

Hebrew Prayer -
The Resonance of Saints

A Messianic Jewish Commentary

By P.R. Otokletos

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Dedication

**As always ... the work is dedicated to the great and awesome G_D Most High;
the Infinite G_D of all existence whom no man has seen but the only begotten
Son; the G_D of Israel: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Psalms 9:11: "And they that know thy Name will put their trust in thee; for
Thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."**

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About P. R. Otokletos

The author Andrew A. Cullen has been writing under the pen name of P. R. Otokletos since 2004 when he began writing/blogging Messianic Jewish/Hebraic Roots commentaries across a broad range of topics.

The author is part of an emerging movement of believing Jews as well as former Christians and new believers recapturing the Hebraic roots of the Messianic faith. A movement that openly receives not just the redemptive grace revealed within the Good News Gospel of Yeshua (Jesus) but also the transformational lifestyle that comes with joyful pursuit of G_D's Sacred Torah ... just as it was in the first century Ce!

Despite a successful career in politics and business, the author is driven first and foremost by a desire to understand the great G_D of creation and humanity's fate. To this end the author has spent years studying the Hebrew and Greek Sacred Texts, in a Hebraic context in order to get past the delusions of mainline religions ... to get at the truth!

In 2005 the author completed this first book "The Seven Churches of Asia - The Path of the Chosen Revealed". A work which provides a Messianic Hebraic look into the Revelation of Jesus Christ (Yeshua HaMashiach in Hebrew/Aramaic) respective to the seven church messages found in the Book of Revelation.

In his second full length book completed in 2013 "Exposing Mystery Babylon - An Attack On Lawlessness", a broad sweeping overview is provided regarding how G_D's adversary works against the children of men through confusion, lies and deceit to keep people from the truth of the Gospel Message and the Covenantal relationship offered by G_D. The work exposes the false framework of wisdom woven into this temporal world (olam hazeh) and the genuine solution for humanity and all of creation (Grace and Torah) provided by G_D through Yeshua HaMashiach. This work undertakes a broad overview of the Torah Commandments and present day applicability within a Messianic context provided to us by Yeshua ... The Master Rebbe and Lord!

His third book "The Biblical Festivals - Messiah's Aliyah of Glory" was completed in 2014. In this work the Traditional and Messianic Hebraic perspectives relative to the eternal Biblical

Festivals are surfaced, discussed and reviewed in order to reveal the glory of G_D through the awesome fulfillment and perfection of the Festivals by, in and through Messiah Yeshua. This work essentially reveals Yeshua's great "aliyah" (ascent) to glory and consequently the great aliyah of Mashiach's faithful community ... a.k.a... Israel!

The author is convinced that nearly two thousand years of wayward understanding of the Biblical texts and man-made doctrine has significantly shrouded humanity's view of G_D ... his Messiah ... and even the very Gospel message itself. Consequently the author has dedicated his time and efforts to offer humanity the original Hebraic perspective of the G_D of Israel ... the original Hebraic perspective of Messiah Yeshua ... the original Hebraic perspective of the Gospel message in the hopes that some might be awakened to and pursue a relationship with G_D as defined within Holy Scriptures.

There is indeed a veil of ignorance that thickens all around us and is keeping us from our destiny ... from our restoration. Like others who have been enabled to see past this shroud, the author labors for no other reason than to give G_D the glory he is due and G_D's just due comes by way of the Hebraic bias ... as the reader will soon see!

The author hosts a web-site at <http://pr.otokletos.org/> where numerous Messianic Hebraic materials are provided free of charge.

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Introduction

Unfortunately there is only little justice that can be done herein to describe the importance and nature of prayer within the Hebraic perspective ... it is quite frankly a fundamental communal, personal and mysterious aspect of a believer's life.

Anyone familiar with mainstream religious Jewish individuals or families realize that in the Jewish world ... there is a prayer for virtually every occasion. In the Jewish mindset just about every human activity entails giving thanks or praise to G_D ... waking up ... going to sleep ... having a job ... crossing the street safely ... and so forth!

