

*Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi*¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Shelach:*** **Numbers 13:26 - 14:10a**
 Haftarah: **Joshua 2:8-11**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Hebrews 3:10-11**

... *And they gave their report.*

[Numbers 13:26(b)]

Today's Meditation is Revelation 3:7-13;

This Week's Amidah prayer is Petition No. 8, *Mish'pat* [Justice]

Vayelchu – Then they walked up ... *vayavo'u el-Moshe v'el-Aharon* – and went up to Moshe and Aharon ... *v'el-kol-adat B'nei-Yisra'el* – and to the entire witness throng of B'nei Yisrael ... *el-midbar Paran Kadeshah* – in the wilderness of Paran, around Kadesh ... *vayashivu otam davar* – and they gave their report **Numbers 13:26.**

The God of our forefathers brought us out of Egypt by way of the Wilderness. Or odyssey of freedom began with venues like *Sukkot, Etam, Elim, Yam Suf, Marah, Massah/Meribah, Refidim* and *Sinai*. More recently the Pillar of Fire and Cloud has led us through dry, barren places like *Bamidbar Paran, Taberah, Kiv'rot Ha-Ta'avah*, and *Chatzerot*. But the landscape is changing! As today's aliyah begins, we find ourselves poised to breach the Western border of the land of Promise. Our first glimpse of the 'place prepared for us' by our Bridegroom King will be at *Kadesh-Barnea*, just a few kilometers from *Be'er Lahoi Roi*, where Yitzchak and Rivkah lived as newlyweds. Are we ready for the transition? Are we ready to return to and take caretaker responsibility for, restore *tahorah*² and *kedusha*³ to, our covenantal 'home base'? Are we ready to go toe-to-toe with the warlike Kena'ani – and the motley crew strange-bedfellow allies that they will enlist to help them oppose our long-prophesied national return to the land of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov? Are we done with the desert once and for all?

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² *Tahorah*, commonly mistranslated into English as 'ritual purity', is a spiritual state of balance which promotes wholeness, wellness, and maximal levels of productivity, fruitfulness, beauty, and shalom. It is the spiritual counterbalance to *tumah*, commonly translated 'uncleanness' or 'defilement', the primary characteristic is that it promotes dissolution, division, disharmony, conflict, chaos, dysfunction, disease, disability, and ultimately, death.

³ *Kedusha*, commonly translated into English as 'holiness', is the pulsing, inspiring, empowering energy that emanates from the Holy One's Presence, His Words, and His Deeds/Works. It is the spiritual counterbalance to that which is *chol*, commonly translated as 'profane' or 'common', but meaning designed, initiated, and/or controlled/limited by fallen man's uninspired thoughts, desires, opinions, theories, philosophies, ideologies, political systems, institutions, habits, customs, religious practices, traditions, 'science', 'medicine', and 'law codes' (as opposed to sourced in, emanating from, and infused with energy from the Holy One).

We are So Close! So ... What Comes Next?

From the highest points of our encampment here we can see the ancient road that leads to a chain of oases with familiar names – places like Be'er Lahoi Roi, Be'er Sheva, Hebron, Beit Lechem, and Salem/Jebus/Y'rushalayim. We have heard stories about these places all our lives. Is it possible we will soon see them? We can almost feel the holy, pulsing energy of patriarchs' footprints calling to us. Destiny is staring us in the face. We have no doubt that something huge is going to happen at this place – at Kadesh-Barnea – something that will be remembered by our children and our children's children forever. The question to be determined is, will this place, and what is going to happen here, be remembered for 'good' – or will it be remembered for 'evil'? Will this be one of our finest moments – or one of our darkest hours? Will Kadesh-Barnea be remembered by future generations as a place of *soaring triumph* – or a place of epic failure? We can make it either one. But when the time comes, will the choice we make, the things we say, and the things we do be birthed in prayer and resultant Heavenly revelation? Or will what comes forth from us be the product of fleshly emotions overstimulated by the crippling pseudo-intelligence of human opinion? We will see, and very soon – because ... *look yonder!* Here come *the spies*, returning with their report!

Here Come the Spies!

The atmosphere in the Camp is supercharged. Our excitement is hard to contain. Forty long, hot summer mornings ago we sent twelve men – all respected tribal leaders - out to reconnoiter the land. Every morning since we have met at the Mish'kan to *daven Shecharit* for these men. Every evening we have spoken *shalom* over their tents and pronounced the blessings of *Ma'ariv* over the members of their families. In their absence, we have marked time by watching the night sky. First we watched the moon of the third month – *Sivan*, finish its trek across the Heavens. When we watched the moon of the fourth month – *Tammuz* – rise and process through its full cycle. We are now watching the moon of the fifth month – *Av* – waxing in the evening sky. And today, at long last, our delta force heroes are re-entering the camp. Torah describes the journey of discovery they just completed as follows:

***They went up and scouted/explored/reconnoitered the land –
from the Wilderness of Tzin as far as Rechov, near the entrance of Chamat.
And they traversed the Negev and went to Hebron.***

***Then they went to Nachal Eshkol [i.e. the Eshkol Watershed Area],
where they cut off a branch with one cluster of grapes that they carried
between two of them on a pole. And they brought also some pomegranates and figs.
And then, after forty days, they returned from exploring the land.***

[Numbers 13:21-25]

Hallelujah - the boys are back in town! And just look at the *grapes, figs, and*

pomegranates they brought with them!

The Boys Are Back In Town

It has been a long, suspenseful season of springtime turning to summer. But now, excited children are jumping up and down, shouting ‘*Abba! Abba!*’, while joyful wives have put modesty on the back burner, girded up their loins, and are running at breakneck speed toward the outskirts of the Camp to reunite with their husbands. Shofars are blowing throughout the camp. The silver trumpets are sounding too. Miryam has taken tambourine in hand and is leading in a dance. This is indeed the ‘*joyful sound*’. Moshe and Aharon are grinning from ear to ear. Elderly fathers are whispering *Baruch HaShem* – because their sons who have been so long in harm’s way have come home. Mothers are crying huge tears of very real joy - because their own eyes have now confirmed that each of these beloved young men has returned 100% safe, sound, and unharmed.

