

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Shelach Lecha:*** **Numbers 14:10-45**
 Haftarah: **Joshua 2:12-16**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Hebrews 3:12-15**

Not one of them will ever see the land I promised

[Numbers 14:23]

Today's Meditation is Revelation 3:14-22;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition No. 8, *Mish'pat* [Redemption-Focused Justice]

Vayomeru kol-ha-edah lirgom otam ba'avanim – And the whole witness throng said: 'Heap up stones against/around them'.... Numbers 14:10a.

As our aliyah begins there is an air of high drama in the camp. Two brave men have just bucked the tide. In the face of a stunningly negative 'majority' report from their fellow *meraglim* (KJV 'spies'; literally scouts), young Yehoshua of the tribe of Efrayim and young Kalev of the tribe of Yehudah issued a passionate exhortation to the assembled hosts of Israel: *Al-tira'u et am ha-aretz* – Do not fear the people of the land ... *ki lachmeinu hem* – because for us they are as bread (to consume)! *Sar tzilam m'aleihem* – their protection has departed from them ... *v'Adonai itanu* – and with us is the Holy One! Numbers 14:9. The scouts have all now had their 'say'. The options are now squarely on the table. We can trust that the Holy One will Do what He says He will do, and march into the land as soon as the Pillar of Fire and Cloud sets out before us ... or we can let heart falter in the face of the prospect of Emori opposition, *turn tail*, and *run away*. Decisions, Decisions! Do I hear a motion and second?

The air is thick with tension. The Emori threat is real. The danger is imminent. The consequences of making the wrong choice would be severe. What is the proper, prudent course of action? What is the will of the Holy One? What is the counsel of Torah? Put yourself into the shoes of the heads of a household in B'nei Yisrael. If it was you and your family facing this challenge ... what would YOU do?

Will You Be Coming to the Ball?

Our season of 'just us' with the Holy One - far away from the raging nations - has been sweet. Yes, our recent forced march through the desert in the summer heat has been taxing, but seeing the Pillar of Fire and Cloud, and knowing the Holy One

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is with us, guiding us, and protecting us from our enemies, has gotten us through the daunting obstacle course. Yes, we have spent way too much time and wasted way too much energy along the way murmuring, complaining, and slinging ourselves and one other with lashon hara – but our Bridegroom King/Redeemer has remained ever vigilant and faithful. He has disciplined us as a father – all the while doing everything necessary to keep us alive, sustain us, and empower us to learn from our mistakes and overcome every obstacle. Alas, it looks like a new season – and with a new, even more challenging phase of our training as His '*am segulah*', '*mamlaket kohanim*', and '*goy kadosh*' - is about to begin. In this next season we will be called upon not just to deal with difficult terrain, harsh environmental conditions, post-Egyptian bondage flesh-triggers, and our own *yetzer ra* (evil inclination), but also with hordes of *ra*, *shachat* & *chamas*-infected strangers to the covenant. We have not had to deal with that particular challenge since we threw hands and crossed swords with the Amaleki hordes at Refidim.

We knew it had to happen sometime. The Holy One made it clear from the outset that He did not call us forth at such a time as this to live like monks or lepers on the backside of nowhere. We are snow globe people. We have a blessing – and a message of peace on earth and goodwill toward men that we are supposed to deliver to all families of the earth. We have a 'more excellent way' lifestyle to model, *tikkun nefesh* to offer, and inspiration to bring to the raging nations and vain-imagining ethnicities of the world. We have a protocol of *tikkun aretz* to introduce to every continent, every city, every village, and indeed to every square centimeter of *terra firma* on the planet. We cannot fulfill our destiny – or accomplish our mission - if we stay in isolation. We will have to 'go public' sometime. So, the Holy One has arranged a little '*Debutante Ball*' of sorts for us at Kadesh-Barnea. Oh, look yonder – is that vast hordes of Emori (KJV 'Amorites') ... and whole families of GIANTS ... I see occupying the stretch of Wilderness just ahead! Ready or not, here we come ... or DO WE?

How will these 'foreigners' react to our presence? How are we to respond to theirs? Should we be afraid? Should we just stay where we are, and hope/pray that something supernatural happens that makes them all just suddenly go away? Should we turn aside and look for another point of entry into the promised land? Should we turn around and hightail it back Sinai – or maybe even to Egypt?

We know what the majority report of the spies think. We know what Yehoshua and Kalev believe. But the decision is not theirs to make ... it is OURS.

What Say You? Will You Be Coming With?

As the new moon rose on the fourth month² the Holy One set a table for us in the presence of brutal, barbarous peoples who *commune with and serve the unclean spirits of the occult realm, who obsess over vain things, who spew profanity, who delight in evil, who honor cruelty and oppression, who normalize sexual perversion, and who commit unspeakable atrocities on a daily basis.* Be on your toes, Toto - we are not in Kansas anymore!

Why did the Holy One decide to re-introduce us to the dark side of fallen humanity here – at such a lawless ‘wild west’ outpost? The choice was by no means random. Kadesh-Barnea is the location where the terrain transitions from barren wasteland to arable pastureland (at least in the springtime), and thus from inhabitability to habitability. The sustainability-of-life factor is the reason Kadesh-Barnea wound up being the first populated city we came to in the course of our long journey across the Sinai peninsula, a land of shifting sands where almost no rain falls and harsh Khamsin windstorms howl. Moreover, Kadesh-Barnea marked the Westernmost boundary of our patriarchs seasonal wanderings in the Land. In our forefathers’ day this outpost had been controlled by the treacherous Amaleki bands. Over the course of our long period of enslavement in Egypt Emori³ warlords usurped control over the area. Just a short distance to the south of Kadesh-Barnea the belligerent Edomi hordes were entrenched. Just to the west the cunning Yish’maeli had done the same. They all know we are here – and why we have come. Suffice it to say, they are not about to welcome us with open arms.

