



Your voice puts YAH's words into your mind

Parashat nitzavim (51) – Standing

Torah: *Debarim* 29:9 to 30:20

Haftarah: *Yeshayahu* 61:1 to 63:10

Apostolic Scriptures: *Romiyim* 9:30 – 10: 1 3

Sometimes this *sidrah* is studied with the following one, depending on how the year works out. This year we are doing it separately and learning that little bit extra again, as with every year of study. This is possibly one of the most powerful lessons in the entire *Torah* as YAH emphasises for the umpteenth time the importance of obedience. We are again taught of blessings when we stay in YAH's will, but also the curses when we go outside of His will. We *sh'ma* for the sake of fulfilling His desires! It is outlined very clearly as follows:

Debarim 30 ¹⁹“I have called the heavens and the earth as witnesses today against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore you shall choose life, so that you live, both you and your seed, ²⁰to love יהוה your *Elohim*, to obey His voice, and to cling to Him – for He is your life and the length of your days – to dwell in the land which יהוה swore to your fathers, to *Abraham*, to *Yitshaq*, and to *Ya'aqob*, to give them.”

According to *the Talmud*¹, seven things were created before YAH recreated the earth:

- 🥂 *Torah*,
- 🥂 repentance,
- 🥂 the garden of *Eden*,
- 🥂 *Hinnom*, known by many people as 'hell',
- 🥂 the throne of esteem,
- 🥂 the temple,
- 🥂 the Name of the Messiah/Anointed One.

The first striking remark we read, right at the beginning of this *sidrah*, is that no one person is excluded. Strangers are included, those who hew wood and draw water; we also learn this shortly after the *Ruach haQodesh* is poured out:

Ma'asei 2 ³⁹“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are far off, as many as יהוה our *Elohim* shall call.”

Yet again we come to the point where none of us have anything to boast about. If a slave can become part of the covenant nation of YAH through repentance, rebirth and baptism, this means that no one will ever be

¹ *Pesachim* 54a, Soncino Press Edition

excluded – it is everyone’s free choice! The password, however, remains ‘obedience’ to *Torah*. It is also clear that *Torah* distinguishes between cheap materials such as wood or stone and precious metals such as gold or silver. The latter two, according to *Torah*, are seen with their owners, hidden, so that they cannot be stolen. It is almost astonishing that these ‘mighty’ idols cannot defend themselves against thieves!

However, idolatry is not the only thing we are warned against, as the covenant includes several other aspects. Some people believe that goldfish have a memory span of only 3 seconds. From many studies that have been done, this statement appears to be untrue, but it seems as if the memory span of some *Torah* believers is really that short! Three days after being led through the Sea of Reeds, they complain about water, then about food, then about water again and it goes on *ad nauseum*! How much do you remember of what *YAH* has done in your life and how often do you thank Him for it, before you stand before Him again with your spiritual shopping list?

Most people have probably experienced this while searching the internet for a specific topic. It happens so easily that our attention is diverted from what we are doing and therefore we must be extremely alert to what *Yeshua* is coming to teach us:

Luqas 21 ⁸And He said, “See that you are not led astray, for many shall come in My Name, saying, ‘I am,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Then do not go after them.

Both *Mattithyahu* and *Marqos* also recorded these words and many people have read them, but how many really pay attention to them? They would rather listen to someone who may not follow *Torah*, or a demon who teaches them that Jesus discarded all those strange, ‘Jewish’ rules when hanging on a torture stake. Most of them would probably rather use the word ‘cross’ to make it sound better, but in reality this is derogatory and reckless.

None of us need a master’s degree in literature to understand that “obey My [*YAH*’s] rules” means exactly that. For almost the entire *sidrah* we read of *Mosheh* warning the nation to be obedient. Anyone who would excuse themselves from this would eventually be removed from the face of the earth. This younger generation, in particular, would have to obey the rules of the covenant in every respect; they had already begun to apply some of them, and this would ultimately be the system by which they would be governed in order to obtain maximum benefit from the covenant. These maximum benefits included not only ownership of the land, but also occupation and full use of it.