Everyone’s attention is now focused squarely on the scouts - and on the stunning haul of Israeli produce they have brought with them. All attention is now *OFF of the Holy One*. Suddenly no one is watching the Pillar of Fire and Cloud. No one is meditating upon the covenant the Holy One cut with the Patriarchs, on how we were delivered from bondage in Egypt, or on how we have been cared for and protected by the Holy One so as to reach this auspicious moment on the threshold of destiny. No one is talking about what the Torah has to say about the challenge we face. The once ubiquitous chorus ‘*Let the Holy One arise, and let Your enemies be scattered! Let them who hate You flee before You!*’ has slipped from both our lips and our minds. Our Assigned Mission and our Manifest Destiny have been relegated to a distant back burner. All our attention is now being focused intently on *men* – and on *what mere men have to say*. Suddenly the Voice of the Holy One our God is blotted out by the voices of fallen men with severely limited perspective, myopic frames of reference, and logic impaired by personal paranoia and private agenda are saying we *can and cannot* - and *should and should not* - do. But it all feels so ‘right’. What could possibly go wrong?

Basking in our attention, the scouts are about to release ... well, as men given attention are apt to do, they are about to release *whatever is in them*. Out of the abundance of their hearts their mouths will speak; and so it always goes. Words are about to come forth from their mouths that should not even be thought, much less uttered, in the Camp of the Redeemed. Knee-jerk reactions will issue forth that will be totally inappropriate and at odd with our Redeemer’s Ways. Opinions will be given voice – and heeded - that are absolutely inconsistent with the Wisdom and the Counsel of the Holy One. Free speech in its darkest forms – those forms unenlightened by Divine Wisdom, Mercy, or Kindness – is about to spill forth like

toxic waste and wreak havoc on our camp. Fallen humanity at its ugliest is about to show its serpentine head. And the Glorious People of the Bridegroom-King are about to depart the realm of Divine Inspiration and Direction and crash land in the venomous realm of human opinion, logic, and rhetoric. A generation of *nowhere men* is about to be birthed.

The Holy One knew this was going to happen. And He already has a plan to work this, as He works all things, *together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.*

Welcome to the Kedusha Crucible of Kadesh-Barnea!

The Holy One made it clear in the *Great Kedusha Discourse*⁴ – i.e. the longest revelation stream of the book of Leviticus – that we are called to distinguish between the *kadosh* [i.e. holy, pulsing with the energy and emitting the frequency of the Holy One’s Throne Room] and the *chol* [i.e. common, profane because emanating from the cravings, emotions, appetites, and pseudo-intellect of fallen man’s nefesh]. Equipped with the *Kedusha* Protocols of *Sefer Vayikra* we should be able to recognize immediately the difference between the *Sweet Voice of our Bridegroom-King* on the one hand and the *sickening cacophony of uninspired human opinions* on the other. We should know the difference between wisdom and folly. By this stage in our Walk with the Creator we should know the difference between the *loving guidance of our Good Shepherd* and the *whiny, fearful, angry, emotionally charged rhetoric of fallen men* very well. We should be on the lookout for and be quick to recognize the telltale signs that differentiate *the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake* from *the counsel of the ungodly*, from *the way of sinners*, and from *the seat of the scornful*. We should immediately discern that what is *kadosh* as being that which is of, from, about, focused on, generated by, for, and exalting the Holy One and His Glorious Agenda of Redemption. Our spiritual antennae should immediately warn us when we encounter that which is instead of, from, about, focused on, generated by, for, and exalting of fallen men and their self-obsessed fleshly agendas.

We had amazing, transformative waves of truth released over us at Sinai – but have we *sh’ma*-ed, *sh’mar*-ed, and *internalized* them? But *knowing a truth* and *walking in it* are two different things. *Believing a truth* and *living it* are by no means the same thing. The Holy One knows that – but we do not. The wilderness of Paran is therefore about to become our *killing field*.

Are the things our Bridegroom-King has taught us *useful to us in a functional sense* – or are they just ‘beliefs’, ‘concepts’, ‘principles’ and ‘theological notions’.

⁴ The *Kedusha Discourse* is found in *Sefer Vayikra* [Leviticus], in chapters 11 through 26. It is the Divine Download that our Bridegroom-King released over us beginning in the middle of parsha Sh’mini and continuing with *parshot Tazria, Metzora, Acharei Mot, K’doshim, and Emor.*

Are they *life and breath to us* – or are they just dreamy ideals for discussion in ivory towers, memes and social media rants? Are they *the creative, prophetic blueprint out of which we live and move and have our being* – or are they just a moral code/creed to which we pretend to adhere but mainly just seek to apply externally upon other people? Will the wonderful, transformative things we learned at Sinai grow and mature in our lives until they define our identities, our personalities, and our destinies – or will they just swim around in our heads when we take a break from indulging our screaming, untamed, flesh? And can – *will* - we *asah* the Words of our Bridegroom – *i.e. build a living house upon their firm foundation* – when our very real sandals hit the very real sand?

The heat of summer is beating down. There are a host of hostile armies and fortified cities awaiting us. This is no longer a dreamer's reverie – it is very, very real. This is no longer some theoretical bridge we will cross when we come to it – this is rapidly unfolding in real time. Do we have the focus and the patience to trust in, hold fast to, and apply the blueprint and instructions of the Bridegroom-king in the face of real threats and in the throes of real pain? Do we trust Him to be Who He is and do what He does – when not only our lives, health, and callings, but also the future of our children and children's children, are hanging in the balance?

The Fourth Dimension of Divine Testing!

The first challenge of every person called to walk with the Holy One will always be *the critical test of the choice of a King to admire, follow, and serve*. In Egypt we had to make a real-time choice to either cow-tow to Pharaoh or follow the instructions of the Holy One. We had heard the call of the Holy One to put the blood of a lamb on our doorposts and lintels. This required a public profession of faith in the One we had not seen – and flew directly in the face of the authority of Egypt's Pharaoh. We entered the crucible on the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan/Aviv. We exited on the morning of the fifteenth. But that was just the beginning.

The second challenge of those called to walk with the Holy One will always be *the critical choice of whether we will walk in the Way He has Provided or will take our chances with the way[s] we know*. At the Sea of Reeds we had to make a real-time choice to step between the standing walls of water and 'launch out in the Deep'. This required us to choose the unknown possibilities revealed to us by the Holy One over everything that seemed 'real'. It required us to make a quantum leap that made no logical sense – but was based solely on trust.

