

Shiur L'Yom Chamishi¹

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Chukat:*** **Numbers 20:14-21**
 Haftarah: **Judges 11:12-27**
 B'rit Chadasha: **John 3:19-20**

We cried out to the Holy One - and He heard our voice.
[Numbers 20:16]

Today's Meditation is Proverbs 8:12-31;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 11, *Y'rushalayim* [Jerusalem]

Vayishlach Moshe mal'achim – Then Moshe sent out messengers ... *miKadesh el-melech Edom* – from Kadesh to the king of Edom **Numbers 20:14a.**

A new generation of *B'nei Yisrael* is arising – one that the Creator plans to use to change the Middle East - and the world - forever. The constituents of this generation are presently immature and imperfect, but they are brimming with passion - and are exhibiting a level of *Kingdom Gravitas* that far outstrips their forebears. They are a generation with *fire in its eyes*. Instead of complaining about its circumstances, this generation is learning to humbly worship and joyfully serve its King. A generation with an atmosphere-shifting persona, a world-changing mission, and a glorious Kingdom-focus destiny is about to step onto the stage of human history. The world does not yet know what to do with this generation – it just knows it absolutely cannot ignore it. This new people – dare we say *nation?* - that is arising is about to become *the elephant in the room*.

We Have Always Been ... And Will Always Be ... The Elephant in the Room

The people/nation that is arising in the Wilderness is not a political movement. It is not powered by ideology, economics, social justice, or even anyone's idea of morality. Its potential to change the world does not come from its thinkers, theorists, academics, intellectuals, or entrepreneurs, but from each individual and household's ever-deepening Covenant relationship with the Creator of the Universe. It is not seeking to establish a religious institution – nor to send out preachers, revivalists, evangelists, or signs-and-wonders workers. It is not run by activists, demagogues, rebel-rousers, reformers, or idealistic dreamers. It is instead made up of hundreds of thousands of simple, practical, down-to-earth, *sh'ma*-ers, *sh'mar*-ers, and *asah*-ers. Slick-talking evangelists, fear-mongers, race-baiters, class-warfare inciters, tantrum-throwers, accusers, and profanity spewers have no

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place in this group. This people/nation has one goal - to model in front of the world *what the Creator of the Universe's definitions of love joy, peace, hope, and wisdom look like in human form*. This people/nation actually thinks it can change the world by filling the atmosphere with practical demonstrations of Divine mercy, forgiveness, patience, gentleness, meekness, steadfast-faithfulness-to-covenant, self-control, wisdom, and love, its people have learned through continuously dwelling in the *Secret Place of the Most High* and consistently abiding in the *shadow of the Almighty*.

***It All Sounds Good in Theory . . .
BUT, Can Anybody Really Pull Something Like This Off
in Real Time?***

Alas, nothing truly glorious comes easily. Being born into, and invited to participate in, a generation of Return to Relevance is one thing, but actually persevering through the desert wanderings, overcoming the wilderness temptations, repelling the attacks of enemies bent on wiping us off the face of the earth, maintaining humility before and passion for the Bridegroom-King of Heaven, and walking out our individual and collective destinies all the way to and into the Land? Well that is something very, very different.

The Grand Redemptive Plan of the Holy One is destined to go forward over all the earth's terrain and all of its kingdoms – but it will do so in fits and starts, and over a lot of dead bodies. As the Psalmist says:

***A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand;
But it will not come near you.***

***He will give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.
In their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You will tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.***

[Psalm 91:7, 11-13]

If there is anything our sojourn in the Wilderness of Paran should have taught us it is that *whoever chooses to live by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* - and hence allow himself to be offended by, get angry at, criticize, judge, and shout epithets at others - *is destined to die by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of evil as well*. Only those who reject the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and choose to live instead by the fruit of the tree of life – *i.e. love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control* - can enter the deeper joys of life and be trusted with the greatest tasks in the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no *shalom* to be found in offense, anger, complaint, criticism, judgmentalism, or labeling. There is not a single trace of *simchah* in any of those things. And there is no *ahav* - or even *tikvah* [hope for the future] - in any of them either. Why? Because

these things represent *the antithesis of the message of Torah* and totally inconsistent with our calling to abide in Messiah.

