

Shiur L'Yom Shishi¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah Yitro:** **Exodus 20:1-23**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 7:1-6; 9:6-7**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Peter 2:8-10**

All the people witnessed the thunderings

[Exodus 20:18a]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 34:15-22;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 14: *Modim Anachnu* [We Give Thanks]

Vayedaber Elohim et kol-ha-devarim ha-eleh l'emor – And the Creator spoke all these substantive declarations, saying ... *Anochi Adonai Eloheicha* - I am the Holy One your God Exodus 20:1-2a.

We have seen a number of amazing things since Moshe watched a thorn bush spontaneously combust. We have seen signs and wonders galore. We have looked on in stunned silence as plagues devastated the most powerful nation on earth. We have seen a Sea split in twain before our eyes - and marveled as we walked right through its deepest depths dry-shod. We have seen manna fall from Heaven to feed us. We have seen inexhaustible fountains of living water gush from a rock to quench our thirst. Awesome stuff, right?

As wonderful as all that has been, however, it was only the 'lead-in' for what we will see today. What we will see today will make all the other things seem like child's play. Today the Manifest Presence of the Creator of the Universe will descend on a mountain. Today the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov will display His glory to millions of human beings simultaneously. Today the Holy One of Israel is going to release pulsing waves of 'Thunder Speak' in the hearing of multitudes. Today we will finally learn the stunning truth about what the 'Great Nation' calling of Avraham's seed is really all about.

Not since the foundation of Gan Eden have the *ha-shamayim* [i.e. the heavens] and *ha-aretz* [i.e. the earth] realms of Creation been so close in alignment. We can palpably feel the cleansing, purifying, empowering energy of the Heavens flowing usward. We can hear Heaven's sounds; we can smell Heaven's scents; and we can feel the powerful pull of Heaven's magnetism.

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We have done what we could to prepare for this moment. We have humbled ourselves and prayed. We have self-denied for days in every way imaginable. We have tried to eliminate every spot, stain, wrinkle, and blemish that might hinder us from entering into Covenant with our Creator. We have put on fresh, stone-washed garments. Now our appointed hour to respond to the weightiest invitation ever issued, and present ourselves to the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov as His next-generation covenant partners, has come at last.

The *chuppah* where we are to commit our troth to our Bridegroom King is ready. Though we number in the millions, and each one of us has a unique story to tell of how he or she got here, at this moment we are all one. All any of us can think about is: Our Deliverer is coming to visit us! We will see Him with our own eyes – and will hear His Voice with our own ears! He will speak - and we will *sh'ma* ... or WON'T WE?

Be Still, Wildly Beating Hearts! This is REAL! Are you Ready?

Is this really happening? We know we are unworthy. We know that the Holy One deserves so much better than anything we can give him. But we are what we are – so ... *here goes!* Our Bridegroom-King knows what He is doing, even if we don't. He knows exactly what He is getting Himself - and us – into. Though we are dark, He nonetheless sees us as lovely. It is almost impossible for us to imagine - but that doesn't matter now, does it? Our time for imagining has run out. The first day of something far too big and life-changing for us to possibly understand has begun. As we read yesterday:

*... there were thunderings and lightnings, and a dark cloud on the mountain;
and there was a sound of a very loud shofar,
so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.*

*Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Holy One descended upon it in fire.
Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace,
and the whole mountain quaked greatly.
And the blast of the shofar sounded long and became louder and louder*

[Exodus 19:16, 18]

This is *the day*; this is *the hour*; and this is *the moment* for which the Holy One has been planning since the foundation of the world. This is what He had in mind when He sent Adam and Chava out of the Garden; when He dispersed the nations at Babel; when He issued His *Lech Lecha* call to Avraham; when He put His right Hand of blessing on Yosef and His left Hand of guidance and protection on Moshe. Everything He has ever done He has done with this in mind. The Great Cloud of witnesses has assembled. The Bridegroom has bidden us 'come'.

The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of

What is about happen next upon this Glorious Mountain is ... well, it is indeed *the*

stuff dreams are made of. We will see shooting flames (like tongues) of fire issuing forth from the cloud like lightning. We will therefore both see and hear the Voice of the Creator of the Universe. Then the Voice that we agreed to sh'ma in the aliyah we read on Wednesday [see Exodus 19:8] will proclaim over us the ten most basic characteristics of the Bride we have agreed to become. This will be the Discourse of our Prophetic Destiny. From the youngest to the oldest among us we will all finally hear with our own ears the Voice about which Moshe has been telling us for so long. And then our spiritual DNA will be changed forever as words from the Throne of Heaven pierce the air and implant themselves permanently into our individual and collective souls.

It's Only Words ... Or IS IT?

Do not fall into the trap of thinking of the words that were spoken from Heaven on the day of our Betrothal as a list of 'commandments'. That English phrase does not begin to capture the essence of these words. Every Hebrew letter the Holy One vocalizes, every syllable the Holy One pronounces, and every word the Holy One utters is pulsing with both *prophetic* and *creative* power. Remember what happened in connection with the '**Light, BE!**' declaration of Genesis 1:3. Light did not *obey a commandment*; instead *Light was prophetically empowered to appear in the world by an outburst of Divine Energy*. Picture in your mind *the greatest solar flare* in history. Now imagine the energy released into our solar system by that solar flare magnified to the 100,000th power. Do you have the picture? Good. Now understand that the massive quantity of energy you were just thinking about *does not even come close to the energy released by Divine speech*. Now let's leave our solar system totally and focus on the vast regions of outer space. Imagine the largest supernova that has ever occurred anywhere in the universe. Take the energy that was released by that supernova and intensify it 100 million times - and you still get only a rough idea the kind of power release I am talking about.

Whenever the Holy One speaks, you see, energy far surpassing all the solar flares and supernovas in history is released into the world. The result is that all Creation instantly begins to scramble, and rearrange, to line up with His Word. Now do you understand why it says in Isaiah 55:10-11 that *His Words do not return to Him 'void' – i.e. empty, without accomplishing the purpose for which they were uttered?* There may be many impediments and obstacles encountered as all the elements of creation scramble to line up with the words spoken by the Holy One, but those impediments and obstacles *only postpone the inevitable*. The Holy One's Word, once spoken, ABSOLUTELY WILL BE FULFILLED. That is not because people *decide they will be good*, and do/obey what they are 'commanded'. That is not the way it was designed to work, nor the way it works. The Holy One's Word is fulfilled for one reason and one reason only - because *His Word is in itself a*

creative force more powerful than any force on earth or in creation, and is more than powerful enough to accomplish everything His Voice declares - whether we will it or decide to cooperate with it or not.