The third challenge of every person called to walk with the Holy One is the critical *crucible of the Golden Calf systems of our day*. Once the Holy One delivers us, we

will immediately be confronted with people and systems that tell us they are the way. Someone will say *'let's assemble'* at a particular time and place and in a certain way. Someone else will declare confidently *'this is your God ... who led you out of bondage.'* Someone will proclaim a day at random as *'a feast unto the Holy One'*. And suddenly we will have to discern if what the people doing all the talking are promoting is a golden calf worship system that will lead to chaos and death or is worship in Spirit and in Truth as directed and choreographed by the Holy One Himself. When this seduction comes around, will we do *what the Holy One called and empowered us to do, when and as He instructed us to do it* – OR will we let others design for us a god and a religion according to human tastes, catered to our fleshly appetites, and encouraging us to just fit a little 'God-stuff' into our self-obsessed schedule?

After these things comes *the fourth dimension of Divine Testing*. Welcome to Kadesh-Barnea – and the *faith-meets-fear crucible*. Welcome to the *Great Controversy* – the seemingly endless struggle between *the Spirit that is willing and the flesh that is weak*. Welcome to *the bloody battlefield of the mind* – where the *law of our fleshly members* teams up with *the law of our fallen human minds* to wage guerilla warfare against the Holy Torah - and try to distract and discourage us from *sh'ma-ing* the Sweet Voice of our Bridegroom-King. Welcome to the world of scouts and disinformation. Welcome to the world of fear mongering and fatalism. Welcome to the world of Yish'mael, where people love to pontificate as if they knew what they were talking about, even though all they have to offer are empty *clichés*, emotionally charged rhetoric, and half-baked opinions. Welcome the season when men think higher of themselves than they ought, and spout outright folly presuming it to be wisdom.

Kadesh-Barnea is everywhere. It is every place where everyone around us seems to have – and feel compelled to express – a bad attitude, a strong opinion, and a dozen or so reasons why we need to be very, very afraid; why we should all be disgusted, outraged and offended; why we should vilify and demonize those who look at life different than us; why we should boycott, stage a protest march, shout profanity and ridicule those who oppose our agenda; and why ranting, raging, and cursing other human beings are not only acceptable but virtuous forms of behavior! Ah, this, too, is a 'testing ground' through which all people who walk in Covenant with the Holy One must eventually pass – and ultimately transcend – on our way to Kingdom maturity and responsibility.

The Hard Lesson of Kadesh Barnea:

All Human Opinions Are Absolutely Toxic To the Kingdom of Heaven

Wherever we are, we are enter a '*Kadesh-Barnea zone*' when everyone – including

us – starts to think: [a] his/her opinion is the only reasonable one, [b] it is his/her duty to give voice to that opinion and [c] it is his/her right to be outraged at anyone who dares to disagree. These three blatantly fleshly deceptions always tend to present serious challenges to the Camp of the Redeemed. Through these three distractions, great destinies often get exchanged for pride, offense, and drama.

The people of the Great Redeemer are called to be *sh'ma* people – not an *opinionated* people. Opinions flow out of the tree of the knowledge of ‘good’ and evil like venom flows out of the mouth of a serpent. Opinions are formed only from [a] we think we see – albeit from our horribly myopic perspective; [b] what we think we hear – albeit though organs of hearing that are constantly bombarded with rhetoric; and [c] what we think we know based on what we see and hear – albeit the best we can see anything is through a glass darkly and the best we can hear anything is through a din of disinformation, misinformation, and outright nonsense. So, if we are not called to act on or trust opinions, how are we to live, move, and have our being? That is the good news! We are called to move in response to our Divine Bridegroom’s Movement, Voice, and Counsel. We are called to dance a flowing dance with a Supernatural Partner – not to form battle lines against other men and their institutions over their or our opinions regarding politics, ideology, ‘social justice’, theology, or morality. We are called to *speak only what the Holy One gives us to speak and to do only what we see Him doing* – not to regurgitate, rally around, or react to the talking points constantly being spewed into atmosphere by demagogues, fear-mongers, and haters.

What, in the context of a glorious, intimate relationship with the Creator of the Universe, are human opinions, ideologies, and agendas? They are the *hellish fires of human flesh burning out of control*. What, in the realm of walking through this life with the Good Shepherd, is the value of any man’s rhetoric? The rhetoric of fallen men is the *gasoline that the foolish among us allow the Serpent to pour on the hellish flames of burning flesh in order to make the great bonfire of fear, folly, blame, and offense appear even larger*.

No advancement of the Kingdom of Heaven has ever come - or will ever come - from any human opinion, any ideology, any political agenda, any religious organization, or any man’s rhetoric. There is a reason for this: the Kingdom of Heaven is the realm of things *kadosh*; the areas in which opinion and rhetoric flourish – politics, ideology, philosophy, and theology – is the realm of things *chol*.

Lives, Family Lines, and Generations Hang in the Balance

This is a *destiny-shaping moment* in the midst of a momentous prophetic season. Any time the attention of the Camp becomes focused upon the ‘good’ and ‘evil’

spoken of and engaged in by serpents and men instead of upon the invigorating energy of the Holy One's Tree of Life, we become very, very vulnerable. We fall victim to every negative thought and vain imagination: from *questions to doubts*; from *pseudo-intellectual over-analysis to quantum leaps of flawed logic*; from *inflammatory rhetoric to blatant fearmongering*; from *conspiracy theories to paranoia*; from *making accusations to forming judgments*; from *offense to outrage*; and from *mirage to arbitrage*, and from *espionage to sabotage*. We become enamored with the agendas of men. We allow ourselves to be deceived and manipulated. We cave into the fears. We yield to human sentimentality. And alas, if we are not careful, we do the work of the Adversary in the Name of the King. Step carefully, O sons and daughters of Israel - for the direction of many, many lives will dramatically change as the result of whatever decisions are ultimately made this momentous day.

The fate of *three generations* – including every single person in our Camp as well as every single person of the nations presently living in the land of Promise – hangs precariously in the balance. Neither little Pinchas nor little *Rachav* [*i.e. Rahab*] have any idea how drastically different their futures will be depending on what happens in the next few hours.