Okay. So be it. No more hanging around in the desert green room for us. Our audience – albeit a hostile one - awaits. Smile everyone – it’s SHOW TIME!

Time for Our Long-Awaited Debut Among the Nations & Peoples of Earth

Why did the Pillar of Fire and Cloud stop here, and not just march us right into the Promised Land? Why did He give us time to think about the resistance we were

² This moon-cycle usually occurs during the months known as ‘June’ and ‘July’ on the Gregorian calendar. Because this moon-cycle contains the so-called ‘Summer Solstice’, it is regarded as ushering in the season of maturing fruit – *i.e.* ‘summer’.

³ The Emori [KJV ‘Amorites’], like most of the ‘ites’ of the ancient Middle East, were descendants of Noah through his son Cham and his grandson Kena’an. See Genesis 10:16. They appear to have migrated into the Promised Land from Mesopotamia by way of Syria and/or modern-day ‘Lebanon’. The apocryphal book ‘Jubilees’ describes these masters of witchcraft as ‘*an evil and sinful people whose wickedness surpasses that of any other.*’ **Jubilees 29:11.** The same source suggests the Emori took sides with Esav in his offenses against Ya’akov, and eventually took on Esav’s disdain for Ya’akov’s seed.

about to face? Why did He not just plow forward, doing what He has promised to do - go before us, sending the hornet into our enemies' camps, and clearing the way?⁴ What role will this stopover at Kadesh Barnea play in our national history? What is this oasis on the Promised Land's western frontier destined to mean as the new moon of the fourth month? How will what transpires over the course of our sojourn here change us? How will this oasis be remembered? The Holy One did not bring us there to begin a war of conquest. He knew we were nowhere near ready for that. He brought us here to and *humble* us and to *test* us⁵. He knew all along that though He had called many are called to walk with Him, and establish His Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven, few will pass the tests that can qualify them to be chosen. He knew the temptations produced by the flesh and the false knowledge produced by the pseudo-intellect would be too much for most of those He had invited to participate in His Grand Plan of Redemption and Restoration.

***The Perils of the Proving Ground – Where a Crucible Intended for
Our Growth Can Quickly Become an Existential Crisis!***

All is not well with our souls. As a result of the emotionally charged majority report of the 'spies', the camp has become a boiling cauldron of fear, offense, anger, and despair. The seventy-member board of elders? They are a polarized, partisanship-obsessed mess, providing no leadership whatsoever. Every time any of them opens his mouth it is just to add more fuel to the roaring flame that is threatening to engulf us. The Holy One's '*B'nei Yisrael*' dream team - the key 'on-earth-as-it-is-in-Heaven' component of His Grand Plan for the Redemption of Mankind as a species and for the Restoration of Creation to its intended Edenic state of beauty, fruitfulness, and *shalom* - seems to be falling apart at the seams. The people have been listening to horror stories, devouring division-bait, and shouting emotionally charged slogans. In the face of that, many have abandoned the lifelines of the Kingdom - prayer, meditation on Torah, and focusing on faithfully walking with the Holy One through the fields of *mitzvot*. Who is modeling humility? Who is seeking –or speaking - revelation from on High? Why is everyone suddenly abandoning Torah and doing whatever he or she sees as being 'right' in his own eyes? Fearmongers have always delighted in spreading horror stories. Divisive people have always excelled at sowing division. Mockers have been skilled at mocking. Why do we in the camp of the Redeemed seem to keep falling for this stuff?

⁴ See Exodus 33:2 and Deuteronomy 7:17 – 26.

⁵ See Deuteronomy 8:2-3.

***Is This the Best We Can Do?
Are Moral Indignation, Insult, Accusation, Blame and Outrage
the Best We Have to Offer the World?***

“*Heap up stones*” against Yehoshua and Kalev, the crowd shouted! *Heap up stones* – as an outraged, lawless mob would do unto a woman allegedly caught in the act of adultery, or unto a man who faithful elders of the tribes of Yehudah and Efrayim? *Heap up stones* – is this to be thanks that honorable men like Kalev and Yehoshua receive for their service to the Holy One? *Heap up stones* - just because they dared to buck the popular *newspeak narrative* of the day and encourage people to stick to the Creator’s Plan? *Heap up stones* – because they stood up to the fearmongers, hatemongers, and doomsday proclaimers and exhorted the people ‘*fear not, for the Holy One is with us*’? *Heap up stones* - really? Is this the state of our nation? Is this the depth to which the Great Nation of the Holy One has fallen? My, did that ever escalate quickly! How ... on earth ... did people who sang the *Song of the Sea* with Miryam and vowed *na’aseh v’nishma* with swelling hearts and trembling lips at Sinai fall so far, so fast? Well, if you insist, *heap up all the stones* you want – but be sure that who is without sin casts the first one!

This shouldn’t be going on at all, of course. It is all beneath us. We are in Covenant with the Creator of the World. We are His redeemed. We are His chosen ones. We eat from His Table, drink from His Wells of Living Water, and enjoy His Manifest Presence, day in and day out. But alas, we are also still human – and the last two months in the Wilderness have pretty much eaten our lunch. The heat, the sand fleas, and the differing vehement opinions of so many people in leadership about where we should go from here have us raising our voices, clenching our fists, and clawing at each others’ throats. Ten of our most respected leaders have declared: ‘*the land devours its inhabitants; there are giants there, and we were like grasshoppers in their eyes*’. Two men have countered: ‘*The land is a very, very good land. The inhabitants are bread for us. God is with us - don’t be afraid.*’ Now the opinions have been stated. Everyone’s position is on the table. Ready or not, decision day is upon us. Will we turn tail and run back to Egypt –or will we follow Yehoshua and Kalev into the land of Promise ... and GIANTS?