The Holy One's Protocols of Prophetic Empowerment

I will not, in these studies, call the passionate declarations spoken over us by the Bridegroom King on Mt. Sinai 'commandments'. I will instead call them '*prophetic empowerments*'². As you read each of them, I urge you to consider the words you read as the equivalent of "***Light, BE!***" – *but addressed specifically to you*. You are the *Light of the world*. Do you consider yourself to be commanded to be the light of the world – or do you consider yourself to be empowered to be the light of the world? The answer should clearly be the latter. The utterances of the Living God are *the energy source through which you and I produce the light*³.

What is the assigned purpose of the Holy One's prophetic empowerments? What is the energy of His Words released for? Consider Ephesians 5:25, where Shaul of Tarsus admonished husbands to love their wives in a very unusual manner. He told men to love their wives "*... as Mashiach also loved the k'hillah and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her, with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious k'hillah, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish ...*" How can mere words sanctify and cleanse and wash, you ask? How can mere words remove spots and wrinkles and blemishes from a Bride? How can words empower? Oh, we all know that words can *motivate*, of course. We all know that words can *inspire*. We even know that words can *wound*. But can words really totally transform *a human being from the inside out*? They can *if they are the words of the Living God*. The words of the Living God, you see, are not 'mere words'. The words of the Living God are *DIVINE ENERGY*. Can words really renew the fallen human mind and recombine fallen human DNA to form a new creation? They can if they constitute *empowerments* instead of *commandments*. The words of Divine Speech are intended – and effective - for the sanctification and cleansing and washing of His Bride. Their primary assigned purpose is not to convict, to accuse, or to command. Their primary purpose is to *awaken, inspire, and empower*.

² The prophetic edge to these words means that our mission and purpose in life is to grow, expand, and increase in the characteristics the Holy One has spoken over us, just as every universe in Creation constantly grows, expands, and increases in the characteristics spoken over it in Creation Week. Each of the prophetic words the Holy one has spoken in the Torah empowers us to fix some aspect of ourselves, some aspect of the community of man, and some aspect of Creation that was adversely affected by the sin of Adam and Chava in the garden.

³ This is not in any way to leave Messiah out of the equation. Messiah is the bow in the cloud from which the words emanate. It is He Who focuses and directs the light and shines it where He wishes it to shine.

Prophetic Empowerment No. 1: “I, Adonai, am YOUR God ...”

A hush falls over the mountain. A roaring sound like that of a mighty rushing wind begins to engulf us. A sweet fragrance fills the air. A sense of awe brings us to complete attention. All eyes are fixed on the Fire that is burning on top of the Mountain. Our hearts begin to pound. Beads of nervous perspiration begin to form. We feel like we may burst into flame or disintegrate into dust at any moment. What will be the first words that He will speak to us? What will the sound of the Voice of this One Who spoke Creation into existence *do* to us – inside us - when we hear it? We do not have to wait long to find out. We thought the Trump was loud! The next sound we hear makes the Trump seem like a mother’s lullaby! From everywhere, it seems – both from the Heaven above us and from the earth around us and from deep inside us and from deep inside all of our neighbors - comes the most amazing, transforming sound that anyone could imagine. The sound of His Voice resounds. The earth shakes. The mountains tremble. The trees clap their hands. The waters billow and dance.

The Voice of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth literally fills *the air*. It sets *our ears*, and *our eyes*, and *our souls off in sympathetic vibration with its frequency and in perfect time with its rhythm*. All our echo chambers *resonate*. Our flesh *is a-tremble*. Our *cells dissolve and reform*. Our *chromosome threads unravel, shuffle, and reform*. It is as if *an earthquake is occurring in our innermost being*. Our spirits are leaping within us like calves released from the stall. We feel like we will take off and fly! And then we begin to catch and absorb in our consciousness the content of what His Voice is communicating deep within us. Did we really hear what we thought we heard? Yes, we did. We heard the Most Glorious Voice in the Universe declare, directly to us:

Anochi Adonai Eloheicha

I, the Holy One am your God

asher hotzeticha me'ereetz Mitzrayim mibeit avadim

Who has brought you forth from the land of Egypt, from the bondage house

Moshe has come to know the sound of the Voice of our Bridegroom very well in the months since the burning bush encounter. But now we – a gaggle of former slaves - have the privilege of hearing the Most Beautiful Voice Ever speak directly to us for the first time. He *had us at **Anochi Adonai Eloheicha!***

The first words we heard the Holy One speak were to our spirits what ***Light – Be!*** was to the primordial goo of Creation. This was to our souls what ***Be Fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it*** was to the first man. We must remember to breathe. We must not faint. We must push through the sensation of overwhelm. We must resist the temptation to run away, to find a tree behind which to hide, and to

cover ourselves in fig leaves. We must stand - and *sh'ma*. We must not miss a single moment of this bliss. Be still, oh trembling hearts! This is the day for which we were born, and the hour for which we were redeemed. Our identity is being restored. Our mission is being declared. Our destiny is being revealed. But what a paradigm-shifting message our Bridegroom-King's first words to us entail. He started it all off by declaring *Who He is* - because *Who He is* defines who we are to become. He declared *that He is ours* - because *the stunning fact that He is ours determines whose we will forever be*.

The Holy One did not stop there, of course. He proceeded to declare *what He has done for us*, because *what He has done for us defines what we are called to co-labor with Him in doing for others*. His intentions are honorable – indeed delightful. He is not angry – either at us, or at humankind, or at the world. He is not out to hurt us – or anyone. He has no desire to punish anyone. He is not disdainful or critical or judgmental of us. Nor is He distant, aloof, and/or unapproachable as we had thought. Much less is He apathetic, disinterested, and/or uninvolved as we had feared. Moreover, nothing about what He is saying over us is conditional upon our performance. He starts from the premise that *He is OUR God, and we are HIS people*. That is His foundational Covenant Lifestyle Declaration. That is the first and essential element of our new creation identity, of our new creation mission, and our new creation destiny. We do not have to do anything to earn that relationship. The relationship is offered as a Divine gift. It is only the *enjoyment by us of that gift in real time* that is in any way conditional upon our responsiveness to His empowering words.

In order to maximize the relationship opportunities we have been given we are not best served by merely *hearing* or *agreeing theoretically with the wisdom of* the words our Maker has spoken. We are best served by allowing our thoughts, speech, actions and priorities to be *changed* by His words. We are to let them flood over and into and through us like an immense tidal wave. We are to allow ourselves to be *consumed by* them in real time. One by one, family-by-family, clan-by-clan, all throughout the camp we are to surrender to being knocked off our feet and swept away in the backwash. We are to yield to the energy of His words until we are made over into exactly what His Words say we are.

