

## Chapter Five

1) And Moses summoned all Israel, and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your hearing this day, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. 2) The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3) Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant but with us, who are all of us here alive this day. 4) The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, 5) while I stood between the Lord and you at that time to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said: 6) "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 7) "You shall have no other gods before me. 8) "You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth; 9) you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me 10) but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. 11) "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. 12) "Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. 13) Six days you shall labor and do all your work; 14) but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son or your daughter or your manservant or your maidservant or your ox or your ass or any of your cattle or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. 15) You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day. 16) "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you; that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God gives you. 17) "You shall not kill. 18) "Neither shall you commit adultery. 19) "Neither shall you steal. 20) "Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor. 21) "Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field or his manservant or his maidservant, his ox or his ass or anything that is your neighbor's.' 22) "These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud and the thick darkness with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them to me. 23) And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders; 24) and you said, 'Behold, the Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire; we have this day seen God speak with man and man still live. 25) Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die. 26) For who is there of all flesh that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have and has still lived? 27) Go near, and hear all that the Lord our God will say; and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you; and we will hear and do it.' 28) "And the Lord heard your words when you spoke to me; and the Lord said to me, 'I have heard the words of this people which they have spoken to you; they have rightly said all that they have spoken. 29) Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their children for ever! 30) Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." 31) But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you all the commandment and the

statutes and the ordinances which you shall teach them that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess.' 32) You shall be careful to do therefore as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33) You shall walk in all the way which the Lord your God has commanded you that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land which you shall possess.

According to a footnote in the **RSV**, Chapter Five begins Moses' "second address" which runs through Chapter Twenty-Eight with the third and final address comprising chapters Twenty-Nine through Thirty. Keeping this division in mind we can take the conjunctive  $\nu$ - (and) as having special significance insofar as it shows a seamless connection between the first and second addresses; the same applies between the second and third, Chapter Twenty-Nine beginning with the conjunctive  $\nu$ -. In this light we can say that the entire Book of Deuteronomy flows from its opening words '*eleh hadbarym* or "these (are) the words" which Moses spoke, the verb *davar* being the root of the noun with the same spelling. In sum, *davar* informs the text from the first verse to the last with the sustained power of *davar*, that word being of the same order as *logos*.

Moses decides to summon (*qara'*: cf. 4.7) the entire nation of Israel which means he sent out messengers beforehand, the place not being specified which is secondary to what he's about to say. *Qara'*, of course, is an oral summons followed by *shamah* and *davar*, hearing and speaking, two more oral verbs. This *qara'* has to be done with exceptional care since nothing is written down meaning that the Israelites must pay close attention for retaining and for passing on to future generations. That means these future generations will have to cultivate a special relationship between the leaders they pick as well as making sure they are ready to receive his *qara'*.

In the verse at hand *qara'* concerns the Lord's statutes and ordinances (*choq* and *mishpat*: cf. 4.45 for both). If written down, the two would be easier to consult. However, their hearing demands an attention to details that must be interiorized and referred to at the proper time. That's why vs. 1 has "in your hearing." From there issues learning and care in doing them, *lamad* and *shamar* (cf. 4.14 and 40 respectively).

In vs. 2 Moses speaks of a covenant (*beryth*: cf. 4.13) which essentially means a cutting, and in the case at hand, that implying the *qara'* mentioned above as written down and being more permanent. Note that this covenant was done literally "in (*b-*) Horeb." However, the *beryth* at hand is more abbreviated, an outline of sorts, to assist the people in retaining the statutes and ordinances within their collective memory.

A good number of Israelites listening to Moses speak of the covenant made at Horeb are still alive and thus have a more vivid impression of what they had witnessed. Despite this, vs. 3 says that the Lord didn't make the *beryth* with the people alive then but with us "alive today," the verb being *karath*, the root of *beryth* and found last in 4.23 but not noted there. The inconsequence of time comes across clearly here, something both Moses

and the people were fully aware of, another indication of the power of *qara'* and all it involves. Note the phrase "in this day" in both vs. 1 and 3 which parallels "on that day" of Ex 13.8.

As for vs. 4, we could say that the Lord manifested himself from the midst of fire on Horeb and spoke with Moses, he being the intermediary. "But let not God speak to us lest we die" [Ex 20.19]. This is reflected by Moses saying in vs. 5 that he stood between the people and the Lord, *byn* being the preposition. From such an in between position Moses was able to declare the Lord's word or *davar*, the verb being *nagad* (cf. 4.12) meaning to be manifest or to be in the front. Moses acknowledges the natural fear of the people who didn't ascend Horeb; in fact, they were forbidden to do so. "But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord" [Ex 19.24]. As for the *nagad* by Moses, it concerns the Ten Commandments, begins in vs. 6 and continues through vs. 21. References to the same are found in Exodus and Numbers but not given here. The of thirteen objects, if you will, of *nagad* are listed as follows:

Vs. 6: The Lord declares himself as belonging to Israel, having rescued her from Egypt, using the well known designation "house of bondage," the verbal root *havad* (cf. 4.28) also applicable to slavery.

Vs. 7: The Lord won't allow Israel to worship other gods, a commandment they threw to the wind once in Canaan. The text reads literally as "not be to you other gods on my face." In other words, they're forbidden to plaster over the nature of the true God with the images of these false gods.

Vs. 8: The prohibition against fabricating graven images or likeness, *pesel* and *temunah*, both found last in 4.23 and here with respect to heaven and earth, the latter specifying water under the earth. According to the Genesis account, the firmament is in the midst of the waters, so below the firmament and hence the earth are the "fountains of the great deep" or the place from which most of the flood waters associated with Noah came [cf. Gen 7.11].

Vs. 9: A continuation of the extended sentence begun in the previous verse, here dealing with prohibiting worship of *pesel* and *temunah* put as neither bowing down nor serving them, *shatach* and *havad*, the two used in the same sense as in 4.19. The Lord describes himself as being jealous (*qana'*, cf. 4.24) which for the Israelites is double-edged. On the one hand, they're fortunate to have such a divine protector who boasts of his concern, whereas on the other hand they can't give into their inclination to worship alien gods. This jealousy compels the Lord to visit iniquity not just upon children but up to the fourth generation, a very long time for it to peter out. *Paqad* is the verb for visit which has multiple meanings and can be used in a military sense not unlike here. "Then commanders shall be appointed at the head of the people" [20.9]. In the verse at hand, *havan* is the noun for iniquity which connotes something depraved. "A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed" [20.9]. Hatred for the Lord here is bound up with *havan*, the verb being *sane'* found last in 4.42 but not noted there.

Vs. 10 begins with “but” or the conjunctive *v-* to show the close connection with the previous verse, the other side of *paqad*, if you will, which is *chesed* or love in the sense of ardent desire and not unlike *agape*. “The faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments” [7.9]. Such *chesed* pertains to thousands, a way of saying that at least at this stage most of the Israelites are firmly with the Lord. However, that will change shortly.

Vs. 11 has to do with swearing, of using God’s name in vain, the noun being *shave’* which connotes destruction as well as falsehood. It’s found next in vs. 20: “Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.” If anyone does this *shave’*, the Lord will hold him guilty or literally (not) pure, *naqah*. “For the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain” [Ex 20.7].

Vs. 12 has the verb *shamar* or observe where in vs. 1 it means to be careful, a not inaccurate way of putting it, here concerning the sabbath or more accurately to keep the sabbath holy, *qadash* being the verb which means to set apart. “All the firstling males that are born of your herd and flock you shall consecrate to the Lord your God” [15.19]. This setting apart is with respect to the six days mentioned in vs. 13 for work compared with the seventh or literally “day seven” when such work is forbidden (cf. vs. 14). This prohibition against work and for rest is comprehensive: son, daughter, man servant, maid servant, ox, ass, cattle and sojourner. The last or *ger* (cf. 1.16) means someone who isn’t an Israelite and may not have a clear idea of what is involved with regard to this rest. Such a *ger* is mentioned “within your gates,” an intimate way of putting it, for to be such means being part of the town or tribe occupying that place, not living outside the gates. The reason for such lavish hospitality is that Israel had once been slaves in Egypt and must never forget this fact. Vs. 15 has the verb to do or *hasah* for keeping the sabbath which implies that although it’s a day set aside from work, the doing at hand is not unlike the *shamar* of vs. 12 with respect to the sabbath.

Vs. 16 concerns honoring or *kaved* one’s parents, this fundamentally means to be heavy. “That you may fear this glorious and awful name, the Lord your God” [28.58]. The reason for such *kaved* is twofold: 1) to lengthen one’s days, implying to become as old as one’s parents and 2) that it may go well in the land the Lord is giving. The parents were faithful to observing what Moses handed down from the Lord on Horeb. If that memory can be preserved, there’s a chance temptations to apostasy laying ahead may be averted.

Vs. 17 pertains to not killing, *ratsach* (cf. 4.42), that is, generally speaking.

Vs. 18 pertains to not committing adultery or *na’aph*, the same being noted in Ex 20.14.

Vs. 19 pertains to not stealing, *ganav*. “If a man is found stealing one of his brethren...then that thief shall die” [24.7].

Vs. 20 pertains to not bearing false witness which consists of the verb *hanah* (cf. 1.41 but not noted there) which usually means to answer and the noun *reah* which means a friend (cf. 4.42 but not noted there).

Vs. 21 deals with two types of desire: 1) coveting the wife of a neighbor, *chamad* which implies lust. “You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves” [7.25]. 2) *Avah* or to long for, to turn aside as pertaining to another’s

property as well as slaves. “You may eat as much flesh as you desire” [12.20].

Vs. 22 sums up the list of thirteen words (*davar*) which the Lord spoke (*davar*) to the assembly or *qahal*. “And on them (tablets) were all the words which the Lord had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly” [9.10]. In addition to fire as in 9.10 the verse at hand adds cloud and thick darkness or *hanan* and *haraphel*, both noted together as in 4.11 along with a loud (*gadol* or great) voice or *qol* (cf. 4.35). Interestingly this verse is an understatement of sorts saying that the Lord “added no more,” *yasaph* being the verb (cf. 4.2). Instead of speaking, the Lord switches to writing the Ten Commandments on stone after which he gave them to Moses.

Vs. 23 refers once again to the Lord’s voice or *qol* from the darkness, *choshek* which as noted in vs. 11 is a more general term compared with *haraphel*. While this voice was sounding, at the same time the entire mountain (Horeb) was on fire whereas in Ex 20.18 it’s smoking. Despite such a fearful sight, the people and leaders drew near to it after which they said in vs. 24 that the Lord showed (the common verb *ra’ah* as in 4.35) them his glory and greatness, *kavod* and *godel* (cf. 3.24 but not mentioned there). As for *kavod*, it’s derived from *kaved* as in vs. 16 and is the only use of the noun in Deuteronomy. “And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord because he has heard your murmurings against the Lord” [Ex 16.7].

In addition to this hearing of God’s voice the people see Moses speaking (*davar*) with the Lord, he still being alive after the experience. “And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God and ate and drank” [Ex 24.11]. Actually the people didn’t see Moses on the mountain because it was enshrouded totally. Perhaps reference is to seeing him emerge about halfway up the mountain just below the thick darkness.

Vs. 25 has the Israelites asking themselves about staying alive when confronted with this incredible sight, especially when hearing the Lord’s voice. It’s more than a rhetorical question, for everyone was asking each other about this. Moses, of course, approved though he didn’t let on because it gave an opportunity for the Lord to instill fear of him which hopefully would have a lasting effect.

Vs. 26 has another question about this which is more rhetorical in nature. Note as in the previous verse the close connection between hearing the divine *qol* or voice and living as opposed to anything visual. Next in vs. 27 the people bid Moses (his name isn’t mentioned) to draw near to the Lord, *qarav* (cf. 4.11) that he may hear the Lord. The image here is of a resounding voice everyone can hear though only Moses is qualified to listen after which he’ll speak (*davar*) what he has heard. After this the people agreed to hear what he has said and follow through on it. In sum, this is a modification...a reduction...of the divine *qol* through Moses and then to the people for their benefit.

After this list consisting of thirteen commandments vs. 28 begins with the conjunctive *v-* to show the close connection between them and the Lord who says that the people hearkened to Moses' words or literally, voice of their words, *qol* (cf. vs. 22) and *davar* which they spoke or *davar, qol* being an amplification of *davar*, if you will. The Lord concurs, having listened in all along to them speaking, *davar*. There remains the fact, however, of the people actually putting into action this *davar* as they claimed they'd do in vs. 27.

Next (vs. 29) the Lord utters a spontaneous exclamation which begins literally as "who will give and become to their hearts" (*levav*: cf. 4.39). The Lord simply wishes Israel to fear him and keep his commandments (*yare'* and *shamar* being the verbs, 1.19 and vs. 12 respectively). The end is that it will go well both with them and their children, *yatav* (cf. vs. 16 but not noted there). There's something poignant about this utterance, straight from the heart of the Lord, failure to comply being a genuine tragedy which unfortunately will be the case. Immediately afterwards the Lord bids Moses to have the people return to their tents so that individual families may ponder among themselves what just happened and hopefully come to a consensus.

Once the people are tucked away within their tents, the Lord has Moses stand by him, the verb *hamad* (cf. 4.11) with the preposition *himad* derived from this verb...a double standing, if you will, as Moses remains stationary while all the Israelites make their way to their tents. Some must have wondered why he was there alone but didn't dare question him. Besides, by now they were familiar with the Lord communicating with their leader and didn't wish to interfere knowing that if they did, they'd face the consequences. So once the Israelites were inside their tents—no one dared to peep out—the Lord tells (*davar*) all the commandments, statutes and ordinances (*mitsvah, choq* and *mishpat* (4.40, vs. 1 and vs. 1). After this personal *davar* Moses is to teach the people, *lamad* (cf. vs. 1) in the land they're about to possess (*yarash*, cf. 4.38). As for the *davar* by the Lord to Moses concerning the three just mentioned, it took only an instant to communicate them. However, the *lamad* is another story. Moses used the time before entering the land of inheritance (which *yarash* means) to do this *lamad* using trusted men to assist him, this being done totally in an oral manner.

In vs. 32 the Lord spells out *lamad* in a general way, that is, to be careful or *shamar* (cf. vs. 29) meaning he is to be faithful to the instantaneous communication mentioned in the last paragraph and not impose his personal interpretation on the commandments, statutes and ordinances. In other words, Moses is to turn neither to the left nor to the right, *sur* being the verb which has the further sense of distance in that it also means to depart (cf. 4.9 but not noted there). Left and right signify deviance, thereby hemming in Moses on a very straight and very narrow path of *lamad* for the people. In vs. 33 this is called a *derek* (cf. 1.2) or way which leads straight to the land Israel is to possess/inherit (*yarash*, cf. vs. 31).

