

Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: *Torah Devarim:* Deuteronomy 1:32 - 2:7
 Haftarah: Isaiah 1:7-9
 B'rit Chadasha: I Timothy 3:2

You would not sh'ma

[Deuteronomy 1:43a]

Today's Meditation is Lamentations 1:5-7;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the Avot, [The Patriarchs/Fathers]

Uvadavar hazeh eynchem ma'aminim b'Adonai Eloheichem – But in this thing/word/situation, you [plural] had no *emunah* in/with/in relation to the Holy One your God. Deuteronomy 1:32.

The 'Mission: IMPOSSIBLE' report given by the spies at Kadesh-Barnea knocked the *nishmat chayim*² - right out of us. Without the *nishmat chayim* we reverted back to being animals bearing nothing but a superficial resemblance to the Adam who walked with the Holy One in the beginning and tended and kept the beautiful Garden of Eden for Him. Without the *nishmat chayim* we did not have eternity in our hearts [See Ecclesiastes 3:11b]. Without the *nishmat chayim* we had no ears to hear the Voice of our Creator and no eyes to see into His Unseen Realm of Ultimate Reality. Moshe summed this up by saying we had no *emunah*³. We can see it now, in retrospect. Moshe was right. We abandoned the 'emunah paradigm' entirely, electing not to process things through *Torah*, through *Tefillah*, through *the Wisdom and Understanding that flow through the reverent fear of Heaven*, or through *the precious gift of Shalom*, but instead through the *myopic eyes, helplessly flawed pseudo-intellectual opinion matrix*, and *fickle, untrustworthy emotions* of our flesh. We had no *emunah* in the Holy One our God. We shook our heads and looked at one another. No *emunah*? After all we had seen - how could that possibly be? Oh, we believed that God existed, of course. We believed that it was He, and none other, Who created the Universe. We even believed that our forefathers had walked and talked with, cut covenant with, and been guided and blessed by Him. We believed that He brought about the Exodus through the medium of the ten

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² The *nishmat chayim* is the infusion/breath of the Creator own life-force which He breathed into Adam after forming him out of the dust of the earth. See Genesis 2:7b.

³ *Emunah* is usually translated into English as 'faith' or 'trust'. The Hebrew word, however, is means to receive, embrace, nurture, carry, and yield one's mind and body to the service of a life-force that motivates action, inspires, and empowers. The verb root of this word points to the way a pregnant woman or nursing mother changes everything about her life and rearranges all her priorities for the sake of the life force [baby] that she is carrying (or nursing).

plagues. We believed that even now He dwelt between the wings of the *cherubim* in the *Mish'kan*, just a few meters from our tents, and provided us with manna and water. But that was as far as it went. We believed that He 'is', but we refused to trust Him to always *reward those who diligently seek Him*. Cf. **Hebrews 11:6**. We did not *know Him* – or even seek to know Him - as an Active, Present Persona, Partner-in-Covenant, Shepherd, Companion, or Friend. We did not *love Him* – or even mildly aspire to love Him. We were not willing to subordinate any of our base appetites, urges, or desires to His service. We did not surrender our selfish agendas to His will, our opinions to His declared truth, or our speech/demeanor/behavior patterns to His discipline. We did not have any appetite for interacting with Him, conversing with Him, or walking with Him outside the comfortable boundaries of orthodox 'religion'. It all 'worked', more or less, until Kadesh-Barnea. At Kadesh-Barnea we found out that, whatever thin veneer of religion we had, our cupboard was bare of an essential staple of Covenant life; we had no *emunah*. We had never bonded with the Holy One the way Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov did. We did not trust Him to bring about good in every situation the way Yosef did. We did not trust His Vision. We did not trust His Plan. We did not trust His Promise. We did not trust His Wisdom. We did not trust His Commitment. We did not trust His love. We did not trust His Character. We did not even trust Him to use His Power in ways that would measure up to the standards of our morality. Despite our declarations of *na'aseh v'nishma* [i.e. *we will asah and we will sh'ma* – see **Exodus 24:7**] we were anything but 'all in' on the Covenant. We were therefore not faithful to His calling. We were not steadfast in following His leadership. We chaffed at His easy yoke. We scoffed at His goodness. We rationalized away His signs and wonders. We insisted on judging every situation based solely on what our eyes could see, what our ears could hear, what our flesh could feel, and what our fallen minds could think. We clung tenaciously to our self-will, our self-determination, our self-preservation instinct. Even though the Exodus had happened, it was not enough. Even though Sinai had rocked our world, it was not enough. Even though manna fell from Heaven for us, and water poured forth from a rock to meet all our needs, it was not enough. Even though our sandals did not wear out, and no enemy could defeat us, it was not enough. Even though, as Moshe puts it, the Holy One had carried us along the road out of Egypt the way a father carries his son [**Deuteronomy 1:31**], we had not learned to trust Him. Even though He had gone before us in a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day to show us the way, like a scout, a shepherd, and a wilderness guide all rolled into one [**Deuteronomy 1:33**], we had no *emunah*. Oh, we had lots of other things. We had an abundance of attitude – especially in the areas of entitlement and victimization. We had tongues as sharp as butcher knives. We had an arsenal of murmurings and complaints, accusations, and *lashon hara* [i.e. *critical, negative speech*]. We had no shortage of snarky slogans. We had the full

spectrum of out-of-control appetites and emotions. We had extremely vivid – albeit hopelessly vain - imaginations. We had fear. We had self-pity. We had anger. We had offense. We had pseudo-intellectual theories and abstract ideas of what was good and evil, right and wrong, moral and immoral, fair and unfair, and just and unjust. We had worst-case scenarios. But we tested negative for *emunah*. Alas, most people – even those who claim to ‘believe’ - still do. You can fake a lot of things – but you can’t fake *emunah*. Anyone can talk a good talk. Anyone can join an institution. Anyone can get all up in their emotions under the social pressure of a religious-themed meeting; but when there is no *emunah*, whatever faux-faith one’s flesh may have whipped up in an ivory tower environment always evaporates at the first sign of serious real-world trouble. That is why the Holy One uses the Wilderness – with all its gut-wrenching challenges – as His proving ground to determine who is just called ... and who is chosen. The desert reveals for all to see exactly who has developed functional, Covenant-centric *emunah* on the one hand ... and who has been content just to drink the Kool-Aid of popular philosophy, abstract theology, and culturally acceptable religion on the other.

What is Emunah ... and How Does One Get It?