His Words stimulate our every nerve ending. They make our eardrums and diaphragms quiver at the frequency they emanate. They displace the air in our lungs. They quicken the pulsing of the blood in our veins. They change our DNA. The effect these words have on us is *intensely personal – yet it is also corporate*. Perhaps, most important, *it is FOREVER*.

Has it begun to sink into your mind, heart and soul yet? He will *always be* – and *over the years of our lives and those of our children and children’s children, generation after generation, will increasingly be revealed as* – our God. He has bound Himself by Covenant to *always be about the business of bringing us – and our children, and our children’s children, generation after generation, forth out of the slave markets and bondage houses of this world!* All He wants is a Covenant Partner to work with Him to accomplish His goal of *redeeming mankind to his original Adamic innocence and restoring Creation to its intended Edenic state of Beauty, Fruitfulness, and Shalom.*

The Fundamental Principle Underlying it All:

It’s All About a Deep, Abiding Covenant Relationship Like a Marriage

The ***Anochi Adonai Eloheicha*** [I, the Holy One, am your God...] declaration constituted *far more than a mere self-introduction*. All the Holy One’s words are like *zarah* [seed] – these are no exception. These words are not ‘orders’ from on High. They do not resemble the Decree of a King or Judge. They are not the instructions of a Master. They are not even the directions of a Shepherd. No, the message He speaks over us through these all-important first words is the kind of message a Bridegroom coos lovingly to His Beloved as He spreads His tallit over her and invites her to drink from His Cup, eat from His Table, and co-labor with Him to build a kingdom. These words contain *vast reservoirs of potential energy* - an energy that promises cycle after cycle of life, health, and blessing that will keep producing a harvest of righteousness in us year after year, *generation after generation, and age unto Age*. Through these words the greatest prophetic, creative force in the universe is being *implanted in our hearts, minds, souls, spirits, and DNA*.

The surge of Divine Energy the Holy One is releasing over us carries with it the seed of *the truth that what we were born for, redeemed for, and brought into His Courts to experience is not primarily a mission, but is instead an eternal, intimate, ever-deepening covenant RELATIONSHIP*. He has declared us to be not mere citizens of His creation but *dearly beloved companions* – intimate friends with whom He is very closely associated historically, intellectually, and emotionally.

The Holy One has started off the Divine Betrothal Covenant Ceremony by advising us that the *most basic, fundamental and elementary principle* of all in our covenant must be that our relationship is based upon *yada* – *intimate knowledge gained through personal encounter and experience*. We are not first and foremost servants of a Divine Master. We are not first and foremost soldiers of a Divine King. We are not even first and foremost sons and daughters of a Divine Father. We are, first and foremost, the *chosen Bride of a Divine Bridegroom*. This means

that the betrothal that the Holy One is going to be contracting with us at Sinai is not going to be a matter of ‘*law giving*’ – it is, instead, going to be the *birthing in our spirits of the capacity to enjoy a living, breathing relationship with the Creator of the Universe*, based upon the *reality* that the covenant partner of Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya’akov, and Yosef, is *our* God, and is *our covenant partner* just as He was theirs. Our relationship will therefore always be based upon our *knowing* and *acknowledging* Him for Who He is, and for what He has done for us.

With the first prophetic empowerment He spoke over us under the Glorious Chuppah of Betrothal the Holy One branded us as His – and assured that we will – generation after generation – see Him not as a *cruel taskmaster* but as a **GLORIOUS DELIVERER**. We have now been prophetically empowered *to pursue and constantly build upon and deepen the relationship*. The seed of that truth of special relationship has now been implanted deep within us. We will from this point forward begin to see ourselves – and our children and children’s children – primarily in light of *that primary truth*.

We thus begin the adventure of life pursuant to the Sinaitic covenant with the fundamental assurance that we do not have to do anything to either *win our Divine Bridegroom’s favor* or *earn His love* – because long before we ever got to this mountain, through no effort or our own, we *captured His Heart with one glance of our eyes*, and *He inscribed our names on the palms of His Hand*. The fundamental truth underlying the Torah we have just begun to receive, therefore is that, before we do any of it - before we conform in the slightest degree to a single prophetic empowerment – already *we are our Beloveds, and He is ours*. He wants us to know He is not just ‘God’ – He is ‘*our*’ God. He intentionally employs a forceful pronoun of possessiveness to describe His status *vis-à-vis* us. We are, as He describes it, *possessors* of Him. And He delights in the thought of increasing the closeness.

The God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov has also invited us – indeed prophetically empowered us - to consider Him ‘our’ own. That means He freely and voluntarily allows Himself to be *possessed* by us. Oh, He has not agreed to be controlled by us. Nor will He ever agree to be governed by us. Nor will He allow Himself to be *used for our own self-indulgent purposes when and if and to the extent it is convenient* – but He has agreed to be *possessed* by us nevertheless. We actually have a claim to and upon the *time* and *attention* and *affection* and *protection* and *provision* of the Creator of the Universe. That’s absolutely *scandalous*. It almost seems *blasphemous*. Just remember - I didn’t say it ... HE DID! He said: “***I am YOUR God!***” As Sh’lomo wrote in his Song of Songs, it means that *we are our Beloveds, and He is ours*.

Oh, and there is one more thing about this introductory prophetic empowerment that is just as glorious. His first words to us on this mountain are not only to establish us in relationship – they are specifically designed *to bring healing to our fractured and fragmented minds* in the area we need it most.

***He Has Empowered Us to Overcome the Dysfunction of our
Fallen Minds and Really Know Him the Way We Were Designed To***

Man was originally created with the infinite capacity to know, to meaningfully interact with, and to walk - and work effectively - alongside His Creator. That was his primary purpose. It still is. But we have a problem - we have *a disease of the mind*. We have become ‘*dumbed-down*’. Our mind is corrupted. Our thinking is futile. Though the mind of man was originally patterned after the mind of the Creator and was thus *absolutely brilliant* and *fully functional*, unfortunately the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil changed that. That fruit contained a virus of sorts. When our ancestors ate that fruit, the virus was downloaded into and infected the human mind’s *hard drive*, and ultimately corrupted not only our attitude and worldview but all our cognitive processes. In every subsequent generation this virus increased its operation, taking larger and larger bites out of our capacity to [a] know and walk with the Creator, and [b] be good stewards of life. We substituted opinions for knowledge, theories for truth, criticism for empowerment, outrage for shalom, indulging emotional responses for problem solving, depression for joy, worry for hope, and arrogance for wisdom. As a result, now – without Divine intervention - man is severely handicapped in the ability to know or walk intimately with, much less effectively serve, either the Holy One or our fellow man. Moreover, what the debacle resulting from our ancestors’ *sh’ma*-ing of the voice of another in the Garden did not do to poison our minds, our own experience of spending our critical formative years in oppressive – albeit sometimes pleasurable - cultural, emotional, and intellectual bondage has accomplished. Given over from youth to *uncleanness*, surrendered to the *indulgence of vile passions*, and *constantly immersed in depravity*, our minds have become a faint shadow of the creative, relational masterpieces they were designed to be⁴.