However, there is another section that may sound very strange to some people, especially with our Western way of thinking:

Debarim 29 ¹⁴“And not with you alone I am making this covenant and this oath, ¹⁵but with him who stands here with us today before יהוה our *Elohim*, as well as with him who is not here with us today. [emphasis added]

How is it possible that *YAH* would even want to include people in a covenant that are not present? What we need to understand here is that *YAH* created everything and everyone on earth, even those who do not yet exist – they are already in *YAH*’s mind, but their time on earth has not necessarily arrived. This covenant is made with the second generation from *Mitsrayim* on the plains of *Mo’ab*, but includes all the descendants that are yet to be born – even thousands of years later. It also includes every person who is not born as a direct descendant of *Abraham*, but through the blood of *Yeshua* lives in obedience according to the rules that *YAH* has laid down since Creation.

Please keep in mind that a covenant, as made in the ANE, would have very serious consequences for someone who does not keep it. A covenant is also not something that can be declared null and void at will, like the promises of most of us, which also includes marriage vows. A covenant can never be replaced with a

'new' covenant; it is only supplemented by explaining the rules of the original covenant in more detail. *Yeshua* does this in a brilliant way during the sermon on the mount, which we are made aware of in *Mattithyahu* 5 to 7. The 'new' covenant that *Yeshua* gave us "to love one another" therefore does not replace any previous covenant or replaces what *YAH* gave us at *Sinai*; it supplements that covenant and simply reaffirms everything that we have already agreed to (cf. *Shemoth* 24:7):

Shemoth 19⁸ And all the people answered together and said, "All that **יהוה** has spoken we shall do."
So *Mosheh* brought back the words of the people to **יהוה**.

We therefore first learn in the verses quoted from *Deḇarim* that *YAH* desires that we keep the covenant, pass it on to our children and that they keep it as well (cf. *Deḇarim* 6:7 et al). The purpose of a priestly nation is thwarted if the rules of *YAH* are not strictly followed by every household. Every believing parent must therefore contribute to carefully instructing their children in *YAH*'s entire Word, a promise that christians like to make with the sprinkling of their babies, but most of them never fulfill.

Second, we learn here that a covenant does not have to be renewed or issued with each generation. Someone who is already in covenant by a set-apart way of life as the covenant requires, will have their children born into the same covenant. It holds many benefits that people outside the covenant will never experience, but it also includes a great responsibility. Since this covenant remains valid for future generations, it means that the covenant never goes out of fashion, because each command contains truth according to a principle that each new generation can simply connect to. It is therefore up to each individual to honour that covenant and those who do not, are excluded from it by their own choice, as we will see later with the nation's exile which they bring upon themselves.

The next two verses confuse us a bit, because we live in a world from which we should be set apart, yet we battle to rescind from it:

Deḇarim 29¹⁶ "For you know how we dwelt in the land of *Mitsrayim* and how we passed through the nations which you passed through, ¹⁷and you saw their abominations and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were with them,

There is currently an evil spirit that controls the earthly systems. *Sha'ul* calls it the "spirit of the world" and is contrary to that which comes from *YAH* (cf. *Qorintiyim Aleph* 2:12). The spirit of this world tries to deceive people, to seduce them, so that man will pursue his own pleasure, something that is removed from *YAH* and therefore brings disobedience to His rules. People who practise this lifestyle are enemies of *YAH*, as the good description that *Yeshua*'s half brother teaches us:

Ya'aqob 4⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with *Elohim*? Whoever therefore intends to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of *Elohim*.

The *talmid* of love completely agrees with this, but puts it slightly differently:

Yoḥanan Aleph 2¹⁵ Do not love the world nor that which is in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶Because all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passes away, and the lust of it, but the one doing the desire of *Elohim* remains forever.