If we in the Camp of the Redeemed choose to believe and act on the majority report – the report that proclaims the land to which our Divine Bridegroom has called us is worth neither the effort nor the risk it would take to possess it - we will not just wind up running away from a confrontation with a few 'ites'. We will wind up turning our backs on our children's *heritage*, on our Divinely ordained *mission*, and *everything that is good about our prophetic destiny*. If we buy into the propaganda of the naysayers and fear-mongers among us, what we will be turning our backs upon will not just be the *Anakim* that are squatting on the land where Avraham pitched his tent near Hebron. We will also be turning our backs upon the faith-walk of the wandering Aramean who became the friend of God. We will be spurning the blessing of Melki-Tzedek the King of Righteousness. We will be scoffing at the deliverance of Yitzchak the child of promise. We will be discounting the transformation of Ya'akov the trickster into Yisrael the Prince of Heaven. We will be ignoring the passion of Rachel who forever weeps for her children. And we will show disdain for the prophetic vision of Yosef, who dared to dream the very dreams of the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven.

If we do what the majority is going to tell us to do at this critical juncture we will be giving up the glorious dream the Holy One has birthed in our hearts in exchange for a man-centered, meeting-focused religion that looks amazingly like what the Holy One called us out of when He redeemed us from Egypt. Beware, sin is

crouching at our doors. It desires to have us. But we can master it! And beware, *ha-satan* the adversary desires to sift us as wheat. But when we have turned about, we will strengthen our brothers.

***Learning the Important Life Lessons Revealed
In the Narrative of Torah's Most Famous – and Prototypical –
Covenant-Breaching Scenarios***

We have heretofore in our study of Torah to date already encountered a number of prototypical ‘*covenant-breaching (i.e. ‘sin’/‘trespass’/‘transgression’) scenarios*’. Remember the aftermath of the ‘tree of knowledge’ incident in the Garden? Did you think Torah was just providing an expose’ of Adam and Chava’s worst day so that we could sit in our ivory towers and judge them for their folly? Did you think the clever serpent-speak; the shrewd focus-shifting deception he played; the sudden appeal to both human senses and pseudo-intellect of something common, that had been present all along; the attempted cover-up; the shifting of blame, the curse ... were just THEIR problem? No, dear one. The crucibles they faced – and the wrong turns they made along the way - were not just *their problem*; they are an integral part of every human life. The story is included in Torah - in detail, no less – not so we can blame Adam or Chava for making a mess of things, but so that we can understand the essential challenges that we - and every man, woman and child ever born – must face and deal with every day we live. The story of Adam and Chava’s sin-scenario is not merely historic – it is prototypical.

The same is true with regard to all the sin scenario stories we find in Torah: the struggle of *Kayin vis-à-vis Hevel*; the *proliferation of violence and corruption in the world during the generation of the Flood*; the *arrogant, humanistic mindset that led to the building of the City and Tower of Bavel*; the *rampant appetite for sensuality that led to the destruction of S’dom and G’morrah*; and so forth. Each sin scenario narrative in the Torah is presented as an *integrally related part of a finely woven tapestry of Divine Revelation*. Each ‘sin’-scenario narrative that the Holy One has caused to be recorded in the Torah is designed to paint for us a vivid picture of the degenerating spiritual condition of *mankind-without-a-covenant-with-its-Creator*. And so it is with the ‘sin’-scenarios of our ancestors’ Great Journey of Freedom. The narrative of the *chet ha-egel* [sin of the (golden) calf]; the sin of murmuring and complaining, Miryam and Aharon’s slander of their brother Moshe and his wife, Moshe’s various meltdowns, and all the other post-redemption experiences, were all included by the Holy One in Torah to help us navigate our way through the danger zones of this world – and own souls.

Today we study yet another critically important ‘sin’-scenario narrative – that of ‘*chet ha-meraglim*’, or ‘sin of the scouts/spies’. As talmidim of Torah our first task

is to gird up our loins and be willing to stare right into the many *Hydra-heads*⁵ of mankind's 'sin problem' – and to do so without being repulsed by, or becoming judgmental of, the human beings most directly affected by it. Only after we have passed through this revulsion-barrier effectively can we move on to the greater challenge, which is *to learn, implement and teach our children and children's children how to avoid when possible and overcome when necessary each of the hydra-heads the sin-problem presents to mankind*. Torah is not entertaining us with interesting fables to give Christian preachers fodder for Sunday sermons – it is trying to teach you and me – and our children and children's children - critical life lessons drawn from very real crucibles of distraction, deception, over-stimulation of fleshly appetites, sensuality, sentimentality, emotional anarchy, and pseudo-intellectual folly.

So, Beloved, as we venture off into Torah's narrative of *chet ha-egel*, please proceed with extreme *caution* – and make sure your eyes are and remain wide open. Resist the urge to be repulsed by the people involved, as well as the temptation to be judgmental. The sin scenario of *Shelach Lecha* is not about 'them' and how they messed everything up, you see - it is about US and how we can mess everything up too, in our generation, if we don't pay close attention and learn from our ancestors' mistakes. Torah's *chet ha-egel* narrative is about the ugliness that lies inside all human beings, including you and me – ugliness that lurks just below our super-spiritual smiles and oh-so-spiritual talk. It is about the *animalistic nature* that every human being inherited from Adam and Chava – the *yetzer hara*/'dark side' that is always present in us, stalking, looking for just the right moment/opportunity to spring forth out of the shadows and infect our lives, our homes, our relationships, our bloodlines, and our destiny with the seeds of death. This 'sin'-scenario is about what *we really think* about, and how much we do *or do not* value, what our Divine Bridegroom has promised us. And it is about how worthwhile – or not – and how important – or not - the mission, and the destiny, and the purpose, for which the Holy One our God has prepared for us and *prepared us for* really are to us. Which brings us to the report of the "scouts".

Chet Ha-Meraglim

The Holy One clearly and unambiguously promised to deliver the land of the patriarchs into our hands. He promised to drive out the 'ites' who were squatting on that land before us. But when the *meraglim* return from reconnoitering the land they seem to forget that fact. They have the floor – and they cannot resist saying

⁵ *Hydra* is the name of a legendary creature from the Greek Hercules myths – a serpent with multiple dangerous heads (the number deviates from five to nine up to one hundred depending on the version of the myth). According to the myth, if one of Hydra's heads was severed, another [or, in some versions of the myth, two more] would grow in place of the severed head.

not only *what they saw* but what they, in the dark recesses of their spirit-of-Yish'mael infected minds, *think, theorize, and opine*. Brace yourself. This is not going to be pretty. But here goes. The first verse of our passage of the day reads as follows:

... vayashivu otam davar

And they brought their report to them [Moshe and Aharon]

v'et-kol-ha-edah

And to the entire community of witnesses,

vayar'um et-pri ha-aretz

and showed them fruit from the land.