## Numbers = Verses

qara': 1, shamah: 1, choq: 1, mishpat: 1, lamad: 1, shamar: 1, beryth: 2, beryth: 3, karath: 3, nagad: 5, havad: 6, pesel: 8, temunah: 8, shatach: 9, havad: 9, qana': 9, paqad: 9, havon: 9, sane': 9, chesed: 10, shave': 11, naqah: 11, shamar: 12, ger: 14, hash: 15, kaved: 16, ratsach: 17, na'aph: 18, ganav: 19, hanah: 20, reah: 20, chamad: 21, 'avah: 21, qahal (noun): 22, hanan: 22, haraphel: 22, qol: 22, gadol: 22, yasaph: 22, qol: 23, choshek: 23, ra'ah: 24, kavod: 24, godel: 24, qarav: 4.11, qol: 28, levav: 29, yare': 29, shamar: 29, yata: 29, hamad: 31, mitsvah: 31, choq: 31, mishpat: 31, lamad: 31, yarash: 31, shamar: 32, sur: 32, derek: 33, yarash: 33.

## Chapter Six

1) "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord your God commanded me to teach you that you may do them in the land to which you are going over to possess it; 2) that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments which I command you all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged. 3) Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them; that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you in a land flowing with milk and honey. 4) "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; 5) and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6) And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; 7) and you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise. 8) And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9) And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. 10) "And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob to give you with great and goodly cities which you did not build 11) and houses full of all good things which you did not fill and cisterns hewn out which you did not hew and vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and when you eat and are full, 12) then take heed lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 13) You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him and swear by his name. 14) You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples who are round about you; 15) for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. 16) "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested him at Massah. 17) You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God and his testimonies and his statutes which he has commanded you. 18) And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers 19) by thrusting out all your enemies from before you as the Lord has promised. 20) "When your son asks you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord our God has commanded you?' 21) then you shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; 22) and the Lord showed

signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household before our eyes; 23) and he brought us out from there that he might bring us in and give us the land which he swore to give to our fathers. 24) And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always that he might preserve us alive as at this day. 25) And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.'

This new chapter begins with the familiar conjunctive *v-* translated as “now” to show the connection between what Moses is about to say and what he had just communicated. Note the singular commandment (*mitsvah*, cf. 5.31) and plural statutes and ordinances, *choq* and *mishpat* (cf. 5.31, ‘all the commandment’). All three are to be done (*hasah*, cf. 4.14) in the land Israel is about to possess or inherit, *yarash* (cf. 5.33).

Vs. 2 is an extension of the previous verse, that the people may fear (*yare'*, cf. 5.29) the Lord or more specifically, that the son of each person and his son, that is, two generations specified, keep (*shamar*, cf. 5.32) the statutes and commandments (*choq* and *mishpat* of vs. 1 in order to prolong their days, *'arak* (cf. 4.40). In other words, if this *shamar* is neglected, the span of life will be curtailed radically. Thus length of life and *shamar* are synonymous.

Both vs. 3 and 4 begin with *shamah* or hear along with the collective Israel, the former concerning *shamar* or keeping the statutes and commandments with two ends in mind: to go well (*yataw*: cf. 5.29) and to multiply greatly, *ravav* along with the adverb *me'od* which implies excessiveness (cf. 4.15), the verb found last in 3.5 but not noted there. *Ravav* is reminiscent of Gen 1.28 (the verb is similar, *ravah*): “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.” As for Canaan flowing with milk and honey, the first time it's mentioned is Ex 3.8: “And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.” This verse continues with mention of six tribes inhabiting it which tempers the tone of this verse considerably.

As noted in the paragraph above, vs. 4 begins with *shamah* or hear, reminiscent of Dt 6.4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” The adjective *'echad* as one can mean first as well as alone. The Israelites will forget this oneness as applied to the Lord shortly after entering Canaan, a fact noted several times thus far. Nevertheless the command will be remembered, that is, to love the Lord, *'ahav* connoting desire as well as breathing after. It's found last in 4.37 but not noted there. This *'ahav* is to be done in a threefold manner: heart, soul and might (*levav*, *nephesh* and *me'od*: 5.29, 4.29 and vs. 3) the three with the prefaced with the preposition *b-* (in) and the adjective *kol* or all which is not unlike *'echad* or a human reflection of the divine *'echad*.

Vs. 6 speaks of the divine words or *davar* being upon the heart of the people, *levav*, which they will teach diligently to their children, the verb not being the expected familiar



*lamad* but *shanan* which interestingly means to sharpen. “If I whet my glittering sword...I will take vengeance on my adversaries” [32.41]. So the idea is for parents to lift the *davar* placed upon their hearts and *shanan* them to their children. In addition to this “sharpening,” parents are to speak (*davar*) of the *davar* in four ways non-stop which encompasses all aspects of daily life: while at home, walking about, laying down and rising. All four flesh out the very first words of Deuteronomy, *‘eleh hadbarym* or “these (are) the words” which Moses spoke,

Vs. 8 takes this transmission of the divine *davar* to what seems an extreme, of binding (*qashar*, cf. 11.18) them as a sign (*‘oth*, cf. 4.34) upon the hand and as frontlets between the eye or *totaphoth* which are scrolls with excerpts from the Torah. “And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” [11.18]. Vs. 9 takes this physical display one step further, that is, by having the *davar* to be written on doorposts and gates. As for the former (*mezuzah*) which are found one other time in Deuteronomy (cf. 11.20), the Israelites must have had in mind the blood of the Passover lamb in Ex 12.23: “For the Lord will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you.”

Vs. 10 begins an extended sentence, if you will, running through vs. 12. It speaks of the land of Canaan which the Lord swore (*shavah*, cf. 1.18) to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as in Ex 33.1: The Lord said to Moses, “Depart, go up hence, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give it.’” This *shavah* is striking by use of the preposition *l* (to) which is found six times in the verse at hand. It contains cities which the Israelites hadn’t built along with vineyards, olive trees and cisterns (cf. vs. 11), so Canaan is presented as a ready-made place to be taken over and inhabited. In vs. 11 the Lord warns about forgetting him once the people have eaten their fill. This is reminiscent of having gathered manna on the sabbath (cf. Ex 16.27-28). In other words, eating too much effects forgetfulness of deliverance from Egypt which is called a house of bondage and noted last in 5.6.

After having enjoined the people to fear, serve and swear in vs. 13, the Lord cautions them not to follow after other gods which are round about them. In other words, the people will be literally hedged in by a multitude of alien divinities of which they barely have knowledge. While their ancestors had been in a parallel situation for four hundred years in Egypt, they didn’t succumb to local divinities. Part of the reason is that the Lord didn’t promise Egypt as a permanent dwelling place as he did with Canaan. Thus it was easier to ignore Egyptian divinities.

To counter the temptation mentioned in vs. 14 the Lord says that he’s in their midst, *qerev* (cf. 4.34), this *qerev* dependent upon the collective *shamah* or hearing put forth in vs. 3 along with other exhortations. Not only is the Lord *qerev* his people, he’s jealous or

*qana'* (cf. 5.9). While this may seem beneficial, for the Israelites it would turn out to be a painful reminder later when they succumb to the worship of Canaanite gods. From this *qana'* will issue divine anger or *'aph* which refers to the nose and hence the an image of the Lord breathing forth flames. "Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly" [7.4]. The verb in the verse at hand is *charah* also as in 7.4 and connotes intense ardor. Also it's akin to the verb *chamad* or to destroy (cf. 5.21) found in vs. 15.

Note the similar sounding words in vs. 16: *nasah* (cf. 4.34) and Massah, the latter being derived from the former and an obviously uncomfortable reminder which the Israelites would prefer to forget. This can be relegated to the past, however, provided they not just keep the Lord's commandments and testimonies (*mitsvah*, *hedah* and *choq*, vs. 1, vs. 2 and 4.45 respectively) but do so diligently which is conveyed by double use of the verb *shamar* (cf. vs. 2).

Vss. 17-19 pretty much repeat what has been said already concerning the proper way of relating to the Lord with regard to possessing the land of Canaan. Vss. 20 to the end of Chapter Six deal with future generations about all this. For example, vs. 20 has a son (that implying just the next generation) asking his parents or the generation with which Deuteronomy is dealing with now about the meaning of the testimonies, statutes and ordinances (*hedah*, *choq* and *mishpat*: vss. 16 and 20). The question is phrased literally as simply as "what." The response hearkens back to when Israel had been in Egypt, vs. 21 speaking for the first time of being slaves under pharaoh from whom the Lord had effected deliverance. Part of this deliverance consisted in signs and wonders or *'oth* and *mopheth* (vss. 8 and 4.34 respectively). There were directed against (the preposition *b-* or *in*) Egypt, pharaoh and his household as well as before the eyes of the Israelites.

The last two concluding verses of Chapter Six have the current generation saying to the next generation by way of practice, if you will, that keeping the divine statutes (*choq*, cf. vs. 20) and commandment (*mitsvah*: cf. vs. 16) will be of benefit to them. Note the plural of the former and the singular of the latter as in vs. 1. If this is done, it will be righteousness or *tsedaqah*. "Do not say in your heard...'It is because of my righteous that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land'" [9.4].

#### Numbers = Verses

*mitsvah*: 1, *choq*: 1, *mishpat*: 1, *hasah*: 1, *yarash*: 1, *yare'*: 2, *shamar*: 2, *choq*: 2, *mishpat*: 2, *'arak*: 2, *shamah*: 3, *ravav*: 3, *me'od*: 3, *shemah*: 4, *'ahav*: 4, *levav*: 5, *nephesh*: 5, *me'od*: 5, *levav*: 6, *shanan*: 6, *'oth*: 8, *qashar*: 8, *totaphoth*: 8, *mezuzah*: 9, *shavah*: 10, *qerev*: 15, *qana'*: 15, *'aph*: 15, *charah*: 15, *chamad*: 15, *nasah*: 16, *mitsvah*: 16, *choq*: 16, *hedah*: 16, *shamar*: 16, *hedah*: 20, *choq*: 20, *mishpat*: 20, *'oth*: 22, *mopheth*: 22, *choq*: 20, *mitsvah*: 20, *tsedaqah*: 25.

## Chapter Seven

1) "When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than yourselves, 2) and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. 3) You shall not make marriages with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons. 4) For they would turn away your sons from following me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. 5) But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and hew down their Asherim and burn their graven images with fire. 6) "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. 7) It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; 8) but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9) Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations 10) and requites to their face those who hate him by destroying them; he will not be slack with him who hates him, he will requite him to his face. 11) You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the ordinances which I command you this day. 12) "And because you hearken to these ordinances and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love which he swore to your fathers to keep; 13) he will love you, bless you and multiply you; he will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the young of your flock in the land which he swore to your fathers to give you. 14) You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15) And the Lord will take away from you all sickness; and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew will he inflict upon you, but he will lay them upon all who hate you. 16) And you shall destroy all the peoples that the Lord your God will give over to you, your eye shall not pity them; neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you. 17) "If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?' 18) you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, 19) the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out; so will the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. 20) Moreover the Lord your God will send hornets among them until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed. 21) You shall not be in dread of them; for the Lord your God is in the midst of you, a great and terrible God. 22) The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you may not make an end of them at once lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you. 23) But the Lord your God will give them over to you and throw them into great confusion, until they are destroyed. 24) And he will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under heaven; not a man shall be able to stand against you

until you have destroyed them. 25) The graven images of their gods you shall burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves lest you be ensnared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. 26) And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become accursed like it; you shall utterly detest and abhor it; for it is an accursed thing.

Vss. 1-3 form an extended sentence which may be divided into two parts signified by the words “when and then.” The former (*ky*) opens this new chapter whereas the latter isn’t in the Hebrew text but implied. *Ky* suggests a period between the time when the people hear these words and their taking possession (*yarash*, cf. 6.1) of Canaan. They are to clear it of many nations, *nashal* which means to draw out or to fall off. “The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little” [vs. 22]. Such nations are before Israel, literally as “in their face” which here suggests a more threatening tone. They comprise seven groups which vs. 1 calls greater and mightier than Israel, the latter adjective being *hatsum*. It is found last in 4.38 where it’s noted that the noun *hetsem* or bone is derived from it...in sum, ‘bone strength.’

Vs. 2 also begins with *ky* or when, a continuation of the period of waiting mentioned above. First the Lord gives the seven tribes over to Israel followed by defeating them, *nakah* (cf. 3.2) meaning to strike or to smite. This seems to be the first phase of subjection after which comes their annihilation as represented by the verb *charam* (cf. 3.6). It’s used twice for emphasis and has the notion of consecrating. Making a covenant (*beryth*, cf. 5.3) with any or all the seven tribes is forbidden; if done, it would enable the native inhabitants to get the upper hand quickly. This turned out to be true through Israel yielding to worship of their gods. Finally the Lord bids Israel not to have mercy upon them, *chanan* (cf. 3.23).

Vs. 3 forbids intermarriage, the real stumbling block as acknowledged in vs. 4 where the Canaanite daughters would turn Israel’s sons away from the Lord. Should that happen, the Lord would destroy them at once, *shamad* with the adverb *maher*, both found in 4.26 though the latter isn’t noted there. Right after this threat of intermarriage which can destabilize Israel quickly, the Lord speaks of the necessity to tear down objects of worship. The list runs as follows:

- 1) Break = altars. The verb *natats* as in Ps 52.5: “But God will break you down forever.”
- 2) Dash in pieces = pillars. *Shavar* as in 9.17: “So I took hold of the two tables...and broke them before your eyes.” In the verse at hand the object of *shavar* are pillars or *matsevah* as in 12.3: “You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars.”
- 3) Hew down = Asherim. Cf. 12.3 just above.
- 4) Burn = graven images. *Saraph* and *pesel* as in vss. 25 and 5.8: “The graven images of their gods you burn with fire.”

The four commands with respect to Canaanite divinities are intended to preserve the holiness of which vs. 6 speaks, *qadosh* being the adjective applicable to Israel and means that which is set apart. “You shall be blessed above all peoples” [vs. 14]. Such apart-ness is fleshed out by the verb *bachar* or to choose found in the next verse along with the preposition *b-* reading literally “in you.” The noun *segulah* also reflects this apart-ness meaning possession in the sense of property or wealth. “And the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his own possession” [14.2]. The phrase “on the face of the earth” as referring to all other peoples means that Israel is no longer on their level but elevated, if you will, above the earth by reason of being *qadosh*.

Vs. 7 spells out the reason for the Lord having chosen Israel: not because of their number but because of his attachment to them despite their being few which is the meaning of the verb *chashaq*. “Yet the Lord set his heart in love upon your fathers” [10.15]. Vs. 8 continues this theme by the Lord saying straight out that he loves Israel, *’ahav* (cf. 6.4). Hence the reason why he keeps his oath, the verb *shamar* (cf. 6.16) with *shevurah*. “The covenant which he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac” [Ps 105.9]. As a reminder, the Lord adds that he brought Israel from the house of bondage (cf. 6.12) and from Pharaoh’s hand.

Vs. 9 begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “but” and shifts attention to what’s required to follow the Lord who is faithful or *’aman*, the verbal root to believe. For another sense of this participle, cf. 28.59: “Then the Lord will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions.” Such faithfulness is akin to *chesed* (cf. 5.10). Vs. 9 contains two uses of the verb *shamar* (cf. vs. 8): with regard to God and his covenant and with regard to those keeping his covenant. In other words, the covenant or *beryth* (cf. vs. 2) is the intersecting point between God and Israel. Not only will this pertain to the current generation but to a thousand generations henceforth.

