

PARSHAT NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH  
DEUTERONOMY 29:9-31:30  
HAFTARAH ISAIAH 61:10-63:9  
23 ELUL 5784/26 SEPTEMBER 2024



*Rough Sea*

Oil on canvass by Joseph Mallord William Turner

### UNFINISHED WORK

1. “Now, write this song (*shira*) down and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths in order that this song should be a witness for me among the people of Israel.” (Deuteronomy 31:19)
2. “This song” means from” Give ear, O heavens” to “and He will appease His land and His people” [Deuteronomy 32:1-43].” (Rashi)

Each person must write a Torah scroll, as it is written: ““Now, write for yourselves this song and teach it to the children of Israel.” (Sanhedrin 21b)

“Teach it to the Israelites” – this is Scripture; “put it in their mouths” – these are the *halachot*. (Scholion, commentary to Megillat Ta’anit)

3. Judaism is a religion of words, and yet whenever the language of Judaism aspires to be spiritual it breaks into song, as if the words themselves sought to escape from the gravitational pull of finite meanings. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)

4. There is a distinction between poetry and prose. In poetry the subject matter is not plainly set forth as in prose. Additional explanations are necessary in order to indicate the allusions condensed into each expression. Such is the nature of Torah. Its story is not elaborated. It requires additional explanations in order to appreciate its allusions. (Netziv, 1817-1893)
5. I have never started a poem yet whose end I knew. Writing a poem is discovering. (Robert Frost)