[Numbers 13:26]

Warning, Beloved! Gird up your loins! Proceed with extreme *caution* – and with your eyes wide open. Resist the urge to be repulsed by the people involved, as well as the temptation to be judgmental. The sin scenario we are about to read is not about ‘them’, you see - it is about US. This story is not about ‘the Devil’. It is not about anyone or anything else but *about you*, and *about me*. It is about the ugliness that lies inside the both of us – the all of us – hiding just below our super-spiritual smiles and oh-so-spiritual talk. It is about the *sin nature* which every human being inherited from Adam, and which is constantly waiting for just the right moment, and just the right opportunity, to issue forth and infect our lives, our homes, our relationships, and our destiny with the seeds of death.

This sin scenario is about what *we really think* about, and how much we do *or do not* value, what our Divine Bridegroom has promised us. And it is about how worthwhile – or not – and how important – or not - the mission, and the destiny, and the purpose, for which the Holy One our God has prepared for us and *prepared us for* really are to us.

We need to understand this particular ‘sin’ scenario – and the hydra-head called ‘discouragement’ - very, very well. What we are about to read, you see, is not *history* – it is *prophecy*. This is *your life* – and your heritage - and mine.

Understanding Our Glorious Mission And Our Magnificent Destiny

The Holy One called us out of Egypt specifically for the purpose of taking possession of, and assuming the custody and care of, the land of the patriarchs. The fact that the land the Holy One was planning to give was occupied by multitudes of Kena’ani peoples (i.e. Canaanites) who had no intention whatever of vacating the premises was however never a secret. From the day that the Holy One called Moshe to his life’s mission at the burning bush, the future plans of the Creator for the people vis-à-vis both the land and the present occupants thereof were spelled out clearly. Out of the burning bush Moshe heard these words:

I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt,
 * * *
So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians,
and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land,
to a land flowing with milk and honey,
to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites
and the Amorites and the Perrizites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.
 [Exodus 3:7-8]

Then after the Exodus, while we were being molded into a people at Sinai, the Holy One made it clear exactly how the Kena'ani were going to be dispossessed from the land. We were not called to be *liberators* - just a *clean-up crew*. The Holy One would be responsible for driving the Kena'ani out of the land.

We were never given any reason by the Holy One to think ourselves responsible for, or capable of, either developing or executing an invasion plan, devising or implementing a military strategy, or of preparing or effectuating an attack plan. After all, here is what the Holy One told us about the matter before we ever left the shade of His Sinaitic *chuppah*:

Behold, I will shalach⁶ malach [send an Angel] before you
to guard/protect/watch over you in the way
and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.
 * * *
And if you indeed sh'ma His voice and asah all that I speak,
then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.
For My Angel will go before you
and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and
the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.
 * * *
I will send My fear before you,
I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come,
and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.
And I will send hornets before you,
which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.
I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate
and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.
Little by little I will drive them out from before you,
until you have increased, and you inherit the land.
 * * *
For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand,
and you are to drive them out before you.
 [Exodus 23:20-30]

⁶ Note the irony of the Holy One. He said He would *shalach Malach* [send an angel, messenger] to guide us to - and then clear out the Kena'ani from - the land. But we preferred to *shalach meraglim* [scouts]. And, having two voices speaking to us on the same subject [such as Adam and Chava experienced in the Garden], we chose, as did Adam and Chava, to *sh'ma* the wrong voice.

The question was never whether we were able to defeat the Kena'ani – much less the descendants of Anak - *militarily*. We weren't. They were bigger, and stronger, and better armed, and better trained at war. But we were never *supposed to* defeat them militarily. We were merely supposed to *sh'ma* the voice of our Divine Bridegroom and *sh'mar* the covenant He made with us and *asah* all the words He spoke concerning us [i.e. the Torah].

Conquest was never our mission. *Torah* was our mission. Making war on the Kena'ani was not our purpose in life. *Torah* was our purpose in life. We were never asked to be the *strike-force* that drove out the 'ites' of Kena'an; the Holy One's promised He would send His Angel before us to do the striking, and would send the hornet ahead of us to cause the people to flee from us. We were just asked to be witnesses to His Wondrous Works. Defeating and taking back the land from the enemy was never our destiny - *Torah* was our destiny.

Nothing has changed in that regard. But I digress. We were speaking about the sin scenario that is unfolding at Kadesh-Barnea. We were speaking of discouragement as public enemy number one. Let us open our spiritual eyes, then, and look more closely at the situation of the scouts/spies.

The Amazing Non-Verbal Message of the Scout's Mission

Before considering the words the *meraglim* are about to speak to the assembly at Kadesh Barnea, let us carefully consider that which was *obvious*, and which *required no words*.

First of all, note that *all twelve scouts who went on the mission came back – very alive and very well*. The Land had not devoured them, nor had the inhabitants of the Land harmed a single hair on a single head. *Each man, representing each tribe, and together representing the whole people, had been protected, hidden, and preserved by the Holy One, throughout their entire mission*.

Secondly, note that not only had the scouts survived their sojourn in the land, *they brought with them, for all to see and sample, an abundant sampling of grapes, figs, and pomegranates from the Land*.

Now let us meditate on each of these fruits and what they symbolize.

P'ri Ha-gafen [the Fruit of the Vine]

First let us meditate regarding the *grapes* the “scouts” brought back. Our Torah text tells us that in the valley of Eschol, the scouts had found marvelous grapes. We are told that they brought back to Kadesh Barnea with them a cluster of grapes so large and full of fruit that it took two of the scouts to carry it.

Wow! Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas [oops, I mean *Egypt*] anymore! So, what does this mean? On the surface, of course, it means that the land [at least in the Valley of Eschol] is productive – good land for vineyards. But look beyond the surface for a moment. What is the non-verbal message? What do grapes in abundance *symbolize*?

Grapes symbolize *joy* and *cause for celebration*. They are sweet to the taste, and are the source material for fine wine. A single cluster of grapes so large that it had to be suspended on a pole and carried by two men said not only that the land was fruitful, but sent a clear message to all who had eyes to see and ears to hear - the Land before you is *a source of joy* and a *cause for celebration*, and in such abundance that it must be shared by your families and clans. Before any of the “scouts” opened his mouth to speak this message was being broadcast loud and clear. Creation spoke. And it beckoned us to *come into its beautiful Garden*.