Our fallen human minds have therefore become dysfunctional as to the single most

⁴ See Shaul’ thorough discussion of this process in Romans 1:24-32. “*Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves. who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*”

important thing they were designed to be able to do – *i.e.* to *know the thoughts and ways of and interact meaningfully with the One Who designed and breathed life into our progenitor*. Hence in their unrenewed state our minds have no defense against the serpentine siren songs of Tower-of-Babel style idealism, of Sodom-and-Gomorrah style perversion, of Kena’ani-style avarice, Lavan’s-household style materialism, of Amaleki-style violence, and of Egyptian-style self-obsession. In its fallen state, you see, the mind of man draws its power from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil instead of from the tree of life. That means the mind of man can now comfortably interpret and process only *empirical data* – *i.e.* *what the physical eyes see and what the physical ears hear* – as same impact bodily appetites and urges such as hunger, thirst, social acceptance, *the craving to manipulate our environment*, and *voyeuristic curiosity*. That means that the human mind’s primary activity now is now self-focused and sensually oriented. That means the mind focuses its energy on the classification of people, things, and situations as ‘good’ or ‘evil’, ‘fair’ or ‘unfair’, and ‘moral’ or ‘immoral’. This leads to the obsession of our minds with the futile labor of forming and justifying of opinions, theories, philosophies, belief systems, value systems, and theologies. Since the human mind is now obsessed with the knowledge of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ it is in a constant rush to judgment. It reacts with romantic emotion to that which it, from its limited and self-interest clouded perspective, has reasoned is ‘good’ ‘fair’, ‘moral’, ‘exciting’ and ‘comfortably familiar’, and it reacts with immediate revulsion against and condemnation of anything it perceives, from its limited and self-interest clouded perspective, to be ‘evil’, ‘unfair’, ‘immoral’, ‘unexciting’, or ‘unfamiliar’.

In its fallen state our mind now must formulate a *criticism of anything it sees or hears or smells or tastes or feels that does not bring it sensual pleasure*. It now must *judge what it does not understand*. It now must *murmur and complain about things it is too dumbed-down to appreciate*. It now must *create and wallow in drama over the types of things man was designed to share with and receive handling instructions from the Holy One*.

Oh how far we have fallen from our former glorious estate! And the only cure for this disease of the human mind is a repeat of that which animated and activated that mind in the first place - *i.e.* *the very life-breath of the Creator*. See **Genesis 2:7: *And the Holy One God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being***. And where is that life-breath found? It is found in only one place - *in the words of His Mouth*. See **Deuteronomy 8:3**. His words of prophetic empowerment bring back the life-breath of His Essence to our minds. Psalm 107:20: ***He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions***. So at Sinai when the Holy One opened the Discourse of Our Prophetic

Destiny by saying *Anochi Adonai eloheicha asher hotzeticha me'erezt Mitzrayim mibeit avadim* His Breath awakened in our minds the dormant capacity both to know and experience Him for Who He truly is and to begin to finally understand who we truly are created to be. And that leads us to the next prophetic empowerment in the Betrothal protocol.

Prophetic Empowerment No. 2:

“Your Face/Focus/Attention is Intended For Me Alone!”

Even as the stunning reality of the first prophetic empowerment resonated through our minds the earth under our feet began to shake again. The Radiant Cloud above us began to rumble. Even greater gusts of wind – the breath of His Mouth - began to blow upon us. Then a *second* prophetic empowerment was spoken over us out of the Fire: *Lo yihyeh lecha elohim acherim al-p'nei* – i.e. *You will not have any “gods” after being face-to-Face with Me.*

The intimate relationship we are called to have with the Holy One is an *incredibly deep and eternally fulfilling one* – one that He chooses to describe with the Hebrew phrase *al-p'nei*, literally meaning ‘before My Face’ and/or ‘Face to face’. Our Divine Bridegroom invites us into an *al-p'nei* level of intimacy with Him. He calls us to a *baring-our-souls* and *surrendering-our-wills* level of intimacy with Him. He wants us to bring us into a *knowing-we-are-loved-and-valued-by-Him-despite-our-imperfections-and-blemishes* level of intimacy with Him. He bids us to come into His private chambers and *dine with Him*. He invites us to *consult with Him in His private office*. He asks us to *rejoice with Him in His private reflections*. He calls on us to *weep with Him over His deepest burdens*. He invites us to *learn to see our fellow men through His perfect blend of wisdom and compassion*, and to *learn to love others by watching Him love them*. He bids us to *draw near and learn from him how to steward the wonders of Creation with His tender touch by being with Him to watch what He is doing*. He invites us to learn to *place values and priorities upon things and ideas according to His eternal perspective instead of through our limited vision and corrupted passions*.

The Creator has thrown open the doors of Heaven for us to enjoy an “*I will always, always, always love you*” and “*I will never, never, never leave or forsake you*” and “*I will always seek the best for you*” and “*I will always believe the best of you*” and “*I will always bring out the best in you*” relationship with Him. *Selah!* [*Pause and spend some time meditating in wonder upon that!*] The *al-p'nei* relationship with the Creator is indeed *the stuff dreams are made of*. Along with this great privilege however comes an awesome responsibility. For this relationship to ‘work’ there has to be a passionate commitment on our part in return. In order for the relationship we are called to have with our Divine Bridegroom to be as incredibly deep and fulfilling as it is designed to be it has to be an EXCLUSIVE relationship

– like unto betrothal and marriage. No man can serve two masters, as Messiah taught, for certain; but it is even more than that. There is you see much more to the relationship that is being established than master and servant. Think of *marriage, Beloved*. Remember Genesis 2:24: *For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave only to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*. Our eyes, our affections, our hearts – and our faces - are to be only for Him.