Although to many outsiders this traditional/cultural nuance of the Jewish people might be perceived as purely learned behavior ... the point must be made that even if this is the case these nuances run extremely deep and are embedded within Jewish culture from their earliest days of existence.

For instance ... most faithful Jews recite a prayer to G_D upon waking:

Modeh Ani

**Modeh* ani l'fanecha melech chai v'kayam,
she-hech-ezarta be nishmati b'chemla,
Yom hazeh rabah emuna-techa**

**"I thank You ever living King,
for compassionately returning my soul to me,
how great is Your faithfulness"**

In the Hebraic perspective ... the very act of awakening represents a gift from G_D and sets the tone by which "yom hazeh" (this day) will be conducted. In the Hebraic perspective G_D is in control and the central focus of life ... in all aspects. In fact, as this prayer suggests, the very awakening represents a quickening of sorts wherein a lifeless (unconscious) person is once again instilled with the breath of life from G_D and the reality is we have no power of our own to guarantee that we do awake! Hence the blessing for the return of our cognitive essence.

On a more historical note however Jewish scholars and sages over the millennia have discerned that the key to prayer lies in the very root of the Hebrew word for prayer itself – "tephilla". The root of "tephilla" is "palal". This word root means "to judge, discern, differentiate, clarify and decide." In other words, prayer is the means by which the believer's own will comes to discern, clarify and differentiate G_D's will ... from their own. Conversely it would also appear that in the act of "tephilla" G_D also judges and discerns the heart of the one praying ... hmmm!

We pray so that we can be changed by our own musings and words, so that we can through our own speech and resonance better understand how to be transformed into G_D's likeness. We pray so that we can develop true perceptions about life in order that we may be prepared to receive what G_D's will is for us. We pray in order to fit G_D's desire ... we pray so that we can fit into G_D's plan!

According to the rabbis, prayer is less to do with what I think I want, what I think I need, or what I desire and more about communicating with G_D in a manner wherein I become pliable enough for G_D to place his will into me. The traditional Hebraic perspective is that man becomes more human through conversation with the Creator ... which leads to a better understanding of his will ... which ultimately leads us to obediently follow his Torah ... thus manifesting his desires for creation! We in essence return to the human creations we were meant to be and hopefully exercise acceptable and authoritative stewardship over G_D's creation.

Additionally within the Hebraic perspective and assuredly in Holy Scriptures itself there are scores of words that are associated with prayer ... crying, groaning, pleading, shouting, praising, jumping, contemplating ... on and on. Consequently from a Hebraic perspective prayer is not always a neat and clean formulaic recitation ... we simply need look to the Psalms to confirm this evident truth. Prayer can be getting deep into the weeds with one's inner most essence and hoping to meld this connection with G_D Himself! When we ponder the Psalms we should be connecting with the hearts of the Psalmist. Yes the words are inspiring ... but much more so when we realize the deep emotional connection in which the Psalmists are praying.

We also need to keep in mind that there are core Hebrew ritual prayers which in many respects encapsulate Israel's understanding of and relationship with G_D. Through review of these core traditional Jewish prayers we can peer into the mind of ancient Israel as we seek to

garner a greater understanding of how the Hebraic perspective approaches prayer, faith and belief.

Additionally we will also conduct a review of Hebrew prayer in a renewed covenant perspective; in a Yeshua (Jesus) perspective ... seeking to understand the impacts upon Hebraic prayer responsive to the great Messianic Mission!

Shalom Aleichem

P. R. Otokletos

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Prayer - A Traditional Hebraic Perspective

The Sh'ma (Shema)

If one accepts the Traditional and Messianic Hebraic perspective that deep within the Sacred Shabbat is encapsulated the quintessence of the relationship between G_D and Israel - between G_D and humanity ... then it might be worth pondering the importance and relevance of the foremost cited and revered traditional Hebrew prayer ... generally referred to as the “Shema/V’ahavta” in as much that this prayer has come to serve as the foundational Jewish profession of faith and prayer life ... and as will be seen so very much more!