At Kadesh-Barnea, when the challenge of the giants in the land came, our parents – like most human beings who have ever lived – lacked the critical Covenant characteristic – the active presence of *emunah*. English Bibles try to translate this as ‘faith’ or ‘belief’, or even ‘trust’. But it is so much more – and yet so much less. *Emunah* is so profound – yet so simple. *Emunah* is that special thing that which was implanted in, took root in, and started growing in, Avram at the time of the Genesis 12 call. Three chapters after the call, after many trials had been overcome through this life force, the Holy One accounted the active operation of *emunah* in Avram as the seed form of *tzedakah* [i.e. in English, ‘righteousness’]. See **Genesis 15:6**. *Emunah* is the pulsing, breathing growing force of a spiritual form of life begotten from the union of a human being – body, soul, and spirit - with incorruptible Divine seed. Emanating from the Word of the Holy One, which takes root in the human mind, heart, and soul, *emunah* is *calm, patient, confident shalom*. *Emunah* is constant awareness of Who the Creator of the Universe is and how He is always working everything together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. *Emunah* is *unstoppable love*. *Emunah* is *irrepressible joy*, irrespective of circumstances. *Emunah* is *unflappable hope*, no matter what the challenge. *Emunah* is *the person and personality of the promised Messiah, alive in us*. *Emunah* is *unquenchable passion for the holy things of God* solely because one recognizes those things as *treasures from our spiritual Father’s Home in the Heavens* that have been given *on loan to the people of earth*

Emunah is what differentiates *people who carry the Present, active, life force - and thus the atmosphere-shifting power - of the Holy One into the spheres of influence they are assigned*, from those who merely believe He exists and rules the Universe, and therefore seek to be blessed by Him. *Emunah* is the Word of the Holy One, alive and active, sprouting, maturing, and bearing fruit in a human life. People without the supernatural infusion of *emunah* can try in the flesh of their minds to ‘believe’ all the right doctrines; alternatively, they can attempt in their flesh to ‘obey’ all of that they see as the Creator’s ‘rules’ and ‘laws’. But without *emunah* these efforts are purely human flesh endeavors, are dependent upon human intellect on the one hand and willpower on the other, and are therefore doomed to fail. *Emunah* is birthed from Heaven, not from earth. People who have *active emunah* operating in them do not ‘obey’ laws – they *sh’ma* a Voice. They embrace the Holy One’s Presence, absorb His energy, resonate in consonance with His Words, and rebroadcast to the world the pure tone of His love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, humility, and self-control.

Now that we have a basic understanding of *emunah*, let us return to our fathers, and what happened to them at Kadesh-Barnea. Though our fathers had seen the Holy One’s signs and wonders first hand, with their natural eyes; though they had heard His Voice speaking the Ten Words of Life with their natural ears; though they had felt His power, enjoyed His protection, and reveled in His love, with their natural minds; though they had, in the heat of the moment at Sinai, declared ‘*we will sh’ma and we will asah!*’ – these things had not changed them the way Avram was changed. Their DNA had not been reconstituted by these Divine Engagements the ways Avram’s was by his. Their nature had not changed as Avram’s had. They were not new creations as he was. It was not that our fathers did not *agree mentally/philosophically* with what they had heard and seen from the Holy One – if they had been asked, they would swear that they did. But ‘agreeing’, ‘believing’ and ‘trusting’ are not at all what *ma’aminin/emunah* is about. Agreeing, believing and trusting are just some pseudo-intellectual Westerner’s idea of what they think ‘faith’ is supposed to consist of. *Ma’aminin/Emunah* is so much more. Ah, but at Kadesh-Barnea, except in Y’hoshua and Kalev, the fruit of *ma’aminim/emunah* was nowhere to be found. Alas, for the rest, their spiritual wombs were still empty. They had not conceived the incorruptible seed the Holy One had sown in them. They were as barren. They looked like a fig tree, and bore leaves like a fig tree - but they bore no figs. Let it not be so with us! Let us be found, in every trial and challenge, to have *ma’aminin/emunah* – alive, flourishing, and overcoming!

Living In the Times

The fortieth year of our freedom from the taskmasters of Egypt is nearing an end. We have just observed the new moon of the eleventh month of that year. Early

signs of the impending approach of spring are popping up everywhere. We are getting anxious to start the final leg of the march toward home. We are, you see, literally so close to the Promised Land that we can smell it! On clear days we can the outline of the walls of bustling Kena'ani fortress *Yericho* on the other side of the Jordan Rift Valley. With this intoxicating nearness, a sense of imminent destiny has gripped us all – especially Moshe. He has called an assembly – not merely of the heads of the tribes, but of all Israel's hosts. We are listening to everything he has to say with our ears - but we are also keeping one eye fixed on the pillar of fire and cloud all the while. We are watching for the slightest indication of movement. Our hearts are hungry for the moment when we see the manifestation of the Holy One's Presence rise up and head westward. Our lips are poised to proclaim again: “***Kumah Adonai v'yafutzu oyeveicha*** [i.e. 'Arise O Holy One, and may your enemies be scattered!']

Alas, the pillar of fire and cloud is staying put. We are going to have to wait a little longer. The fullness of the gentiles has not yet come. The latter rains⁴ have not even begun in earnest; much less has the Jordan been brought to flood stage. The land is not yet ready to receive us. Nor, apparently, are we ready to receive it.

Moshe knows what is making us unready – even if we do not. He has been getting briefings from the Bridegroom-King daily on the subject. He knows that the main thing holding us back is a *stunning lack of perception about where we have come from and who we are*. He knows that we have lost touch with our national past. And he knows it is his assignment to fix that. As a result the old prophet is as animated as we have seen him in a long time. He has only thirty-six more days to prepare us for the magnificent endeavor that awaits us. He knows he has to make every *dabar* – every weighty Kingdom word he releases – count. And he is doing just that.

'Bucket List': Empty! It is Well With My Soul!

Though he only has a little over five weeks to live, Moshe has no fleshly 'bucket list' of fleshly thrills that he wants to experience before he dies⁵. He has found all the fulfillment of which he could ever dream in the context of a rich, thriving, ever-deepening relationship with the Bridegroom-King. He knows that there is no more exhilarating experience in life than *conversing with the Creator of the Universe face to Face as a man speaks with his friend*.

⁴ The 'former rains' of the agricultural cycle of the Jordan Rift Valley come in the Fall, in the seventh and eighth months of the Biblical year [i.e. Tishrei and Cheshvan]. The 'latter rains' of that cycle come in the Spring, in the first and second months of the Biblical year [i.e. Nisan and Iyar].