The children of *Yisra'el* lived in *Mitsrayim* for many years and suffered the consequences of idolatry as practised by the natives. We would like to believe that most of them resisted the religious system, but all were still exposed to it; idols, evil powers, sorcerers and witchcraft. Those who did not reject it probably did not leave *Mitsrayim* with the vast majority when *YAH* commanded *Mosheh* to leave. Only those who did not submit to the pagan system were completely freed from the slavery they had to go through for more than

one hundred years. All who left *Mitsrayim* were still in the world, but not of the world, something that is valid for every believer who lives completely set apart according to the rules laid down in *Torah*.

On their journey through the wilderness, they encountered people who lived in a similar way to the *Mitsrites*; people with idols, evil spirits, and various other evil customs that were contrary to *YAH's* Spirit. In this *sidrah*, we learn of several warnings that *Mosheh* gave to the people not to heed these types of evils, so that they would not fall into the trap of becoming part of idolatry and breaking *YAH's* covenant.

YAH placed His chosen nation in this world, but expected them to not be part of the world. Every time the nation submitted to evil, misfortune befell them because of the curses *YAH* had placed upon them. Every time they denied *YAH* and followed the things of the world, they experienced wars. Those who returned to *YAH*, in humility and repentance, people who did not yield to the spirit of the world, were equipped to carry the torch of trust to this day; people who continue to not yield to the evil spirit of this world, will be able to keep it up until the spirit of this world is taken away, as we learn:

Zekaryah 13² “And it shall be in that day,” declares *יהוה* of hosts, “that I cut off the names of the idols from the earth, and they shall be remembered no more, and I shall also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the earth.

In his prayer to *YAH*, *Yeshua* prayed in a similar way, shortly before he left the earth:

☞ *Yohanan* 17¹¹ “And I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Set apart Father, guard them in Your Name which You have given Me, so that they might be one, as We are.

☞ *Yohanan* 17¹⁴ “I have given them Your Word, and the world hated them because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. ¹⁵“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the wicked *one*. ¹⁶“They are not of the world, as I am not of the world.

Only those who know how to live in this world without being part of it are the people who will have the privilege of reigning with *Yeshua* in the millennium.

It is sometimes surprising how some people appoint themselves as special envoys, people who would ‘receive’ special information from *YAH* that He will not give to anyone else. Every bit of information we need is already in Scripture, as well as some of the Apocrypha – we need nothing more and it is very clearly pointed out here:

Debarim 29²⁹ “The secret *matters* belong to *יהוה* our *Elohim*, but what is revealed belongs to us and to our children forever, to do all the Words of this *Torah*.

Luqas confirms this shortly before *Yeshua's* ascension:

Ma'asei 1⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

A brilliant preacher, researcher and supporter of Hebrew culture, pastor Dries van As of AFM Vaalpark (South Africa), has mentioned on several occasions that no one in this life is singled out to be given special information or certain mysteries. *Yeshua*, as Son of Man, He who was created as the Light before everything began, does not even have certain information, because it does not concern Him:

Mattithyahu 24³⁶ “But concerning that day and the hour no one knows, not even the messengers of the heavens, but My Father only. ³⁷“And as the days of *Noah*, so also shall the coming of the Son of *Adam* be.

Let's be honest with each other: each of us desires to have information that someone else doesn't have – it gives great pleasure to know that I have something that you yet have to discover and now I am the one to tell you. This makes me a very distinguished person, since this elevated knowledge causes me to be elevated in esteem. Isn't this how most ministers in the christian churches see themselves?

From the pen of one commentator²:

“God keeps some knowledge to Himself. There are people who will tell you that they have access to this knowledge, claiming that God has given them a special revelation of His teaching. But God never contradicts Himself. The things He holds in secret are not a different truth that will erase the things we now know. They are simply things that only the Lord, in His infinite wisdom and power, can know. Everything that is essential for life has already been stated in God's Word. We do not need any 'extra' revelation. It is enough to be accountable to all that He has already told us within the pages of this Book.”