It must be noted that the Shema is an aggregation of a few key Scripture passages found within the Tanakh (so called Christian Old Testament) ... which include the “Shema/V’ahavta” (Deuteronomy 6:4–9) ... The “V’haya im shamo’a” (Deuteronomy 11:13-21) ... and “Vayomer” (Numbers 15:37–41) respectively. The complete prayer is provided below herein!

(Note: Unlike the English language and transliterated text below herein the actual Hebrew text is read "right to left".)

| |
|---|
| Sh'ma V'ahavta Deuteronomy 6:4-9 |
| שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד: <i>Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Elohaynu Adonai Echad.</i> Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. |
| n an undertone: בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: <i>Barukh Shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va-ed</i> Blessed be His Name and His glorious kingdom for ever and ever |
| וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ: <i>V-shavta et Adonai Elohecha, b-chol l'vavcha/u-v-chol naf'sh'cha/u-v-chol m'odecha.</i> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. |
| וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶנִּי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לְבָבְךָ: <i>V-hayu ha-d'varim ha-syleh/asher anochi m/itzav'cha ha-gom/al l'vavecha.</i> And you shall have these words that command you today shall be in your heart. |

וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם לְבַנְיֵי הַדִּבְרֹת בָּם
בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:

V-shinantam l-vanecha v-dibarta bam

b-shivt'cha b-vaytecha u-v-lecht'cha ba-derech, u-v-shachb'cha u-v-kumecha.

And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.

וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם לָאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:

U-k'shartam l'ot al yadecha,, v-hayu l-totsfot bayn aynecha.

And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

וְכָתַבְתֶּם עַל מְזוֹזֹת בַּיְתְּךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

U-chtavtam al m'zuzot baytecha u-vi-sharecha.

And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

V'haya im shamo'a -Deuteronomy 11:13-21

וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַעַתְּ שְׁמֵעוּ אֶל מִצְוֹתַי
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לָאֱהָבָה אֹת יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
וּלְעַבְדוֹ בְּכֹל לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכֹל נַפְשְׁכֶם:

V-haya im shamo'a tish'mu el mitzvotai

asher anochi m'tzaveh etchem ha-yom, l-ahavah et Adonai Elohaychem,

u-l-avdo b-chol l'vavchem u-v-chol nafsh'chem.

And it shall come to pass if you surely listen to the commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul,

וְנָתַתִּי מִטַּר אֶרְצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ
וְאַסְפֹּת דְגָנְךָ וְתִירֹשְׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ:

V-natati m'tar artzchem b-ito, yoreh u-malkosh;

v-asafta d'ganecha, v-tirosh'cha v-yitzharecha.

that I will give rain to your land, the early and the late rains, that you may gather in your grain, your wine and your oil.

וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדְךָ לְבַהֲמֹתֶיךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ:

V-natati aysev b-sad'cha li-b'hem'techa; v-achalta v-savata.

And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle and you will eat and you will be satisfied.

הִשְׁמְרוּ לְכֶם פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם
וְסָרְתֶם וְעַבַדְתֶם אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרַיִם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם:

Hishamru lachem, pen yifteh l'avchem,

v-sartem va-avadtem elohim achayrim, v-hishtachavitem lahem.

Beware, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn and serve other gods, and worship them.

וְחָרָה אַף יי בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מָטָר
וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת יְבוּלָהּ
וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יי נָתַן לְכֶם:

V-charah af Adonai bachem, v-atzar et ha-shamayim v-lo yihyeh matar,

v-ha-adama lo titayn et y'vulah;

va-avadtem m'hayrah mayal ha-aretz ha-tovah asher Adonai notayn lachem.

And anger of the Lord will blaze against you, and he will close the heavens and there will not be rain, and the earth will not give you its fullness, and you will perish quickly from the good land that the Lord gives you.