⁵ The only thing of this earth for which Moshe still has a desire is to enter the land of the Patriarchs. The Holy One has given him that desire, and has also ordained how He will fulfill it. See Matthew 17, where Moshe is seen in the Promised Land, on the Mount of Transfiguration, with Messiah.

Moshe has from that fountain drunk long, deep, and often. He knows the joyful sound of the Holy One's Beautiful Voice better than any man alive. He knows the pleasure of the Bridegroom-King's sweet companionship. He knows the transformative power of the Light of Holy One's Countenance. He knows the tenderness of the Holy One's Touch. He knows the infinite, unsearchable wisdom of the Holy One's Ways. He knows the incredible lightness of being that falls with the Weight of the Holy One's Glory. And he knows the Deep, Inspiring, Mesmerizing Kindness that infuses even the Holy One's Rebuke and Discipline. Having experienced all that, Moshe's joy and delight will never again be invested in the inferior pleasures of the realm of the flesh – it is invested instead in his assigned role in that King's Grand Redemptive Plan for mankind and Creation. His only objective now is to *finish the course* designed for him by the Glorious King he knows so well, and to *finish it strong*.

Moreover, the more Moshe has gotten to know the Holy One, the more he has gotten to know the best – and the worst – parts of himself. He now knows that he is no better, more righteous, or more holy than anyone else. The knowledge of the glory of the Holy One is slowly, inexorably killing off his flesh – and thereby transforming him into a humble and useful vessel. As a result Moshe is now fully aware that, despite his best intentions, he has at multiple times and places along the journey succumbed to things like irritation, anger, offense, arrogance, and overwhelm - just like every other person in the Camp. As a result, he is fully aware that he has at times over the past 40 years allowed himself to be blindsided by, and actually play unwitting host to, the critical, judgmental, self-righteous spirits that haunt the waste places of the wilderness. Each and every time he has succumbed to fleshly temptations, indulged self-righteous attitudes, or spouted his own horribly flawed opinions instead of revelation from the Bridegroom-King, it has cost not only him, but also the people he was called to lead, very greatly. There is absolutely no time for such self-indulgent folly now. His sole objective in the last thirty-six days on earth is whatever it takes to empower the sons and daughters of the men who walked with him dry-shod through the Sea of Reeds to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth in the Land the Holy One has chosen to serve as His earthly command center.

Getting Perspective, Getting Closure ... and Moving On

Moshe knows that if we are going to complete the mission we must make peace with, and get closure concerning, the failure of our fathers at *Kadesh Barnea*. He has carried the burden a long time – longer than anyone in the camp except Y'hoshua and Kalev. The debacle of Kadesh Barnea is not a part of the journey we

can just sweep under the rug. Moshe is not angry now – he is weeping. I hope you can sense the Bridegroom-King’s tenderness in the tone of his words:

... in the wilderness where you saw how the Holy One your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.

*Yet, for all that, now, here, you do not **aman** the Holy One your God*

Who went in the way before you ...

[Deuteronomy 1:31-33]

You saw? *You* went? *You* did not *aman the Holy One*? Why is Moshe ignoring the obvious generational change? Has he forgotten that almost forty years have passed since the events he is talking about. Has he forgotten that all the people who participated in the sin of the spies at Kadesh Barnea are all dead. Why does he repeatedly use the second person pronoun ‘you’ in discussing the Kadesh Barnea debacle - instead of employing the more appropriate third person pronoun ‘they’? He is talking about *the parents of the people sitting before him ...* isn’t he? Uh-oh – I don’t think he is, Dear Reader. I think he knows exactly who he is talking to. I think he is speaking with Divine Inspiration. And I think he chose exactly the right pronoun. As much as we might wish he was, you see, he is not talking about ‘them’. When he says: ‘***Yet for all that, now, here, you do not aman the Holy One your God***’, He is talking about *you and me*. The apple really doesn’t fall far from the tree.

I think we had all better put away our distractions, attitudes, and opinions, and *sh’ma* very carefully what Moshe has to say. This *rosh chodesh* - and the week that follows – is, after all, our appointed time each year to face up to the challenges of the month of Av. That includes the debacle of Kadesh Barnea. This is not about our parents or some long-forgotten ancestors and something that happened a long time ago; this is about us, and this is about now. We are going to have to learn the hard lessons of *Kadesh Barnea* in our day, for our time. We are going to have to finally get a realistic understanding of the root problem that raised its head for the first time at Kadesh Barnea. We are going to have to accept personal responsibility. Each of us is going to need to personally embrace healing, closure, and overcoming empowerment before the Pillar of Fire and Cloud moves. If we do not, we will just keep repeating, generation by generation, the great folly of rejecting our destiny as royal ambassadors in the chambers of the Bridegroom-King in favor of murmuring, complaining, fussing, fuming, envying, coveting, jostling for position and titles, arrogantly rebelling, and slowly dying in the wilderness.

***In Regard to Matters of Destiny It All Comes Down to
Who You Fix Your Eyes Upon, Talk About, Fear and Trust***

Moshe wants to empower the generation seated before him to overcome, and make *tikkun* concerning, the great mistake of trust that is inherent in every Kadesh-

Barnea experience. He saw firsthand how the sight of a few giants and the dread of war can turn men's hearts to mush. He knows it is one thing to dream about a destiny, and it is another to actually reach out and take it. He knows how easily distracted and discouraged even the elect – and the supremely blessed - can become. He knows that in regard to matters of destiny it always comes down to what you allow your eyes to be fixed upon – the huge fruit promised by the Holy One, or the giants standing in the way. He knows it always comes down to what kind of talk you allow to come out of your own mouth, and what kind of talk by others you allow to affect your will, your mind, and your emotions. He knows it always comes down to *Who you choose to magnify and fear* and *Who you choose to magnify and trust*. Moshe knows the secret to our success in the Kingdom endeavors to which we are called is to reject the 'we were like grasshoppers' mentality of our fathers in favor of the '***The Holy One is my Light and my Salvation – whom shall I fear?***' mentality of our future king. So, as much as it pains Moshe to speak of these things, he is not pulling any punches.

What Was The Holy One's Response?