*Ha-Tanei*⁷ [The Fig]

The next fruit mentioned is the *fig* [in Hebrew, *ha-tanei*]. In *Eretz Yisrael* figs ripen in two crops – an early crop in June and a late crop in August. The second crop is obtained by *pruning the branches* after the early crop comes on, inducing a second blossoming.

What do *figs* symbolize?⁸ Figs symbolize *prosperity*⁹, *good health*¹⁰, *peace* and *security*, as well as *a double portion* (since the figs produced two crops per year). The presence of figs in abundance should have spoken non-verbal volumes to the People of God. They proclaimed: the Land before you is a land of *prosperity*, *peace* and *security*, for yourselves, your families, and your People!

⁷ As stated in the text, the Hebrew word translated “fig” is *tanei*, *tav*, *alef*, *nun*, *hey*, Strong’s Hebrew word #8384. This word is first found in Genesis 3:7, to describe the leaves which Adam and Chava sewed together to make a covering [albeit an ineffectual one] for themselves. Yeshua specifically mentioned the appearance of leaves on the “fig tree” as the sign of His Return. **Mark 13:28-30**.

⁸ The fig tree is used repeatedly as a symbol in Hebrew Scripture. In Judges 9, Yotam [Jotham – Gideon’s youngest son, the only one who escaped his brother Avimelech’s sword] used the imagery of the trees of the land – including the fig tree, the olive tree, and the vine – at Avimelech’s coronation, in a prophecy of judgment to come. Then, in Song of Songs 2:13, the fig tree is referred to, along with the vine, as aspects of the Divine Romance. Jeremiah [5:17, 8:13, 24:1-8], Hosea [2:12 and 9:10], Joel [1:7, 12, and 2:22], Nahum [3:12], Habakkuk [3:17] and Haggai [2:19], all utilize the fig tree symbolically to represent prosperity, peace, and security. Messiah also used the fig as a symbol in His teaching: Matthew 7:16 [“*Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*”]. See also Mark 11:11-13; Matthew 21:19, where Yeshua symbolically “cursed” a fig tree – representing His judgment upon the rulers of His people.

⁹ See I Chronicles 12:38 – 40, where figs were employed *in the celebration of David’s coronation* as king of all Israel: “... for there was *simchah* (joy) in Israel.”

¹⁰ Isaiah speaks of figs as *a source of healing and health* [II Kings 20:7; Isaiah 38:21] – and utilized a poultice of figs to heal King Hezekiah.

Oh that the “scouts” had let the figs do the talking for them!

Ha-Rimmon¹¹ [*The Pomegranate*]

The third species of fruit our Torah text says the men brought back with them is the *pomegranate*. The pomegranate [*ha-rimmon*, in Hebrew] is a bright red, hard-shelled fruit with what resembles a crown where the stem attaches¹², and with hundreds of moist seeds inside. To the Hebrew mindset the pomegranate symbolizes *the fullness of Torah*¹³. Its many seeds correspond to the many *mitzvot* of the Torah lifestyle. Its rich, flavorful pulp corresponds to the blessing of the Holy One upon the life of those who honor Him by holding fast to His covenant. And its sweet nectar is that which those who know Messiah as Bridegroom share with Him.¹⁴

What does the presence of pomegranates in abundance in the Land mean? What is its non-verbal message? It declared that the Land was indeed *a place where the People of the Holy One could become all they were created to be, and model the lifestyle of Torah to all the world* the way the Holy One had redeemed them from Egypt to do.

Remember also that the pomegranate’s image was inscribed on the hem of the robe of the high priest. Hence the pomegranate also symbolized that in this Land the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov could indeed become and function as a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, called to show forth the praises of the Holy One.

The non-verbal message was this: *“In this land you can fulfill your destiny as My kingdom of priests.”*

He Brought Me To His Banqueting Table

The presence of these three particular fruits *all together, at one time*, was even more glorious. The grape, the fig, and the pomegranate, all present at one time, symbolize nothing less than *the fullness of the kingdom of Messiah*. Consider the

¹¹ The Hebrew word translated “pomegranate” is *rimmon*, *resh*, *mem*, *vav*, *nun sofit*, Strong’s Hebrew word # 7416. This word is first found in Exodus 28:33, to describe the ornamentation on the hem of the robe of Aharon the *Kohen G’dol* [high priest].

¹² In Song of Songs 4:3 and 6:7 the temples of the Bride are likened to a piece of pomegranate.

¹³ See Song of Songs 4:13, where the Divine Bridegroom speaks prophetically over His chosen Bride: *“The plantings of your garden – i.e. the works of your hands (mitzvot) - [are to me] an orchard of pomegranates, yielding pleasant fruit, a covering [Hebrew, k’far], and a lovely fragrance [Hebrew nard].”*

¹⁴ This is the symbolic meaning of Song of Songs 8:2, where the Beloved Bride says that if her Bridegroom could be a brother to her [as Messiah became], born from the same mother, she would give him *“spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.”*

prophecy of Zechariah 3:8-10:

... Behold, I will bring forth my servant, the Branch.

and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

In that day,' says the Holy One of hosts,

'you will invite every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.'

Consider as well the prophecy of Micah 4:1-4:

*... in the latter days it will happen that the mountain of the Holy One's temple
will be established on the top of the mountains,*

And it will be exalted above the hills; and peoples will stream to it.

*Many nations will go and say, "Come, and let us go up
to the mountain of the Holy One, and to the house of the God of Ya`akov;
And He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths."*

For out of Tziyon will go forth the Torah,

and the word of the Holy One from Y'rushalayim;

And He will judge between many peoples, and decide concerning strong nations afar off.

They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not lift up sword against nation; neither will they learn war anymore.

But they will sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree;

And no one will make them afraid:

The hope of Messiah's appearing, of His ushering in of forgiveness to Israel (and through Israel, to all nations) "in one day" [Zechariah 3:9], and His wise, just and prosperous rule over the nations in accordance with the principles of Torah [Micah 4:2-3] is the *source of the joy* and the *cause for the celebration* of His People and the world.

Messiah is *the source of prosperity, peace, and security* not only for Israel but for all the peoples of the earth. Messiah is *the embodiment of the Torah*, and is *the great High Priest forever*, after the order of Melchizedek. And when Messiah reigns, Creation – and mankind – are restored to perfect fellowship with the Holy One the way Adam and Chava had perfect fellowship with Him before the Fall.