Perhaps it will be helpful at this point for me to share with you the Rabbi's son's paraphrase of this second prophetic declaration. Here it is:

*No other principalities or dignitaries of any kind
are ever to be allowed to obscure your vision of Me
or interrupt your intimacy with Me*
[Rabbi's son paraphrase of Exodus 20:3]

We are called to be unto our Beloved *a garden for His delight alone*. We are to be a 'locked garden', a garden enclosed, His alone to *tend*, His alone to *nurture*, and His alone to *enjoy*. We are to *allow no other courtiers*. We are to *acclaim no other heroes*. We are to *pursue no other lovers*. Our sole focus is to be upon the Holy One our God. As Moshe and Yeshua would both later explain it, we are to *love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength*. **Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37; Luke 10:27.**

If He is ours, we are His. We can *never share our private garden with another*. This is absolutely *MISSION CRITICAL*. It sounds impossible, of course. But it is not. And the reason it is not impossible is because He is, by these very words of His Mouth, *empowering us* to make it happen.

The wonderful truth of ***Anochi Adonai eloheicha*** [I am yod, hey, vav, hey, your God] is that we get to look forward to, enjoy, and introduce others to a vibrant, flowing, ever deepening *al-p'nei* intimate communion with the Creator of the Universe and Redeemer of Mankind every day of our lives. We are to live our entire lives in *al-p'nei* [face to Face] intimacy with the Holy One our God – and we are not to have that kind of *baring-our-souls* and *surrendering-our-wills* intimacy with any one or anything else – not even for a minute. We are to be His *exclusive possession*. As a Bridegroom He deserves nothing less. And lest we fail to understand what He is talking about the Holy One quickly added two corollaries to the exclusivity of interaction empowerment.

Lo Yihyeh Corollary #1:

Lo ta'aseh-lecha feisel v'chol-temunah ...

You will not build/create any images or likenesses according to your imaginations ...

The first corollary to the *exclusivity empowerment of the Great Discourse of our*

Prophetic Destiny has to do with how we exercise and utilize our capacity to release creative energy. Our Maker is creative – and has given to each of us some aspect of His creativity. With that gift of creativity comes an innate, irrepressible urge to create. But what form of expression does *the urge to create* take for you? What specifically are you driven to *asah* [*i.e.* make, build, form, mold, shape]? In some of us creative capacity and drive express themselves primarily in *works of artisanship*. In others the creative energy gifts of the Holy One primarily manifest in *works of artistry*. Some people create images *with their hands*. They are artists, sculptors, carpenters, craftsmen, smiths, architects, decorators, musicians, website designers, etc. The Creator has gifted other people with the ability to create images *with their words*. Examples are authors, poets, scribes, reporters, songwriters, prophets, teachers, philosophers, politicians, and diplomats. The Holy One's purpose in giving us these precious gifts of creative energy is *so that we may each individually asah His words in our own unique way – i.e.* that we may each take His instructions for living out of the verbal, intellectual theoretical, spiritual realm, apply the creative energies He gave us to them, and thereby *transform those creative energies into conduct, conversation, and lifestyle in the physical, tangible, practical realm of human activity where the 'rubber meets the road'*.

Our capacity for creativity is *a very, very precious gift from our Creator* to us individually *and to the world as a whole*. And our creative energy is the substance of all human commerce. The Holy One wants to empower and direct persons within His covenant community to use their creative capacities and abilities responsibly - and in *sh'ma* response to the Holy One - as opposed to as vehicles of 'personal expression' that present to the world a *false reality*. As the Betrothed Bride and Covenant Partner of the Holy One what we are called upon by Him to *asah* [build, focus our creative energies upon so as to cause to become visible to all the world] is *His mitzvot* and *His mishpatim*. We are all given a blank canvas upon which to *asah*. But His *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* are for us to be like numbers on a preprinted 'paint by numbers' canvas. As we 'connect the dots' of the *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* through our actions, words, and attitudes over the course of our lives, what will be revealed to the world is nothing short of the image of Messiah.

Being the Holy One's covenant partners means that we are to be ever *mindful of* and ever *dedicated to* this mission. We are to *be very mindful of how we employ the creative energies He has placed in us – i.e.* what we *asah* [make, build, form, mold, shape out of the raw materials furnished to us] with our creative energy. The Holy One wants us to know up front that the first and most effective way to cut oneself and his family and sphere of influence off from the intimate, free-flowing, life-giving, world-changing relationship He as Divine Bridegroom has planned for us is to misuse the creative energy He has given us. That is what happens every time we

create or let our affections turn to an ‘image’ or ‘likeness’ – be it physical or philosophical, real or imagined – which so enamors us that we begin to venerate the image instead of the Holy One. If our Divine Bridegroom is our *sole focus of attention and admiration*, and if deepening and broadening our relationship with Him are *the primary motivations of all our thoughts, words, and deeds*, we will quite naturally reject out of hand every temptation to give time or attention to any voice or image that distracts us – or others within our sphere of influence - from Him. The quickest way to disconnect from our life source, turn our back on the covenant through which we are empowered to become a blessing to all the families of the earth, and lead ourselves and other people astray is to use our creative energy He gives us to *asah* either a *fesel* [usually translated into English as ‘graven image’] or a *temunah* [usually translated into English as ‘likeness’]. For us to expend our energies and creativity in creating anything the Holy One did not instruct us to focus our energies on – is not only totally inconsistent with *but is directly antithetical* to the covenant relationship the Holy one offers us. Such activities *fracture our new-creation identities*. So be very, very mindful of what you create – with your *hands*, with your *words*, and even with your *thoughts*.

We have a *very, very special calling*. We have a *wonderful Divine mission* – a great redemptive purpose in being on earth at such a time as this. Our reason to be here is first and foremost to always by actions, words, and even the light of our countenance point people to eternal truths and to spiritual realities lying *beyond the physical, beyond the animal, beyond the philosophical and beyond the theological*. If we focus our creative energies in any of the areas we are supposed to be helping others see beyond, what we are doing is *creating and propagating a false reality*. And that brings us to the second corollary the Holy One announced to help us understand the essence of the *lo yihyeh lecha elohim* empowerment.

Lo Yihyeh Corollary #2:

Lo-tishtachaveh lahem v'lo ta'ovdem

You will not bow down to [such images or likenesses], or worship or serve them ...

The ***lo-tishtachaveh/lo ta'ovdem*** corollary to the exclusivity empowerment [*i.e. you will not bow down/you will not serve likenesses/images/icons*] is a very important aspect of the empowerment. Through this prophetic, creative statement, the Holy One is freeing us from *obligations of deference to people and images* and from *conflicting obligations of service and veneration*. He does not want us to even construct *worship images of Him* – as the very essence of *image-making is to exalt form over substance and separate personality from persona*.