What, we might have asked, is the best course for us, for our children, and for our children’s children? Between the two options presented to us by those who are supposed to be ‘in the know’, which approach, we might have asked, would most closely align with the instructions of our Bridegroom King and the agenda of His Glorious Kingdom? Which decision, we might have asked, will advance the Holy One’s Grand Plan for the Redemption of Mankind and the Restoration of Creation

to its Edenic potential? We might have asked those things - but, alas, we did no such thing. Neither the Will of the Holy One, nor the advancement of His Kingdom, nor the effect of anything that might be done in the face of this challenge upon His Grand Plan of Redemption and Restoration, was even considered. In the face of that challenge – as is true in the case of most challenges men face in this world – what it turned out to really be all about was ... US. It was about what WE THOUGHT. It was about what WE BELIEVED. It was about what WE WANTED – AND DIDN'T WANT. It was about OUR PARANOIAS. It was all about our FEAR OF MAN. It was all about the FRUIT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL MASQUERADING AS 'REASON' AND 'LOGIC' and someone's idea of 'SOCIAL JUSTICE'. Heaven help us all!

***Beware – This is Paran – There Just Might be
A Few 'Paranas' and 'Paran-oias' in Our Drinking Water!***

Tread carefully now - these are the dark days of *Paran*. This is the place and this is the season of the year when the spirit of Yish'mael runs rampant. Something attention grabbing occurs – either in the Camp or in the world - and suddenly *paranas* and *paran-oias* are everywhere. Suddenly everybody cops an attitude, forms an opinion, takes an offense, and carries a chip on their shoulder. It is easy to get caught up in the drama. But there is no *shalom*, no joy, no hope, no *wisdom*, no *testimony of the Holy One's goodness*, and no love in that. We have come to the Kingdom for a far too important a purpose than to waste one moment being repulsed, shocked, appalled, offended, outraged, panic-stricken or in any way 'drama-tized'. We are here for the King and the advancement of the Kingdom – *His Way*. We simply do not have time for drama. We do not have time to fight over ideas. We don't have time for attitudes or opinions. For us it is an abandonment of mission – an offense of being away without leave – for us to take offense, to take sides, or to leap into the fray of meaningless argument - and thereby to swallow the wily enemy's lure hook, line, and sinker. It often feels so right to be offended, and righteous to be angry - but it is neither. Anger and offense are just traps of the enemy. Drama is his art form; *shalom*, *redemption*, and restoration are the Holy One's way.

The great calling of the sons and daughters of the Most High is therefore to stay calm, and remain above the fray. Our assignment is not to immerse ourselves in the petty arguments, offenses, controversies and conflicts of the day; it is to *transcend* them. It is so easy to forfeit the calling of the Holy One upon our lives and slip into outrage, cynicism, sarcasm, and negativity - right back into the cesspool of irrelevance out of which He called us in the first place. But irrelevant and offended is not who the Bridegroom-King redeemed us to be. We are called to live lives,

speak words, and engage in behaviors that release atmosphere shifting Light and Salt - not become just another tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

The Holy One wants us to know that we do not have to keep falling for the same old cheap bag of tricks. We just have to *stay calm*. We just have to *stay focused* on the Holy One's majesty, on His Glorious Plan of Redemption, on His Abiding Covenant Faithfulness, and on His Awesome Power to cause whatever He has decreed concerning us to come to pass. We just have to stay in communion with Him. We just have to *press on toward the goal line for the prize of the High Calling of the Bridegroom-King*. We just have to *stay on task*.

It is not great theological deception that threatens to derail us – it is the coldness of our own hearts. It is not mistakes of doctrine that will cause us to become enemies of the Holy One, standing in the way what He is doing in the world in our lifetimes; it is the uncircumcision of our hearts, and ears, and lips, and flesh. It is not a false prophecy or a false prophet that is most likely to lead us astray; it is our own bent toward *fleshly distraction, revulsion, offense, outrage, and drama*. It is not the lies – or even the all-out assaults - of ha-Satan that will defeat us; it is our ridiculous love affair with our own beliefs and opinions.

This is a test. The Holy One has ordained it, because understanding and overcoming challenges like this is going to be critical to the success of the mission He has assigned us. He has therefore authorized the Accuser of the Brethren to administer this test – albeit under His watchful eye and tight rein. A few of us will pass this test. By far the majority of us, however, will miserably fail it – and will be routed to the back of the line. In which group do you want to be, Dear One?

How To Plan For, Prepare For, and Pass the Test of Kadesh-Barnea

The interesting thing about tests is: *if you know they are coming, you can prepare for them*. Every year at this time we should know – from repeating the Torah cycle year after year both in study and in life experience - that the test of *who we are and what we prioritize* is coming our way. How do we prepare for – and pass – this test? We who know the Holy One activate and employ the *precious gift of memory*. We remember *our Creator*. We remember *how far He has brought us thus far*. We remember *the great distraction we indulged at the time of the visitation of Yitro*. We remember *the great calamity that befell us when we made up our own plan with the golden calf*. We remember *the sickening smell of the rotting corpses of quail we rushed out to kill in a fit of fleshly appetite and then could not eat*. We remember *the serious warning that was issued from Heaven after the lashon ha-ra*

spoken by Miryam concerning the Holy One's choice of a primary spokesperson. We occupy our minds not with opinions of men but with meditations on the Precious and Life-Affirming Words we have heard our Bridegroom-King's Mouth – *i.e.* the '**Vayadaber Adonai el-Moshe emor**' [and the Holy One spoke to Moshe, and said ...'] pronouncements recorded for us in Torah. As David did at Ziklag, we strengthen ourselves in the Holy One. See **I Samuel 30:6**⁶. We intentionally displace complaining with the giving of thanks. We humbly acknowledge the holes that still remain in our souls, and run to the brazen altar to exchange our ashes for His Beauty. We focus on thinking, speaking and behaving like the *sh'ma*-people we have been called to be instead of the *knee-jerk reaction*-people we used to be. We practice being holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy.