וְשָׂמִיתֶם אֶת דִּבְרֵי אֵלֶּה עַל לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל נַפְשְׁכֶם
וְקִשְׂרִיתֶם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם:

V-sam'tem et d'varai ayleh al l'avchem v-al naf'sh'chem;

u-kshartem otam l-ot al yedchem, v-hayu ltotafot bayn agnaychem.

So you shall put these, my words, on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them for signs on your hands, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

וְלַמַּדְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם לְדָבָר בָּם
בְּשִׁבְתְּכֶם בְּבֵיתְכֶם וּבְלֶכְתְּכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּכֶם וּבְקוּמְכֶם:

V-limadtem otam et b'naychem l-daber bam

b-shivt'cha b-vaytecha, u-v-lecht'cha baderech, u-v-shachb'cha u-v-kumecha.

And you shall teach them to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

וְכָתַבְתֶּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בַּיְתְּכֶם וּבְשַׁעְרֵיכֶם:

U-ch'tavtam al m'zuzot baytecha u-vi-sharecha.

And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיְמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יי
לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם לָתֵת לָהֶם כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל הָאָרֶץ:

L'ma'an yirbu y'maychem vi-y'may v'naychem al ha-adamah asher nishba Adonai

la-avotaychem latayt lahem ki-y'may ha-shamayim al ha-aretz.

In order to prolong your days and the days of your children on the land that the Lord promised your fathers that he would give them, as long as the days that the heavens are over the earth.

Vayomer – Numbers 15:37-41

וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
Vayomer Adonai el Mosheh laymor.
And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying...

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם
וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל כַּנְּפֵי בְּגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם
וְנָתַנּוּ עַל צִיצִית הַכַּנָּף פִּתִּיל תְּכֵלֶת:
Daber el b'nay Yisrael v-amarta alayhem,
v-asu lahem tzitzit al can'fay vi-g'dayhem l-dorotam,
v-natnu al tzitzit ha-canaf p'til t'chaylet.

Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, they should make themselves tzitzit (fringes) on the corners of their clothing throughout their generations, and give the tzitzit of each corner a thread of blue.

וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת יְיָ
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם
וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֹתָם זָנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם:
V-hayah lachem l-tzitzit, u-r'iytem oto u-z'chartem et kol mitzvot Adonai,
va-asiytem otam v-lo taturu acharay l-vavchem
v-acharay aynaychem, asher atem zonim acharaychem.

And they shall be tzitzit for you, and when you look at them you will remember all of the Lord's commandments and do them and not follow after your heart and after your eyes, which lead you astray.

לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי וְהִייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם:
L'ma-an tiz'k'ru v-asitem et kol mitzvotai, vi-h'iyitem k'doshim laylohaychem.
In order to remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.

אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם
לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
Ani Adonai Elohaychem, asher hotzaytiy etchem mayeretz Mitzrayim,
li-h'yot lahem laylohim. Ani Adonai Elohaychem.
I am the Lord, your God, who lead you from the land of Egypt
to be a god to you. I am the Lord, your God. Ahmein!

So what then is this “Shema” prayer all about and why is it so vitally important to Israel in the original Hebraic perspective? To begin let us look at Deuteronomy 6:4-9 ... we should see how it begins with the critical Hebrew word Shema ... which means:

#8085 שָׁמָּה shama' (shaw-mah')

a primitive root; TWOT - 2412, 2412a

v

1) to hear, listen to, obey

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to hear (perceive by ear)

1a2) to hear of or concerning

1a3) to hear (have power to hear)

1a4) to hear with attention or interest, listen to

1a5) to understand (language)

1a6) to hear (of judicial cases)

1a7) to listen, give heed

1a7a) to consent, agree

1a7b) to grant request

1a8) to listen to, yield to

1a9) to obey, be obedient

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) to be heard (of voice or sound)

1b2) to be heard of

1b3) to be regarded, be obeyed

1c) (Piel) to cause to hear, call to hear, summon

1d) (Hiphil)

1d1) to cause to hear, tell, proclaim, utter a sound

1d2) to sound aloud (musical term)

1d3) to make proclamation, summon

1d4) to cause to be heard

n m

2) sound

As should be seen the prayer thus starts out with an axiomatic mandate to listen up and take to your very deepest inside human element the truth that Israel's G_D is ADONAI (The LORD in Hebrew) ... he stands alone above all else ... he is the very essence of all that is!