English translations of the Bible state at this point that the Holy One was 'wroth' [KJV], or 'angry' [NKJV]. But we know that the Holy One is faithful, and all-knowing, and always at *shalom*. We know that He does not get all huffy and offended like short-sighted mortal humans do. We know that He does not throw tantrums like a spoiled child, fly into and out of outrage at the drop of a hat like a progressive 'activist', or rant and rave like a narcissistic bully. We know His response to every situation is geared toward repair, redemption, restoration, strengthening the covenant, and furthering the Kingdom Agenda. We know His chief characteristics are merciful, compassionate, slow to anger, faithful to covenant, forgiving, and patient. **Exodus 34:6-7**. So we really need to consider shaking off the '*monarchs are always irritable, angry, and mean*' worldview of our English translations consider what really happened. The Hebrew word Moshe used to describe the Holy One's response was *qatzaf* – *kof, tzade, feh sofit*. The verb root of this word means to 'break off', 'take a break'; or as modern language might put it, 'back off', or 'pull back'. What is connoted is not an emotion, but an action. *Qatzaf* connotes instituting a strategic season of withdrawal from active engagement. It is a standard *covenantal training protocol* – if apprentice or disciple absolutely refuses to follow instructions, implement procedures, or stay focused on the assignments given, the Master/Teacher lets the horse 'have its head'. Turning loose of the reins, the Master/Teacher lets the apprentice/disciple do things his own way for a while – and, of course, fail miserably. The object is not punishment or retribution; the protocol is employed in order to teach a headstrong apprentice/disciple discover the hard way. that doing it the Master's way, on His timetable, according to His instructions, is the only way this can work.

Psychologists today might call this *qatzaf* protocol a form of ‘tough love’. And so it is. Because the vast majority of the men of the generation of the Exodus refused to embrace the Holy One’s vision, trust His Wisdom, His Plan, and His Promises, and walk in His ways, the Holy One simply backed off. He pulled back His protective Hand and just let nature, folly, vain imagination, and futile thinking run their predictable course – knowing all the while that Y’hoshua and Kalev, the two rising stars of His apprenticeship program, would keep the Vision alive and the Plan moving forward. Many are called – but few are chosen.

Catching the Fire from Y’hoshua and Kalev

As Moshe recounted the story of what happened at *Kadesh Barnea* in the ears of the multitudes, I imagine the scene unfolding something like this. Y’hoshua’s face became flushed with embarrassment – or was it holy fire? He stole a glance at his old friend Kalev, son of Yefuneh. Kalev however sat perfectly still, staring straight ahead as if into space. The old Y’hudi looked as if his mind were lost somewhere in time - as if his thoughts were far, far away.

Y’hoshua stared for a moment at his old friend. Kalev’s jaw was taut; his lips were weathered and tightly pursed. His aging eyes appeared moist with emotion. No tears issued forth from those eyes *yet*. But Y’hoshua knew it was only *a matter of time*. This was, you see, for Kalev and for Y’hoshua, *a time to weep*, and *a time to mourn*. Of all the people present that day listening to Moshe’s oratory that day only Y’hoshua understood how his friend felt as the agony of the *Kadesh Barnea* debacle was replayed. Thirty-nine years ago at *Kadesh Barnea* the events about which Moshe was at that moment speaking to the multitudes had come very, very close to costing both Kalev and Y’hoshua their lives. When the two of them had stood up to disagree with the majority report of the committee of spies and to urge the Redeemed Community to trust the Holy One, press forward, and take possession of the Land *giants or no giants*, the fathers and grandfathers of the very young men who were now seated around them had as one man taken rocks in hand with the intention of stoning them into oblivion.

Only a miracle of Divine Intervention had saved the two of them back then. But miracles were normal in those days for Kalev and Y’hoshua. So, quickly and decisively the Holy One had turned the tables on those who had sought their lives. Thirty-nine years later every single person whose hand had reached for a stone that day with murderous intent against them was now dead and buried in the desert sand ... but here Kalev and Y’hoshua were still very much alive and kicking. Let us listen in with Kalev and Y’hoshua as Moshe continues his narrative: *The Holy One swore, saying,*

Im-yir'eh ish ba'anashim ha-eleh ha-dor hara hazeh

Surely not one of these men of this self-obsessed generation will see

et ha-aretz ha-tovah asher nish'bati latet l'avoteichem

the good land, which I swore to give to your fathers,

Zulati Kalev ben-Yefuneh

save Kalev the son of Yefuneh:

hu yir'enah v'lo-eten et ha-aretz asher darach-bah ul'vanav

and to him will I give the land that he has trodden on, and to his children,

ya'an asher mile acharei Adonai

he shall see it; because he has wholly followed the Holy One.

[Deuteronomy 1:35-36]

At that, the eyes of the old *Yehudi*, the son of Yefuneh, finally welled with tears. Kalev refused, however, to yield to the pull of gravity on those tears. He breathed deeply. He blinked repeatedly. Then, realizing his old friend Y'hoshua was staring at him, he chuckled to himself. He glared back at the Efrayami, son of Nun, in mock anger. And then he broke out in a broad, toothy grin, as he heard Moshe said:

Y'hoshua bin-Nun ha-omed lefaneicha

... And Y'hoshua the son of Nun, who stands before you,

hu yavo shamah oto chazek ki-hu yanchileinah et-Yisra'el

he will go in there: encourage him; for he will cause Yisra'el to inherit it.

[Deuteronomy 1:38]

Kalev looked Y'hoshua full in the face, winked, and mouthed in his direction the following words: “*Soon, old friend. Very, very soon!*” For those in covenant with the Holy One, you see, after every time to weep there is a time to laugh; and with the Holy One, after every time to mourn there a time to dance. Moshe continued:

V'tapchem asher amartem lavaz yihyeh

Moreover your little ones, whom you said should be a prey,

uvneychem asher lo-yad'u hayom tov vara

and your children, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil,

hemah yavo'u shamah

they will go in there,

v'lahem etnenah v'hem yirashuha

and to them will I give it, and they will possess it.

[Deuteronomy 1:39]

Confronting and Overcoming the Darkness in Our Own Souls: Our Mission in the Month of Av

The calendar of the Kingdom of Heaven is filled with prophetic times and seasons. Each one is strategic. Each is designed to spur us both to passion for the Bridegroom-King and energize us in facing the obstacles the season holds for our

Covenant Walk. Part of the challenge – and the thrill – of walking through life in Covenant with the Holy One is learning to understand and flow in His rhythms. He has made each year a great symphony. He has orchestrated each movement of the symphony with deep prophetic waves. Perfectly choreographed through the year are times of *sotto* and of *marcato*, times of *adagio* and of *allegro*, times of *minuet* and of *scherzo*, times of *rondo*, of *crescendo* and of *diminuendo*, and times of *sonata* and of *concerto*.