This verse, 29:29, was probably added by *Mosheh* as a solemn warning, his way of concluding the blessings and curses. We see from this that no one knows if this will happen and if it does happen, no one can say when. This information is reserved for *YAH* alone. Man has enough to keep himself busy with in terms of studying Scripture and consequent obedience – let him and his own self concern himself with that and leave the secret things in *YAH*'s capable hands. We cannot even handle what we know, let alone what we know nothing about! Sages point out that this would also include sins that would be hidden even from the offender, something done out of ignorance. These sins belong to *YAH*, to such an extent that He does not hold them against the offender. When the ultimate redemption takes place, these “hidden ones”, known only to *YAH*, will be united with the rest of the covenant nation and restored to the same class as their ancestors (*cf. Mizmor 87:6*).

Shortly before this verse concerning the secret things, there are four verses (29:25-28) that most commentators believe were added much later. Some believe that these were added after the exile. The reason for this is that they specifically refer to the apostasy, which did not occur until 722 BC. We see confirmation of this in *Melaḳim Bēṯ 17:7-20*, which indicates that apostasy from the northern kingdom brought about their removal.

The curses we learn about in Scripture do not come from *YAH* out of revenge or to ruin people's lives. *YAH* brings curses upon many people for different reasons. First, we must know that it is a way in which *YAH* reveals His impartial righteousness to man, a way to point out and condemn sin in man. If a sinner is not punished, *YAH* would not be just and would give the impression that He approves of sin, something that is not part of His Character. The second reason why curses come upon a sinner is because *YAH* must keep His Word. He promises again and again in Scripture that the sinner will be punished and therefore He must maintain His credibility. If a sinner is not punished, *YAH* would not be faithful to His own Word.

However, we see a beautiful purpose for curses: to bring about *t'shuvah* in the sinner, a truly repentant return:

Deḇarim 30 ²and shall turn back [*t'shuvah*, with repentance] to יהוה your *Elohim* and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your being, you and your children, ³then יהוה your *Elohim* shall turn back your captivity, and shall have compassion on you, and He shall turn back and gather you from all the peoples where יהוה your *Elohim* has scattered you.

Any form of cursing is unpleasant and forces us to do something in order to stop the curse. The sinner will therefore develop a deep, inner desire to restore the intimate relationship with *YAH*. While one or more

² Charles R. Swindoll, *The Swindoll Study Bible*, p. 245

curses disrupt the sinner's life, the sinner realises that there is no life without YAH. Curses and blessings cannot be in someone's life at the same time, so the curses will depart once the sinner returns to YAH with full repentance and follows every command carefully. The root word of תשובה (*t'shoo-Vah*) can also be translated as "to come back" and "to do something again." Someone who performs *t'shuvah* thus returns to where the person was before, before sin entered, in order to do again what was done before, in obedience to YAH's commands.

Even someone born into a pagan culture and later repents, will not be in contact with YAH for the first time. The word *t'shuvah* teaches us that every child, as it is woven in the mother's womb, already experiences an intimate relationship with YAH, regardless of whether the parents are walking in the Way of Truth at that stage or not. The moment conception occurs, the Spirit of YAH also breathes spirit into that new life, just as with *Adam* – so there is a spiritual link between YAH and the unborn baby. At the time of birth, the child loses that link with YAH and must be born again from above during its earthly life in order to experience the same intimacy. That life, whether adult or still a child, must *t'shuvah* in order to return to a loving Father who is patiently waiting for that moment. So there is nothing too evil that cannot be redeemed, in order to let only goodness come forth. *Yeshua* taught us this in a practical way while he was hanging between two murderers:

Luqas 23 ⁴³ And יהושע said to him, "Truly, I say to you today, you shall be with Me in paradise."