Vs. 10 is a continuation of the previous verse which speaks of the Lord requiting those who hate him, *shalam* being the verb which fundamentally means to finish or bring to a conclusion. “I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will requite those who hate me” [32.41]. The phrase “to their face” brings home in no uncertain way that the Lord will make good on his *shalam*. With regard to this hatred, the Lord won’t be slack, *’achar* meaning to delay. “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not be slack to pay it” [23.21]. This *’achar* occurs in between two instances of *shamar*, the second concerning the singular person who hates the Lord compared with the plural (‘their face’). Thus *shamar* is found in vs. 11 with regard to the singular commandment and plural statutes and ordinances (*mitsvah, choq, mishpat*, all as in 6.20).

Vs. 12 contains a promise by the Lord provided Israel hears, keeps and does the ordinances or *mishpat* (cf. vs. 11), the three words being *shamah, shamar* and *hasah* (cf. 6.3, vs. 9 and 6.1). The next verse (13) fleshes this out in four ways: love, bless, multiply, bless (*’ahav, barak, ravah* and *barak*). The first is noted last in vs. 8 with the second

occurring twice. “And you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you” [8.10]. As for *ravah*: “That the Lord...multiply you as he swore to his fathers” [13.17]. Compared with the first general *barak*, the second one pertains to the following seven: fruit of one’s body, fruit of ground, grain, wine, oil, cattle and flock.

Vs. 14 says that Israel will be blessed (*barak*, cf. vs. 13) above all peoples, literally “from (*min-*) all peoples” which is not unlike the sense of *qadosh* as being separate in vs. 6. There are two signs for such separate-ness, the first being a lack of barrenness, *haqar*. “But Sarai was barren” [Gen 11.30]. The second is no sickness and diseases which are associated with Egypt though there’s no explicit mention of those in the Book of Exodus. Perhaps allusion is Israel’s prolonged exposure to Egyptian gods over four hundred years. However, such afflictions are transferable because the Lord will impose them on nations which hate Israel.

Vs. 16 speaks of destroying all the peoples in Israel’s way, *’akal* (cf. 4.14) which fundamentally means to eat and thus implying to devour. If this isn’t done, the nations will become a snare to Israel, *moqesh*. “For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you” [Ex 23.33].

The Lord takes into consideration the reluctance Israel has about the enterprise set before her when the people begin questioning privately among themselves which is meant by heart, *levav* (cf. 6.6). Humanly speaking their dispossession is impossible, *yarash* being the verb which is used often in Deuteronomy as to possess or inherit but also has this meaning as in 4.38. The antidote to this fear is remembrance of what the Lord had done when Israel had been in Egypt, *zakar* being used twice rendered literally as “to remember you shall remember.” This is more than recalling past events but bringing them into the present. It’s easier than at first glance since for pre-literate cultures virtually all transmission of their history and stories are done in an oral fashion. Besides, those still among the Israelites old enough to have been present in Egypt would hold special honor as storytellers. It was essential for younger men to associate with them and thereby continue transmission of their oral stories in Canaan.

Vs. 19 is a continuation of the previous verse which lists what the Lord had done both to Egypt and to Pharaoh. Mention of the latter is especially important in light of the visits between him, Moses and Aaron, he ultimately being responsible for the ten plagues and destruction of his army in the Red Sea. The list contains five items: trials, signs, wonders, mighty hand and outstretched arm or *masah* (cf. 4.34), *’oth* (cf. 6.22), *mopheth* (cf. 6.22), *chazaq* (cf. 4.34) being the adjective and *natah* (cf. 4.34). Note that of the five the first is the one singled out as seen by the Israelites, *masah* also meaning temptation which intimates it was more drawn out in time than the others. The outstretched arm brought Israel from Egypt though most likely the mighty hand was involved as well. Vs. 19 concludes by saying that all five will happen to anyone who resists Israel. Again, mention of pharaoh is reassuring insofar as the people will be equipped to handle anyone

like him in Canaan. Certainly Joshua learned from Moses' experience many decades ago.

Vs. 20 has a plague of hornets or *tsirhah* not unlike what's mentioned in Ex 23.28: "I will send hornets before you which shall drive out Hivite, Canaanite and Hittite from before you." In the verse at hand such a swarm is provisional, if you will, the real goal being destruction of Israel's foes, *'avad* (cf. 4.26) which connotes losing as well as wandering. This will occur once those opposing Israel had been driven into caves, etc., in order to hide themselves from the hornets.

Vs. 21 contrasts dread and midst, *harats* and *qerev*, 1.29 and 6.15 respectively, that is, the Israelites with regard to the people they will encounter in Canaan contrasted with God in their very center who is great as well as terrible. If God is *qerev*, the people they are around it meaning God will reveal himself outward through the people. That's why in the next verse (22) the Lord will clear away nations, *nashal*. Note that this verb applies in vs. 1 with regard to seven nations which are listed whereas here *nashal* is done little by little or gradually. This is an important caution, for the Lord compares these nations with wild beasts (literally 'beasts of the field') which not only will resist fiercely but will increase in number. However, according to vs. 23, following this caution will leave to throwing the nations into great confusion, *hum* being the verb along with the noun *mihumah* which is derived from it. A reference concerning the former: "I am overcome by my trouble. I am distraught by the noise of the enemy" [Ps 55.2-3]. As for the latter: "The Lord will send upon you curses, confusion and frustration" [28.20]. This will last until the nations are destroyed, *shamad* (cf. vs. 4).

The rapid-fire sequence of what can happen provided Israel remains loyal to the Lord is intimated by use of the conjunctive *v-* in vss. 23 and 24, "but, and." As for vs. 24, it deals with kings whose collective name (in the singular, not plural, 'the name of them') will perish (*'avad* connoting losing as well as wandering compared with the laying waste of *shamad*). This will be easier than anticipated, for vs. 8 had the Lord reminding Israel of the pharaoh of Egypt who was far more powerful than these local despots.

Vs. 25 gets to the heart of the matter, of what will tempt Israel the most to abandon worship of the Lord, that being graven images which are an abomination, *pesel* and *tohevah*. These two words work hand-in-hand almost all the time to trip up Israel and even the Lord himself. "For every abominable thing which the Lord hates they have done for their gods" [12.31]. Hence such images are to be burned; even their precious covering can be a snare for the people, *yaqash*. "Let the wicked together fall into their own nets while I escape" [Ps 141.9]. One notable example is Achan which will haunt Israel later: "When I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, then I coveted them and took them" [Jos 7.21].

Chapter Seven concludes with one more remark about this *tohevah* or abominable thing,

that the Israelites aren't to bring it into their homes. That would be the ultimate blasphemy and sign that Israel has abandoned the Lord. Besides, it would be an invitation to be accursed, *cherem* being a noun which also means something devoted (as to destruction) as in 13.17: "None of the devoted things shall cleave to your hand." Instead, the people are to both abhor and detest it, *tahav* (the verbal root for *tohevah* as in vs. 25) and *shaqash*, the latter suggestive of contamination. For the former, cf. 23.7: "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother." For the latter, cf. Ps 22.24: "For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted."

It should be noted once again that everything the Lord communicates to his people is strictly oral, not written down. It's to Israel's credit that she can retain all this with plenty more to come in the ensuing chapters. Chances are those with better memories paid closer attention so as to retain what they've heard so as to reformulate it or at least the essentials if and when needed. Because memory retention can be forgotten more easily compared with the written word, even though the spoken word has the force of *davar*, still many if not most Israelites quickly forgot what they have heard. The Lord knew this, of course, which is why some of the material in Deuteronomy seems repetitious.

#### Numbers = Verses

nashal: 1, yarash: 1, hatsum: 1, nakah: 2, charam: 2, beryth: 2, chanan: 2, shamad: 4, naher: 4, natats: 5, shavar: 5, matsevah: 5, saraph: 5, pesel: 5, qadosh: 6, bachar: 6, segulah: 6, chashaq: 7, tahav: 7, 'ahav: 8, shamar: 8 shevuhah: 8, 'aman: 9, chesed: 9, shamar: 9, beryth: 9, 'achar: 10, shalam: 10, mitsvah: 11, choq: 11, mishpat: 11, mishpat: 12, shamah: 12, shamar: 12, hasah: 12, 'ahav: 13, barak: 13, ravah: 13, barak: 14, haqar: 14, 'akal: 16, moqesh: 16, levav: 17, yarash: 17, zakar: 18, masah: 19, 'oth: 19, mopheth: 19, chazaq: 19, natah: 19, tsirhah: 20, 'avad: 20, harats: 21, qerev: 21, nashal: 22, hum: 23, mihumah: 23, shamad: 23, 'avad: 24, pesel: 25, tohevah: 25, yaqash: 25, tohevah: 26, cherem: 26.

### Chapter Eight

1)"All the commandment which I command you this day you shall be careful to do that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers. 2) And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. 3) And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. 4) Your clothing did not wear out upon you, and your foot did not swell these forty years. 5) Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. 6) So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. 7) For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and



hills, 8) a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, 9) a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. 10) And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. 11) "Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping his commandments and his ordinances and his statutes which I command you this day: 12) lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and live in them, 13) and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, 14) then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, 15) who led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, 16) who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know that he might humble you and test you to do you good in the end. 17) Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 18) You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth; that he may confirm his covenant which he swore to your fathers as at this day. 19) And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you this day that you shall surely perish. 20) Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

“All the commandment” (*mitsvah*) is singular as in 7.11 with regard to “this day,” a phrase which occurs last in 7.11 and three times within Chapter Eight. Thus “this day” is akin to a *kairos* event, not necessarily one belonging to the twenty-four hour cycle. It’s significance lays in the fact that the Lord is speaking...*davar*...to Israel which suspends perception of space and time. In fact, his *davar* is greater than space and time. Within “this day” so much is crammed or concentrated for Israel to absorb, and it’s done with specific mention before entering Canaan to possess (*yarash*, 7.17) it.

Closely associated with *mitsvah*/"this day" is remembrance (*zakar*, cf. 7.18) of the way which the Lord had led Israel throughout the Sinai wilderness for forty years, *derek* (cf. 5.33) having as its center point Mount Horeb. To that place *derek* has led from Egypt. From there the *derek* takes on greater significance and comes to fulfillment at the border of Canaan or by the Jordan River. This *derek* both to and from Horeb was an occasion for the Lord to both humiliate and test Israel, *hanah* and *nasah*, 5.20 and 6.16 respectively. Both have in mind Israel’s collective heart of *levav* (cf. 7.17) with regard to keeping the Lord’s commandments, *shamar* (cf. 7.12) again being used. This verse leaves us up in the air insofar as we don’t know what the Lord found there but can surmise it was less than desirable. Still, the Lord has in mind the nation as a whole in the midst of which remain a few faithful Israelites.

Vs. 3 has another instance of *hanah* (cf. vs. 2) or humbling Israel, which implies the ever present potential faithlessness of the people. The Lord hearkens back to the incident of manna in the desert (Exodus, Chapter Sixteen) which seems more important than the quails even though they are richer in protein. Here the words about not living on manna

alone are cited which Jesus uses to rebuke the devil in the temptation to change stones into bread: “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” [Mt 4.4]. In the verse at hand we have “everything” (*kal-*) coming from the Lord’s mouth whereas with Jesus we have word or *rhema*. This noun pertains to that which has been uttered or any sound which has a precise meaning whereas *logos* is broader or more inclusive: discourse, the act of speaking or faculty of speech.

One aspect of the *kal-* is that the people did not lack clothing (vs. 4) or more accurately, it didn’t wear out implying perpetual renewal of garments throughout forty years in the Sinai wilderness. Also their feet didn’t swell meaning that they had their sandals renewed as well, perhaps not unlike the appearance of manna which continued each day to provide food; as for the quails, they came at evening (cf. Ex 16.13). Failure to recognize this is indicative of trouble ahead, of Israel not putting trust in the Lord.

The heart or *levav* is found three verses later into which Israel as a whole is to look or to know (*yadah*, cf. 4.39), here in the sense of dealing with something familiar, that is, disciplining a son, *yasar* (cf. 4.36) which involves instruction. Vs. 6 continues this *yasar*, if you will, by the conjunctive *v-* as “so” by another instance of *shamar* or keeping with regard to the divine commandments, *mitsvah* (cf. vs. 1). Here *shamar* involves walking and fearing, the former concerning divine ways (*derek*, cf. vs. 2).

Vs. 7 speaks of Canaan in terms of water, that is, brooks, fountains and springs, important in a desert environment after which vs. 8 lists seven types of vegetables and fruits followed in vs. 9 by minerals found in the earth.

What had been listed contrasts dramatically with the barren existence Israel had experienced in Sinai for forty years. Yet during this time the people’s attention was trained against forgetting his commandments, statutes and ordinances (*mitsvah*, *mishpat* and *choq* (vs. 6, 7.12 and 7.11 respectively), all within the familiar time frame of “this day” (cf. vs. 1). These begin an extended sentence continuing through vs. 16 which begins with two conjunctives *v-* (vss. 13 and 14) translated as “when and then.” The first deals with multiplication (*ravah*, cf. 7.13) of silver and gold plus everything in Israel’s possession. This *ravah* results (i.e., the ‘then’) in the lifting up of Israel’s heart (*levav*, cf. vs. 5) which represents taking credit where none is due. In this false exultation the people forget the Lord taking them from the house of bondage (cf. 7.8) which could be interpreted otherwise as the people taking credit for this deliverance minus divine intervention.

The rest of the extended sentence begun in vs. 11, that is, vss. 15 and 16, remind Israel of what the Lord had done on her behalf during the forty years in Sinai. It ends with a statement of intent which is to humble and test the people, *hanah* and *nasah* as in vs. 2.

In vs. 17 the Lord cautions Israel about the self-exultation described in vs. 14 although the Hebrew text lacks the verb “beware” used in the **RSV**. Again, reference is made to Israel’s

collective heart (*levav*, cf. vs. 14) about human power and might, *choach* and *hetsem*. The former is noted last in 4.37 while the latter has two other biblical references, Job 30.21 and Ps 139.15. The second reference runs as follows: "My frame was not hidden from you." In the verse at hand both pertain to *chayl* (cf. 3.18) or wealth which also means strength or force. To counter this, the Lord reminds Israel in vs. 18 that it is he who gives *choach* to obtain *chayl*, the verb *hasah* (to do) being used. The end, radically different from self-aggrandizement, is to confirm the Lord's covenant, *qum* being the verb which fundamentally means to rise. "That he may confirm the word which the Lord swore to your fathers" [9.5]. Again, we have mention of "this day" (cf. vs. 11).

Chapter Eight concludes with a solemn warning about forgetting the Lord and going after other gods, *hod* (cf. 4.26 but not noted there) being used with the preposition *b-* reading literally, "in you," this preposition standing in for the adverb. The *b-* of vs. 19 has its counterpoint in vs. 20 in reference to the Lord's voice (*qol*, cf. 5.28), that is, "in the voice of the Lord." This is with regard to the importance of listening, failure of which results in death, *'avad* (cf. 7.24) being used.