We see where this truth is not just about some mere mental affirmation ... the prayer represents a mandate for every individual to take this very truth into the heart. Take this truth and make it a way of life ... having this truth and having it manifest at all times ... being single minded in the ways of G_D ... having this truth and passing it down faithfully from generation to generation ... having this truth guide our very existence and finally having this truth formally codified by marking the house and gates of our dwellings!

What we see in the "Shema" is essentially the core element of Israel's Kingdom Constitution. Contained within the Shema we see essentially what being a Jew is all about ... being a person that is in a relationship with the living G_D ... a person that is single-mindedly aligned with G_D ... a person that is a member of Kingdom Israel. Hence we should gain valuable insights into the essential nature and importance of what "Shema Yisrael" means to a faithful Jewish person ... to the faithful Jew there is no existence without Shema Yisrael!

On a deeper and more complex note please be aware that within the Sacred Texts there are two larger-print letters in the first sentence ...



The 'ayin ע in the word shema and the daleth ד in the word echad which, when combined, spell "עד" pronounced "ed" which in Hebrew means "witness".

The idea thus conveyed is that through the recitation or professing of the Shema, one is a living witness testifying to the truth of its message! Clearly the underlying importance of this declaration, yea this entire expounding of Torah, from Moses was well understood in the Hebraic culture! When this little piece of information is coupled with the fact that "the people" ("haAM") are most often communally referred to as "haEDAH" ... "the witnesses", we should begin to get a clearer picture of the Jewish mindset! Or at least one can hope as much!

So then ... we hopefully should recognize how important the "Shema" is to Israel and understand why a faithful Jew is expected (according to the sages) to recite the prayer minimally twice a day ... when you arise and when you lie down to sleep. But beyond sheer testimony to this truth let us consider if we do not already know ... how the recitation of the Shema can be representative of an individual offering up the twice daily communal "burnt offering" to ADONAI in accordance with the Holy Service conducted within the Temple.

It certainly goes without question that the Jewish sages discerned the connection between "prayer" and the "holy service" (avodah). Although it is the duty and privilege of the priests to present the olah (whole burnt offering) sacrifices to G_D ... we see where these same sages envisioned how every Jew spiritually and ritually participated as it pertains to presenting the "olah" to G_D ... as it pertains to presenting the singular sacrifice that is symbolic of the unique covenantal relationship between G_D and community Israel.

For those not aware of the "olah" it literally means that which "goes up" ... or "ascending" ... or perhaps in some manner we can visualize the rising pleasing aroma making an "aliyah" to G_D. Unlike other specific sacrifices (peace, guilt, sin, etc.) within the Holy Service, the "olah"

has been discerned to be the sacrifice that is given completely to G_D ... a whole burnt offering ... an offering of simple and complete dedication to G_D on behalf of Kingdom Israel.

Moving along ... the V'haya im shamo'a - Deuteronomy 11:13-21 portion of the prayer presents us with a little bit of different dynamic in that the prayer now moves further towards a communal/national/kingdom perspective and does so clearly within the auspices of the Everlasting Covenant and the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ... (the Patriarchs).

We see clearly where there are continued blessings associated with heart felt compliance to G_D's commandments - G_D's Torah and conversely we see where there are harsh penalties if Kingdom Israel wavers in their faith. Consequently this portion of the prayer brings to mind the great promises to Israel ... their inheritance ... their blessings! But also the responsibilities associated with being the chosen people Israel ... the children of the covenant.