Understanding the Real Message

The presence of grapes, figs, and pomegranates together in abundance, along with the safe and healthy return of each tribe's representative, declared – for those with eyes to see and ears to hear - the message *that the Land in front of the redeemed community would be the Land from which Messiah would come, and in which His Kingdom would be established*. The message spoken by Creation, at the bidding of the Holy One, the Master of Creation, long before a single spy uttered a single word, was thus "come unto Me, and I will give you rest!" The question is, *will the scouts speak in harmony with this message of Creation?* Will the people who claim to be in covenant with the Creator see, hear, and respond to the voice of

Creation? Or - will *words* get in the way?

Alas, seldom does the majority - even of people who have had a genuine encounter with The Holy One - perceive, much less concur with, the message of Creation. Which brings us to the verbal aspects of the report of the “scouts”.

The Report of the Scouts: The Words Get in the Way

With this background, and understanding the non-verbal message Creation has given us through the return of the “scouts” laden with symbols of blessedness, let us now look at the *verbal* report that is given. The majority report of the “scouts” went like this:

*We came to the land where you sent us;
and surely it flows with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.*

However ... *the people who dwell in the land are strong,
and the cities are fortified, [and] very great:
and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.*

*Amalek dwells in the land of the South: and the Hittite, and the Yevusi,
and the Amori dwell in the hill-country;
and the Kana`ani dwells by the sea and along by the side of the Yarden.*

[Numbers 13:27-29]

We aren't able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

*The land, through which we have gone to spy it out,
is a land that eats up the inhabitants of it;*

and all the people who we saw in it are men of great stature.

*There we saw the Nefilim, the sons of `Anak, who come of the Nefilim:
and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.*

[Numbers 13:31-33]

How will the people – the majority, at least - respond? Alas, as so often happens with us, the din of vehement human voices projecting man’s poor excuse for wisdom and understanding totally drowned out, in their untrained ears, the wonderful message Creation was trying to convey.

*All the assembly lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.
All the children of Yisra'el murmured against Moshe and against Aharon.*

*And the whole congregation said to them, Would that we had died in the land of Mitzrayim!
or would that we had died in this wilderness!*

Why does the Holy One bring us to this land, to fall by the sword?

Our wives and our little ones will be a prey.

Wouldn't it be better for us to return into Mitzrayim?

[Numbers 14:1-3]

Note who has just been added into the blame matrix – Aharon! Not long-ago Aharon mocked and judged Moshe; now he is mocked and judged by others right

alongside him. This is, alas, only the beginning of Aharon's 'reaping' of what he sowed in lashon hara.

But that is not the main part of this particular lashon hara story. The bigger issue of this is what the confused/deceived people thought, and actually said, about the holy and precious land of Israel! They played Esav, and hated their birthright. They wanted no part of it. Instead,

*They said one to another, Let us make a 'captain',
and let us return into Mitzrayim.*

[Numbers 14:4]

The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as "captain" is *rosh*¹⁵. It literally means "head", and figuratively means leader, or chieftain. The people decided that they wanted a little democratic process – they wanted to *elect/appoint* their own leader or chieftain. Remember however what the Holy One had said about the leadership of the camp of the Redeemed. The Divine Bridegroom's leadership plan for His redeemed people did not involve democratic process. The Holy One had specifically appointed a Messenger to lead the people into Kena'an – to "guard" [*sh'mar*] them along the way, and take them into the Land - see Exodus 23:20-22. The people were instructed however to pay attention to and *sh'ma* this Messenger. They were warned *that if they rebelled against him, the Holy One would not forgive their rebellion*. The act of the people in declaring they would select their own "rosh" was the ultimate rebellion against the Holy One's Messenger.

So much for 'majority rule'. It seems that such a process has little, if any, place in the kingdom of the Holy One. It is, instead, an outgrowth of the Tower of Babel mentality. The majority, you see, almost always sits down *in the seat of the scornful*. Especially is this so when, as was the case in the desert of *Paran*, the prevailing spirit in the society is the 'spirit of Yish'mael' – the mocking spirit of a 'wild donkey of a man'.

All is not lost – indeed will never be lost – however, because there are Kalevs and Y'hoshuas in our midst. The Holy One will not be left, in any generation, without at least two witnesses on His behalf. For the Kalevs and Y'hoshuas among us, the Voice of Creation – and the promise of the Holy One – cannot be extinguished by human voices, however passionate, however negative, however 'well-reasoned', and however 'universally accepted'. For the Kalevs and Y'hoshuas in every generation, the covenant promises of the Holy One are not drowned out by the naysaying of elected/appointed leaders whose interest in preserving the *status quo*, in pleasing the masses who support them, and in keeping their positions of authority, stops up their spiritual ears and darkens their counsel.

¹⁵ Rosh is *resh, alef, shin*. Strong's Hebrew word #7218, it is pronounced *roshe*.

From the Kalevs and Y'hoshuas in our midst, the Holy One will bring forth a new generation – a generation who will *sh'ma* His Voice. And the voice of the stranger – or ‘majority’ – or ‘elected/appointed leader with a vested interest’ in the *status quo* - they will *lo sh'ma*.

Questions For Today's Study

1. Let us start our study with some very basic analysis of the scouts' report:

[A] What do the scouts report about *the Land* itself?

[B] What do they report about *the people* of the Land?

[C] What do they report about *the defenses* of the people of the Land?

[D] Who do they say controls *the water*?

[E] Who do they say holds *the high ground*?

[F] Who do they say hold *the Negev* [the first obstacle, if approach is made from the South]?

2. After the initial report is given by the majority faction of the spy delegation we hear from Kalev¹⁶ [Caleb].

*Kalev stilled the people before Moshe, and said,
“Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”*

Kalev's message of confident faith in the Holy One's promise goes unheeded however. Torah tells us ... *the men who went up with him said, “We aren't able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.”* Numbers 13:30-31.

[A] Who was the first to “make a motion” regarding what B'nei Yisrael should do, in light of the report of the *meraglim*?

[B] What is his proposal?

[C] What was the basis of his reasoning?

[D] Was what he said accurate? Explain.

[E] What is the response of the rest of the *meraglim* to this assessment and proposal?

[F] In the Hebrew, the text says the rest of the *meraglim* spread a *dibbat* [a noun form of Strong's Hebrew word #1681] about the land. What is a “*dibbat*”? [Hint: the same root is used in B'reshit (Genesis) 37:2, to describe the report Yosef [Joseph] brought to Ya'akov [Jacob] about his brothers].

[G] List the four (4) separate parts of the “*dibbat*” spread by the scouts?

