



בית כנסת בית ישראל
Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael

**Dvar torah on
Parshat HaShavua by
Rabbi Chanoch Yeres
to his community**

Graciously shared with Philo-Torah

**SH'MA YISRAEL HASHEM ELOKEINU
HASHEM ECHAD, "Hear O Israel,
HaShem our G-d, HaShem is One"
(D'varim 6: 4).**

What does this well-known verse mean? Why is it found placed between two psukim discussing the importance of Eretz Yisrael?

Most Jewish people have heard this prayer, no matter what their background is. The Midrash emphasis this as a statement of faith. He who is now accepted as G-d by Israel will one day be accepted by the entire world. By reiterating our acceptance of the yoke of the heavenly kingdom, we admit taking responsibility in spreading His message of monotheism, by being a "light unto nations".

Our early prophets regard this role only possible via our living in Eretz Yisrael. "From Zion shall come forth the Torah and the word of G-d from Yerushalayim. (Yishayahu 2:3)

That being said, I once heard from a prominent Rabbi that perhaps we can begin to understand the placement of another pasuk in this parsha of Vaetchanan. Moshe pleads to be

given another chance and to see "the good land that is beyond the Jordan, the goodly mountain region and Lebanon" (3:25)

Our Rabbis felt that Moshe's request was more than just a personal dream come true. As Rav Simlai in The Gemara Sota (14a) asks "was Moshe's desire to enter the land just to eat its fruits or good bounty?" Rather, Moshe spoke differently. "Israel was commanded many commandments which cannot be completely fulfilled, unless present in the Land of Israel. I wish to enter the Land so that all of them may be fulfilled by me." Rav Simlai probably understood that Moshe's desire was to fulfill the ultimate vision of the Torah - the same goal as the Sh'ma - which is to bring awareness of the word of G-d (His commandments) to the entire world. This goal can only be reached from inside the Land of Eretz Yisrael. Around 2000 years after Moshe's demise, another cried out the words of "Sh'ma Yisrael". Rabbi Akiva, while being tortured by the Roman occupiers, here in Israel, called out with his last breath "Sh'ma Yisrael". Perhaps Rabbi Akiva was teaching the generations the true message of Judaism - not only to survive but to redeem. Our ability to redeem is only when we continue living G-d's word in G-d's land.

This Shabbat is called Shabbat Nachamu - The Shabbat of Comfort, which follows the three weeks of mourning of the destruction of the Temple, culminating with Tish'a b'Av.

Moshe begs to enter the land because he knows that we, as a nation, are only complete under G-d's words of the Torah. However, it is more than just a struggle for survival, rather it's a perpetual path for Redemption that can only be successfully reached while dwelling in our perpetual Homeland of Eretz Yisrael.

With the destruction of the Temple in our past, we move forward living and building the State of Israel so that final Redemption can be reached and bring health, security, peace , mercy and justice to the entire world.