It must be remembered that Israel was raised up by G_D to serve him as the mechanism for restoration of his creation. Israel by design is intended to stand in the gap for the nations ... to be the light to the nations and therefore manifest G_D's glorious character and benevolence upon the Earth. This portion of the prayer calls into mind the responsibility of Nation Israel and just as well forewarns Israel what becomes of them if they forsake their covenantal charter!

Sh'mot/Exodus (19:4-6) Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will hearken unto my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own treasure from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.'

Vaikra/Leviticus (20:22-24) Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all mine ordinances, and do them, that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, vomit you not out. And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I am casting out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. But I have said unto you: 'Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the LORD your G_D, who have set you apart from the peoples.

Devarim/Deuteronomy (4:5-8) Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as the LORD my G_D commanded me, that ye should do so in the midst of the land whither ye go

in to possess it. Observe therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there, that hath G_D so nigh unto them, as the LORD our G_D is when so ever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

Isaiah (56:4-7) For thus says the LORD concerning the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast by my covenant: Even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a monument and a memorial better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting memorial, that shall not be cut off. Also the aliens, that join themselves to the LORD, to minister unto him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keeps the Sabbath from profaning it, and holds fast by my covenant: Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

Hopefully we can see the relevance and importance of the V'haya im shamo'a portion of this great Hebrew prayer. We see in this portion of the prayer where G_D has established the chosen peoples' purpose in the great restoration plan. G_D did not redeem Israel simply to raise up the Jewish people. G_D raised up the Jewish people so that "all nations" would be drawn into G_D's glorious light! G_D desired that Israel would flourish within the auspices of the Everlasting Covenant and all other nations would marvel at Israel's success and be drawn to the source of their blessings and goodness ... G_D Himself!

When faithful Jews recite this portion of the prayer it is hoped that their thoughts are drawn to the promises made by G_D and just as well the great commission they were given by G_D and their communal responsibilities ... to their homeland-Israel ... and to all the nations of the Earth.

The final component of the prayer consists of the Vayomer - Numbers 15:37-41 segment wherein we see ADONAI's great exhortation to Israel ... "Be holy for ADONAI is holy" ... but clearly G_D does so while making Israel understand that conforming to his holiness is not something that is innate to a fallen humanity ... even the chosen people Israel. Herein we see

G_D clearly define the propensity of fallen man and the need to be constantly reminded of this propensity.

But there is more going on here as well. Within vayomer we must realize that the command to wear tzitzit (fringes) on their clothing is also a tangible means of separation between the ways of this temporal world ... olam hazeh ... and the ways of ADONAI! In many respects the tzitzit represent the most visible and tangible testimony of either being with G_D ... or with the world.

Additionally ... despite the poor English translation it should be noted that the Hebrew word "zonim" literally translates as whore. So in actuality within this portion of the prayer it is considered by traditional Judaism to represent that unique Biblical dynamic between G_D and Israel ... between Husband and Wife ... wherein G_D views Israel's unfaithfulness in the same way a husband views a wife's sexual infidelity.

Shema Conclusion

As is often the case with commentaries provided on these diverse and in many ways complex matters ... the information provided is done so necessarily at a fairly high level ... hopefully depicting some major points worth noting. Quite frankly a comprehensive study on the Shema by itself could entail books if we wanted to really delve into the nuances of the Hebrew language and the comprehensive writings of the Jewish sages.

What is important however is for us to gain an appreciation for the importance of this "Shema" prayer from a Hebraic perspective! It is important that we know about Shema Israel because this prayer is fundamental to the Jewish people ... fundamental to the Hebrew Faith ... fundamental to all believers in the G_D of Israel ... including the Gentiles!

In just these few brief pages of review we should realize just how essential this Shema prayer is to the Jewish people. We should readily see how this prayer broadly incorporates the following:

- The testimony that the G_D of Israel is the only G_D and he has determined to make known his glory through the chosen people Israel;

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