#### Numbers = Verses

mitsvah: 1, yarash: 1, zakar: 2, derek: 2, hanah: 2, nasah: 2, levav: 2, shamar: 2, levav: 5, yadah: 5, yasar: 5, shamar: 6, mitsvah: 6, derek: 6, mitsvah: 11, mishpat: 11, choq: 11, ravah: 13, levav: 14, rum: 14, hanah: 16, nasah: 16, levav: 17, choach: 17, hetsem: 17, chayl: 17, choach: 18, chayl: 18, hasah: 18, qum: 18, hod: 19, qol: 20, 'avad: 20.

#### Chapter Nine

1) "Hear, O Israel; you are to pass over the Jordan this day, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2) a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim whom you know and of whom you have heard it said, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' 3) Know therefore this day that he who goes over before you as a devouring fire is the Lord your God; he will destroy them and subdue them before you; so you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly as the Lord has promised you. 4) "Do not say in your heart after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land'; whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. 5) Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land; but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. 6) "Know therefore, that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness; for you are a stubborn people. 7) Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place you have been rebellious against the Lord. 8) Even at Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, and the Lord was so angry with you

that he was ready to destroy you. 9) When I went up the mountain to receive the tables of stone, the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water. 10) And the Lord gave me the two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them were all the words which the Lord had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. 11) And at the end of forty days and forty nights the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, the tables of the covenant. 12) Then the Lord said to me, 'Arise, go down quickly from here; for your people whom you have brought from Egypt have acted corruptly; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molten image.' 13) "Furthermore the Lord said to me, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stubborn people; 14) let me alone that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.' 15) So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire; and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands. 16) And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the Lord your God; you had made yourselves a molten calf; you had turned aside quickly from the way which the Lord had commanded you. 17) So I took hold of the two tables and cast them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes. 18) Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water because of all the sin which you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. 19) For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure which the Lord bore against you so that he was ready to destroy you. But the Lord hearkened to me that time also. 20) And the Lord was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him; and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. 21) Then I took the sinful thing, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust; and I threw the dust of it into the brook that descended out of the mountain. 22) "At Taberah also, and at Massah and at Kibroth-hatta'avah, you provoked the Lord to wrath. 23) And when the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, 'Go up and take possession of the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God and did not believe him or obey his voice. 24) You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you. 25) "So I lay prostrate before the Lord for these forty days and forty nights because the Lord had said he would destroy you. 26) And I prayed to the Lord, 'O Lord God, destroy not your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27) Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; do not regard the stubbornness of this people or their wickedness or their sin, 28) lest the land from which brought us say, "Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness." 29) For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out by your great power and by your outstretched arm.'

Although the command to hear (*shamah*, cf. 7.12) begins this chapter and more specifically carries through vs. 3, its echo resounds to the very last verse. The Lord is bidding the people to *shamah* through Moses who while gazing out upon those assembled before him, could feel that many, if not most, would fail to pay attention. The hearing at hand is of special important—one of two instances of “this day” in Chapter Nine—in that Israel is on the verge of crossing the Jordan River into Canaan. There Israel

is to dispossess nations far greater than they, *yarash* being the verb which as noted in 7.17 means the opposite of its usual sense to inherit. Thus it can be said that Israel is to un-inherit the people dwelling in Canaan having in mind that they had once lived there before coming to Egypt at Joseph's invitation. Mention of cities reaching up to (literally, 'in,' *b-*) heaven is intended to re-enforce the *shamah* beginning this new chapter; in other words, Israel isn't to slide into forgetfulness.

Another spin-off of *shamah* is mention of the Anakim mentioned early towards the beginning of Deuteronomy (cf. 1.28), As for these people, earlier inhabitants of Canaan, the spies in Num 13.33 compared themselves to them as grasshoppers. A rhetorical question is put forth here, about no one able to resist the Anakim, *yatsav* meaning to take a stand. It's mentioned in 7.24 but not noted there. Compare the height insinuated with regard to these people, cities "fortified up to heaven," they being appropriate for such places.

Vs. 3 contains the second reference to "this day" where the Lord presents himself as a devouring fire, a fire which eats or better, consumes (*'akal* (cf. 7.16). It both destroys and subdues all before Israel, *shamad* (cf. 7.23) and *kanah*, the latter meaning to bring low or bend the knee as in Ps 81.14: "I would soon subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes." Note that the Lord does this in preparation for Israel to drive them out and as well as to have them perish quickly: the first is another example of an alternate use of *yarash* and the second is *'avad* (cf. vs. 1 and 8.20 respectively). This is possible only because of the Lord's promise which is rendered by him having spoken or *davar*.

Vs. 4 is not unlike 8.17 where the Lord forbids the people to take credit for any future victory, *levav* being the noun for heart in which this presumption comes to birth. It centers around self-righteousness or *tsdaqah* (cf. vs. 5) over thinking that they, not the Lord, are responsible for the expulsion of the people in Canaan, *hadaph* being the verb as found in 6.19 but not noted there. The real reason for driving out these people is their wickedness or *rishhah*, this noun found in the next verse.

Vs. 5 pretty much repeats the contents of vs. 4 in order to drive home the fact that the Lord is in charge, not Israel, and least of all, the inhabitants of Canaan or anyone else who may oppose his designs. Everything is directed to the end that the Lord confirm (*qum*, cf. 8.18) the *davar* sworn to the three patriarchs of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This third patriarch is responsible, albeit unwittingly at the time, of going to Egypt at Joseph's invitation along with his other sons, the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. And so hearing his name is special for the Israelites since they had departed Egypt just one generation ago. As far as Abraham goes, the original patriarch, he was promised Canaan way back in Gen 12.1: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." At the present Israel is not unlike Abraham. Although familiar with living as nomads in the Sinai, they knew all along this wasn't their fate, that

they were on the threshold of entering someplace new yet strangely familiar, familiar from stories they had heard passed down generation after generation.

Vs. 6 begins with the conjunctive *v-* but isn't translated, continuing as it does with Moses speaking for the Lord. It shows the close connection between what the Lord has just communicated to his people and its continuance. The Lord makes sure that Israel realize (*yadah*, to know; cf. 8.5) their possession of Canaan isn't due to their righteousness or *tsdaqah* (cf. vs. 4). Unfortunately it's nullified by their stubbornness which reads literally as stiff neck, *qasheh* being the adjective found next in vs. 13. This charge colored with some disgust is first used in Ex 32.9: "I have seen this people and behold, it is a stiff-necked people." To counter such hardness in vs. 7 the Lord urges the need to remember and don't forget, the two being essentially the same but put differently for emphasis. They concern how Israel had provoked the Lord, *qatsaph* (cf. 1.34) meaning to break or break out. If this weren't a bad enough reminder, Israel had been rebellious literally from the first day Israel left Egypt and lasted, more or less with the exception of a few bright spots, until the people came to where they are now. *Marah* (cf. 1.42) is the verb which works hand-in-hand with *qatsaph*. It's used with the preposition *him-*, literally, "with the Lord. The time span of forty years isn't mentioned but certainly specified.

The conjunctive *v-* introducing vs. 8 translates as "even" with respect to Israel's attitude at Mount Horeb, the very place where Moses encountered God and received the Torah. It's almost as though the people completely ignored the Lord from the day they stepped onto the shore of the Red Sea opposite Egypt all the way to the border of Canaan...one continuous attitude of rebellion and ignorance of what had transpired in the Sinai wilderness. At Horeb, this most sacred place, Israel had provoked the Lord, *qatsaph* being used as it is in the previous verse relative to the wilderness. It's as though this second *qatsaph* is an intensification as well as greater insult to the Lord as he is appearing on the mountain. There the Lord is on the verge of destroying (*shamad*, cf. vs. 3) the people through his wrath, *'aph* (cf. 6.15 implying the breathing out of furious wind from his nostrils).

Moses states in vs. 9 that he ascended Horeb to receive the tables of the covenant or *beryth* (cf. 7.9) and remained there for forty days and nights, the latter suggestive of this extended period of time which obviously differs from conventional calendar days. During this time Moses fasted from both food and water. Even if these were regular forty days and nights, it was possible because he was immune to the passage of time and hence awareness of space. What's so important about this *beryth* are the words (*davar*) of the Lord which he had spoken (*davar*). Thus the *davar* which had been uttered to now starting with the first verse of Deuteronomy (*'eleh hadbarym*, 'these [are] the words') are carved into stone and hence made visible for the first time. What separates the oral *davar* from the written *davar* is that they emerged from the midst of fire and more specifically, on the day of the assembly or *qahal* (cf. 5.22). It is within the context of this gathering of the entire nation of Israel that the *davar* became visible, so no one could

claim later that only a privileged few had seen them.

In vs. 11 Moses specified the time when the Lord gave him the tablets, at the end of being on Horeb forty days and forty nights which seemed like an instant to him. Immediately afterwards the Lord rushed him off down the mountain with the command *qum* (cf. vs. 5) as arise because as sadly but entirely not unexpected the people acted reverted to their old ways. If Moses weren't bidden to arise, he would have lingered on the mountain and therefore neglect his responsibility toward Israel. Right away it was obvious as to what was going on without the Lord telling him, that the people have acted in a corrupt fashion, *shachath* (cf. 4.25) also meaning to destroy. A certain trace of scorn by the Lord lays in the words when he calls Israel *your* people which *you* have brought from Egypt. In other words, they belong to Moses, not the Lord, so responsibility rests with him.

Vs. 12 contains a second use of the adverb *maher* (quickly), that is, Israel having turned aside (*sur*, cf. 5.32) from the way or *derek* (cf. 9.6) especially designed for them, preferring the dead-end of making a molten image, *masekah* which is found next in vs. 16. Here *masekah* isn't identified as the image of a calf, perhaps because Moses is too angry and embarrassed to recall that incident.

The conjunctive *v-* of vs. 13 continues the fast-paced action recounted so far and is translated as "furthermore." The Lord exclaims that he has seen this people which is followed by *hineh* or behold, a expression of astonishment. This sentiment is very different from the Lord's words to Moses in Ex 3.7: "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt." Perhaps he's saying to himself that Israel would have been better off under trying circumstances, but never would he communicate this to Moses. The phrase "stiff (*qasheh*) neck" is found again as in vs. 6. Like someone who has suffered an affront, he exclaims to Moses that he be left alone (*raphah*, cf. 4.31) for two purposes: *shamad* (cf. vs. 8) and *machah*, the latter as in 25.19: "You shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Then in vs. 14 the Lord says that he'll make a nation greater than the one he's dealing with now, perhaps referring to Mose who will be forced to start from scratch.

Upon hearing the astonishing words about the very real possibility that the Lord will blot out Israel and start anew, in vs. 15 Moses turns aside before coming down from Horeb, *panah* (cf. 3.1) being the verb for compared with the one of *sur* in vs. 12 which is more a departing. In other words, *panah* intimates a quick spin around, not necessarily the sense of departing, though that's included. It was as though Moses were too astonished at having heard these words. So as he did his *panah* and was descending, the mountain was afire although he didn't dare look back. However, he hoped this dramatic sight would sufficiently frighten the people before he arrived in the camp.

Once Moses had reached the base of Mount Horeb, he looked and beheld (*hineh*) just as the Lord had done in vs. 13. He was unable to do this twofold gesture both on Horeb as

well as when he was coming down simply because the fire behind him was too intense. He came across the people having sinned (*chata'*, cf. 1.41 but not noted there) against the Lord, the preposition *l-* rendering this literally and more directly as “to the Lord.” The words “(made) themselves” or *lakem* shows the consequence of this sin—*l-* the Lord—for it too uses the same preposition which reads literally as “to you.” And the making involved obviously is the molten (*masekah*: cf. vs. 12) calf. This double *l-*, if you will, which involved sinning “to” the Lord and making “to” themselves the calf demonstrates not just the people had turned aside but did so with astonishing rapidity. The verbs is *sur* along with the adverb *maher* (cf. vs. 12 for both) with regard *derek* (cf. vs. 12 for all three).

The conjunctive *v-* beginning vs. 17 translates as “so,” showing Moses’ immediate response to the golden calf as he grasped the two tablets, *taphas* being the verb as in 21.19: “Then his father and his mother shall take hold of him.” In the verse at hand *taphas* is a sudden response of shock, horror and anger which happens a mere second before Moses dashes the tables to the ground. *Shavar* is the verb to break along with the preposition *l-* which reads literally as “to your eyes” or right smack before you...almost on you.

After the dramatic shattering of the two tablets which contained the essence of the Torah, everyone expected Moses to let all hell break loose. Instead he lay prostrate on the ground for a period of forty days and forty night which he had done recently on Mount Horeb (cf. vs. 9). However, this was a long, drawn-out affair, not at all as being with the Lord. The same goes for the fast he undertook. This time Moses was doing it for the people who had committed evil (*rah*, cf. 4.25) which, in turn, provoked the Lord’s wrath, *kahas*, cf. 4.25) also meaning to displease.

And so with good reason Moses is afraid, *yagar* being the verb in vs. 19 which has six other biblical references compared with the more common *yare'*, one of them being 28.60: “And he will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt which you were afraid of. Such fear manifested by Moses has two objects: the Lord’s anger and hot displeasure, *'aph* (cf. vs. 8, that sense of breathing out fierceness) and *chemah* or fury, both found in 29.23: “Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and wrath.” Both the Lord bore against Israel, *qatsaph* (cf. vs. 7) or literally “on (*hal-*) Israel,” making *'aph* and *chemah* all the more terrible as destruction, the verb *shamad* (cf. vs. 14) being used. Yet by way of a dig towards those he’s addressing, Moses concludes that the Lord was willing yet again to listen to him.

Vs. 20 also begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “also,” intended to include Aaron as the chief culprit in the golden calf incident. The Lord was not just angry with him (*'anaph*: cf. 4.21 but not noted there and *b-*, literally ‘in him’) but excessively so, *me'od* being the adverb (cf. 6.5). To prevent the Lord from destroying (*shamad*: cf. vs. 19) Aaron, Moses prayed for him, *palal* connoting intercession and found next in vs. 26. Note that Moses does this “at the same time.” Nothing is said earlier about such *palal* though



it's inferred as in vs. 19 with regard to the people. Immediately after this intercession—we have no new as to how it went—Moses burned the golden calf and ground it into dust, calling it a sinful thing or *chata'th*, the only use of this noun in the Bible. Even though Moses pulverized it and threw it into a stream, still its presence lingered among the people. Also the remains of the dust clung to Moses' garments and skin some time afterward despite a thorough wash as possible.

Vs. 22 mentions three places referred to earlier in Exodus and Numbers, the most well known being Massah noted in 6.16. All were scenes of provocation, *qatsaph* (cf. vs. 19). The same unfortunate situation carries over in vs. 23 when the Lord sends Israel from Kadesh-barnea, that is, made all the worse because the people are going to possess (*yarash*, cf. vs. 3) the land. The fact that the Lord had given it to them makes the situation all the more difficult and gives pause to wonder why the Lord has been putting up with this rebellious (*marah*, cf. 1.43) attitude for so long with not the slightest intent of change.