The foregoing are the essential preparation tools we need to navigate through the wily distractions thrown at us at this time each year. These things hold the keys to transcending the drama, the trauma, and the *prima donna* in and around us.

The Lessons of Kadesh-Barnea – Do Not Try This At Home!

Not since Pharaoh's chariots charged us at *Pi Ha-Chirot* have we been so paralyzed by fear. We have believed the negative report of the 10 scouts. We considered these men knowledgeable, and gave great weight to their opinions. That meant that we took our eyes off of, and quit *sh'ma*-ing and *sh'mar*-ing, the Holy One. Because of the opinions expressed by mortal men with official-sounding titles, we eschewed the protocols the Holy One had established to guide us. It should come as no surprise to anyone, therefore, that this is not going to turn out well. The men in question were not trustworthy at all. They had absorbed and embraced the prevailing spirit in the last desert we went through – *i.e.* the desert of Paran, where the descendants of Hagar and Yish'mael set the tone. The men we were listening to had subconsciously taken on Yish'mael's *untamable, irreverent, wild* donkey-like attitude. Most destructively, these men had bought into Yish'mael's tendency to devalue the land of *Eretz Yisrael*. They had adopted Yish'mael's approach of always choosing foreign ways over the ways of the Holy One and have followed Hagar's practice of running away from the covenant that the Holy One made with Avraham. They had adopted wholesale Yish'mael and Hagar's *attitude of special entitlement*. And like Yish'mael these men had elected to respond to every challenge by blaming the faithful remnant of the Avrahamic covenant for all the things they see as wrong with the world. They did what spies

⁶ I Samuel 30:6 describes David's response to the trauma of his family – and the families of all his men - being taken captive from Ziklag by the Amaleki. The inspired account states: *David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Holy One his God.*

of enemy nations always do – they *spin misinformation, sow confusion* and *spread corruption* wherever and however they can. And unfortunately, multitudes among us actually bought it hook, line, and sinker. Masses of people who should know better fell for the ten scouts-turned-enemy-spies’ spin. They took our minds – and meditations - off of Torah. They made us *forget things we knew to be true*. That left us vulnerable to have *our worst fears* played like a violin. They seduced us with negative rhetoric. With mere words they induced *an epidemic of mass hysteria*. Does anyone even remember the covenant the Holy One the Holy One made with our forefathers? Does anyone remember hearing the Bridegroom-King’s Voice at Sinai? Does anyone remember who we are, what we are called to do, and what the Holy One has done for us all along the way – from Egypt to Kadesh-Barnea?

The spies among us would have us believe that the absolute truths of Torah that were entrusted to us by our Divine Bridegroom at Sinai are really nothing more than matters of *personal preference* and issues of *private morality*. The spies of the Bondwoman and her son – then and now - tell us with straight faces that anyone in our midst who prefers the Sinaitic revelation of the Holy One over the latest pop-psychology mantra put out by the spies’ spin factory is a *closed-minded, intolerant, right-wing extremist*. They tell us that up is the new down; and that out is the new in. They insist that darkness is the new light, that bad is the new good, and that good is the new bad. The spies of the bondwoman and her son tell us that the Avrahamic-pattern of faith in the Holy One is utter foolishness, that dedication to the lifestyle of Torah is a faithless form of legalism, and that those who insist on walking a set apart kind of pathway with an eye toward the promises of God are the ones who are responsible for all the problems the world is facing today.

Welcome to *Paran-oia*!

Can I get a Witness?

Two men – Kalev son of Yefuneh, of the tribe of Y’hudah, and Y’hoshua son of Nun, of the tribe of Efrayim – stand against this tide. They call us to resist the voices of *Paran-oia*, and return to the Holy One and His covenant.⁷ In her state of deception and confusion, however, the chosen Bride-People of the Holy One

⁷ See Numbers 14:7-9: “Y’hoshua the son of Nun and Kalev the son of Yefuneh, who were of those who spied out the land, tore their clothes: and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Yisra’el, saying, *The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceeding good land. The Holy One delights in us, and He will bring us into this land, and give it to us; a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Holy One. And do not be afraid of the people of the Land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Holy One is with us. Do not be afraid of them.*”

stopped up their ears, rushed upon Kaleb and Y'hoshua with vehement anger, and took up stones with which to shut the mouths of the two witnesses.⁸ They became 'paranas' - and that prompted the Holy One to step out of His usual realm of invisibility and eternity, break the finity barrier, and enter the fray

u'kevod Adonai nir'ah b'Ohel Mo'ed

Then the glory of the Holy One appeared at the tent of meeting

el-kol-b'nei Yisra'el

before all the children of Israel.

[Numbers 14:10(b)]

*Kevod Adonai? The glory of the Holy One? We haven't seen that since we left Mount Sinai! In fact, we haven't seen that since the day the service of the Mish'kan was inaugurated. See Leviticus 9:6, 23. On that day, after Moshe and Aharon emerged from the newly inaugurated Mish'kan and blessed the people, Torah tells us ***the glory of the Holy One appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the Holy One and consumed the olah and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their face.*** Oh wait – *that was right before Nadav and Avihu were taken out**

When the glory of the Holy One is present, there is not only holy *awe* and delicious *wonder* – there is *instant accountability*.

When the 'Boss' Enters the Room

The Holy One our God has appeared “in the presence of all the children of Yisrael” three times previously – at Sinai, when He spoke the “Ten Commandments” over us as the preamble to the Torah, our betrothal covenant⁹; at the dedication of the *Mish'kan*, when the Radiant Cloud of His Presence so permeated the tent of meeting that no one – even Moshe - could enter it¹⁰; and when the first *korban* [approach surrogate/offering] was placed on the altar in the courtyard of the *Mish'kan*¹¹. Each time He has appeared ‘in the presence of all the children of Yisrael’, there have been some *pretty impressive fireworks*. *Oy veh, are we in big trouble now!*

A hush falls over the camp. The Voice we all heard at Sinai speaking beautiful words of betrothal is about to ring out over the desert scape again. The Spy-of-all-spies is about to take the floor and present His report. It will not be an opinion. It will not be rhetoric, mantra, dogma, political bullet-point, or complaint. It will be

⁸ See Numbers 14:10 (a).