The fifth month of the Bridegroom-King's earthly calendar – the month the Babylonians taught our forefathers to call Av – is a month of deep emotional renewal. This is the Holy One's appointed time for us to focus on our greatest national sins, failures, and tragedies, to regain some perspective regarding the fragility of life, and to reconnect with our Covenant identity, mission and destiny as the duly appointed ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven to the scattered nations and peoples of the earth. We focus on the traumatic events that have occurred through the centuries in this month. We remember, and meditate on the reasons for and the great loss both we and the world sustained because of the destruction of the Holy Temple, and our expulsion from Jerusalem, in this month in both 586 BCE and 70 CE. We focus on our three great national expulsions, all of which occurred in this month - from England in this month in 1290 CE, from France in 1306 CE, and from Spain in 1492 CE. We focus on the Hebrew lives snuffed out in the Crusades, the Hebrew families cowered into conversion or tortured to death during the Great Inquisition, slaughtered, the Hebrew blood spilled during the Chmielnicki Massacres, and violent hatred of everything Hebrew that culminated in the Holocaust. And as we are doing so, the cycle of Torah always brings this season of coming face to face with why and where and how we lost our way with Moshe's recitation of the great crisis of faith our ancestors experienced – also during this month of the year - at Kadesh Barnea.

How can we find comfort in such things? Ah, Dear One, the secret is in the *Devarim*. Sh'lomo, in his great book *Mishlei* [i.e. Proverbs] wrote: ***Though the tzadik [righteous man] may fall seven times, he will arise.*** Proverbs 24:16. It is this word from Sh'lomo that caused Kefa to inquire of Mashiach: *How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?*” Matthew 18:21. Kefa recognized that the issue in forgiveness is never the wrong done or the pain experienced; it is always the opportunity the wrong and its aftermath provides for *tikkun* and restoration. Yeshua taught him – and us – never to limit the opportunity for *tikkun* and restoration even to seven sins or falls. The Holy One has forgiven far more than seven failures by His Covenant People. He sees each national sin as merely a springboard that provides a new opportunity for a deep work of cleansing, healing, and restoration. He wants us to do the same.

The prophet Micah took this a step further than Sh'lomo. He wrote on behalf of the Covenant People: ***Do not rejoice over me, my enemy, because I fell. For I will rise! Because I sit in the darkness the Compassionate One is a light unto me!*** Micah 7:8. These two verses, among others, resulted in an oft repeated saying:

"Through falling, there is rising; through darkness, there is light."
[Yalkut Shimoni]

In *Devarim* Moshe calls us to complete the transformative cycle of falling and rising, succumbing and overcoming, once again. Moshe has immersed us in this process by including in his final set of *Devarim* his memories and exhortations concerning the *chet ha-meraglim* [the sin of the spies] of Kadesh-Barnea. Moshe is not about to stop with the initial deviation of our hearts from the Way of the Bridegroom-King. He proceeds quickly to remind us of phase II – our stubborn, presumptuous response to the Holy One's decree, and the disastrous consequences that flow from such a response. Let's listen in:

"I spoke to you, v'lo sh'matem [but you didn't listen/heed];
and you rebelled against the mitzvah of the Holy One,
and were presumptuous, and went up into the hill-country.

The Emori, who lived in that hill-country, came out against you,
and chased you, as bees do, and beat you down in Se'ir, even to Hormah.
And then you returned and wept before the Holy One;

v'lo-shama Adonai b'kolechem

[i.e. but the Holy One didn't listen to your voices]

nor gave ear to you.

So you abode in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you abode [there]."

[Deuteronomy 1:43-46]

Alas Moshe, we remember it all too well. It was the first time since the golden calf episode that the Holy One had *hid His Face* from us.

We remember that immediately after this happened our fathers began a 38-year process of dying in the desert. We remember burying them, and mourning them, and missing them terribly. But despite our grief we remember that the Holy One still provided enough manna six days of every week to feed over 2 million people. And we remember that through it all He still saw to it that we rested, and resided in a state of blessedness and holiness, on the 7th day. We remember that in the midst of judgment for our sins He still provided for us – old and young – rivers of living water from a rock in the middle of the desert. We remember that neither our sandals nor the sandals of our fathers who were under the judgment decree wore out. And we remember that despite all the death and dying that was going on the Holy One nurtured us, and cared for us, and little by little, caused us to grow up. We remember that we resolved to learn from our fathers' mistakes as best we

could. And we remember that we just kept moving on, from station to station, in the desert, following the pillar of fire and cloud the Holy One provided us – until we got here. Truly *"Do not rejoice over me, my enemy, because I fell. For I will rise! Because I sit in the darkness the Compassionate One is a light unto me!"* [Micah 7:8]. For truly *"Through falling, there is rising, and through darkness, there is light."* [Yalkut Shimoni]

Remembering the Hard Lessons of ‘Hating the Grace Poured Out Upon the Lives of Others’ – Witness our Encounter with Edom

Moshe then continued with the wilderness saga. He recounted what happened when the Holy One brought us into contact with the Edomi - the descendants of Esav. He recalled in our hearing how the Holy One spoke to him at that time, saying,

Rav-lachem sov et ha-har hazeh
Enough encompassing this mountain

penu lachem tzafonah
turn northward.

*Command the people, saying,
You are to pass through the border of your brothers the children of Esav,
who dwell in Se`ir; and they will be afraid of you:
take good heed to yourselves therefore;*

Al-titgaru *[don't contend with them] for I will not give you of their land,*

***For the Holy One your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand;
he has known your walking through this great wilderness:
these forty years Adonai Eloheicha imach*** *[the Holy One your God has been with you];
you have lacked nothing.*
[Deuteronomy 2:1-7]

Yes Moshe, we remember. Edom was rude – and tried to intimidate us. But we remember as well that the Holy One was indeed *with us*. And with His help we were able to rise above the hatred of Esau, just as did our ancestor Ya’akov.