As Shaul of Tarsus taught, from the Song of Moshe²: ***Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. To the extent possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Holy One. Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with that which is tov.*** Romans 12:17-21.

Oh, Beloved – please learn to *resist the urge to find fault, form opinions, criticize, and judge*. Fight the good fight daily against the dangerous fleshly tendency to *impute negative characteristics and apply negative labels* to yourself or to others. Cultivate *patience with and humility toward* the Holy One - and with and toward your fellow man. Stand firm in the precious gift of Covenantal *shalom, simchah, ahav* and *emet*. Be not overcome by the evil that unfolds before or around you; overcome that evil with that which is *tov*. As Yeshua declared: ***Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it*** [Luke 18:17] and ***Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*** [Matthew 7:21].

Picking Up ... and Moving On

The earthly remains of Miryam now lie buried alongside her timbrel in the sands of Desert of *Tzin*. Angrily attributing the label ‘*morim*’ [*i.e. rebels deserving of thirty-nine lashes*] to thirsty people in the Camp of the Redeemed, and claiming personal credit for procuring living water for them, has secured Moshe and Aharon burial places outside the land of Promise as well. We will miss these three famous siblings – but we cannot dwell on their loss. We must move on. And move on we will.

The Holy One is not going to lead the generation of the Return along the *direct path* to our destination, however. Instead, He is going to take us on a circuitous route that I like to call ‘*the long way home*’. Along the way we will meet - and have to learn to deal with - some of the people groups with whom we are going to

² Shaul is referencing and incorporating into his teaching Deuteronomy 32:35, from the Song of Moshe. That is where Moshe quotes the Holy One as declaring: ***Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; their foot shall slip in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them.*** Letting the Holy One – the Stronger Covenant Partner - bring about whatever judgment is necessary and appropriate, at the appropriate time, instead of declaring it ourselves, is an essential component of the Covenant. Our task is to approach others in humility, model *shalom, simchah, love, and truth* to them, and let the kindness of the Holy One lead them to *t’shuvah* if they will but *sh’ma*.

have to learn to share the earth. The Holy One is not going to take us into the land of our inheritance without giving us some critical trials of our *socialization skills*. We must, therefore, decide how we are going to approach interaction with other people groups – people vastly different from, and often hostile to, us, the Torah that the Holy One has given us, and the *new way of life our Divine Bridegroom is teaching us*. We will not have the choice, any longer, of avoiding conflict through isolation. Hence our aliyah for the day begins:

Vayishlach Moshe mal'achim miKadesh el-melech Edom

Moshe sent messengers from K'desh to the king of Edom

[Numbers 20:14a]

When it comes to cross-cultural interaction, we really only have three options.

Option #1:

The Genocidal ‘Come In Like a Wrecking Ball’ Approach – Critically Judge and Try to Destroy Everyone Who Is Different From us

Our first option would be the *genocidal ‘come in like a wrecking ball’* approach. People who take this approach resent everyone who is not like them for daring to try to breathe the same air. A group following this option would label everyone else ‘*pagans*’, ‘*heathens*’, and/or any number of other derogatory labels. Under this approach, anyone who doesn’t think, speak, act, and react like you is regarded as lower than an animal. If we choose this option, we will declare war on the other people groups – and take them on wherever we find them. We will resolve to consider no *compromise over anything*, acknowledge no of shades of gray in interpretation, and offer no *tolerance whatever toward persons having other viewpoints* or *halakah*. We will stop up our ears, harden our hearts, wag our tongues, pull out our swords, wave them in the air menacingly, and charge forward with reckless abandon, bent on obliterating whoever or whatever blocks our path.

If we choose this option, it will be *kill or be killed*. Every inter-cultural social interaction will become a *winner take all* mixed martial art fight. It will, alas, be quite a trick to be the light of the world to people we complain about, criticize, suspect, fear, hate, and want to annihilate. So let’s give some thought to the two other options.