Our Divine Bridegroom wants us free to fully occupy our time on earth relating to Him personally, honoring Him in real time, co-laboring with Him as Creator and Redeemer. We simply have no time to honor or venerate people, or Created things

- or causes, creeds, or philosophies, or theologies, or religions, or icons, for that matter. Every second, every breath, and every burst of energy spent in those pursuits is time engaged in that which leads to death – for us, for our families, and for all of those with whom we have contact. In connection with this very important second principle therefore the Holy One announced a “*Bridegroom*” *undertaking* – something He will do, as a faithful and loving Bridegroom, for all those who He has redeemed and called His own: ***V'oseh chesed l'alafim l'ohavai ul'sh'mrei mitzvotai*** – *I will build covenant faithfulness in, and I will show breath-taking love for, those who sh'mar My mitzvot*

Take those words of Your Bridegroom to heart. Those words are *part of His betrothal vow*. Meditate on both the promise and the essential condition the Holy One attached to it. The *promise* is that the Holy One our God will take the initiative to *build covenant faithfulness* in human beings. The *essential condition* for this promise is that it applies only to those who consciously choose to *sh'mar* His *mitzvot* [i.e. to the instructions for living which He has designed to function as Divine portals of connection to His Kingdom]. We do not have to do the heavy lifting of the covenant faithfulness/fulfillment stuff – HE IS COMMITTING TO DO IT FOR US AND IN US. He wants us to know from the beginning that building faithfulness to covenant is HIS WORK, not ours. But we still have a part to play. What we have to do is to *sh'mar* [i.e. esteem, treasure, cherish, carefully guard and keep watch over] His *mitzvot*. How do we do that? *Take a lesson from the gardener!* Our Divine Bridegroom's Word is as Seed; our lives, human relationships and associations are as a garden. Enter the gardener. A gardener does not have to strain to make a seed sprout, grow and reproduce – the seed is fully capable of doing that itself - because *that is precisely what it is divinely empowered to do*. It is the same with us. In fact, the more you and I grunt and groan and strive and stir things up in order to bring forth life from the seed, *the less likely* the seed is to be able to germinate, sprout, grow, or reproduce in the manner intended for it. We have to *trust the One Who created the Seed*. Our part in the process is to *sh'mar* the seed of the Word of the Holy One the way a good farmer *sh'mar's* the physical seed he has sown in his field. That means we are to *keep close watch over it, treasure it, and monitor* it carefully. And it also means that we are to *let absolutely nothing* – no weeds, no trampling herds or assemblies of men, no slithering serpents or rodents or birds - *interrupt the process*.

Of course we are never to think for one instant that it was our hard work that caused the seed to grow, made the garden beautiful, or produced the bountiful harvest. That was – always is - can only be - the Holy One's doing.

Prophetic Empowerment No. 3: Lo Tisa et-Shem

“My Name is to Be Precious to You”

The shaking intensified. The atmosphere became even more supercharged with holiness. And then the Divine Bridegroom’s Voice proclaimed a third prophetic empowerment, accompanied by tongues of fire. Here is what He said: ***Lo tisa et-shem et-Adonai Eloheicha lashav*** – *You will not make the Name of the Holy One empty of meaning or an object of ridicule.*

This special prophetic empowerment is intimately connected with our responsibility to become a kingdom of *kohanim* (ambassadors/emissaries) and a *goy kadosh* [holy nation] as stated in Exodus 19:6. As a bride takes the name of her bridegroom with reverence and honor and cherishes it forever, so are we to take the name of the Holy One. It is the first evidence of our *new identity* as his Chosen Bride. The author would therefore paraphrase prophetic utterance number three as:

*You will not lift up, take up as a banner,
or otherwise carry into the public domain the name of Your Bridegroom
in a manner which will carry no substance
and/or make people turn away in disappointment, disgust, or disbelief.*

As successors to the covenant of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov, we are being infused with both the *power* and the *zeal* to venerate His Name. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch said it this way:

The Holy Name of God which you bear, my son and my daughter, shall call you to everything that is beautiful and good, to truth, to justice, and to love. It is the same Name which dedicates every one of your brothers and sisters in Israel to the same way of life, which calls all humanity to gather round Him and to dedicate themselves to Him. And - let your heart rejoice at this lofty thought - not for yourself alone have you taken upon yourself God's Holy Name. By the manner in which you bear it shall the life of your brothers and sisters in Israel be illumined and hallowed; moreover, by the manner in which Israel bears this Holy Name shall it shine like a ray of light through the vicissitudes of history, and shall be a monument to God, the One and Only, and to humanity's sacred vocation. (Horeb 97)

We are designed – indeed pre-programmed - to bring high levels of accolades, praise, blessing, honor and glory to our Divine Bridegroom’s *shem*. As a human wife should never even consider saying or doing anything that would bring dishonor to the reputation of her husband, so we should never even consider saying or doing anything that would bring dishonor to the *shem* of our Bridegroom King.

Prophetic Empowerment No. 4: Zachor et-yom ha-Shabbat

You Will Enjoy/Delight In the Sabbath with Him

The next sentences spoken over us out of the Fire begin with the following prophetic empowerment: ***Zachor et-yom ha-Shabbat l’kad’sho*** – *You will remember/commemorate the Shabbat; it will be for His sanctification/holiness.*

What does the Holy One empower us to do concerning the Shabbat? He empowers us to *zachar* it – *i.e. keep it in the forefront of our minds, remember it, and actively commemorate it*. It is the Holy One’s betrothal gift to us. Should we not cherish it? Should we not be thankful for it? Should we not unwrap and enjoy it? Of course we should. It is part of the celebration of our covenant. It is part of the bond that holds us together. The Holy One has therefore chosen to use the Chuppah of Sinai to *program His Shabbat into our individual and collective psyche*. By the power of the Holy One’s creative Word the *Shabbat* has now become *an integral part of our new-creation identities*. In other words, since Sinai *we simply cannot be who the Holy One created, destined, delivered and empowered, us to be without responding to this prophetic declaration*. We do not ‘do Shabbat’ to earn our Divine Bridegroom’s favor or to say we have ‘obeyed’ His Commandments. We do and keep *Shabbat* simply because *Shabbat is as natural to us as breathing and as pleasant to us as stopping to hold hands and have intimate conversation with our most cherished companion*.