At this stage apparently only Moses (Aaron was disgraced by reason of the golden calf) was the one who held everything together. Again he lay prostrate before the Lord, *naphal* (cf. vs. 18 but not noted there) meaning to fall, feeling as though the weight of Mount Horeb itself were crushing him. However, given the hard-heartedness of Israel, *naphal* suggests that Moses simply fell flat on his face, having collapsed on the ground because he could do nothing more. And this lasted forty days and forty nights. Even if this were a literal span of time the people hardly would take notice, stepping over him nonchalantly as they went about their business. That's how hard-hearted they had become. During this extended time Moses prayed (*palal*, cf. vs. 20) directly to the Lord not to destroy the people, *shachat* (cf. 4.31). This verb means to lay waste as well as to act wickedly compared with the more common *shamad*, and used in the previous verse, connoting extermination as well as annihilation.

Moses' *palal* or intercession begins in vs. 26 and continues to the end of this chapter. He begs the Lord not to destroy Israel (*shachat*) because he has redeemed her, *padah* meaning to loose or set free. "Forgive, O Lord, your people Israel whom you have redeemed" [21.8]. In the verse at hand, this is done literally in (*b-*) the Lord's greatness, referring to when Israel came from Egypt. In vs. 27 Moses appeals to remembrance of the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and contrasts them with Israel's stubbornness, wickedness and sin (*qeshy*: only use of the word, *reshah* and *chata'th*: cf. vs. 21) which he begs not to regard or *panah* noted in vs. 15 as to turn. Here *panah* implies a sudden movement, a full turn of the body, if you will, toward the object of regard, that is, away from the patriarchs.

Vs. 28 is a continuation of vs. 27, the two forming an extended sentence where Moses speaks in an almost cunning fashion, if you will, that the land from which the Lord brought Israel mock both that people and the Lord himself for having failed in his

promise. At the same time there's still time to save face or for the Lord not to be put to shame by Egypt, the super-power of its day, as well as by other peoples. Moses concludes (cf. vs. 29) with the retort, if you will, that Israel is both the Lord's people and heritage or *nachalah* (cf.. 4.39). So while all this is going on—Moses interceding with the Lord—there remains the very real possibility that the Lord may be tempted to give up on the entire enterprise, swallow his pride and let Egypt mock him.

#### Numbers = Verses

shamah: 1, yarash: 1, yatsav: 2, 'akal: 3, shamad: 3, kanah: 3, yarash: 3, 'avad: 3, levav: 4, tsdaqah: 4, hadaph: 4, rishhah: 4, qum: 5, yadah: 6, tsdaqah: 6, qasheh: 6, qatsaph: 7, marah: 7, shamad: 8, 'aph: 8, beryth: 9, qahal (noun): 10, qum: 12, maher: 12, sur: 12, derek: 12, masekah: 12, hineh: 13, qasheh: 13, raphah: 14, shamad: 14, machah: 14, panah: 15, hineh: 16, chata': 16, masekah: 16, sur: 16, maher: 16, derek: 16, taphas: 17, shavar: 17, rah: kahas: 18, 18, yagar: 19, 'aph: 19, chemah: 19, qatsaph: 19, shamad: 19, 'anaph: 20, me'od: 20, shamad: 20, palal: 20, chata'th: 21, qatsaph: 22, yarash: 23, marah: 24, naphal: 25, palal: 26, shachat: 26, padah: 26, panah: 27, qeshy: 27, reshah: 27, chata'th: 27, nachalah: 29.

### Chapter Ten

1) "At that time the Lord said to me, 'Hew two tables of stone like the first and come up to me on the mountain and make an ark of wood. 2) And I will write on the tables the words that were on the first tables which you broke, and you shall put them in the ark.' 3) So I made an ark of acacia wood and hewed two tables of stone like the first and went up the mountain with the two tables in my hand. 4) And he wrote on the tables as at the first writing, the ten commandments which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; and the Lord gave them to me. 5) Then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they are as the Lord commanded me. 6) (The people of Israel journeyed from Be-eroth Bene-jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died, and there he was buried; and his son Eleazar ministered as priest in his stead. 7) From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land with brooks of water. 8) At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day. 9) Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers; the Lord is his inheritance as the Lord your God said to him.) 10) "I stayed on the mountain, as at the first time, forty days and forty nights, and the Lord hearkened to me that time also; the Lord was unwilling to destroy you. 11) And the Lord said to me, 'Arise, go on your journey at the head of the people that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.' 12) "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul 13) and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good? 14) Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the

heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; 15) yet the Lord set his heart in love upon your fathers and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples as at this day. 16) Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. 17) For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of Lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God who is not partial and takes no bribe. 18) He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. 19) Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. 20) You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him and cleave to him, and by his name you shall swear. 21) He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen. 22) Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons; and now the Lord your God has made you as the stars of heaven for multitude.

The opening words of this new chapter, “at that time” (cf. vs. 8), show that the Lord is eager to replace the original tables as quickly as possible and get on with the task at hand. The verb *pasal* is used for hew instead of *karath* (to cut) from which the noun covenant is derived. Actually *pasal* is the root for *pesel*, a graven image and hence an abomination (cf. 7.25). It has five biblical references, one of which is in 10.3, and based upon Ex 34.1: “But two tables of stone like the first.” Note that in both instances Moses does the work, not the Lord, as in Ex 24.12 which contains the verb *katav* as here (cf. 9.10 but not noted there). Thus *pasal* is an image, if you will, of *katav* which makes more sense when applied to a *pesel*, an image formed by humans. It imitates what God had formed and hence is an imitation...bordering upon an usurpation...of his creative power.

Vs. 2 begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “and” preceded by the last two verses which has the same rendered as “and” and “so.” These are followed by vs. 5 which has the conjunctive as “then.” They’re mentioned here to show the close connection between the Lord and Moses within the context of the latter hewing the tables and the former writing upon them.

In vs. 3 Moses is to do his *pasal* of the ark or *‘aron* comprised of acacia wood. This container also applies to a coffin and as to be expected, is frequently mentioned in Chapter Ten. After all, it was on Horeb that the Lord bade Moses to fashion the *‘aron* (cf. Ex 25.10). Acacia wood is the material *shitah* being black in color not unlike ebony and must have had a certain gleam about it as well as a mysterious quality. Besides, it’s only found here in Deuteronomy though frequently mentioned in Exodus.

Once Moses ascends Horeb (cf. vs. 4), the Lord will write or *karath*...cut...not *pasal* or hew...the words (*davar*). As a footnote in the RSV points out, these aren’t commandments as found in that text but belong to what is called here “the first writing.” While in the camp, Moses hewed the two blank tables which must have roused considerable curiosity among the people. Also they were ashamed, this second set reminding them of how they had worshiped the golden calf made of gold in their possession. It’s easy to picture Moses chipping away, deliberately so, in the eyes of everyone. Chances are for posterity Moses chose the hardest rock he could find so if urged to smash them, they wouldn’t break.

Afterwards he spent considerable time polishing them so the *davar* would stand out more than the first copy. As he was ascending Horeb, Moses couldn't help but wonder if the Lord would duplicate exactly his earlier *davar* or modify them after the golden calf incident. Only on the top of Horeb would that become known. As for Moses speaking with the Lord, he couldn't do this in the camp because the people would discover quickly just how strong is their rebellious attitude and perish on the spot.

The last conjunctive *v-* as "then" in vs. 5 concludes the sequence begun in vs. 2 with Moses having turned, (*panah* as in 9.15). Bound up with this turning is his descent from Horeb after which he put the tables in the shiny *'aron* or ark. Moses says that he had made it along with hewing the tables. However, now with the divine *davar* inscribed on them, no longer could he claim to have made them. The final words of vs. 5 "There they are" add a certain human touch as if to say that I, Moses, went through all this trouble. Now you Israelites have the new tables both as a condemnation and as a witness that you be faithful to the divine covenant.

The **RSV** has vss. 6-9 in parentheses the observation that they are an editorial insertion and parallel Num 33.30-38. Vs. 6 states that Aaron had died with Eleazar succeeding him as priest. This is significant in light of the need of Moses to have the two tables duplicated. It was Aaron who was directly responsible for fashioning the golden calf and thus set in motion this business about the tables. Also mention of Eleazar as successor of his father's priestly role serves to push this unfortunate incident further into the background, thereby reducing further embarrassing memories.

Vs. 7 mentions a land with brooks of water, an important insertion within the context of Israel's journey through an arid or semi-arid land. Chances are the people lingered there for some time to re-coop and reflect on recent events, sobered by what they had gone through.

Vs. 8 has the phrase "at that time" as in vs. 1, a *kairos* event, if you will, when the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi, *badal* (cf. 4.41) also meaning to shut out and thus make exclusive for a given end. It pertains to the tribe of Levi which fits in with the breaking of the tables and golden calf. It was this tribe that showed allegiance to Moses and set about the gruesome but necessary task of slaying fellow Israelites who succumbed to worship of the calf: "and the sons of Levi did according to the word (*davar*) of Moses" [Ex 32.28].

By reason of their *badal*, the Levites are to carry out four functions: 1) to bear the ark of the covenant, 2) to stand before the Lord, 3) to minister to him and 4) to bless him. *Sharath* is the verb to minister and connotes waiting upon. "The man who acts presumptuously by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there...that man shall die" [17.12]. *Barak* is the verb to bless noted last in 7.14 and is to be done in the name of the Lord. The words "to this day" mean more than temporal duration but connote continuation of liturgical worship as ministered by the Levites. Because of this honor

where the Levites live off alms, etc, they lack a share in Israel's inheritance or *nachalah* (cf. 9.29. Instead, the Lord is their *nachalah* as stated in Num 18.20: "I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel." Here the boon of *cheleq* (portion) is added which also can mean lot. Also, while the Levites may experience a certain destitution as they await the *nachalah* from the Lord, nevertheless it remains among the people as the Numbers verse indicates.

In vs. 10 Moses brings to mind his stay on Mount Horeb the length of forty days and forty nights, the verb *hamad* (cf. 5.31) implying that he stood or abided there without moving. Such *hamad* made Moses impervious to the passage of time whether it was an actual forty days and forty nights or such time more or less as a *kairos* event. "That time" is the third occurrence in Chapter Ten, the other two being vss. 1 and 8. The benefit of this *hamad* by Moses is that the Lord was disinclined to destroy the people, *shachath* (cf. 4.25). The text uses *shachath* with the singular second person "you" which can be taken as Moses along with the people, the two being one and the same.

After Moses informed the people about his stay on Mount Horeb in vs. 11 the Lord told him to arise or *qum* (cf. 9.12) which can be taken as an order to get going as soon as possible. Such quickness is also intimated by the conjunctive *v-* (and), connecting what's recounted in the previous verse in contrast to the one at hand. The Lord confirms Moses' role as leader saying he's to return to being at the head of the people, *liphney* also as "before." Once so positioned, the people with Moses at their head will possess (*yarash*, cf. 9.23) the land though in actuality that task fell to Joshua. The Lord knew this, of course, but for the sake of Israel's survival he couldn't let either the people or Moses know even though chances are everyone could intimate what was going on. The basis for this *yarash* isn't the current generation of Israel but the Lord keeping true to his oath sworn to their fathers. Although such wording has occurred earlier, still it hasn't sunken into the collective mind of the people. Though linked, they and their fathers are separate by reason of obedience to the Lord. It seems the Lord is speaking thus for future generations to look back and see this distinction.

Vs. 12 has the conjunctive *v-* coupled with *hatah* ('and now') beginning what amounts to a rhetorical question. It's intended to draw attention away from Moses to the people where he spells out five requirements, *sha'al* being the verb which also means to request or demand. However, here it borders on politeness, a new tactic the Lord adopts when dealing with such a stiff neck people. "Or a charmer or a medium (*sha'al*) or a wizard or a necromancer" [18.11]. The five requirements are as follows, the last being in vs. 13. In that verse are the words "for your good" or literally "to good to you," *l-* being prefaced to both words. The five run as follows:

- 1) Fear or *yare'* (cf. 6.2) the Lord.
- 2) Walk or the common *halak* (cf. 8.6 but not noted there) with regard not just to ways (*derek*, cf. 9.16) but to them all. This analogy is something the Israelites can identify

readily with by reason of their advancement...their *derek*...toward Canaan.

3) Love or *'ahav* (cf. 7.13).

4) Serve or *havad* (cf. 5.9), the verb connoting slavery and to be done with the heart and soul (*levav* and *nephesh*, cf. 9.4 and 6.5 respectively), both modified by *kal-* or whole, entire.

5) Keep (*shamar*, cf. 7.12) with regard to commandments and statutes (*mitsvah* and *choq* cf. 8.11 for both).

Vs. 14 shifts attention to the Lord's broader concern for Israel to whom belong heaven, the heaven of heavens and the earth. The verse begins with *hen* or behold in order to get Israel's attention and is more along the lines of "surely, indeed," similar to *hineh* as in 9.16. Heaven is directly above, the dome of the sky, whereas the second is above that where the Lord dwells and out of range of human perception.

In contrast to this all-encompassing domain which contains everything that exists, the Lord in vs. 15 (it begins with *raq* or 'yet' for emphasis in contrast to the hugeness just mentioned) turned his attention to Israel's fathers. The verb is *chashaq* (cf. 7.7) meaning to cleave or to join together, "heart" being part of this verb as translated here. It's used with the infinite of *'ahav* (cf. vs. 12) or love, that being prefaced with the preposition *l-*, literally as "to love." Such clinging is stressed further by the preposition *b-*, literally as "in your fathers." In order not to shame the people, despite being stiff necked, the Lord adds that this love (with the prepositions *l-* and *b-*, if you will) also applies to them. The phrase "as at this day" serves to bridge the time between Israel's fathers and the current generation as well as all those in between.

Vs. 16 speaks of circumcision or *harlah*, sign of the very first covenant with Abraham: "You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you" [Gen 17.11]. Certainly the Israelites continued this covenant relationship down the ages, but here circumcision pertains to their hearts (*levav*, cf. vs. 13). This will take away their stubbornness or *qashah* (cf. 2.30), a verb meaning to be hard of which the foreskin around the heart is a symbol. The reason for circumcision is given in the next verse (17), that the Lord is God of gods and Lord of lords. These titles are meant to distinguish him not so much from local Canaanite deities but to make sure Israel understands such is his nature, given their tendency to worship local deities. Also the Lord isn't partial nor takes bribes: the first translates literally as "lifting faces" and the second with *shochad* as the noun which also means a gift or reward. "And you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous" [16.19].

Both vs. 18 and 19 deal with relationships, just as important as all that has been said, the first pertaining to those Israelites who are most vulnerable, the fatherless and the widow. At the end of vs. 18 and into vs. 19 the Lord speaks of the sojourner or *ger* (cf. 5.14) as if he were more important. Not only is this based upon traditional hospitality in the desert

but more precisely because Israel had been a *ger* in Egypt. So despite four hundred years of relative prosperity and safety after Joseph bade his family to come there, Israel is considered a *ger*. Furthermore the sojourner is to be shown love (*'ahav*), something not mentioned with regard to the fatherless and widow.