Option #2:

The Chameleon Approach – Try to Blend In With Our Surroundings

Secondly, we can do the exact opposite. We can become so impressed by and enamored with the culture and ways of other people groups that we just *assimilate*. We can want to be like them instead of being who we are. We can try to fit in, and become just like them. If we choose this option we will offer our minds to their worldviews, philosophies, ideologies, priorities, values, and practices. We will seek pleasure in the things they seek pleasure. We will therefore wink at – and

accept first as normal, then eventually as ‘good’ – both their cultural pathologies and their private perversions. We will offer our backs to their economic systems, and entrust our future – and that of our children – to *their human institutions*. We will adore their heroes. We will offer our dedication to their governments. And, eventually, we will bow our knees to their gods. This is the way chosen by Yehudah [Judah] when he went to live among the Kena’ani. See **Genesis 38**.

Eventually, however, the other guys always seem to wind up blaming us for all their cultural, economic, political, and personal problems. Eventually they will always wind up beating plowshares into swords, sneaking into our homes, and slicing our wives and children into little pieces before they kill us. For that is always the way it works for the people of the Most High. If we do not maintain our separateness and distinctness, they will always ultimately take social interaction option #1, and go genocidal on us.

Thus the route of assimilation actually comes with an even higher price tag than the warfare option. If we choose the assimilation option, you see, we will have to *lay aside the Holy One’s Torah*. We will dilute, then abandon, the Holy *Shabbat*. We will replace our assigned participation in our Bridegroom-King’s *mo’edim* with the sensually stimulating, idolatry-based observances of the cultures in whose political and economic systems we have chosen to immerse ourselves. We will abandon our Bridegroom-King’s calendar and the rhythms of life He has established for us and start to live instead by the calendar and according to the biorhythms of the people around us. That means not only abandoning our Bridegroom-King and throwing away our own lives and destinies for a foreign-language song, but also inflicting horrible spiritual abuse on our spouses and children in the process. And it means denying the world, in our generation at least, the Witness of the Holy One’s Supreme Goodness and Wisdom³.

If we choose the route of assimilation we will have to lay aside that which makes us who and what we are. We have to *forget about our calling, our destiny, and our identity as the Holy One’s Betrothed*. We have to *intermarry with and start looking, living, and thinking just like our neighbors*. We have to adopt their *lifestyles*, live by their *calendar*, wear their *styles of clothing* and adopt their standards of *personal appearance*. We have to eat what they eat. We have to fear what they fear. We have to love what they love and hate what they hate. We have to repeat politically correct catch phrases and spout politically expedient bullet points with a straight face and as close as we can come to a self-hating sneer. We will have to let them take control of our children’s education and cheer while they pervert the precious seed of Avraham with animalistic *values and priorities*.

³ See Deuteronomy 4:5-10.

Surely there is a better option than either one or two above. What is the *third option*?

Option #3:

**The *Royal Ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven* Option –
Being Salt and Light in the Midst of a Flavorless and Darkened World**

The third option is that we can *be who he has created and prophetically empowered us to be*. This option would entail taking a deep breath as we step into each encounter with the peoples of the world, holding fast to our Divine Bridegroom's Hand, leaning close upon His Breast, and very, very carefully *sh'ma*-ing each of His words and instructions as He navigates a path for us through the obstacle course - and around the deadly booby traps – which our neighbors inevitably lay out for us. This option involves saying of the Holy One, "He is *my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust*" – and then living like He is exactly that.

The third option is the one chosen by Avram, by Yitzchak, and by Ya'akov. And it is the option the Holy One always calls us to choose as well. But look yonder! Our first challenge of socialization approaches. Who will be the first people group we will encounter on our road back to relevance? It will be the descendants of Ya'akov's arch nemesis Esav. Gird up your loins Folks. This is *not going to be easy*. One thing is for sure, however – it is time to choose an option.

It Is A Time for Living By the Voice - Not the Sword

More than 400 years before the events that open today's aliyah occurred, under far less than optimal conditions, an old man blessed his two sons. To the younger one he gave all his own inheritance in the land of Kena'an and the pre-eminent position among his brethren. **Genesis 27:27-29**. To the older one he said ***by your sword you will live***. **Genesis 27:40**. Many generations later the descendants of the two brothers are about to meet for the first time. The meeting will take place through emissaries. Here is the Biblical account, roughly transliterated from the Hebrew and translated into English:

Koh amar achicha Yisra'el

Thus says your brother Yisra'el,

v'hineh anachnu v'Kadesh ir ketzeh gevuleicha

'... behold, we are in K'desh, a city in the uttermost of your border.