⁹ Exodus 19:16-21; 20:18-19.

¹⁰ Exodus 40:33-35

¹¹ Leviticus 9:23-24.

raw and real – and anyone who has an ear to hear should stop what they are doing and listen.

Moshe Meets with the Holy One

The Holy One's opening words were:

Ad-anah yena'atzuni ha-am hazeh

'How long [or 'no more'] shall this nation continue to provoke Me?

v'ad-anah lo-ya'aminu

How long [or 'no more'] will they not trust in Me,

vi b'chol ha-otot asher asiti b'kir'bo

despite all the miracles that I have done in drawing near to them?

[Numbers 14:11]

In English translations it appears that the Holy One starts out by asking Moshe questions? “*How long ...*” But the Hebrew word our text translates as “how long” is ‘*ad*, which can also mean “*thus far*”, “*even now*” or, as in this instance, “*no more*”. So let's see what the passage would say if we translated *ad* as ‘*no more*’, instead of ‘*how long*’. It would go something like this:

***No more, Moshe! For the Sake of the Grand Plan of Redemption
My patience, my Mercy, this generation's contemptuous rejection of Me
and of that which I provide and promise
now requires that I instigate some serious damage control measures.
I will strike¹² with a plague¹³, and will destroy¹⁴ [Hebrew *yarash* - disinherit, supplant].
And from your ot [i.e. your covenant-confirming signs]
- i.e. not from your reproductive organs -
I will make¹⁵ a nation greater and stronger.***

¹² Strong's Hebrew word #5221, *nun, kaf, hey*, pronounced *naw-kaw*'. The first Biblical usage is in Genesis 4:15, where we are told that the Holy One, in mercy, put a mark on Kayin (Cain), *lest any finding him should kill* [Hebrew, *nakah*] *him*. See also Genesis 19:11, when the angels of the Holy One were attacked by the male residents of S'dom while staying with Lot. In order to prevent the assault, Torah tell us: *they smote* [Hebrew, *nakah*] *the men that [were] at the door of the house with blindness*.

¹³ Strong's Hebrew word #1698, *dalet, beit, resh*, pronounced *deh'-ber*. The first Biblical usage is early in the Exodus story, when Moshe goes to Pharaoh and requests permission for the people to go out in the desert for three days to worship the Holy One, “*lest he fall upon us with pestilence* [Hebrew, *deber*] *or with the sword.*” See also Psalm 91:3, where the psalmist praises the Holy One because: *Surely he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, [and] from the noisome pestilence* [Hebrew, *deber*].

¹⁴ Strong's Hebrew word #3423, *yod, resh, shin*, pronounced *yaw-rash*'. Strong's interprets this word to mean, depending upon the context: to seize, to dispossess, to take possession of, to inherit, to *disinherit*, to occupy, to impoverish, to be an heir

¹⁵ Strong's Hebrew word #6213, *ayin, shin, hey*, transliterated as *`asah*, and pronounced *aw-saw*'. The word picture this verb root presents is that of a potter sitting at his wheel, fashioning a vessel of clay with His hands, kneading and shaping the clay until it conforms to the pattern he has developed in his mind. It implies an intensely personal creative process, where the craftsman interacts with, and molds and

Moshe hears what the Holy One says and, I believe, badly *misinterprets His intention*. Moshe thinks the Holy One is saying He is going to wipe out all the Hebrew people (of all ages) totally and instantaneously, then raise up a totally new nation *from the physical lineage of Moshe*. Even in the confusion of the moment, could Moshe have actually believed that the Holy One was saying He was ready to abandon His covenant with the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov? But of course, in the Hebrew text, the Holy One did not say that at all. Go back and look carefully at what the Holy One said. Moshe had a limited frame of reference. He apparently had no grid for, and therefore never considered, the possibility of a “generational cleansing” such as the Holy One was planning. Moshe could only think in terms of his own past experiences with a king’s judgment – when vast numbers died immediately. So, since that is the kind of royal ‘damage control’ protocol Moshe knew, it was that kind of judgment scenario that He assumed the Bridegroom-King had in mind. Moshe therefore pleaded with the Holy One not to destroy all the people, or turn His back on His covenant promises. The Holy One readily agreed with Moshe’s plea, of course –because *that was never His intention anyway*. Moshe’s intercession was like that of Avraham in Genesis 18. Neither talked the Holy One out of anything at all. The Holy One is not a man, that He would change His Mind – or say something and not do it. So, after Moshe finished speaking the Holy One went on to do exactly what He had told Moshe He was going to do. He decreed that all those He said would die would indeed die in the wilderness as they had requested – but that a new nation greater and stronger would indeed come forth under Moshe’s personal tutelage in Torah. In Hebrew thought this is regarded as equivalent to *parentage*.