Right after speaking in rather noticeable fashion of love for the sojourner the Lord bids Israel to fear (*yare'*) him simply because he is terrible (*yare'*, cf. vs. 17). It's necessary to say this, given the persistent hard-heartedness Israel has manifested to date which unfortunately has the prospect of continuing well into the future. The counterpart to *yare'* is *davaq* or cleaving to the Lord or literally "in (*b-*) him," this verb also meaning to glue. "And you shall him and cleave to him" [13.4]. Such closeness to the Lord results in swearing (*shavah*, cf. 6.10) by his name, literally as "in (*b-*) his name." Thus here we have two instances of "in."

In vs. 21 the Lord is Israel's praise or *tehilah* by reason of the people having seen great and terrible things, *yare'* again being mentioned. "He will set you high above all nations that he has made in praise and in fame and in honor" 26.19]. Reference is to what Israel has seen, most likely hearkening back a generation or two since her departure from Egypt as well as the dramatic events at Mount Horeb and elsewhere within the Sinai wilderness. And that covers a span of some forty years.

Chapter Ten concludes with another calling to mind of Israel's migration into Egypt (i.e., they being sojourners there as noted in vs. 19). Here we have remembrance of the original seventy who went at Joseph's invitation in reference to the twelve brothers and hence future tribes mentioned in Ex 1-5. However, that concludes quickly with Joseph's death, setting the stage for Israel's eventual departure from Egypt. Even then as vs. 22 says Israel had multiplied greatly. "But the descendants of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong so that the land was filled with them" [Ex 1.6].

#### Numbers = Verses

pasal: 1, katav: 1, 'aron: 1, pasal: 3, 'aron: 3, shitah: 3, karath: 4, panah: 5, 'aron: 5, badal: 8, sharath: 8, barak: 8, cheleq: 9, nachalah: 9, hamad: 10, shachath: 10, qum: 11, yarash: 11, sha'al: 12, yare': 12, halak: 12, derek: 12, 'ahav: 12, havad: 12, shamar: 13, levav: 13, nephesh: 13, shamar: 13, mitsvah: 13, choq: 13, chashaq: 15, 'ahav: 14, harlah: 16, levav: 16, qashah: 16, shochad: 17, ger: 18, 'ahav: 18, yare': 20, shavah: 20, tehilah: 21, yare': 21.

#### Chapter Eleven

1) "You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his ordinances and his commandments always. 2) And consider this day (since I am not speaking to your

children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, 3) his signs and his deeds which he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land; 4) and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord has destroyed them to this day; 5) and what he did to you in the wilderness until you came to this place; 6) and what he did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben; how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel; 7) for your eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord which he did. 8) "You shall therefore keep all the commandment which I command you this day that you may be strong and go in and take possession of the land which you are going over to possess 9) and that you may live long in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10) For the land which you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your feet like a garden of vegetables; 11) but the land which you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys which drinks water by the rain from heaven, 12) a land which the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. 13) "And if you will obey my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14) he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. 15) And he will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be full. 16) Take heed lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, 17) and the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no fruit, and you perish quickly off the good land which the Lord gives you. 18) "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 19) And you shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 20) And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates, 21) that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them as long as the heavens are above the earth. 22) For if you will be careful to do all this commandment which I command you to do, loving the Lord your God, walking in all his ways and cleaving to him, 23) then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves. 24) Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your territory shall be from the wilderness and Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. 25) No man shall be able to stand against you; the Lord your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you. 26) "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: 27) the blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day 28) and the curse if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God but turn aside from the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which you have not known. 29) And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. 30) Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oak of



Moreh? 31) For you are to pass over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land which the Lord your God gives you; and when you possess it and live in it, 32) you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.

The conjunctive *v-* shows a seamless connection between the last chapter and the one at hand, that is, keeping in mind Israel's deliverance from Egypt as noted in vs. 22. '*Ahav* (cf. 10.18) or love is the command leading off Chapter Eleven. It's with respect to the Lord who is not distinct from the keeping (*shamar*: cf. 10.13) of his charge, statutes, ordinances and commands (*mishmereth*, *choq*, *mishpat* and *mitsvah*). The first is obviously derived from *shamar*, the only reference in Deuteronomy. "Even when the cloud continued over the tabernacle many days the people of Israel kept the charge of the Lord and did not set out" [Num 9.19] The other three objects of *shamar* are found together in 8.11; all four are to be kept literally "all the days."

Vs. 2 begins an extended sentence running all the way through vs. 7. It contains the phrase "this day," *hayom* literally as "the day" and is the first of eight occurrences in Chapter Eleven, the others being vs. 4, 8, 13, 26, 27, 28 and 32. NB: vs. 4 is the only one reading "this day" whereas the others read literally "the day," This immediate present is of utmost importance which is why the verb *yadah* (cf. 9.6) or consider, knowledge in the intimate sense is used.

The **RSV** of vs. 2 has in parentheses the Lord speaking through Moses not to the current generation's children because they have neither known or seen (*yadah* and *ra'ah*, vs. 1 and 5.24 respectively) "it," that is, "the day." Note the direct speech, "your children" who are present with the older generation of Israelites. Such a statement is telling in that it reveals basically two generations assembled together: those who came from Egypt and the other two which were born in the Sinai wilderness at various times throughout Israel's forty years. Perhaps those who had been born after the departure from Egypt and encounter with the Lord at Mount Horeb were too young to have had first hand experience of his intervention. Their consideration or their *yadah* as distinct from their elders in many ways is more important. They must pay close attention to what their parents' generation is in the process of teaching or passing on because they will be responsible for the sustained memory of all that has happened to date. Most important and enduring of them all, of course, is the Torah.

Vs. 3 contains the second instance of "consider" or *yadah*, with respect to the current generation having full knowledge of past events. The Lord wishes them to have the intimate knowledge associated with *yadah* which contains the following elements:

Vs. 2: Discipline or as a footnote to the **RSV** has it, instruction or *musar* which is often applicable to children. That can apply to the children referred to in vs. 2, i.e., the parentheses. "Hear, O sons, a father's instruction" [Prov 4.1]. Greatness or *godel* (cf. 5.24), mighty (*chazaq*, cf. 7.19) hand, outstretched arm (*natah*, cf. 7.19).

Vs. 3: Signs (*'oth*) and deeds (*mahaseh*: cf. 4.28 but not noted there) as pertaining to Egypt and pharaoh as well as his land or *'erets*. Here Egypt and land are distinguished, perhaps the latter as under pharaoh's direct ownership and control. Both signs and deeds are done literally "in the midst of" Egypt, *betok* meaning in its very center.

Vs. 4: The Egyptian army, horses and chariots are mentioned separately. "The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst (*tok*, with the preposition *'el* instead of *b-* as in *betok*) of the sea, all pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen" [Ex 14.23]. The verse at hand mentions water overflowing the Egyptian force as well as destroying it, *'avad* (cf. 9.3). It has the second mention of the phrase "to this day"(i.e., not 'the day' as with the other references to the phrase) implying that what had happened then continues into the present, namely, that the same fate awaits Israel's present and future foes.

Vs. 5: "To this place" (*maqom*: cf. 9.7 but not noted there) parallels "to this day."

Vs. 6: The earth swallowing up Dathan and Abiram. "The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and covered the company of Abiram" [Ps 106.14]. In the verse at hand, this happened in the midst or very center of Israel, *qerev* (cf. 7.21) prefaced with the preposition *b-* (in).

Vs. 7: Great work (*mahaseh*, cf. vs. 3) which the Lord had done, *hasah* (cf. 8.18) being the verbal root of this noun.

As with vs. 1, vs. 8 has the conjunctive *v-* translated as therefore showing the close connection of what is recounted in the above six verses to the Lord bidding Israel to keep (*shamar*, cf. vs. 1) his commandment or *mitsvah* commanded (*tsavah*, cf. 10.13 but not noted there), the latter being the verbal root of the former. By way of note, *tsavah* occurs some seventy-nine times in Deuteronomy and here is within the context of "this day" (literally, 'the day'), the third use of this phrase. As for *shamar*, it has three parts, if you will: *chazaq* (cf. vs 2), *bo'* and *yarash* (cf. 10.11) or be strong, enter and possess in the sense of inherit. The importance of *yarash* is brought out by the further words "which you are going over to possess."

Vs. 9 continues from the previous verse with the conjunctive *v-* and makes the connection between *shamar* and a long life the Lord had sworn to give to Israel's fathers. Here we have a land flowing with milk and honey, not like Egypt where the Israelites had to sow their own seed which produced vegetables. Although these vegetables are a better diet than milk and honey, the image is reminiscent of Eden where everything was provided in contrast to life outside it. The first pertains to inside Eden and the second, outside: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden" [Gen 3.16]. "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground" [Gen 3.19].

The Lord continues to describe Canaan, the land of *yarash*, in the sense of inheritance as noted several time earlier. In vs. 10 it's described as hilly and has plenty of rain. Even more importantly, vs. 11 calls it a land directly under God's care, *darash* (cf. 4.29) being the verb which means to seek; it connotes a rubbing as well as treading. When the

Israelites hear that the Lord is going to do this, naturally they are excited. Vs. 12 specifies how such *darash* is to be done, the Lord having his eyes upon the land. He does this in a temporal way, if you will, from the beginning to the end of a given year. That means the Israelites are to cultivate a sense of being watched unceasingly by the Lord under which their stiff-necked mood begins to chafe with disastrous consequences.

Vs. 13 begins with *shamah* or obey (i.e., listen; cf. 9.1), a refinement, if you will, of *shamar*, the two sounding similar. It is in reference to the fourth use of the phrase “this day” (literally, ‘the day’). Actually it seems easy, to love (‘*ahav*, cf. vs. 1) the Lord with one’s heart and soul, *levav* and *nephesh* both found together last in 10.13. Despite the apparent easiness of *shamah* (and the implied *shamar*), Israel’s inherent stiff-necked attitude is bound to get in the way. However, if the Israelites follow through with *shamar*, vs. 14 says that the Lord will provide rain, specifying early and later rain, *yoreh* (mid October to mid December) and *malqosh* (March and April). The former has one other biblical reference in Jer 5.24 which contains the latter as well: “They do not say in their hearts, ‘Let us fear the Lord our God who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain.’” The timing of both rainfalls more or less are equivalent to the Lord’s eyes upon the land from the beginning to the end of a given year noted in the last paragraph. The same providential action summed up by *darash* in vs. 12 (cares for) is found with regard to providing for Israel’s cattle.

The *shamar* of vs. 16 as take heed pertains to Israel’s potential for being deceived, *patah* also meaning to spread out, to persuade. More specifically, such deception is located in the hearts of the people, *levav* (cf. vs. 13). “And my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand” [Job 31.27]. This *patah* plays out in three ways, all pretty much the same: *sur*, *havad* and *shatach* or turn aside, serve and worship (9.16, 10.12 and 5.9 respectively).

Vs. 17 is a continuation of the previous verse where the Lord holds out the threat of kindling his anger, ‘*aph* and ‘*charah* being found together in 6.15. Both are directed literally “in (*b-*) you.” As noted earlier, ‘*aph* refers to the nose and hence the Lord breathing forth flames which results in drying up the rains just mentioned. No small wonder that Israel will perish (‘*avad*, cf. vs. 4) immediately from the land, bearing the brunt of this ‘*aph*.

Vs. 18 has the conjunctive *v-* as therefore (cf. vs. 8) which continues the Lord’s care for Israel in a more appealing tone of voice. That is to say, the people are to lay up (*sum*, cf. 4.44) or to set the Lord’s words (*davar*) literally upon (*hal-*) their hearts and souls, the familiar *levav* and *nephesh* (cf. vs. 13 for both). These are interior to a person. Next comes an exterior gesture, if you will, with the binding (*qashar*, cf. 6.8) of divine *davar* as a sign or ‘*oth* (cf. vs. 3) which means that which is invisible or uttered becomes visible upon the hand. The noun is singular and doesn’t specify whether it’s left or right. In addition to this the *davar* are to be frontlets (*totaphoth*, cf. 6.8) between the eyes, that is,

scrolls with excerpts from the Torah. In other words, the *davar*...divine speech...now become a third eye. Thus divine speech is to be transformed to perceive that which is invisible.

The conjunctive *v-* beginning vs. 19 is appropriate in that it sets the stage to shift the inward and outward position of the divine *davar* of vs. 18 to one's children. That is to say, the parents informed by the *davar* on the hand and between the eyes will do the teaching or *lamad* (cf. 5.31) to their children. In this way the next generation will be taught by *davar* as action (the hand) and by *davar* as sight (the frontlets).

In vs. 18 we have the *davar* between the eyes, *beyn* being the preposition which is similar to the singular *ben* for child. With this coincidence in mind, the parents simply have to look upon their children with that third eye thereby effecting a *beyn* to their *ben*. As for *lamad*, it's five-fold which covers virtually every aspect of life: walking, sitting, walking, laying down and rising.

Vs. 20 says that the *davar* also are to be written on doorposts or *mezuzah* (cf. 6.9) and gates for the purpose of multiplying the days of those present and their children. In vs. 21 it is to be done in (*hal-*, on) the land the Lord swore to Israel's fathers. So if the entrances to homes of the Israelites have this presence of the divine *davar*, it will ward off any influence by Canaanite divinities, that is, by speaking (*davar*) directly to them.

Vs. 21 involves a time span, namely, as long as the heavens are above (*hal-*) the earth intimating that should the Israelites fail to follow through on this matter, the heavens will come crashing down. The first *hal-* is with respect to the land or '*adamah* (cf. vs. 9 but not noted there) whereas the second *hal-* is with respect to the earth or '*erets* (cf. vs. 3). The former pertains to the ground as well as land and the latter more to a country. Both instances of *hal-* depend upon the one with respect to writing the divine *davar hal-* one's doorposts and gates.

Vs. 21 is a conditional sentence which continues into the next verse which hopefully will produce the intended result, that is, the "then" beginning vs. 22. And so a lot depends upon the "if" involved as intimated by the verb *shamar* (cf. vs. 16) which occurs twice reading literally "to observe you are observing." The *shamar* at hand involves the following three concerning Israel's relationship with the Lord: loving, walking and cleaving (*'ahav*, *halak* and *davaq* or vs. 13, 10.12 and 30.22 respectively). As for the "then" which is the conjunctive *v-* introducing vs. 23, we have the Lord who first will take action followed by Israel who will dispossess these nations. The same verb *yarash* (cf. vs. 8) is used here in two different senses but as two halves of the same coin, something that's impossible to convey in translation.

Vs. 24 speaks of *maqom* or place as marked out by the walking of the Israelites, *darak* (cf. 1.36 but not noted there) being the verb and root for *derek* (way), implying a

trampling or pressing. This treading must be planned...laid out in a pattern...but not in the conventional way. It has to take into consideration the boundaries laid out by the noun *gevul* (cf. 3.17 but not noted there), territory acquired as the result of *darak* which eventually becomes the fulness of *maqom*. Such an area is situated between the wilderness and Lebanon, the River, the Euphrates and western sea or the *gevul* set later by King David. In other words, under the guidance of Moses, Israel intuited this future expansion and planned accordingly.

