-הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי  
נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Note all of the things that are being said here in Parashat Haazinu, the divine instruction from heaven to earth, salvation leading the people, only the man having a different heart, one that continually trusts in the Lord may enter the Promised Land, the person Hoshea rather than the more spiritual name Yehoshua (Salvation), and the breaking of faith that Moshe demonstrated at Meribah-kadesh. These are very important Torah con-

cepts because all of these things appear to be related to the idea of our response to God's word.

In the history of Israel, we read how the people failed to following God's commands and sought after the foreign gods of the nations. As a result, the Lord caused the people to be exiled into a foreign country. One example is the Babylonian exile. Due to the lengthy period of exile, Asaph in his psalm asks, *ט הָאֵפֶס לְנֶצַח תִּסְדּוּ גַמְר אֱמַר לְדֹר וָדֹר: י הֲשָׁכַח* *77:8 Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? 77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah. (NASB)* Notice how the MT is written translated literally “*naught, nothing*” (הָאֵפֶס) “*forever*” (לְנֶצַח) “*His grace*” (תִּסְדּוּ) “*finish, end*” (גַּמְר) “*said*” (אֱמַר) “*from generation to generation*” (לְדֹר וָדֹר). The phrases “*Ledor Vador*” לְדֹר וָדֹר or דֹּר וָדֹר occurs frequently in the Torah. Ledor Vador is the Hebrew phrase which alludes to the legacies we leave and it means literally “*From Generation to Generation.*” A major component of Judaism is passing traditions ledor vador and to keep them alive. This is significant in light of what Asaph is saying, *77:8 Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? (NASB)* We are instructed in the Scriptures to remember the promises of God so that we are able to give Him praise, and so that we have hope, joy, and life. Note the context of remembering and obeying according to Parashat Haazinu. Contained within the promises of God are the traditions which are passed on as part of the covenant. For example, the covenant found in *Bereshit / Genesis 12-17* is the basis for the brit milah (the covenant of circumcision) in Judaism. The covenant was for Abraham and his seed (offspring), by either natural birth or adoption. In *Bereshit / Genesis 12–17* three parts to the covenant can be distinguished. In chapters 12 and 15, the Lord gives Abraham and his descendants the Land of Canaan and does not place any stipulations on the covenant making it an unconditional covenant. In contrast, *Bereshit / Genesis 17* contains the covenant of circumcision which is conditional. The covenant promises may be broken down in the following way:

1. To make of Abraham a great nation and to bless him by making his name great so that he will be a blessing to all peoples. Those



who bless him will be blessed, those who curse him will be cursed, and all the peoples on earth would be blessed through Abraham. (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-3*)

2. The Lord gave Abraham's descendants all the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. (*Bereshit / Genesis 15:18-21*) Later, this land came to be referred to as the Promised Land, the Land of Israel.
3. The Lord promised to make Abraham the father of many nations and of many descendants and give "*the whole land of Canaan*" to his descendants. (*Bereshit / Genesis 17:2-9*) Circumcision is to be the permanent sign of this everlasting covenant with Abraham and his male descendants. (*brit milah, Bereshit / Gen 17:9-14*) Note the differences between the circumcision of the flesh as opposed to the heart according to the Torah.

Within these verses, the Lord is establishing traditions that are to be passed down from generation to generation. In *Bereshit / Genesis*, Abraham is promised land because he obeyed God and followed his commands. The Abrahamic covenant is part of a tradition of a covenant of sacrifices, the animals that are slaughtered in the covenant in *Bereshit / Genesis 15* are considered a sacrificial offering. In Asaph's writing "*Ledor Vador*" לְדֹר וָדֹר, he may be drawing in the Torah context of the everlasting promises the Lord made to Abraham, the promises to give, to keep, and to protect, in relation to the Lord forsaking his people in a foreign land. He asks whether the Lord has caused his loving kindness to cease, come to an end forever? *77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? (NASB)* While taking the context of the Torah in this way, we can see how it was because of Abraham's obedience according to His faith, that led to the blessings God had given him. In the time of Asaph, it was the disobedience of Israel due to their lack of faith that led to their exile. It appears as if after even a generation or two, the anger of the Lord is still burning hotly against Israel because of her sins. However, He remembers the covenant and returns His people to the Land. The return may have been expedited if the people had returned to faith in the Lord at a sooner time. The return to the faith is synonymous

to returning to God's ways, His righteousness, justice, and truth. In the concept of "*holiness*," we find the traditions which help us to interpret, understand, and apply the Scriptures to our lives. The question is though, did God nullify the covenant when He sent His people into exile? The obvious answer is no, the people were paying for their sinful lifestyles. This happens even today for those who are in the Messiah Yeshua if one continues in his or her sinful lifestyle, and choose to not turn from their sins. Repentance, Teshuvah (תשובה) means "*to turn from*" and both historically and traditionally means to turn from our sins and turn towards the Lord God, to seek Him and His ways. Repentance is not a mental exercise only, it is the active choice to believe and follow the Messiah who lived as our example. This is what faith is about, by our faith we step out and live for Him, and the Lord then empowers us to do so. Paul said faith comes by hearing and hearing every word of God (*Romans 10:17*). We are being told by Paul the importance of both being taught and remembering the power of God to deliver us from bondage as we read in the book of Exodus, the Lord's mercy and grace to sustain His people during our wilderness journey (*Shemot / Exodus 34, and all of Bamidbar / Numbers*), His ability to fulfill His promises (*Bereshit / Genesis 12, 15, 17*), and His plan for the ultimate redemption of His people (*Bereshit / Genesis 3:15*). It is in the act of hearing and remembering all of these things, the all of Scripture that Paul is speaking of to the Romans in the remembering what God has promised and what He has done in His son Yeshua the Messiah. In Christ we have the future expectation of the power of God in our lives! In addition, Yeshua said to the woman caught in adultery, your sins are forgiven, now go and leave your life of sin (*John 8:11*). That is the most important message on repentance (תשובה), to turn, and to leave behind one's life of sin. A truly repentant heart is the one that lives it.