A Matter of Choices Relative to Direction and Delight

Note also that the topic in question was not a matter of *forgiveness of sin* - that was not the problem. The Holy One had the sin scenario covered. He had forgiven the sin. So what the Holy One did next was not a matter of sin *per se* – it was simply *a matter of choice*. The people chose what they wanted to delight in. They chose what they wanted to deem pleasurable. And a relationship with a Divine Bridegroom-King was simply not on their bucket list. The idea of co-creating with the Creator of the Universe and participating in His Great Plan for Redeeming the World was not something that whetted their appetite. They, like Chava in the

remolds, and shapes and reshapes, as necessary and “fusses over”, as it were, his ‘creation’. This process is summed up in Jeremiah 18:4, where the prophet sees, in the Spirit, the Holy One as a potter: *And the vessel that he made [asah] of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made [asah] it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make [asah] [it]*. Two verses later the prophet hears the Holy One declare: *“O house of Israel, cannot I do [asah] with you as this potter? Says the Holy One. Behold, as the clay [is] in the potter's hand, so [are] you in My Hand, O house of Israel.”* **Jeremiah 18:6.**

Garden, chose someone else's serpentine idea of delight. They, like Adam in the time of the Great Fall, lusted after someone else's poor suggestion of pleasure. They chose poorly – but they were extremely adamant about their choice. And reluctantly, with great sadness, the Holy One gave them the desires of their heart. If they did not want to love Him, they did not have to. If they preferred pining for leeks and onions and dying in the desert to the glorious destiny of the Bride and co-regent of the King of the Universe, He would not stand in their way.

Be careful what you choose to take delight in, Dear Reader. Be cautious who you allow to tell you what you will find pleasure in. The Holy One will give you every incentive in this world and eternity to choose wisely - but He will not force you to do so. He will let you make the choice – and will let you have what you choose – with all the consequences appertaining thereto.

So it was with the Community of the Redeemed, less than two moon-cycles removed from the sweet Chuppah of Sinai. The people made their choice. And the Holy One simply accepted it. He acceded to the request that the people had spoken. They expressed their intense desire to *die in the desert rather than enter Eretz Yisrael*. See **Numbers 14:2**. So let it be written – so let it be done. But what of Moshe's attempt to explain what happened? Moshe had – as men tend to do - put the Holy One in a box. He had had some dealings with authority figures in this world. He concluded that he understood the Thoughts and Ways of Kings. But as he had done at the time of the sin of the golden calf, Moshe misread the mind – and misconstrued the words –of the Holy One. Moshe thought the Holy One had changed his mind, and was ready to change his plan. Moshe thought the Holy One would abandon His Covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Ya'akov – and the Betrothal Commitment He had made to all Israel – and start over with just Moshe. Though he was the most humble man on the face of the earth Moshe – like many men today – still thought more highly of himself than he ought.

The Holy One had a plan to bring forth good from even this betrayal – and that plan was nowhere close to what Moshe thought. The Holy One had a *much higher and much more long-range plan* than the mind of Moshe could conceive. He had a *plan totally consistent with the promises He had made to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov* [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob]. The Holy One, you see, was *thinking trans-generationally* - because that's the way a covenant works. A covenant does not end when the individuals who made the covenant die; to the contrary, a covenant continues into the next generation – and then the next, and then for each successive generation after that, on and on forever.

Learning to See and Think Trans-Generationally

As mortal humans we think only in terms of what we can *see* - especially in terms of *time*. We think only of what will happen *in our lifetime*. Hence Moshe thought only in terms of what would happen *in his lifetime*, and in the lifetimes of the people who were at that very moment leading Israel. The Holy One however is not bound by time limitations or by human lifetimes. He is eternal, and His Word and His Covenant are eternal. The Holy One had made His covenant not just with Avraham but with all of Avraham's descendants forever. And the Holy One had not only covenanted to give possession of Eretz Yisrael to people who physically stood at Sinai – but *to the children, and children's children and all generations of their descendants* of those who stood at Sinai in perpetuity. If the people who were at that moment leading Israel preferred to listen to the majority report of the spies, reject His inheritance, and conclude that to die in the desert was preferable to entering His rest, the Holy One would accept their decision. Indeed, He would even arrange their funeral. *On the other hand*, irrespective of whether they entered the land personally or not, *the inheritance/stewardship responsibility was still forever assigned to them*. If they chose not to receive and accept it, it would pass to their children - the next generation.

Kalev and Y'hoshua, the two men who *chose* to receive and accept the inheritance, were given grace and strength to do so. The others, who *chose* to die in the desert rather than trust in the Holy One, were given grace and strength to do that. So, die in the desert they will – every one of them¹⁶. As the Holy One Himself put it:

B'midbar hazeh yiplu figreichem

In this desert your corpses will fall, because you complained about Me

v'chol-pkudeichem l'chol-misparchem miben esrim shanah

[This will happen to] your complete tally, everyone over twenty years old

v'malah asher ha-linotem alay

Among those who were counted.

V'tapeichem asher amartem lavaz yihyeh

'You said that your children will be taken captive,

v'heveyti otam v'yad'u et ha-aretz asher me'astem bah

But them I will bring [there]; they will know the land that you rejected.

[Numbers 14:29, 31]

Many people are content with the Holy One delivering them from things that

¹⁶ The unexplained exception is Elazar, son of Aharon, who also survived, and entered the Land with Y'hoshua, Kalev, and the generation of “under 20's” those two men were allowed to lead.

immediately threaten or bother them. Merely because one allows himself or herself to be delivered from trouble, however, does not mean that he or she will continue after the initial deliverance experience to follow the Holy One has ordained to take him or her into everything the Holy One has purposed to give.

Here is a difficult truth: *If you choose a partial deliverance, the Holy One understands and accedes*. It is not His best for you, but He will abide by your choice. The Holy One will not *force you* to walk out the destiny He has created you to fulfill *against your will*. If you choose to go all the way with Him, however, be assured – and never, never forget - He is faithful to take you there.

Have you considered that in His omniscience the Holy One knew exactly what would happen at Kadesh before he ever gave Moshe the directive to 'send out spies'? Have you considered that He knew full well that the destiny of the generation which He had redeemed gloriously from slavery and which had trembled before Him to reverently at Sinai was not to enter the Land He had promised to Ya'akov's seed forever? Have you considered that the whole idea of the spying expedition was not about the generation of the Exodus but was designed instead to brand a hunger for the Land into the consciousness of the next generation that could not be denied, much less quenched?