Once this plan is understood, no one will be able to resist the Israelites, *yatsav* (cf. 9.2) meaning to resist. It will come about by direct divine intervention resulting from Israel's treading or *darak*. In other words, fear and dread of the Israelites will be imparted, *pachad* and *mora'* (cf. 2.25 and 4.34 respectively).

Vs. 26 begins with behold, not the expected *hen* or *hineh* but with the verb *ra'ah*, to see (cf. vs. 2) and does so with a specific time in mind, the fifth occurrence of the phrase "this day" (literally, 'the day'). The seeing consists in the Lord setting before (*natan*, to give; cf. 4.8) Israel the choice between a blessing and a curse, *berakah* and *qelalah*. The former is found next in vs. 27 and the latter in vs. 28. Vs. 27 equates *berakah* with obedience or hearing (*shamah*, cf. vs. 13) to God's commandment which has a specific location, if you will, "this day" (literally, 'the day') being the sixth occurrence of the phrase.

Vs. 28 equates *qelalah* or the curse with not hearing. It has two parts, if you will: turning aside (*sur*, cf. vs. 16) from the way or *derek* (cf. 10.12) and here that means the treading or *darak* of vs. 25. Also vs. 28 has the seventh instance of the phrase "this day" (literally, 'the day'). The second part consists in going after gods the Israelites hadn't known, *yadah* implying intimacy (cf. vs. 2). Once such *yadah* has taken root, even on the surface, it will next to impossible to eradicate.

The blessing and curse are to be kept in store and are to be set (*natan*) respectively on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (cf. vs. 29). Note that it's the same word as in vs. 26 ('I set before you...a blessing and a curse'). This setting is more along the lines of each mount being fixed in Israel's memory every time the people pass them by than a physical monument of some sort. A footnote in the **RSV** says that Chapters Twenty-Seven and Twenty-Eight detail both, so we'll leave it for then.

Vs. 30 is a rhetorical question with regard to the situation of Gerizim and Ebal as a preparation for the Lord to inform Israel as to where it will be going: passing over the Jordan with Joshua though that's not stated here and taking possession (*yarash*, cf. vs. 23) of it as noted in vs. 32. As for Gerizim, this is the first mention of it in the Bible. Ebal is found way back in Gen 36.23 for the first time, so no small wonder for insertion of this rhetorical question before moving into a new chapter.

The eighth and final reference to the phrase “this day” or literally “the day” is found at the very end of Chapter Twelve relative to Israel being careful (*shamar*, cf. vs. 22) with regard to the doing (*hasah*, cf. vs. 7) of both statutes and ordinances (*choq* and *mishpat*, both with respect to vs. 1). The echo of all eight phrases relative to “day” are bound to resonate through the next chapter and well beyond.

#### Numbers = Verses

‘ahav: 1, shamar: mishmereth: 1, 1, choq: 1, mishpat: 1, mitsvah: 1, yadah: 1, yadah: 2, ra’ah: 2, musar: 2, godel: 2, chazaq: 2, natah: 2, ‘oth: 3, mahaseh: 3, ‘erets: 3, ‘avad: 4, maqom: 5, qerev: 6, hasah: 7, shamar: 8, mitsvah: 8, tsavah: 8, chazaq: 8, bo’: 8, yarash: 8, darash: 12, shamah: 13, ‘ahav: 13, levav: 13, nephesh: 13, yoreh: 14, malqosh: 14, shamar: 16, patah: 16, levav: 16, sur: 16, havad: 16, shatach: 16, ‘aph: 17, charah: 17, ‘avad: 17, sum: 18, levav: 18, nephesh: 18, ‘oth: 18, qashar: 18, totaphoth: 18, lamad: 19, mezuzah: 20, ‘adamah: 21, ‘erets: 21, shamar: 22, ‘ahav: 22, halak: 22, davaq: 22, yarash: 23, maqom: 24, darak: 24, gevul: 24, yatsav: 25, darak: 25, pachad: 25, mora’: 25, ra’ah: 26, natan: 26, berakah: 26, qelalah: 26, shamah: 27, sur: 28, derek: 28, yadah: 28, natan: 29 yarash: 32, shamar: 32, hasah: 32, choq: 32, mishpat: 32.

#### Chapter Twelve

1) "These are the statutes and ordinances which you shall be careful to do in the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers has given you to possess all the days that you live upon the earth. 2) You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods upon the high mountains and upon the hills and under every green tree; 3) you shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire; you shall hew down the graven images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place. 4) You shall not do so to the Lord your God. 5) But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there; there you shall go, 6) and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering that you present, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock; 7) and there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake in which the Lord your God has blessed you. 8) You shall not do according to all that we are doing here this day, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; 9) for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God gives you. 10) But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land which the Lord your God gives you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies round about so that you live in safety, 11) then to the place which the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering that you present and all your votive offerings which you vow to the Lord. 12) And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your menservants and your maidservants and the Levite that is within your towns since he has no portion or inheritance with you. 13) Take heed that

you do not offer your burnt offerings at every place that you see; 14) but at the place which the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you. 15) "However, you may slaughter and eat flesh within any of your towns as much as you desire according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it as of the gazelle and as of the hart. 16) Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it out upon the earth like water. 17) You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your wine or of your oil or the firstlings of your herd or of your flock or any of your votive offerings which you vow or your freewill offerings or the offering that you present; 18) but you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God will choose, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant and the Levite who is within your towns; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all that you undertake. 19) Take heed that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land. 20) "When the Lord your God enlarges your territory as he has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat flesh,' because you crave flesh, you may eat as much flesh as you desire. 21) If the place which the Lord your God will choose to put his name there is too far from you, then you may kill any of your herd or your flock which the Lord has given you as I have commanded you; and you may eat within your towns as much as you desire. 22) Just as the gazelle or the hart is eaten, so you may eat of it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. 23) Only be sure that you do not eat the blood; for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh. 24) You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out upon the earth like water. 25) You shall not eat it; that all may go well with you and with your children after you when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord. 26) But the holy things which are due from you and your votive offerings, you shall take, and you shall go to the place which the Lord will choose 27) and offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of the Lord your God; the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the Lord your God, but the flesh you may eat. 28) Be careful to heed all these words which I command you that it may go well with you and with your children after you for ever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God. 29) "When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, 30) take heed that you be not ensnared to follow them after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do likewise.' 31) You shall not do so to the Lord your God; for every abominable thing which the Lord hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. 32) "Everything that I command you you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to it or take from it.

This new chapter begins with the Lord presenting statutes and ordinances or *choq* and *mishpat* (cf. 11.1 for both), something by now quite familiar to the Israelites. In the case at hand they pertain to what essentially is a program of extermination instigated by the Lord. As is often the case, the verb *shamar* (to be careful) is used and found last in 11.22. Vs. 1 also contains a promise that the people will abide in the land of their inheritance for the rest of their lives. At the moment they may believe that with sincerity, but the Lord isn't so sure, knowing their stiff-necked attitude which makes them vulnerable to the worship of alien gods. That's why in vs. 2 he says that Israel is not only to destroy places (*maqom*, cf. 11.24) of worship but to wipe them off the face of the earth which is

conveyed by double use of the verb *'avad* (cf. 11.17). If they can do this at the beginning of their occupation, chances are success will follow. Again the verb *yarash* is used in its opposite sense, to dispossess the inhabitants of Canaan as in 11.21. In other words, their dispossession becomes Israel's possession. The locations or *maqom* are both on the heights as well as under every green tree. The former are common whereas the latter are less so because of the arid conditions. Possibly something of an oasis is inferred, an ideal gathering spot for worship.

Vs. 3 continues with this vigorous program of destruction of local divinities. Should that be accomplished, the native inhabitants will collapse and Israel will be able to take over their land easily. The five verbs relative to this all-out program in vs. 3 are *natats* or tear down (cf. 7.5 also with respect to altars), *shavar* or dash in pieces (cf. 9.17), *saraph* or burn (cf. 7.5), *gadah* or hew down (cf. 7.12 but not noted there) and *'avad* or destroy (cf. vs. 2). Of the five the last is most thorough, the singular being used to represent the collective menagerie of these divinities. "Out of that place" has a barely disguised air of disgust, referring to the *maqom* vs. 2 or the spots held as holy by the Canaanites. Right after this which amounts to a demolition of every sacred place comes the brief vs. 4 which says that the five actions just outlined aren't to be applied to the Lord. It sounds a bit strange but thrown out there deliberately because of the oft-mentioned stubbornness of Israel.

Provided Israel is faithful to what the Lord had just bidden them, vs. 5 says that Israel needs to seek (*darash*, cf. 11.12 and connotes frequenting a place) the place or *maqom* for him to reside. Note the definite article is used as if to separate it from the plural *maqom* of vs. 2, the one at hand referring to the land of promise. This *maqom* is to be sought...frequented, if you will...not with regard to any physical object in the land but from Israel's tribes. From one of these twelve tribes the people are to both put the Lord's name and habitation in Canaan. After that, Israel is to go, although they are already present within that *maqom* which lies within their very selves. No small wonder they had difficulty grasping what the Lord was communicating to them.

Vss. 6 and 7 flow from the previous one as an extended sentence, vs. 6 now speaking of sacrifices to be brought there (*shamah*) or to that *maqom*. In other words, sacrifices and the rest as are described in vs. 6 are concrete ways Israel can come to grips with their new situation. By offering them eventually and hopefully they will realize the *maqom* of which the Lord speaks as coming from within themselves. Putting the whole enterprise like this makes the situation look rather tenuous, that the chances of success are minimal unaided by the Lord.

Vs. 7 begins with the conjunctive *v-*, "and there" referring to the *maqom* at hand. Within that "there" the Israelites are to eat before the Lord, most likely in reference to their sacrifices, yet this brings up the image found in Ex 24.11: "And he (the Lord) did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people in Israel; they beheld God and ate and drank."



Obviously this is a cause for rejoicing (*samach*, cf. vs. 12) in what they are to undertake. It reads literally as “in every sending (the common verb *shalach*) of your hand.” Such rejoicing is concomitant with the Lord’s blessing (*barak*, cf. 10.8).

Vs. 8 makes a distinction concerning what the Israelites are doing “this day,” a phrase noted often as at the very end of the last chapter which in the present instance has negative overtones. In “this day” each person is doing what’s right to him, *yashar* being the adjective and suggestive of being one’s own arbiter. Vs. 9 is part of the sentence begun in the previous verse and speaks of the fact that the people haven’t yet entered the land of promise which is their rest and possession, *menuchah* and *nachalah* (cf. 10.9). The former also applies to a habitation. “The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them three days’ journey to seek out a resting place for them.” Both will be achieved once Israel crosses the Jordan River, the land they will inherit, *nachal* being the verb suggestive of occupying a place or object (cf. 1.38) compared with the more frequent *yarash* intimating inheritance. Such occupation is equivalent to rest which the Lord will give, *nuach* (cf. 3.20) being the verb. It will be from Israel’s enemies who are literally all around, *savyv* suggestive of an encirclement and found last in 6.14 but not noted there. Despite this, the Lord will ensure that Israel lives in safety, *betach* also meaning trust. “The beloved of the Lord, he dwells in safety by him” [33.12].

Vs. 11 continues the extended sentence begun in vs. 8 and running through vs. 11 with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “then.” Reference is made to *maqom* or place which harkens back to that noun concerning it as situated in (or from) Israel’s twelve tribes (cf. vs. 5). Here *maqom* is affiliated with the divine name which will dwell there. Note the similar sound of the three words: *shakan*, *shem* and *sham* (dwell, name and there). As for *shakan*, it can be taken as similar to *nuach* of vs. 9. With the close identity between *maqom* and *shem*...place with name...to there Israel is to bring everything the Lord commanded them. That consists of sacrificial offerings and tithes which the people had vowed or *nadar* (cf. vs. 17). Interestingly neither the Torah nor the ark of the covenant are mentioned.

Vs. 12 begins a new sentence with the conjunctive *v-* after the extended one comprising vss. 8-11. Several categories of people are to rejoice (*samach*, cf. vs. 7): children, men servants, maid servants and notably Levites who lack both portion and inheritance among the Israelites, that is, *cheleq* and *nachalah* (cf. 10.9 for both). The phrase “with you” serves to heighten both the sense of isolation and uniqueness of this priestly class, meaning that the *samach* by the Levites differs from their fellow Israelites; they’re destined to occupy an in between land, if you will, between Israel and the Lord himself. Note that *shahar* is the noun for town which actually means gate and thus suggests that places inhabited by the Israelites were pretty much fortified against Canaanite attack. It occurs next as such in vs. 15.

Vs. 13 has the familiar verb *shamar* (cf. vs. 1) or to take heed which reads literally “take

heed to you," *lekah* suggesting a vigilance more watchful than usual concerning not just burnt offerings but those offered in every place (*maqom*, cf. vs. 11) the people see. That means the Israelites may be tempted to perform these sacrifices upon the altars devoted to Canaanite divinities. Instead, vs. 14 has the Lord pick out a *maqom*, that is, not a physical place but one of the twelve tribes. This verse has "there" twice in a row indicating that one of the tribes will be a vehicle, not a regular *maqom*, for offering sacrifices, admittedly a difficult notion Israel had to grapple with. Also the eleven tribes not chosen might become jealous of this privilege which means that the *maqom* may be rotated according to a given schedule.

Vss. 15 through 19 detail regulations with regard to burnt offerings. For example, in vs. 15 the Lord gives permission to slaughter animals for sacrifices within any of Israel's towns which means those places they had taken by force. No limit is imposed, but it will be as the text reads literally, "in all desire of your soul (*nephesh*, cf. 11.18)." Both those who are clean as well as those who are not may eat of it, *tahor* and *tame'* (cf. vs. 22 for both). The most important qualification is that any blood which is believed to contain life must be poured upon the earth. Implied is that this blood belonging to sacrificed animals is responsible for replenishing growth from the this earth.

Vs. 18 restates the command to eat before the Lord as in vs. 7 but with the specification that it be done in a *maqom* or place which the Lord will choose. Again, keep in mind the *maqom* as one of Israel's tribes as noted in vs. 14. This section concludes with vs. 19 reminding Israel not to forsake (*hazav* or to abandon) the Levite who, after all, is responsible for making the offerings at hand. "And you shall not forsake the Levite who is within your towns" [14.27].

Vs. 20 jumps ahead a little in that once Israel is in Canaan the Lord will enlarge her territory, *rachav* meaning to make wide even though many of the natives continue to reside there and are bound to put up a stiff resistance. In other words, *rachav* is opposite the *savyv* of vs. 10 ('enemies round about'). "And if the Lord your God enlarges your border" [19.8]. Along with this broadening of territory is the freedom the Israelites have to eat flesh if they so desire. This stands in contrast with the many years of manna and quails in the Sinai desert and thus is reasonable in light of that unvarying diet.