[H] Beside each of the four separate parts, write either “truth”, “exaggeration”, or “lie”.

¹⁶ *Kalev* [Caleb] is spelled *kaf, lamed, beit*. The name is very unflattering – it means “dog” [See Strong's Hebrew word # 3612]. We are told only that he was the representative of the tribe of Y'hudah [Judah], and that his father's name was *Y'funeh* [often rendered as ‘Jephuneh’]. Some speculate that Kalev was a proselyte, but the Biblical record does not provide a sufficient basis for this speculation.

3. The next subject addressed in today's verses is the response of the people to the speeches of the *meraglim*. In your reading note how the People reject not only their holy calling and the Torah (saying: "we wish we had died in Egypt" and thus had never experienced the Holy One's Presence and the giving of Torah at Sinai), but also specifically reject Messiah and His Kingdom ("let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt").

[A] Try to "get into" the Scripture. Imagine you were a child of a member of the tribe of Levi alive at that time, and were keeping a diary of all that was going on since the plagues struck Egypt. Write two diary entries - one for the day the scouts returned and gave their report and the other for the following day, when the people responded. Indicate in your diary what part of what the *meraglim* said had the most devastating effect on the people.

[B] List all the things we are told the people *thought* and all the things we are told the people *said* after hearing the *dibbat meraklim*.

[C] As we were leaving Mitzrayim [Egypt] the Holy One spoke to us and made us a promise. Go back and read Exodus 23:20-31.

[i] What had the Holy One promised us regarding our interaction with the peoples who presently resided in the land of Promise?

[ii] Upon what were these promises conditioned?

[D] Why do you think the people chose to believe the report of the *meraglim* instead of the promise the Holy One made to us when He took us out of Mitzrayim?

[E] What did Moshe and Aharon do after the people fell into a panic?

[F] Make a list of each of the things Y'hoshua [Joshua] and Kalev [Caleb] said to the people to try to halt the panic.

[G] What was the people's reaction to Y'hoshua and Kalev?

4. In the Haftarah for today *Rachav* [Rahab] the Innkeeper speaks words of revelation to the second set of *meraglim*, and evokes from them a commitment to allow her and her family to share in the inheritance of the Holy One's People.

*Before they were laid down, she came up to them on the roof; and she said to the men,
"I know that the Holy One has given you the land, and that the fear of you is fallen on us,
and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.*

*For we have heard how the Holy One
dried up the water of the Sea of Suf before you when you came out of Mitzrayim;
and what you did to the two kings of the Amori, who were beyond the Yarden,
to Sichon and to `Og, whom you utterly destroyed.*

*As soon as we had heard it, our hearts did melt,
neither did there remain any more spirit in any man, because of you:
for the Holy One your God, He is God in heaven above, and on eretz beneath.*

[Joshua 2:8-11]

[A] What does Rachav indicate she "knows".

[B] What does she indicate her people in Yericho have heard about what the Holy One has done for B'nei Yisrael?

[C] How does Rachav describe the effect this knowledge and these reports have had on the people of Yericho?

[D] What does Rachav indicate she believes about the Holy One?

[E] What does she ask the scouts to do for her?

5. In Hebrews 3:10-11 the writer is quoting the *Ruach HaQodesh*, concerning the reason for the Holy One's judgment upon the generation who accepted the *dibbah meraglim* and wanted to appoint someone to be their leader [rejecting the Holy One's leadership] in a return to Egypt [rejecting their inheritance in the Holy One].

*Therefore I was displeased with that generation, and said,
'They always err in their heart, because But they do not know my ways.
As I swore in my wrath, 'They will not enter into my rest.'"*

[Hebrews 3:10-11]

[A] Why does the Holy One say He became angry with the generation of the Exodus?

[B] What does the Holy One say about the hearts of that generation?

[C] Look up the Greek word that is used to describe the hearts of that generation¹⁷; write that word and its definition. Then study out the Hebrew word that corresponds to this Greek word, write that word, and describe the Hebraic word picture/concept found in that word¹⁸.

[D] What did the Holy One say that, despite seeing His wonders and miracles, and living in His Presence, the generation of the Exodus did not know about Him?

[E] What is it that the Holy One declares the generation of the Exodus would not enter?

[F] Look up the Greek word used to describe what that generation would not enter into. Write that word and its definition.

[G] Study out the Hebrew word that would be used to describe what that generation would not enter into. Write the Hebrew word, and describe the Hebraic word picture/concept found in that word.

[H] The Brit Chadasha readings for yesterday and today constitute a quote from Psalm 95. Read that Psalm. If B'nei Yisrael had stopped and done what verses 1-7a of that psalm say, do you think the *dibbat meraglim* would have

¹⁷ The Greek word that is translated "they always err" is *planontai*, from Strong's Greek word # 4105, *planao*, meaning *to go astray, to wander from the path*.

¹⁸ The Orthodox Jewish Brit Chadasha renders this passage as follows: "Therefore *"AKUT BEDOR VAOMAR AM TO'EY LEVAV HEM V'HEM LO YAD'U DERAKHAI"* ("I was angry with that generation and I said they are a *straying-of-heart* people and they have not had da'as of my ways"); *ASHER NISHBA'ETI V'APEY IM YEVO'UN EL MENUKHATI* ("Therefore I declared on oath in my anger, Never shall they enter into my Rest/Home/Abode/Place of Tranquility.").

thrown them into a panic? Explain.

*May your eyes and ears be so attuned to the voice of Creation and the message of Messiah,
that you will not be deterred from the destiny the Holy One has ordained for you
... or desire any Captain [Hebrew, rosh] but Messiah.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Revelation 3:7-13

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

***"He who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David,
he who opens and no one can shut, and who shuts and no one opens,
says these things: "I know your works
(behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one can shut),
that you have a little power, and kept my word, and didn't deny my name.***

***Behold, I give of the synagogue of Ha-satan,
of those who say they are Y'hudim, and they are not, but lie.
Behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet,
and to know that I have loved you. Because you treasured My instruction to endure,
I also will keep you from the hour of testing,
which is to come on the whole world, to test those who dwell on the eretz.***

***I am coming quickly! Hold firmly that which you have,
so that no one takes your crown.
He who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God,
and he will go out from there no more.
I will write on him the name of my God,
and the name of the city of my God, the new Y'rushalayim,
which comes down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name.
He who has an ear, let him sh'ma what the Spirit says to the k'hillot.***