Consider My Servant Kalev

Before we go any further in our consideration of these things however, let us pause and consider the Holy One's servant *Kalev*. Of him the Divine Bridegroom made this stunning declaration:

V'avdi Kalev ekev ha-yetah ruach acheret imo

But concerning My servant Caleb, since he showed a different spirit

V'yemalei acharai

and followed Me wholeheartedly.

V'havi'otiv el ha-aretz asher-ba shamah

I will bring him to the land that he explored,

V'zar'o yorisheinah

and his descendants will possess it.

[Numbers 14:24]

Who was Kalev? We never even met him in the Book of Exodus. In Numbers he is introduced to us merely as a *representative of the tribe of Y'hudah* on the spy mission - and as *the son of Yefuneh*, of whom Torah has not previously spoken. In Hebrew his name means 'dog'. That gives us very little insight into his persona. In

Joshua 14:6 we are told a little more – that he was the ‘son of Yefuneh *the Kenezite*. The latter description – as the son of a *Kenezite* - produces an interesting possibility. Was Kalev a natural born Hebrew - a physical descendant of Ya’akov through his 4th son Y’hudah – or was he an ‘*engrafted foreigner*’? What, after all, is a *Kenezite*? The first mention of a *Kenezite* in Torah is found in Genesis 15, when the Holy One is covenanting with Avraham. At that time, the Holy One said to Avraham [then still known as Avram]:

***To your seed I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates.
The Kenites, and the Kenezites, and the Kedmonians,
and the Chettites, and the Perezites, and the Refaim, and the Amorites,
and the Chananites, and the Evites, and the Gergesites and the Y’vusites.***

Did the *Kenezites* mentioned in this prophecy pre-exist the Avrahamic covenant? Or was the Holy One speaking prophetically of a group of people who would come into being, and possess parts of the promised land, after Avraham was gone, but before Avraham’s descendants returned from their exile in Egypt? It’s about as *clear as mud, isn’t it?* The word our English Bibles translate as *Kenezite* is *Kenazi*¹⁷. This literally meaning ‘*descendant of Kenaz*’. There is, however, only one person in Torah known as *Kenaz*¹⁸. The only reference to anyone with that name in Scripture is found in Genesis 36, where Kenaz is listed as one of *Esav’s grandsons*, who became a nobleman of the *Edomi* [Edomites]. **Genesis 36:11, 15, 42.** This Kenaz was not a descendant of Ya’akov. Whether Kalev was a natural born Hebrew or an engrafted foreigner, however, one thing is certain - he revered the Creator of the Universe more than he feared man. He was the first person to stand up and say: ***Let us go up at once, and possess it [the land]; for we are well able to overcome it.***

Even when his contemporaries convinced the masses that the land ‘devoured its inhabitants’, and that they should turn around and go back to Egypt, he – this time along with Y’hoshua - stood up for the Holy One, the land, and the mission. He did not lash out angrily. He did not accuse anyone of deception – much less blasphemy. He kept his message 100% positive. Look carefully at what he said:

***The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.
If the Holy One delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us –
a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Holy One,
nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread;
their protection has departed from them, and the Holy One is with us. Do not fear them.***
[Numbers 14:7-9]

¹⁷ Kenazi is *quf, nun, zayin, yod*. It is pronounced *ken-neh’-zi*.

¹⁸ One of the descendants of Yafet [Japhet] was named *Ashkenaz*. Tradition says that the Jewish people who migrated from the German/Poland/Russia area of Europe are called *Ashkenazim*.

Amid all the negativity, Kalev somehow managed to keep his *shalom*. In the face of a sustained barrage of emotionally charged rhetoric he maintained his *Kingdom focus*. In the middle of all the demagoguery, he *stayed on task*. He was steadfast and true to the One Who called him – and to the Bridegroom-King’s Vision. He was a *faithful witness*.

Alas, even though there was not a word of accusation or condemnation in Kalev’s exhortation, the masses took up stones to kill him. They, like so many today, chose to take up arms against one of their own, who sought nothing but their best destiny for them, rather than to stand up to a real enemy who wished them actual ill.

Whose Side Are You On?

Kalev was somehow able to recognize - and *resist* - the spirit of Yish’mael. So was Y’hoshua. They proved it can be done – by ordinary, mortal men. So how about you, Beloved? Are you able to recognize - and resist - Yish’mael’s spirit? Can it be said of you that you ‘follow after *a different spirit*’ than the masses? Can it be said of you that you follow after the Holy One *whole-heartedly*?

Do you truly believe, as did Kalev and Y’hoshua, that it is better to stand firmly in the face of an angry mob with murder in their hearts, or face off against giants twice your size on the field of battle, than to rebel against the Holy One? Do you *really*? Then consider the Holy One’s servant Kalev, Beloved. And consider his reward. Forty years or so later, when he is 85 years of age, this is what Scripture says concerning him:

*Then the descendants of Y’hudah came to Y’hoshua in Gilgal.
And Kalev the son of Yefuneh the Kenezite said to him:
You know the word which the Holy One said to Moshe the man of God
concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea
I was forty years old when Moshe the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea
to scout out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart.
Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt,
but I wholly followed the Holy One my God.
So Moshe swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden
shall be your inheritance - and your children's forever -
because you have wholly followed the Holy One my God.'
And now, behold, the Holy One has kept me alive, as He said,
these forty-five years, ever since the Holy One spoke this word to Moshe
while Israel wandered in the wilderness;
and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old.
Yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moshe sent me;
just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war,
both for going out and for coming in.*

*Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Holy One spoke in that day;
for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there,
and that the cities were great and fortified.
It may be that the Holy One will be with me,
and I shall be able to drive them out as the Holy One said.
And Y'hoshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Kalev the son of Yefuneh as an inheritance.
Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Kalev, son of Yefuneh the Kenezite, to this day,
because he wholly followed the Holy One the God of Israel.*
[Joshua 14:6-14]

Questions For Today's Study

1. After most of the community of the Redeemed accepts the negative report of the spies and votes to return to Egypt or die in the desert rather than go into the land of promise, The Holy One appears in a powerful form of manifestation all the people can see.