Nabra-na e'art'zeicha

Please let us pass through your land:

lo na'avor b'sadeh uvecheirem

we will not pass through field or through vineyard,

v'lo nishteh mey

neither will we drink of the water of the wells:

v'er derech ha-melech

we will go along the king's highway;

nelech lo niteh yamin us'mol

we will not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left,

ad asher-na'avor gevuleicha

until we have passed your border'.

[Numbers 20:14-17]

The road to the younger son's inheritance runs right through the land occupied by the descendants of the elder son. But note that the descendants of the younger son seek only passage. They have no interest in conquest. They have no need – or appetite – for spoils of war. They covet no form of charity or assistance or support. They don't really even need food or water – all of which are abundantly supplied to them from Heaven. All they want is undisturbed passage. All they ask for is to be allowed to go through Edom's land unmolested.

Picture Ya'akov [Jacob], generations earlier, trying to bring his budding family to his father's tent at *Be'er Sheva*, but being intercepted by Esav and 400 armed horsemen along the way. See **Genesis 32:3-6**. Our forefather's experience has become the blueprint for the lives of his descendants. So, like our forefather Ya'akov, we try to placate Esav through *polite diplomacy*. We appeal to “family ties”. We pledge to be respectful guests. We offer to enrich the descendants of Esav financially by purchasing from them water which we did not need because the Divine Bridegroom was still miraculously providing water and food for us wherever we went. It was no use; Esav's descendants, the Edomites, promise to fulfill the prophecy of Yitzchak about them: ***by your sword you shall live***. For Torah tells us:

Vayomer elav Edom

Edom said to him,

lo ta'avor bi pen-b'cherev etze l'k'rateicha

'You shall not pass through me, lest I come out with the sword against you'.

[Numbers 20:18]

Alas, it appears that the sword and the arm of the flesh is all that our close kinsman Esav knows. It is how he *thinks*, and it is how he *lives*. It is *his answer to every problem*. It is *his first response to every stimulus*. Ya'akov on the other hand does not live by the sword (although he owns one and can use it when attacked, as a later part of this week's parsha reveals). When possible Ya'akov's descendants choose to live *not by the sword but by the “voice”*. What do I mean? Remember when Ya'akov stood before Yitzchak, shamefully dressed in Esav's clothes, seeking Esav's ‘blessing’?

As you will recall at that time Yitzchak noted *the voice is Ya'akov's voice*". **Genesis 27:22**. Ya'akov's voice is very distinctive. It carries the authority of the Avrahamic Covenant. In that voice, you see, is *the Holy One's blessing for all nations*. So, when Ya'akov's descendant Moshe sent a message to Esav's descendant the King of Edom, he let it be known that like Ya'akov he desired to interact not with the sword, but with "*the voice*". Moshe did not say (nor could he have) that his people had *conquered* Egypt or *destroyed Pharaoh's army* by the sword. What he said – quite accurately - was: "**We cried to the Holy One, and He heard our voice/sound**". **Numbers 20:16**. Oh Beloved ... is it not time we learned *the secret of the voice/sound on earth that resonates in harmony with the Creator's Voice/Sound?*

Blessed are They That Know the Joyful Sound!

The word our English Bibles translate as "voice" is *qol*⁴. It is usually translated as "voice", "sound", or "noise", and can also mean resonance of a musical instrument. The first Biblical usage of the word *qol* (voice) is in Genesis 3:8, as follows:

And they heard the voice/sound [Hebrew qol] of the Holy One God walking in the garden in the day (or hour) of blowing/breathing: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Holy One God amongst the trees of the garden.