Moreover, please note that the *Shabbat* is interestingly enough the only one of the ten ‘commandments’ that specifically has to do with ‘holiness’. The prophetic announcement is that the *Shabbat* is *l’kadsho* [*i.e. for His Holiness*]. The Holy One does not say – as strange as it may seem to our ears - that the avoidance of idolatry, or adultery, or false witness, or stealing, or even murder is *l’kadsho*. He reserves that designation for – of all things - the *Shabbat*. What are we to make of this, you ask? I believe that what the Holy One is saying is that holiness is not what you or I do or do not do – but is *resting/abiding in Him*. The *Shabbat* is thus *the most holy thing* we will ever know on earth - a *foretaste of Heaven*, and a *remembrance of the intimacy man knew with His Creator in the Garden of Eden*. The Torah makes it clear that *Shabbat* is not just a day of rest. Rather it is a *sign* between us and our Divine Bridegroom [see **Exodus, 31:17**]. Just as a wedding ring is an unmistakable sign of the covenant between a man and his wife, so *Shabbat* is an unmistakable *sign* of the covenant we have with the Holy One our God. To remove the *Shabbat* from our lives is thus to take off the Holy one’s ‘wedding ring’. Many have elected to do just that. Nevertheless, the Holy one is a *Loving Husband* and is loath to give up on us. He keeps calling “*Come back to me! Place the ring that tells the world you are Mine - Shabbat - on your finger again!*”

The Prophetic Voice Continues

We then heard the Holy One announce six more prophetic empowerments one by one. As you read these prophetic declarations, please note how they go so much further than merely ‘commanding’ outward behaviors and *strike at the very essence of our identity in Messiah*:

Kaved et-avicha v'et-imeicha ...

You will bring honor to your father and mother ... "

Lo tirtzach

*YOU WILL NOT TEAR [PEOPLE OR OTHER LIVING CREATURES]
INTO FRAGMENTS OR PIECES!*

Lo tin'af

*YOU WILL NOT WEAKEN/DILUTE YOURSELF OR OTHERS
THROUGH DELETERIOUS MIXTURES!!*

Lo tignov

*YOU WILL NOT TAKE FROM OTHERS - BY DECEIT, STEALTH, OR
MANIPULATION - ANYTHING I HAVE ENTRUSTED
TO THEIR POSSESSION!!!*

Lo-ta'aneh verei'acha ed shaker

*YOU WILL NOT INVALIDATE THE WEIGHT OF YOUR TESTIMONY
BY DECLARING THINGS YOU HAVE NOT SEEN OR HEARD FROM ME.*

Lo tachmod ...

*YOU WILL NOT PINE FOR OR DESIRE
ANYTHING THAT I HAVE NOT GIVEN TO YOU.*

These prophetic announcements tell us in general form *how our Divine Bridegroom sees us*. They describe *the way we look to Him through His eyes of love*. They explain to us *what He is molding and shaping us to be*. He is, if you are ready to receive it, *describing His Bride*. And *if we will only receive the prophetic empowerment* inherent in His Words, He is declaring *us* to be that Bride. But even more than that, these prophetic empowerments spoken over us by the Holy One are *seeds of righteousness* He has planted in us. They have *life energy* in them. And that life energy is constantly looking for a shaft of light to cause it to germinate, and to sprout, and to leaf, and to bud, and to flower, and to bear and mature fruit for all the world to eat.

Do you sometimes look at your life – or the Hebrew people - and say to yourself – *no, the things the Holy one spoke at Sinai do not describe me – or them?* Take heart, Beloved. That is *altogether to be expected*. The transition from seedtime to harvest is not immediate. It is a process, requiring *light* and *warmth* and *moisture* – and most of all, *time*. Just because the seed is planted does not mean the harvest is visible – only that *it is coming*.

Our Immaturity Starts to Show

One might expect at this point *rockets bursting in air*, cascading *kaleidoscopes of color*, laughter, rejoicing, everyone singing “*L’Chaim, L’Chaim, To Life*”, and ecstatically dancing the Hora for hours. But alas it was not to be. At what should have been the most rapturous moment of our history we acted like the very immature, whimpering child of a Bride-to-be that we were. Torah records what happened as follows:

*All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes
and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking;
and when the people saw they TREMBLED, and STOOD AT A DISTANCE.
Then they said to Moshe, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen;
but LET NOT GOD SPEAK TO US, or WE WILL DIE.’*

[Exodus 20:18-19]

This is the third ‘voice’ of parsha Yitro – the voice of our own self-obsessed, narcissistic, unresponsive flesh. The serpent said: ‘*You will not surely die*’ when the Holy One had said we would; our flesh tells us *will surely die* when the Holy One has made it abundantly clear that we won’t.

Ten ‘Commandments’? – or a Shitre Erusin?

Fortunately, while our fearful flesh response interrupted and marred the *erusin* ceremony, and began a slide that led eventually and inexorably to the golden calf episode, the Bridegroom was faithful to His promise and true to His obligations. He delivered the *shitre erusin* on schedule. He gave us ten beautiful visions to which to aspire, ten glorious empowerments to internalize, and ten beautiful garments to put on and model to the world.

Over the centuries English speakers have come to call the first words the Holy One spoke to us at Sinai the “Ten Commandments”. While I realize I fight an uphill battle in contesting that august title, I respectfully would point out that a Bridegroom does not issue “commandments” – He instead offers a doorway into a new and better way of life, and calls forth voluntary covenant undertakings from His Beloved that are designed *to maximize the wonderful relationship they already have*. Moreover, and more importantly, the Bible itself nowhere refers to these pronouncements as the ‘Ten Commandments’. The Bible calls them the *ten devarim* – *i.e.* the ten prophetic words of identity, purpose, and destiny. See the Hebrew text of Exodus 34:28 and Deuteronomy 4:13, and Deuteronomy 10:4. Using the English term “commandments” with its legalistic and governmental implications to describe the words our Covenant Partner in Heaven spoke over us at Sinai completely ignores the context and misconstrues the intended meaning of the beautiful and lovingly crafted words and phrases that He declared over His Beloved. The “*Thou shalt*” and “*Thou shalt not*” translations have turned what was

intended to be a betrothal ceremony into *cold, legislation*. That is what eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil does.

As I explained in yesterday's shiur the purpose and intent of the delivery of the *shitre eyrusin* document is to give the Bride-to-be a written instrument explaining the promises of the Bridegroom and detailing the expectations He has of her as His Bride. This document is not to be put in a drawer or a closet or a glass case somewhere and admired for its poetic wording or its intricate calligraphy. For the Bride-to-be it should be like a blueprint for a construction project, the frame of reference for her every activity. It is to be the constant focus of all her thoughts and actions throughout the betrothal period *in order that she may become, by the time of the marriage, a mature full partner in the relationship*. She should *consult it each morning and evening*. She should *study it intensely*. She should *contemplate its literal and deeper meanings*. She should *meditate upon its levels of application*. She should *cherish it as an expression of the essence of her Bridegroom*. She should *discuss its provisions and their implications with her friends, begin to practice it in her daily life activities, and surrender to its gradual transformation of her life*. Throughout all the years of the betrothal the passion of the Bride-to-be's life – even while she remains in her father's household - is to be learning and practicing the *shitre eyrusin's* provisions so that by the time of the wedding *its essence, as well as its specific wording, will be written on her heart – making it so "second-nature" to her that she will not need anyone teach her how to be a fitting companion to her Bridegroom*.