[A] The Holy One engages in a conversation with Moshe. According to our English Bibles, the first thing the Holy One does is to ask Moshe *two questions*. What are those two “questions”?

[B] Secondly, the Holy One says what He is going to do with the *meraglim* and the generation who has been defiled by accepting their *dibbah*. What two things does He say He will do to this group?

[C] Look up the Hebrew words used as verb phrases in connection with The Holy One's announcement of what He intends to do with the *meraglim* and the defiled generation of B'nei Yisrael. What are the Hebrew words and what are their definitions?

[D] What does the Holy One say He will do after disposing of the *meraglim* and the defiled generation of B'nei Yisrael?

[E] Compare this passage with Exodus 32:9-10. What is the Hebrew verb used in Exodus 32:10 to describe what the Holy One intended to do to those who sinned with the golden calf? Write that word and its definition.

[F] What is the difference between what the Holy One said He would do to those who sinned with the golden calf and those who were defiled by the *dibbah meraglim*?

2. Beginning in verse 13 of today's Torah reading our English translations of Torah tell us Moshe prayed for the Holy One not to “*kill this people as one man*”.

[A] Is ‘killing the people as one man’ what the Holy One had said He intended to do?

[B] In speaking this prayer, was Moshe trying to change the Holy One's mind, or was He trying to find out the precise manner and timing in which the

Holy One is going to do what He said He would do?

[C] In verses 18-19 of today's reading Moshe asks the Holy One to "pardon" [KJV] the iniquity of the people. What is the Hebrew word translated as "pardon"? Write that word and its definition.

[D] Did the Holy One "pardon" the generation that sinned, or did He only pardon the sin so as to not cause the iniquity of the fathers to be visited upon their children?

[E] In verse 20 of today's reading do you think the Holy One saying that He is going to pardon B'nei Yisrael *again*, or is He merely acknowledging that He previously pardoned them many other times, including at the time of the sin of the golden calf?

[F] How does the Holy One say He is going to punish the *meraglim* and the generation that became defiled by the *dibbah* [see verses 23, 28-35]? Does this sound like they were "pardoned"? [See especially verse 34]

3. Kalev and Y'hoshua, the two men who chose to accept the Holy One's gift of the Land and had pleaded with others to do so, were singled out by the Holy One for a different fate.

[A] How does the Holy One say Kalev was different from the defiled generation?

[B] What does the Holy One promise to Kalev?

[C] What does the Holy One promise to Kalev's descendants?

4. In the Haftarah reading from today our text records a covenant between the *meraglim* sent out by Y'hoshua [Joshua] and the woman Rachav, of Yericho. Here is an excerpt [Rachav is speaking]:

[P]lease swear to me by the Holy One, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a true token; and that you will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brothers, and my sisters, and all that they have, and will deliver our lives from death.

*The men said to her, **Our life for yours, if you don't utter this our business; and it shall be, when the Holy One gives us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you.***

[Joshua 2:12-14]

[A] What do the *meraglim* of the next generation promise to Rachav in exchange for her silence about their mission?

[B] Look at the genealogy of Yeshua given by Matthew. Who is mentioned in Matthew 1:5 as being the mother of Boaz [Ruth's future husband], the great-grandmother of David Melech, and the ancestor of Messiah Yeshua?

5. In the Brit Chadasha reading for today the author of the letter to the Messianic

Jews of the First Century issues a warning that we would do well to heed.

*Beware, brothers, lest perhaps there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief,
in falling away from the living God.*

*But exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called "today;"
lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

*For we have become partakers of Messiah,
if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end: while it is said,
"Today if you will hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

[Hebrews 3:12-15]

[A] What does the writer of Hebrews say a sinful, unbelieving heart will do?

[B] What does the writer say we should do to one another daily “as long as it is called Today”?

[C] Look up the Greek word that is used as the verb that formed your answer to the last question (subpart B). What is the Greek word and what does it mean? Search out the Hebrew word that would correspond¹⁹, and describe the Hebraic concept underlying that word.

[D] For what purpose are we to do this to one another “daily”?

[E] How, according to Hebrews 3:14, do we [like Rachav] “come to share in Mashiach [Messiah Yeshua]”?

[F] What is the writer referring to as “*the confidence we had at first*”?

*May you choose the inheritance the Holy One has planned for you, Beloved.
Anybody can die in the desert.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Revelation 3:14-22

And to the angel of the k'hillah in Laodicea write:

"The Amein, the Faithful and True Witness, the Head of God's creation, says these things:

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot.

***I wish you were cold or hot. But because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold,
I will vomit you out of my mouth.***

***Because you say, 'I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing;'
and don't know that you are the wretched one, miserable, poor, blind, and naked;
I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich;
and white garments, that you may clothe yourself,***

¹⁹ The Orthodox Jewish Brit Chadasha suggests this would be a form of the Hebrew verb **chazak**, *chet*, *zayin*, *kaf*, Strong's Hebrew word #2388, in the sense used in Deuteronomy 3:28, where Moshe is told: “charge Y'hoshua, and encourage [**chazaq**] him, and strengthen [*amatz*] him; for he will go over before this people, and he will cause them to inherit the land which you shall see.”

*and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;
and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.*

As many as I love, I reprove and chasten. Be zealous therefore, and make t'shuvah.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

*If anyone sh'ma's my voice and opens the door, then I will come to him,
and will dine with him, and he with me.*

*He who overcomes I will give to him to sit down with me on my throne,
as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

He who has an ear, let him sh'ma what the Spirit says to the k'hillot.