The Hebraic picture is that of a "*natural*" sound which emanates from the essence of something. A dog does not meow – it barks. Barking is the *natural sound* which emanates from the dog's inner being. A cat, however, does not bark, it meows. Meowing is the natural sound that emanates from his inner being. A bird does not roar. A lion does not chirp. A cow does not oink. A pig does not moo. Each creature of the Holy One has a *peculiar sound that comes from, and fits with, the essence of what they were created to be*. It is the same with human beings. Though we make many noises, we only have one "voice". The question is whether we *live* by that voice - or choose to live by something else.

The Process of Hearing [i.e. Sh'ma-ing]

As any fifth grader knows *sound is energy, moving in waves*. We hear because the Holy One has *programmed our eardrums to be responsive to sound waves*. When sound waves enter the auditory canal and impact the eardrum, the eardrum begins to vibrate *sympathetically* - *i.e.* at the same frequency as the sound wave that impacted it. This energy is then translated into *electrical signals* that the nerves in the ear transmit to the brain.

The sound that emanates from the essence of the Holy One is a "voice". And we

⁴ *Qol* is *kuf, vav, lamed*. Strong's Hebrew word #6963, it is pronounced a lot like the English word *coal*.

who are created in the image of the Holy One should be responsive to that voice. When sound/voice emanates from Him, sympathetic vibrations should arise from deep within all His creations.

To *respond to the voice* of the Holy One is to *sh'ma* – “*Hear, O Israel ...*” To *live by the voice* is to live the *sh'ma* lifestyle – hanging on every word of the Holy One as if it were a lifeline, and letting the words of the Holy One *define who we are*, and *restructure how we think*, and *reshape what we talk about*, *how we respond to situations*, and *how we relate to others*, and *how we conduct our lives*.

The *Voice* is pure energy. To live by the Voice of the Holy One is therefore *to live by His energy, not ours*. It is literally to *feed off of and draw strength from His energy*. If we live by His Voice, you see, we actually begin to *resonate* that Voice (like the wood of an acoustic guitar resonates the sound made when the strings are plucked). A resonator does more than receive sound energy – it *vibrates sympathetically* with the sound energy it receives, and actually *emits consonant vibrations*, causing the energy of the originating sound to be *amplified, and transmitted*.

Contrast the Sword

The sword on the other hand *provides no energy of its own*. It depends totally upon the energy of the person who wields it. To live by the sword is therefore *to live by one's own energy* – and to, in the process, *reject the energy of the Holy One*. Living by the sword requires “tuning out” the Voice of the Holy One, such that one's spirit ceases to vibrate sympathetically with the energy of that Voice. Picture what Adam and Chava did (or tried to do) when they hid behind the trees of the garden. Picture as well what the Redeemed Community did at Sinai when they cried to Moshe “*let us not hear the Voice of the Holy One anymore, lest we die.*” We do the same thing when we decide – or accept it when someone else proclaims – that something our Divine Bridegroom has said – something that resonates with energy from His Voice - is “not for today” or “not for us”.

You see, the sounds that emanate from the Holy One are always consistent – they always have, and perpetually vibrate with, *the same frequency*. The Torah has the same frequency as the Prophets, as the Psalms, and as the B'rit Chadasha. Therefore nothing our Divine Bridegroom has ever said is *new*. Nothing our Divine Bridegroom has ever said has changed or can change. *Messiah's teaching is Moshe's teaching*. *Moshe's teaching is Avraham's teaching*. All of these are merely resonators of the Voice of God. If you are the Holy One's, therefore, I have a word for you – a word you desperately need to *sh'ma*. Here it is:

You were created to live by the voice, not by the sword⁵.

Understand these things about ‘the sword’:

The sword is wielded by the arm of the flesh

(i.e. the works one can accomplish by his own efforts independent of the Holy One).

The sword is only as strong or effective as the flesh of the one who wields it.

The voice, on the other hand, is the product of the Breath –

the very thing that the Holy One took of Himself and placed into man –

the Ruach, or Spirit.

The voice is as eternal and effective as its source - the Holy One Himself.

It is the voice by which we who are the Holy One’s are to live. Selah.

Our voice (our prayers and blessings), when employed in harmony with His Voice (His Torah, His prophets, and His blessings), yields life eternal.