Please note the punctuation in this verse, in order to refute another lie from christendom. Not one person is yet in paradise, also known as heaven. After earthly death, the body rests and the spirit is taken back up to YAH. The soul awaits resurrection in *she'ol* to be united with a new, incorruptible body, which will happen when *Yeshua* returns to gather his set-apart people.

Back to our study...

None of these blessings or curses fell upon any of the nation of *Yisra'el* at this stage; everything would come into effect only after they were settled in the new land. In order to convince the nation of the blessings that could await them, *Mosheh* emphasises their return to the land:

Debarim 30 ³ then יהוה your *Elohim* shall turn back your captivity, and shall have compassion on you, and He shall turn back and gather you from all the peoples where יהוה your *Elohim* has scattered you.

Here we see the first word of the Hebrew version as וְשָׁב (*ve-Shav*), which literally means that YAH will return with them. The implication we understand from this is that YAH indeed never takes His Presence away from us as His children, but despite our disobedience and shortcomings, He still watches over us. It also creates the picture that every person who is brought back from spiritual exile is taken by the hand and led back by YAH Himself.

Love is not something that can be turned on and off at will. It is something that is cultivated, sometimes quickly, other times over a long period of time. However, it is also not a feeling that can be lifted up or suppressed, but something that should be steadily present in our lives. This is the type of love that YAH has for each of us; He does not tie it to our obedience, because then He could never love us! Unfortunately, however, it is the typical western way of 'loving' that completely confuses us.

Listen to most secular songs about love and you will immediately notice that 99% of them confuse love with sex. The famous actress, Katherine Hepburn, left us with a beautiful quote many years ago, something we have used before:

“Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get — only what you are expecting to give — which is everything. What you will receive in return varies. But it really has no connection with what you give. You give because you love and cannot help giving”.³

This is the type of love that YAH has for each of us, for He gives us everything, even His Son. However, He expects our obedience and that is exactly what we notice in these verses. Both chs. 29 and 30 are a call to commitment to the rules given to the nation by Mosheh (cf. Yehoshua 24:1-28), which is also a further revelation regarding the promised land: even if the land is available to occupy, the nation will only be able to live there if they remain faithful to YAH.

Despite the 98 curses we learned of last week, YAH promises that He will restore and gather everyone who is exiled, regardless of where they go, which may even include captivity. We learned in a previous study:

Debarim 10 ¹⁶“And you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and harden your neck no more.

Physical circumcision removes a part of our body that may be superfluous or unnecessary. Spiritual circumcision removes from our spirit everything that is not in accordance with YAH's Spirit: lust, impropriety, hypocrisy and pride, characteristics that can be changed and replaced to meet YAH's requirements. This is something we cannot always do ourselves, so here we experience His favour once again:

Debarim 30 ⁶“And יהוה your Elohim shall circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love יהוה your Elohim with all your heart and with all your being, so that you might live,

These are the exact words with which Yeshua answered a lawyer, being asked which commandment would be the most important (cf. Marqos 12:30, 33). Here Mosheh teaches us that YAH will circumcise our heart if we allow Him. However, it is the result of this that is most important: “so that you may live”, something that is highlighted with words such as prosper, multiply, bless and many more. From all this information, a question sometimes arises in some people: is there any excuse I can use for not obeying? Let us find the answer directly from Scripture:

Debarim 30 ¹¹“For this command which I am commanding you today, it is not too hard for you, nor is it far off. ¹²“It is not in the heavens, to say, ‘Who shall ascend into the heavens for us, and bring it to us, and cause us to hear it, so that we do it?’ ¹³“Nor is it beyond the sea, to say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, and cause us to hear it, so that we do it?’ ¹⁴“For the Word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart – to do it.