Perhaps one day through understanding the Hebraic elements of the teachings of the Messiah Yeshua we will escape the deception that portrays the Holy One as an *austere Lawgiver* rather than as the *patient and gentle Bridegroom* that He is. Perhaps we will in time come to look upon the Words of our Bridegroom-King at Sinai not as the outdated code of law theologians delight in telling us they are, but as the *living, breathing Covenant of Love that they were meant to be* – and **still are** underneath all the religious garbage that has been heaped upon them by men.

No, Beloved, the seed of truth and the breath of life that the Holy One sowed in us so long ago at Sinai are not dead. They will, in fact, never die. They are part of our *shitre erusin* – and are destined to form the basis for our *Ketubah*. May the Holy One hasten the day when they accomplish on earth all that He from Whom they came intends!

Questions For Today's Study

1. When the Holy one spoke to the people gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai, "out of" what two things did He say He had brought them?

2. List the ten stipulations of the *shitre erusin* in the order they are given.
3. In part “A” of today’s final haftarah aliyah of parsha *Yitro* we read some disturbing news:

*It happened in the days of Achaz the son of Yotam,
the son of `Uziyahu, king of Y`udah, that Retzin the king of Aram,
and Pekach the son of Remalyahu, king of Yisra'el,
went up to Yerushalayim to war against it, but could not prevail against it.
It was told the house of David, saying, "Aram is allied with Efrayim."
His heart trembled, and the heart of his people,
as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind.
Then the Holy one said to Yeshayahu, "**Go forth now to meet Achaz,
you, and She'ar-Yashuv your son,
at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field;
and say to him, 'Take heed, and be quiet; don't be afraid,
neither let your heart be faint because of these two tails of smoking firebrands,
for the fierce anger of Retzin and Aram and of the son of Remalyahu.
Because Aram, Efrayim, and the son of Remalyahu,
have purposed evil against you, saying, Let us go up against Y`udah, and vex it,
and let us make a breach therein for us,
and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tav'el***

[Isaiah 7:1-6]

- [A] What nation/kingdom comes against Jerusalem?
- [B] What alliance does that attacking nation/kingdom enter into that causes the King of Judah and his people to fear?
- [C] Who was Yeshayahu to take with him to meet King Ahaz of Judah? What did this person’s name mean?
- [D] Where was Yeshayahu to meet with Ahaz? What was his prophetic message to him?

4. In the last part of Haftarah *Yitro* - Isaiah 9:6-7 - we conclude with a message of hope. The great marriage will truly be consummated, and the Bride will conceive and bring forth Messiah.

***Ki-yeled yulad-lanu** - For a child is born to us
ben nitan-lanu - a son is given to us;
vatehi ha-misrah al-shichmo - and the government is upon his shoulder
vayikra shemo - and his name is called **Pele** - Wonderful, **Yo'etz** - Counselor,
El Gibor - Mighty God, **Avi-Ad** - Everlasting Father
Sar-Shalom - Prince of Shalom.
L'marbeh ha-misrah ul'shalom - Of the increase of his government and of shalom
eyn-ketz - there shall be no end
al-kise David - on the throne of David, **v'al-mamlachto** - and on his kingdom
l'hachin otah - to establish it,*

ul'sa'adah b'mishpat uv'tzdakah - and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness
me'atah v'ad-olam - from henceforth even forever.

kin'at Adonai Tzeva'ot - The zeal of the Holy one of Hosts *ta'aseh-zot* - will perform this.

[A] List the names by which our passage tells us the Son born to us will be known - in English and in Hebrew (in Hebrew letters, with vowel markings).

[B] With regard to each of these names, do a search in Gesenius. Write an explanation of the essential meaning conveyed by each of these names.

[C] According to verse 7 what will bring the Messianic kingdom into its fullness?

5. In I Peter 2:8 we read:

*... and [the chief cornerstone will be to those who lo sh'ma] a stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense. For they stumble at the word,
being disobedient [i.e. lo sh'ma-ing] whereunto also they were appointed.*

[A] What verse from the TaNaKh does Kefa quote?

[B] Read the verse quoted by Kefa in today's aliyah in its context - Yeshayahu 8:11-9:7. What is the theme of that context passage?

[C] The same "stone" which is the Cornerstone of the foundation laid in Zion is also described as a "Stone" of stumbling and a "Rock" of offense. What does Kefa say determines, in any person's life, whether this "stone" will be a cornerstone of the foundation or something we stumble over or take offense at?

[D] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the words translated by our English King James Bibles as "disobedient" [NIV "disobeys"], "word" [NIV "message"], and "appointed" [NIV "destined"]. Write the Greek words so translated and their definitions. [NOTE: be sure to look up the root words for these Greek words, and see if the definitions of the root words affect your understanding of what the Greek words mean in the context of what Kefa is saying in I Peter 2:8.]

[E] Remember that Kefa's native language was Hebrew, not Greek. What Hebrew words would correspond most closely with the Greek words translated as "disobedient", "word", and "appointed"?

[F] What do you think would be the meaning of verse 8 if you utilized the Hebrew concepts rather than the Greek or English concepts?

6. Read and memorize for Shabbat tonight I Peter 2:9-10:

*... you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
a people for God's own possession, that you may show forth the excellencies of him
who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:
who in time past were no people, but now are the people of the Holy One;
who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

[A] What descriptive phrases does Kefa use to describe those who enter into covenant with the Holy one through Yeshua?

[B] Look back at Exodus 19:5-6. How are the descriptions given there like the descriptions given by Kefa? How are they different?

7. What are we, as those in covenant with the Holy one through Yeshua, to “show forth”,(KJV)?

May we each let our Bridegroom hold us ... until the fear in us subsides.

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 34:15-22

The eyes of the Holy one are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.

The face of the Holy one is against those who do evil,

To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry out, and the Holy one hears,

and delivers them out of all their troubles.

The Holy one is near to those who have a broken heart,

and saves such as have a contrite spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

but the Holy one delivers him out of them all.

He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken.

Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.

The Holy one redeems the soul of His servants,

And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.