Do you want to *pray* the will of God? Here is the secret: *Resonate the Holy One’s Voice, Rhythm, Volume, and Tone*. Resist the temptation to tell Him what to do (*i.e.* resist the temptation to wield *the sword*, supplying your own energy); resist as well the temptation to add your own emotion, inflection, or ‘two cents’ worth of opinion to what He has said.

Next Wilderness Test: Can We Handle A Little Hostility from our Neighbors to the South - Without Losing Our Shalom?

In today’s aliyah we are going to have a little run-in with the descendants of Esav [the *Edomi’* (Edomites)]. When we sought to negotiate a simple right of passage through *Edomi’* territory, the *Edomi* would have none of it. They *flashed their swords*. They *bared their teeth*. They promised us a fight to the death if we did not turn around and leave without setting one foot on their territory. What will we do? How will we respond? Will we respect their decision – or try to force our will on them? Will we sulk? Will we complain? Or will we just shake our heads, pick up our tent pegs, and move along, whistling the songs of Tziyon as we go?

In the Covenant, any time there is a viable alternative to puffing out one’s chest and going *all Commando* on an antagonist, it is usually the better part of valor to take the ‘other option’. This time, such an alternative was present – just take another route. So, rather than get all offended and dress for a battle the Holy One had never told us to fight, we chose to respond to the Divine Voice instead of the *Edomi* taunt. Moshe simply withdrew from the discussion, turned the Redeemed Community toward the south and east, and chose to “take the long way home”.

⁵ This does not mean that the Holy One’s people are pacifists, or that they do not or should not fight in a ‘time for war’. It merely means that the Voice of the Holy One is what they heed, and in the energy of which they function. At times appropriate to His purposes, the Holy One’s voice calls us to – and empowers for – battle. Living by the Voice includes fighting – in His power, not ours – at such times. Were we to shrink from battle in those times, we would not be living by the Voice.

*Thus Edom refused to give Yisra'el passage through his border:
For this reason, Yisra'el turned away from him.*

Numbers 20:21

This had been a test orchestrated by the Holy One. It was the Edomi's land, not ours. We had no right to cross it without their permission. And however rude or unreasonable the refusal of permission, they had the right to refuse - for any reason or for no reason. Their bad attitude was not a reason to go to war with them.

This time, by the empowerment of the Holy One, we actually *passed the test*. We did not over-react to either Edom's bad attitude or its taunts. We did not counteract evil with evil. We did not return insult for insult, taunt for taunt. We did not whine. We did not sulk. We did not take up offense. We did not *rail*. We did not *wail*. We did not engage our fleshly appetite for drama. We just moved on. Oh, what freedom!

Here is a worthy saying: *Not every fight to which we will feel challenged by an adversary is a 'good fight' of faith. Fights over words, ideas, or material possessions - never have been and never will be 'good' fights.*

This time we got it right. But there many more tests just around the corner.

Questions For Further Study

1. More than 400 years before the events that open today's aliyah occurred an old man blessed his two sons. To the younger one the old man gave all his own inheritance in the land of Kena'an as well as the pre-eminent position among his brethren. **Genesis 27:27-29**. To the older one the old man said *by your sword you shall live*. **Genesis 27:40**. In today's opening verses, many generations later, the descendants of the two brothers meet for the first time - through emissaries.

[A] Find out the location of Edom's territory by using a Bible Atlas.

[B] What modern nation holds the territory which once belonged to Edom?

2. In today's aliyah Moshe, through messengers, engages in a diplomatic argument with the king of Edom.

[A] What is the subject of the argument?

[B] What does Moshe offer to make what he requests permission to do more acceptable to this king?

[C] What is the response of this king?

[D] What is Moshe's second offer?

[E] What is the king's response to the second offer?

3. After leaving Kadesh we avoided the land of Edom and followed the Pillar of

Fire and Cloud to Mount Hor.

[A] When our ancestors reach Mount Hor, the first stop on our journey around Edom, what word came from the Holy One?

[B] What was the reason stated by the Holy One for the instructions he gives at this location?

[C] What “name” did Moshe [with Aharon’s apparent agreement] call B’nei Yisrael at *Meribah*?