Six Key Phrases From Today’s Aliyah

As you meditate on these passages keep in mind that Moshe is not a history teacher. He is not reciting facts for us to memorize and regurgitate on a test at the end of the week or semester. He is instead speaking words at the instigation and with the inspiration of the Holy One. He is aiming those word like guided missiles, *right at our hearts*. This review of recent history is intended as a dire warning to the new generation against failing – as our fathers did time and time again - to trust the Divine Bridegroom and *sh’ma* His Words. As each event that took place in the years of miraculous provision [that is what the “desert” experience really was] is described by Moshe therefore take a few moments and meditate on that event and

its implications. Look for a parallel experience you have had in your life – a time when the words spoken by Moshe about the generation of the exodus could well have been spoken about you. The result could change everything.

There are some six key phrases in today's aliyah which speak volumes to us today, as we consider why it is that some people – even some Redeemed people – seem to be failing to embrace and/or fulfill their destinies. Let's look at these six key phrases together, shall we?

Key Phrase #1: The Seed-Bearing Factor

The first key phrase in today's aliyah comes from a rebuke leveled by Moshe at our ancestors. Of the Redeemed who accepted the report of the spies and cried out to be allowed to die in the desert or return to Egypt, our English Bibles tell us Moshe said: “... *You did not trust the Holy One your God ...*”

The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as “trust”, or “believe” in this verse, [i.e. what those who received and accepted the report of the spies failed to do] is a form of the Hebrew verb ‘*aman*’⁶. This word is the Hebrew verb root of the word English “*Amen!*” which is commonly spoken after a prayer⁷. It is also the root of the crucial Hebrew noun *emunah*, which we discussed at the beginning of this lesson. Understanding the verb *aman* is therefore absolutely essential for anyone who truly wishes to understand his or her purpose upon the earth. To *aman* is often translated into English as “to believe”.

In Yochanan's account of the first advent of Messiah Yeshua he taught us that *aman* is the key to enter into the kingdom of the Holy One. For Yochanan says: “... *as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believed [Hebrew, *aman*]*⁸ *on His Name. John 1:12.* But we must ask ourselves: are the Hebrew verb *aman* and the English verb *believe* really synonymous? Not at all. Are they even analogous? Not really. The English verb *believe* is a function of the human mind. To ‘believe’ means to mentally accept or agree in theory with a philosophical, theological, scientific, or psychological premise. The Hebrew verb *aman* is far deeper, far more spiritual, and light-years more *life-and-walk-impacting* than the English verb ‘believe’. The Hebrew verb *aman* is not based in or dependent upon thoughts, opinions, ideas and theories dreamed up by the human mind. It is a product of the *nishmat chayim* – or Divine

⁶ *Aman* is *alef, mem, nun sofit*. Strong's Hebrew word #539, it is pronounced aw-*man*'.

⁷ *Aman* is almost certainly the word spoken twice by Yeshua to introduce a teaching, translated by the King James Version as “*verily, verily*”. See for instance **Matthew 5:18 and 26, Matthew 6:2, 5, and Matthew 16; 10:15, 11:11, 13:17; Mark 10:15 and 29; John 1:51, 3:3 and 11, and John 5:19, 24, 25, and 26.**

⁸ Though the oldest versions of Yochanan's [John's] ‘gospel’ are in Greek, not Hebrew or Aramaic, Yochanan was a Hebrew, almost certainly raised in a Hebrew/Aramaic home, with a Hebrew/Aramaic mindset. Hence, to get to the root of what he wrote, one needs to look not at the Greek words used, but at the Hebraic essence of what was said.

lifeforce – which the Holy One deposited within man. See Genesis 2:7. *Aman*-ing is the creative energy provided by the union of Divine Breath – i.e. *Ruach Ha-Kodesh* – with the living Words – i.e. *Devarim* – of the Holy One in the soil of a man’s life. Instead of relying upon the fallen mind of a carnal man, as ‘belief’ does, *aman*-ing is a response of the whole heart, will, soul, mind, and body of a man to Divine Presence, direction, and empowerment.

A man’s ‘beliefs’ are like falling leaves in autumn - a dime a dozen, and easily redirected by the prevailing currents. Demons traffic in ‘beliefs’ with great ease. Holy Wars start over ‘beliefs’. Religious orders make fortunes off of ‘beliefs’. So we are never supposed to ever get excited – or particularly concern ourselves with - about what we or anyone else ‘believes’. What we are to get excited about and concern ourselves with is what we and those around us *aman*.

The Hebrew pictograph formed by the combination of consonants that make up this verb root tells the story. The first consonant, *alef*, is the symbolic representation of the Holy One, the ‘alef and the tav’ [in Greek, *alpha* and *omega*]. The second consonant, *mem*, is the symbolic representation of a flowing wave, that which represents movement [as a wave carries an object to the shore]. The third consonant, *nun sofit* (the form the letter *nun* takes at the end of a word) represents the final, ultimate son or heir of the Holy One – Messiah. Putting these together, this pictures the Holy One putting the Messiah in something [or more particularly someone] who will carry Him to full term and deliver Him. To flesh this out a little more, consider that the Hebrew word formed by the first two letters, *alef, mem*, is *im*, means ‘mother’. Add the *nun sofit* to this, and you get one who serves as a ‘mother’ – i.e. becomes pregnant with, and carries to full term, and delivers - the Messiah [the Word – the Torah made flesh]. That, Dear Reader – i.e. becoming impregnated with, and carrying to full term, and ultimately delivering, the Messiah seed - is what it means to *aman*. It is so, so much more than the English word “believe”. It means to totally yield oneself to the Holy One. It means to allow oneself to be impregnated by the Holy One with the Messiah – to be overshadowed by the *Ruach* as was Miryam [known by most English speakers as “Mary”], betrothed of Yosef, of Natzret, and *not to miscarry or abort Him*, but to *carry Him to term*, and *deliver Him into the world*.

Moshe tells us that the generation who accepted the report of the spies did not *aman*. In other words Moshe is saying: *your ancestors did not acknowledge, accept and agree with, and become pregnant with, carry to full term, and deliver, the Holy One’s statements of truth*. What they chose to do instead was to “Amen!” the words of men – men like the 10 spies, like Korach, like Datan and Aviram – men having a much more limited perspective than the Holy One and with personal

motives and secret ambitions. They allowed themselves to become pregnant with, and carry to term, and deliver, the words of someone not your Husband.

So here are the questions that the first key phrase of our aliyah is presenting to our hearts:

1. Whose offspring are you carrying, anyway?
2. Are you beginning to show yet?
3. What changes are you willing to make in the way you think, speak, eat, drink, entertain yourself, socialize and spend your time, energy and money in order to nurture and bring to term the seed of life you are carrying?