In vss. 21 and 22 the Lord takes into consideration the distance the Israelites may have to travel to offer sacrifices. More than distance is involved, namely, the constant threat from Canaanites waiting to pounce upon them. Vs. 21 speaks of the *maqom* once again as being distant but can be identified with one of the twelve tribes (cf. vs. 14). In other words, the *maqom* may be the territory occupied by the particular tribe so designated. The alternative to not traveling there is for the people to eat as much flesh as they desire or from the sacrifices just offered. All this the Lord intends not to restrict the people but that it may go well with them as noted in vs. 25, *tov* (cf. 5.33 but not noted there). This doesn't apply to the current generation but will have positive ramifications in the future

(‘your children’) provided the former does right, *yasar* being the adjective (cf. 8.5). The same cautionary note with regard to *tov* is found in vs. 28 concerning *shamar* (cf. vs. 13) or be careful only in addition to “your children” the promises of “forever” is added. The condition, however, is to do good and what’s right, the adjective *tov* along with *yasar* again.

In vs. 29 the Lord will cut off nations before Israel, *karath* (cf. 10.4) being the same verb used as when making...cutting...a covenant. Such cutting off is equivalent to Israel dispossessing them, *yarash* (cf. 11.32) being used which as noted several times earlier, also means to possess. Directly on the heels of this cutting/dispossessing the Lord issues a warning or another *shamar* (cf. vs. 28) with respect to Israel succumbing to follow the nations. *Naqash* has four other biblical references, one of which is Ps 9.16: “The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.” Interestingly such ensnarement takes place after the Lord destroys the nations. Even though they are no longer present, memory of them haunts the land, especially worship of their gods against which Israel is not to inquire or *darash* (cf. vs. 5). Israel is forbidden to ask how the Canaanites had worshiped their gods, such inquiry being dangerous with the potential to do the same. Just the fact of raising the question doesn’t portend well for the future as history will reveal.

Vs. 31 states the real reason why the Lord is so adamant against Israel being influenced by Canaanite gods even if the native population had been destroyed as vs. 30 states. These people had committed acts of abomination or *tohevah* (cf. 7.26) which consisted in offering their own children as sacrifices. Memories of this are bound to linger in former sacred places, etc. With this in mind, Chapter Twelve concludes in vs. 32 (in the Hebrew text it’s 31.1) with the Lord saying yet again that Israel be careful or *shamar* (cf. vs. 30) with everything he commanded. *Davar* is the noun essentially meaning word as expression and concurs with the frequent *shamar* and other related verbs. The Lord allows neither addition nor subtraction to his *davar*. It is to remain just as it is which is more difficult to practice because it involves that continuous *shamar* which here means listening constantly for the Lord to speak or *davar*.

#### Numbers = Verses

choq: 1, mishpat: 1, shamar: 1, maqom: 2, ‘avad: 2, natats: 3, shavar: 3, saraph: 3, gadah: 3, ‘avad: 3, maqom: 3, darash: 5, maqom: 5, samach: 7, shalach: 7, barak: 7, yashar: 8, menuchah: 9, nachalah: 9, nuach: 10, savyv, 10: betach: 10, maqom: 11, shakan: 11, nadar: 11, samach: 12, shahar: 12, cheleq: 12, nachalah: 12, shamar: 13, maqom: 13, maqom: 14, nephesh: 15, tahor: 15, tame’: 15, maqom: 18, hazav: 19, maqom: 21, tov: 25, yasar: 25, tov: 28, shamar: 28, tov (adjective): 28, yasar: 28, karath: 29, yarash: 29, shamar: 30, naqash: 30, darash: 30, tohevah: 31, shamar.

### Chapter Thirteen

1) "If a prophet arises among you or a dreamer of dreams and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2) and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' 3) you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4) You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and cleave to him. 5) But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death because he has taught rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to make you leave the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from the midst of you. 6) "If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife of your bosom or your friend who is as your own soul, entices you secretly saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' which neither you nor your fathers have known, 7) some of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, 8) you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him; 9) but you shall kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death and afterwards the hand of all the people. 10) You shall stone him to death with stones because he sought to draw you away from the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 11) And all Israel shall hear and fear and never again do any such wickedness as this among you. 12) "If you hear in one of your cities which the Lord your God gives you to dwell there, 13) that certain base fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of the city saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' which you have not known, 14) then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently; and behold, if it be true and certain that such an abominable thing has been done among you, 15) you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, destroying it utterly, all who are in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword. 16) You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its open square and burn the city and all its spoil with fire as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God; it shall be a heap for ever, it shall not be built again. 17) None of the devoted things shall cleave to your hand; that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger and show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you as he swore to your fathers, 18) if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all his commandments which I command you this day and doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God.

The Hebrew text of this new chapter begins as vs. 32 of the last chapter. The verse numbering here is in accord with the **RSV** translation.

Chapter Thirteen continues a series of warnings which run throughout, beginning with two types of persons Israel must be careful of: prophet and dreamer or *navy'* and *chalam* (participle), both found next in vs. 3. Note that the latter is associated with dreams...“dreamer of dreams”...whereas the former is not associated with prophecies. At this stage a prophet isn't familiar among the Israelites, this being the first time it's mentioned in Deuteronomy. As for *navy'*, thus far it's found only on four occasions in the Bible. The same holds true for a dreamer although the verb is more numerous than *navy'*

which implies it may be more familiar among the people, dreams being relatively commonplace as communications from the Lord.

In the verse at hand you get the feeling that the Lord is not only concerned about the people following both prophet and dreamer but detect a tinge of jealousy toward those who might rival him. They arise or *qum* (cf. 10.11) from the very midst of Israel (*qerev*, cf. 11.6) or more directly arise from the *qerev* of “you.” The way this is put is bound to provoke the Lord, especially its directness from the people to whom he’s most devoted. The prophet and dreamer manifest their supposed gift through the giving of a sign or wonder, *’oth* and *mopheth*, both being found together in 7.19. Vs. 2 communicates the two by speaking or *davar* which reflects that jealousy by the Lord, for they can imitate the way he communicates. The first *davar* out of their mouths reveals a clear threat to the Lord, that is, by encouraging the people to serve other gods which they hadn’t known (*yadah*, cf. 11.28) before this point.

Vs. 3 brings to an end an extended sentence begun in vs. 1, another sign that the Lord is riled by all this. He commands Israel not to listen to the *davar* of the prophets and dreamers who, according to vs. 1, hadn’t arisen yet. The Lord seems a bit flustered here when he commands Israel to basically shut up and not pay attention to anyone behaving as a prophet or dreamer. Some may be tempted along this line, thinking they could take advantage of a perceived divine weakness. However, memory of these words will haunt Israel when some from among...*qerev*...them will set themselves up as a prophet or dreamer and woo the people away from the Lord.

The second part of vs. 3 continues with the Lord saying that he is testing the people, *nasah* (cf. 8.16) which also means to tempt. He wants to see if they love him with their whole heart and soul (*levav* and *nephesh*, vs. 18), the preposition *b-* (in) as “in your whole heart and in your whole soul.” Thus their love or *’ahav* will be in competition with the prophet and dreamer, again, not from without but from within or *qerev* themselves, *qerev* being equivalent to *levav* and *nephesh*.

In vs. 4 the preposition “after” with regard to Israel following and fearing (*yare’*, cf. 10.21) the Lord is synonymous with two verbs which sound similar, *shamar* and *shamah* or keeping and obeying (cf. 12.32 and 11.27) his commands and voice. Compare the use of “after” here with the Siren song by the prophet and dreamer in vs. 2, “after other gods.” Vs. 4 also speaks of the necessity of serving and cleaving to the Lord, *havad* and *davaq* (cf. 11.16 and aa.22), the latter having the preposition *b-*, literally as “cleaving in him.”

The Lord gets very serious about the prophet and dreamer, that is, he will put them to death, vs. 5 beginning with the conjunctive *v-* as “but” and continuing for a considerable length. The reason for this penalty? Both have taught (the verb *davar*) rebellion or *sarah* against him, this verb meaning a turning away from or withdrawal. “If a malicious witness rises against any man to accuse him of wrongdoing” [19.16]. The Lord takes this

occasion to remind Israel that it was he who led Israel from Egypt, another way of saying that he had redeemed them from bondage, *padah* (cf. 9.26).

The second sentence comprising vs. 5 has the Lord bidding the people to purge the evil (*rah*, cf. 9.18) in their midst, *bahar* suggestive of consuming with fire (17.7 repeats the same sentence). Note the use of *qerev* or the midst from which both prophet and dreamer had arisen.

Vss. 6 through nine form one extended sentence. The Lord starts off by getting personal, that is, he speaks of one's most immediate relations, two of which can be singled out: 1) the wife of one's bosom, *cheq* implying great intimacy. "The man who is the most tender and delicately bred among you will grudge food...to the wife of his bosom" [28.54]. 2) Friend of one's soul (*nephesh*, cf. vs. 3) or the closest non-family member there is and not far removed from the wife of one's *cheq* just mentioned. All—and the total relationships in vs. 6 amount to six—have the potential of enticing one in secret, *seter* being a noun which reads here as "to say in secret." "Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image...and sets it up in secret" [27.15]. What's uttered or better, whispered, is that the person being addressed to come with them not so much as to worship other gods but to serve (*havad*, cf. vs. 4) them, this verb suggesting that they will be slaves to these alien divinities. Such gods were unknown to the fathers of the current generation, the Lord implying the three great patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Vs. 7 describes some...not all..of the gods the Lord is warning about which belong to people (he doesn't specify which tribes, etc.) encircling Israel. To him it doesn't matter whether they are close or far off, even at the ends of the earth. Just the mere mention of these alien gods is enough to get the Lord on a roll. Anyone caught in violation of the prohibition to worship Canaanite gods is to be scorned utterly. Vs. 8 says that any of the six relationships of vs. 6 are to be treated as follows, all in the negative: yield, listen, pity, spare and conceal (*'ahav*: cf. vs. 3, *shamah*: cf. vs.4, *chus*: cf. 7.16 but not noted there, *chamal* and *kasah*: cf. 22.12). The alternative? Vs. 9 says that such persons, despite their close relationship, are to be killed.

The person being addressed is to take immediate action followed by and accompanied with all the people meaning that the entire nation of Israel is to join in on the action. The method of execution is stoning because the guilty person attempted to draw one away from the Lord, *nadaq* as found in vs. 10. Surely a later generation will reflect back on these words when Joshua had Achan stoned after the capture of Jericho (cf. Josh 7.10+). The "great heap of stones that remains to this day" [vs. 26] pales in comparison to the recollection of these words in Deuteronomy.

The added familiar reference to the Lord in vs. 10 as having brought Israel from Egypt is a constant reminder to Israel as being put in place. Presumably after the stoning of the

apostate in vs. 9 with the entire nation, such wickedness (*rah*, cf. vs. 5) never will be found in (*qerev*, cf. vs. 5) her. This, of course, is reference to the *qerev* of vs. 1 from which both the prophet and dreamer had originated and which again is found in vs. 5.

Vs. 12 commences a drawn-out sentence through vs. 15. It begins by speaking of “your cities” which means those places the Israelites had managed to wrest from the Canaanites. Nevertheless, their situation remains tenuous since the countryside hasn’t come under Israelite control. However, a threat just as serious exists from within the Israelite community. It arises from “certain base fellows” as vs. 13 puts it which reads literally as “sons of wickedness,” *belyhal* referring to what’s unprofitable and vile. “Take heed lest there be a base thought in your heart” [15.9]. Apparently these are people entranced by local divinities, go out and practice them and return with the intent of subverting their own people. They may not be doing this deliberately, to undermine the enterprise of taking over Canaan with conscious intent, but as unwitting agents of the local population to cause subversion from within.

The remedy to this threat is threefold as vs. 14 puts it: inquire, search and ask diligently or *darash* (cf. 12.30), *chaqar* and *sha’al* (cf. 10.12) with *yatav* (cf. 5.29). *Chaqar* means to search out in the sense of to perform an investigation. “O Lord, you have searched me and known me” [Ps 138.1]! *Sha’al* coupled with *yatav* reads literally “ask to do good.” All three culminate in a behold or *hineh* (cf. 9.16) which cushions against the possibility of a shock. That is to say, such a person or persons may be found within Israel’s cities, they being called an abominable thing or *tohevah* (cf. 12.31) which has the air of something unclean or downright filthy. The suspect identified as a base fellow is depersonalized so as to deal with him better, that is, by making him into an object the people can dispose of him more readily. What makes the situation worse is that such a *tohevah* is *qerev* “you” or in your very midst (cf. vs. 11).

Upon discovery of the base fellow, a ruthless plan of extermination is to be set in place. Not just he but everyone in the city in which he’s found is to be treated ruthlessly. Behind this is the idea not so much of collaboration but guilt by association, and that such guilt can be transmitted. Vs. 15 sums it up well with two uses of the verb *nakah* rendered something like “utterly smite” as it is in 7.2. Once done...as if this weren’t enough...everything within the city is to be destroyed utterly, *charam*. Thrown in are the cattle singled out for mention because they are a chief means of livelihood; the phrase “edge of the sword” adds to the thoroughness of the task at hand.

The next step is to gather all the spoil in the center of the town square and burn it along with the city as a burnt offering to the Lord. No attempt at building on the same site is to be attempted. There is no need to post a warning against this, if you will. Each Israelite knew about it and will pass on to their children as a warning. However, the Canaanites were looking on from afar and already were hatching plans to undo what the Israelites had wrought. It may take a while, but as history shows, Israel succumbed

quickly to worship of alien gods. There was no need for any base fellow, if you will. The attraction became simply too strong to ignore.

In vs. 17 the Lord says that no trace of the devoted things or *cherem* (cf. 7.26) are to remain with the Israelites, the verb *davaq* (cf. vs. 4) as clinging being quite vivid and destined to be a stark reminder later on to the Israelites when they've become seduced by worship of local divinities. Also in this verse are the words *charon* and *rachamym*, fierceness and mercy, the former is associated with the Lord's *'aph* (cf. 11.17) or anger which as noted earlier, refers to the nostrils from which the Lord breathes anger. "That the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel"[Num 25.4]. As for *rachamym*, it's in the plural to show the unending nature of divine mercy which emanates not from the Lord's nostrils but from his bowels, this noun being related to the verbal root for it. "Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love" [Ps 25.6].

Chapter Thirteen concludes with condition that Israel must listen to the Lord and keep his commandments, both dependent upon what he had communicated above. Note that the phrase "this day" is used here in vs. 18, the last time being 12.8. As for the Israelites, "this day" is a perpetual reminder which unfortunately only a handful will recall in the future. Nevertheless, it will suffice for the continuance of Israel's existence.

#### Numbers = Verses

navy': 1, chalam: 1, qum: 1, qerev: 1, 'oth: 1, mopheth: 1, yadah: 2, nasah: 3, levav: 3, nephesh: 3, 'ahav: 3, shamar: 4, yare': 4, shamah: shamah: 4, 4, havad: 4, davaq: 4, sarah: 5, padah: 5, bahar: 5, rah: 5, qerev: 5, cheq: 6, nephesh: 6, seter: 6, havad: 6, 'ahav: 8, shamah: 8, chus: 8, chamal: 8, and kasah: 8, nadaq: 10, rah: 11, qerev: 11, belyhal: 13, darash: 14, chaqar: 14, sha'al: 14, yataw: 14, hineh: 14, tohevah: 14, qerev: 14, nakah: 15, charam: 15, cherem: 17, davaq: 17, charon: 17, rachamym: 17, 'aph: 17.