This is why Moshe wrote in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:46-47* saying, מו ויאמר אליהם שימו לבבכם לכל-הדברים אשר אנכי מעיד בכם היום אשר תצנן את-בניכם לשמר לעשות את-כל-דברי התורה הזאת: מז כי לא-דבר רק הוא מכם כי-הוא תייכם ובדבר הזה תאריכו ימים על-האדמה אשר אתם עברים את-הירדן: *32:46 he said to them, 'Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. 32:47 'For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong*

*your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.’* (NASB) The rabbis have much to say concerning the warning to listen, remember, obey, repent, turn, and to seek the Lord.

***Talmud Bavli Berakhot 24b***

*“Through this thing ye shall prolong your days”* (Deut. xxxii. 47). (דברים לב, מז) ובדבר הזה תאריכו ימים.

***Shelah, Chukat, Torah Ohr on Devarim 32, pasuk 57***

*This is what is meant when the Psalmist in Psalm 19:8 says of Torah that תורת ידוד תמימה. This is also what is alluded to in Deut. 4:5 ומשפטים חקים, “see I have taught you statutes and social laws.” The Torah compares the statutes to the social laws. The message is that just as there are easily appreciated reasons for the social legislation of Torah, so we must believe that the reasons underlying the חקים are equally good. They are not רק, empty, devoid of logic. On the contrary: if that is our impression, it proves that we are devoid of reason and good sense, are empty (compare Deut. 32:47). In the same verse, the משפטים, social laws are compared to the חקים, statutes, to make us appreciate that there are hidden meanings to these social laws which failed to meet the eye when we read them and thought we had understood their total meaning.*

***Akeidat Yitzchak on Devarim 32:47***

*Since it is the Torah’s purpose to warn against all these temptations, Torah being the antidote is known by three names corresponding to the three types of temptation. “Chayim,” life, “Torah,” teaching, “mussar, ‘discipline. Inasmuch as Torah is the antidote against all dangers, it is called “life.” “For she is your life.” (Deut. 32:47et al) Inasmuch as Torah is the antidote to all deceptions and misrepresentations, it is called “a teaching”, “instruction”, something that teaches true values. Inasmuch as Torah is*

*the antidote against bad habits and a tendency to indulge oneself, it is called "a discipline." "Know this day that just as a father disciplines his son, so your G'd disciplines you." (Deut. 8:5 et al)*

***Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition) on Devarim 32:47***

*We have a Baraita coinciding with R. Chisda's opinion: "If one is walking in filthy alleys, he should not read the Sh'm'a; moreover, even if he were in the middle of his reading and should happen to find himself in a filthy street, he should stop." If he do not stop, what then? R. Meyasha the grandson of R. Joshua b. Levi said: It is of him that the passage says (Ezek. 20:25) "Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and ordinances whereby they could not live. R. Assi said from this (Is. 5, 18.) Woe unto those that draw iniquity with the cord of vanity. R. Ada b. Ahaba said from this (Num. 15:31) Because the word of the Lord hath he despised. And if he does stop what will his reward be? R. Abuhu said: "To him may be applied the passage (Deu. 32:47) And through this thing ye shall prolong your days."*

The rabbinic interpretation is in agreement with Moshe's words (32:47) that the Torah is a way of life. The Torah is not illogical or unknowable; the Lord has commanded these things to be a warning to guard us against sin. The Law of God is described as three things, "*Chayim*," *life*, "*Torah*," *teaching*, "*mussar*," *'discipline,'* the rabbis describe the Torah as teaching or instruction, that which come down from heaven to earth according to Parashat Haazinu.

Based upon Parashat Haazinu, the Torah of Moses (*and all of Scripture*) was given to us in a form we can understand and comprehend. In the Torah we are told that God's instruction descended from heaven at Sinai and took upon himself language that we might listen, understand, and obey. The Lord gave commands and statutes so that we would be able to speak His word and do the Word of God. When we walk in God's ways, we allow God's Word to be clothed in human flesh. That instruction which was in heaven, in the beginning with God, descended from

heaven to earth like rain. The rain waters every living thing on this earth and water, an essential element for life is incorporated into every living thing. Note how the instruction of God is paralleled to rain, and we live God's word because it is a nourishment for our souls.

It is in this analogy from the Torah that we are able to understand and explain the Messiah. In the Apostolic Writings, we are told also that the Word of God descended from heaven and has taken on the garments of human flesh (*John 1:1-14*). The Word became a real human being, Yeshua of Nazareth, and enabled us to have a direct connection to the Lord God our Father in heaven. Yeshua spoke the words of his Father and kept His commands. He clothed them in the garments of his body in the sense that He lived and walked in God's ways. What John is trying to say in his gospel, is that as the instruction that comes from heaven remained the same, so too did the Word of God that descended from heaven to earth also remained the same in his divine nature. As a result of these things, we are called to follow in His footsteps. In *Matthew 16:24* Yeshua said "*... If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*" (*NASB*) We are not called to be given to our appetites. We are called to deny ourselves, to die to ourselves (take up the cross) and to follow in Yeshua's foot steps. This occurs by the power of God in our lives. Have you denied yourself and taken up your cross to follow Yeshua in his footsteps according to God's Torah?