Key Phrase #2: The Whole-Hearted Pursuit Factor

The second key phrase in today's aliyah comes from Moshe's description of Kalev, son of Yefuneh. *Of Kalev [Caleb], son of Yefuneh, who stood against the report of the spies, it is said: "he followed the Holy One wholeheartedly" Deuteronomy 1:36.* The word translated as "wholeheartedly" in our English Bibles is *male*⁹, meaning *to the fullest, to the utmost; therefore meaning without distraction, without hesitancy, without doubt, and without regret.* It is this kind of single-minded, whole-hearted devotion and steadfastness to which all of us aspire.

Moshe will later call upon all of us to emulate Kalev's whole-hearted devotion and covenant-faithfulness. He will teach us:

V'ahavta et Adonai eloheicha

Love the Holy One your God

b'chol levav'cha

with all your heart

u' b'chol nefesh'cha

and with all your soul

u' b'chol me'odeicha

and with all your strength.

[Deuteronomy 6:5]

Key phrase #1 and #2 are obviously connected. Only he who truly *aman*'s the Divine Bridegroom can love or serve Him *wholeheartedly*. And of course if one is not at least moving toward loving and serving the Holy One wholeheartedly, one does not truly *aman* the Holy One – whatever his creed or confession may say.

The Holy One is not a deity to 'believe in'. He is a Bridegroom to *love passionately* and to *serve tirelessly*. So here are the questions that the second key phrase of our aliyah is presenting to our hearts:

⁹ *Male*' is *mem, lamed, alef*. Strong's Hebrew word #4390, it is pronounced *maw-lay'*.

1. Who are you really following around in this world?
2. Who and what do you really love?
3. What percentage of your heart is devoted to the Holy One, and what percentage of your heart is devoted to cultivating self-interest, comfort, pleasure, control, possessions, and prestige?

Key Phrase # 3: The Humble, Thankful, Generous Stewarding Factor

The third key phrase from today's aliyah is found in connection with a message Moshe received from the Holy One at the time of the *chet ha-meraglim* regarding the children in the camp who were then under 20 years of age. Of those Moshe said: "***they will have possession of*** [the land of Kena'an, which was promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov]" **Deuteronomy 1:39**. The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as "have possession" is *yarash*¹⁰, meaning *to inherit and enjoy the benefits of something one did not acquire by labor or purchase*. The proper Kingdom responses to receiving an inheritance, you see, are *thankfulness, gratitude, humility, generosity to others, and wise and faithful stewardship*. Hmmm. Does this description of how we obtained whatever is worthwhile in our lives help you to put the things and relationships and unique talents you possess in perspective?

So here are the questions that the third key phrase of our aliyah is presenting to our hearts:

1. Where did your possessions come from, anyway?
2. Are you thankful for what you have?
3. Are you being a good steward for the Kingdom of what you have?
4. Are you allowing yourself to become angry, jealous, or offended over what the Holy One has entrusted to someone else?

Key Phrase #4: The Sh'ma-ing Factor

The fourth key phrase in today's aliyah comes from Moshe's description of the 'presumptuous ones', who, after the Holy One said to turn around and go back into the desert, refused to do so, but presumptuously attacked the Emori. Of those who heard, but refused to **sh'ma** the instructions of the Holy One to leave K'desh and turn back into the desert, Moshe said: "***You wouldn't sh'ma! Instead, you rebelled against the Holy One's order, and you took matters into your own hands, and went up into the hill country.***" **Deuteronomy 1:43**.

The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate with the phrase "took matters in your own hands" or "were presumptuous", is *zuwd*¹¹, meaning literally "*to cook - to make a meal*"; by implication, *to try to create something by oneself, to act*

¹⁰ *Yarash* is *yod, resh, shin*. Strong's Hebrew word #3423, it is pronounced *yaw-rawsh'*.

¹¹ *Zuwd* is *zayin, yod, dalet*. Strong's word #2102, it is pronounced *zood*.

defiantly and arrogantly, in a show of self-sufficiency. Does this description of how we obtained whatever is worthless in our lives help you to put everything in perspective, and bless the Holy One?

So here are the questions that the fourth key phrase of our aliyah is presenting to our hearts:

1. Whose voice do you spend most of your time listening for and to? Is it some man's or organization's? Is it some movement or denomination or media source or religious order or political party's – OR is it the Bridegroom-King's?
2. Whose counsel are you heeding and following in regard to life issues?
3. Is there any area of life or relationship in which you are choosing to ignore, resist, or rebel against the Bridegroom-King's counsel?

Key Phrase # 5: The Ever-Ascending Factor

The fifth key phrase from today's aliyah comes from the 3rd verse of Deuteronomy chapter 2. To the new generation, now just coming of age on the plains of Moav, Moshe quoted the Holy One as saying: ***“You have been going around this mountain long enough!”*** Deuteronomy 2:3. The Hebrew word translated as “going around” in this verse is *savav*¹², meaning *to move in a circle, or repeat a cycle* numerous times, making no progress. Does this describe your life at any time? As stated earlier in this shiur, we are called by the Bridegroom-King to live our lives by cycles – cycles of Sabbaths, cycles of *mo'edim*, cycles of *moons*, cycles of *prophetic seasons*, and cycles of *life*. But we are supposed to be ***ever ascending*** Heavenward as we go through these cycles. We are just supposed to be just ‘circling’ like an airplane looking for a place to land. We are supposed to be ***climbing*** the Mountain of the Holy One – and edging ever closer to the Radiant Cloud of His Presence – not slogging the mountain's base slinging dirt on everyone around us.

When we cease gaining elevation and perspective, all we do as we complete the cycles of Sabbaths, *mo'edim*, moons, prophetic seasons and life is to *make ruts*. This is what happens when we disengage our heart from the Great Calling of Avraham's seed. This is what happen when we allow routine to replace passion. This is what happens when we allow meeting schedules and doctrinal arguments and self-righteous judgmentalism to derail us from *the Grand Genesis 18:19-19 Mission*, which is:

1. To surrender wholeheartedly to the process of being *molded by our Bridegroom-King into a great nation;*

¹² *Savav* is *samech, veit, veit*. Strong's word #5437, it is pronounced *saw-vawv'*.