[D] In verse 24 how does the Holy One describe the actions Moshe and Aharon engaged in at *Merivah*? Do you see a connection between the name Moshe called B’nei Yisrael and the “curse” he experienced (dying before entering the Land)? Explain.

[E] At *Merivah* did Moshe and Aharon live by the “the voice” - or did they live by “the sword”? Explain your answer.

4. The Haftarah we are reading is from the book called “Judges”. In Judges 11:12-27 a conversation [through messengers] is taking place between two men.

[A] Who are the two men?

[B] What is the subject of the conversation- what are these two men arguing about?

[C] In verse 27 who does Yiftach [Jephthah] say will “judge” between B’nei Yisrael and the surrounding nations [in this case, Ammon]?

[D] Look up the word that verse 27 translates as “judge”. What is the Hebrew word, and what does it mean?

5. In Judges 11:14-23 *Yiftach* [KJV, ‘Jephthah’] recounts to the king of Ammon a number of events that happened in the days of wilderness wandering. All of these events took place close to where we are today in the Torah. How are these events being repeated today, in what we believe are the last days?

6. Also in today’s Haftarah we see the half-Israelite, half-Canaanite Yiftach at his best and at his worst - in that order.

[A] What happened to Yiftach in verse 29 that caused him to be at his best?

[B] How do you explain what Yiftach did in verses 30-31.

[C] Do you think The Holy One was pleased with what Yiftach did in verses 30-31?

[D] Do you think what Yiftach did in those verses had any effect on what happened in verses 32-33 [Yes, you may read ahead just this once!]?

[E] What do you think led Yiftach to make such a rash vow to The Holy One?

[F] Do you think Yiftach had ever been taught Torah? Why or why not?

[G] Why do you think the Holy One gave Yiftach success in his war against

the Ammoni'm [Ammonites]?

7. In today's reading from the B'rit Chadasha Yeshua continues his conversation with Nicodemus, the Pharisee who has come to Him by night. Yeshua discusses the effect the coming into the world of the Torah [first at Sinai in tables of stone, now in living form as Yeshua Himself] is having on people.

*And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world,
and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

*For everyone practicing evil hates the light
and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.
But he who does the truth comes to the light,
that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*
[Yochanan (John) 3:19-20]

[A] How does Yeshua describe the Torah?

[B] What is the "darkness" of which Yeshua speaks? [Remember, these remarks are addressed to a man who came to speak with Yeshua only under cover of "darkness"]

[C] What does Yeshua say people have loved more than the Light?

[D] What is His explanation as to why people have made this choice?

[E] Look up the words translated "works" and "evil" [KJV] at the end of verse 19. Write the Hebrew words and their definitions.

[F] What Hebrew words would probably have been used by Messiah instead of the Greek words (especially since this conversation was with Nicodemus, a Pharisee who spoke Hebrew and disdained Greek as a polluted language). Describe the Hebraic pictures those Hebrew words project.

[G] Having completed this exercise, what do you think Yeshua meant when He told Nicodemus that the "works/actions" of people are "evil/wicked"?

[H] Compare the "light" Yeshua is talking about with the "sound/Voice" discussed at the beginning of this study. Light is also energy. What is the connection between the "light" energy emitted by God us-ward and the "sound" energy emitted by God us-ward? [Hint: You may wish to read and meditate on the six verb-phrases of the Aharonic Blessing before you answer.]

*May you find your voice, Beloved, and may you sing to the well of life;
and may you live by the voice and not the sword. And may His light flood your life.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Proverbs 8:12-31

***I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion.
The fear of the Holy One is to hate evil;
Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.***

*Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.
By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice.
By me princes rule, and nobles, all the judges of the earth.
I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.
Riches and honor are with me - enduring riches and righteousness.
My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold,
And my revenue than choice silver. I traverse the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of justice,
That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, that I may fill their treasuries.*

*"The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old.
I have been established from everlasting,
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains abounding with water.*

*Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth;
While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust of the world.
When He prepared the heavens, I was there; When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,
When He established the clouds above,
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters would not transgress His command,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth, I was beside Him as a master craftsman.
And I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him,
Rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men.*