From all these words of YAH we learn several truths. First, we are going to answer the question from earlier with a resounding “No! You have no excuse for disobedience.” Someone, somewhere, is always going to try to come up with a counterargument, but once again it is the *yetzer harah*, the evil inclination, that may say that it is too difficult or complicated to keep *Torah*. While it is true that some commands of YAH do require physical exertion, others may even warrant unwavering trust, any person who dedicates himself or herself to YAH with complete commitment, will have no problem fulfilling all of YAH's commands satisfactorily (cf. Luqas 1:6). When we accidentally stray from the path, we have the resources of forgiveness that YAH has provided, so that we can get up and move forward in obedience. No one is perfect and our Father knows this better than anyone. However, this does not give us *carte blanche* to recklessly continue in sin:

Romiyim 6 ¹ What, then, shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, to let favour increase? ²Let it not be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

A child falls many times while learning to walk, but he gets up every time and tries again and does not give up. It should be the same in our walk on the Way of Truth. Someone who can already walk well will not fall easily, but when that happens, there is forgiveness and the person can move on knowing not to commit the

³ From her autobiography “Me: Stories of My Life”, 1992, Katharine Hepburn, Random House Large Print Publishing

same transgression again. This quote from *Torah* also gives us a hint, the key, how to obey commands: speak the words out loud first and then put the words in your mind. When we read Scripture out loud, pronounce it out loud, it is easier to get it into our mind afterwards. In this way we also hear YAH's words with our own voice and anything that is heard can never be 'unheard'. The words of *Torah* have the ability to place words in our hearts when we speak them. By having those words in our mind, they form part of our lifestyle and also part of our actions.

When we come onto this Way of truth and want to teach Christians accordingly, we are often met with a blunt response: "You now want to go back under the law and no one can keep all the laws." The opposite is true, however, because *Mosheh* makes it very clear in vv. 11 to 14. Even people who lived with *Yeshua* and also those afterwards, agree (cf. *Romiyim* 10:8):

Yohanan Aleph 5 ³For this is the love for *Elohim*, that we guard His commands, and His commands are not heavy, ⁴because everyone having been born of *Elohim* overcomes the world. And this is the overcoming that has overcome the world: our belief.

Mosheh led people through the wilderness for 40 years. When people depend on you for anything, it is normal that a relationship of love would develop. Relationships are created, some strong and some less strong, but every person you meet along the way means something to you. It was the same with *Mosheh* and therefore these words do not necessarily come only from יהוה, but also from *Mosheh* himself:

Debarim 30 ¹⁵"See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil,

He is trying to validate this covenant on behalf of YAH:

Debarim 30 ¹⁹"I have called the heavens and the earth as witnesses today against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore you shall choose life, so that you live, both you and your seed,

This is such a serious matter for him that every person, including the stranger, will obey YAH's voice to live in the land for as long as possible. He realised that the end of his earthly time had come and it may be that he tried to greet everyone personally, as far as possible. So he called them together again with the words:

Debarim 31 ²and he said to them, "I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I am no longer able to go out and come in. And יהוה has said to me, 'You do not pass over this *Yardēn*.' ³"יהוה your *Elohim* Himself is passing over before you. He shall destroy these nations from before you and you possess them. *Yehoshua* himself is passing over before you, as יהוה has spoken.

However, this is where we must stop this week, because it ties in with where we will begin next week, in the will of YAH. May everyone who followed this study with us, be blessed many times as we lift up YAH's Name in every way with prayer, song, music, in joy and gratefulness for all that He bestows upon us.

Shabbat shalom!

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Sources:

We prefer to not use the word 'God', because of personal conviction. In most cases, unless quoted from another source, it will be replaced by '*Elohim*' or inflections of the same word.

All citing of Scripture is taken from The Scriptures 2009⁴, unless indicated differently.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Messianic Torah with Commentary – Gary Gardner Ph.D. (Kindle Edition)

Artscroll Sotne Edition *Chumash*

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable

Faithlife Study Bible

Adam Clarke's 1810/1825 commentary and critical notes on the Bible

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⁴ <https://isr-messianic.org/>