2. To constantly pursue a greater level of *knowing and being known by the Bridegroom-King*;
3. *to teach our children and all who follow our households to cherish and carefully keep watch over to stay on the Way of the Bridegroom-King*; and
4. *to make real righteousness and real justice manifest in real world situations in real time.*

So here are the questions that the fifth key phrase of our aliyah is presenting to our hearts:

1. Have you gotten stuck in a rut in your relationship with the Bridegroom-King – or with the members of your family and community?
2. Are you actively ascending the Mountain of the Bridegroom-King in pursuit of Him, the fragrance of His Presence, and the Dust of His Feet – or are you just spinning your wheels in a comfortable routine of meeting for the sake of meeting, fellowshipping for the sake of fellowshipping, doing disciplines for the sake of the disciplines, reading for the sake of reading, praying for the sake of praying, and observing Sabbath, the Mo’edim, and the dietary laws for the sake of observing Sabbath, the Mo’edim and the dietary laws.
3. How surrendered are you to the process of being molded by the Bridegroom-King, along with others, into a great nation?
4. How committed are you to knowing and being known at continually deeper levels by the Bridegroom-King?
5. How actively are you engaged in the process of teaching your children and your households after you to cherish and carefully keep watch over to stay on the Way of the Bridegroom-King?
6. How successful are you being in speaking and acting in ways that make the Holy One’s justice and righteousness burst forth in real situations?

Key Phrase #6: The Essential “With-ness” Factor

The sixth key phrase of today’s aliyah is found in the 7th verse of the 2nd chapter. Moshe concludes this aliyah of his historical overview with a stunning statement – He reminds us that the Holy One has remained faithful to His covenant every step of our journey – *even in the midst of both our most egregious sins and our rejection of both Him and the special bridal chamber He had prepared for us.*

In Deuteronomy 2:7 Moshe describes in a few short words what it really means to have a covenant with the Holy One. Here it is:

The Holy One your God has blessed¹³ you in all the work¹⁴ of your hand;

¹³ The Hebrew verb is Strong’s Hebrew word #1288 **barach** [*beit, resh, chet*, pronounced *baw-rak*’]. The “first instance” of this word is Genesis 1:22, where we are told: “*And Elohim blessed [**barach**] them,*

*he has known¹⁵ your walking through this great wilderness:
these forty years the Holy One your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.*
[Deuteronomy 2:7]

May these words be spoken of you, of me, and of our children and our children's children forever.

So here are the questions that the sixth key phrase of our aliyah is presenting to our hearts:

1. Are we putting ourselves in a position of humility before the Bridegroom-King where He can bless us?
2. Are we yielding our hands to His Will, His Work, His Timing, and His Plan?
3. Are we consciously making an effort to stay 'with' Him at all times as He moves through the world – or are we surrendering to the human temptation to do our own thing, invoke His Name in our own plan, and asking Him to bless our will and make things happen on earth as they are in our mind?

Questions for Today's Study

1. With this short introduction to the spiritual power behind the words of our aliyah, let us examine some of the things Moshe has to say.

[A] What do you think it was like to have the Holy One, in the manifestation of a pillar of fire and cloud, go before you each day and stand guard over you each night?

[B] What two things did the Holy One do for B'nei Yisrael by going before the people?

[C] Why did the Holy One say that Kalev would see and possess the land on which he walked in the Promised Land?

[D] Who besides Kalev did the Holy One say would be allowed to enter the Promised Land? Who did the Holy One specifically say would not enter the Land?

[E] Imagine you were a newspaper reporter assigned to write a "newspaper article" about what the Israelites did after Moshe told them that because of their sin [in not believing a good report about the Promised Land] they would not enter the Land.

saying, 'Be fruitful, and multiply ...' . It means to speak creatively and prophetically over a person, empowering that person with the Holy One's own power to create and bring forth life.

¹⁴ The Hebrew word is Strong's Hebrew word #4639 *ma'aseh* [mem, ayin, shin, hey, pronounced mah-aseh]. It references the *flowing forth* [hence the prefix mem] of the skill and creativity of the artisan – for instance, a potter. As a result of the Holy One's covenant blessing Hebrews have always been leaders in craftsmanship.

¹⁵ The Hebrew verb is Strong's Hebrew word #3045 *yada'* [yod, dalet, ayin, pronounced yah dah']. It references a very intimate knowledge [the same word is used to describe the union of husband and wife]. The Holy One was not just "generally aware" of the events of the desert – He was *intimately familiar with* and *personally* involved in them – as a husband is intimately familiar with the events in his wife's life.

Write your article, calling it “*Amorites Defeat Children of Israel - Where Did Israel Go Wrong?*”

[F] Why do you think the Holy One instructed Israel not to fight with the Edomites, or take anything from them?

2. In today’s haftarah the prophet *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah] continues his prophetic description of Israel under the judgment of the Holy One. Try, as you read these verses, to imagine that the description he gives is of the city/region where you live, or the place where you once were close to the Holy One. Do not look upon these verses as something that happened to “them” – look upon them as something that could happen to you – to your family – to your friends. Let the desolation of life without the Holy One’s blessing and protection settle in on you.

Ar'tzechem shmamah

Your country is desolate.

areychem srufot esh

Your cities are burned with fire.

admatchem l'negdechem zarim ochlim otah

Strangers devour your land in your presence,

ush'mamah k'mahpechat zarim

And it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.

v'notrah vat-Tziyon k'sukah

The daughter of Tziyon is left like a shelter in a vineyard,

v'charem kim'lunah

Like a hut in a field of melons,

v'mikshah ke'ir netzurah

Like a besieged city.

Lulei Adonai Tzva'ot hotir lanu

Unless the Holy One of hosts had left to us a very small remnant,

sarid kime'at kiSdom

We would have been as Sodom;

hayinu la-Amorah daminu

We would have been like G'morrah.

[Isaiah 1:7-9]

[A] Who/what does Isaiah refer to as the “Daughter of Zion” in verse 8?

[B] What does Isaiah say is the state of Israel’s land?

[C] What does Isaiah say is the state of Israel’s cities?

[D] Who does Isaiah say is enjoying Israel’s land?

[E] What three descriptions does Isaiah give of the “daughter of Zion”?

[F] What does Isaiah say, in verse 9, the Holy One has “left us”, so we would not be like S’dom and like G’morrah?

[G] How could the devastation and desolation described in these verses have been avoided? What do you think it would have taken?

3. In 1Timothy 3:2 Shaul of Tarsus describes for Timothy a Kalev-type person who can be trusted to do the will of the Holy One. He thus tells Timothy how to recognize a true *episkope* in any city to which he travels.

*The episkope therefore must be without reproach,
the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible,
modest, hospitable, good at teaching*
[1Timothy 3:2]

[A] In the verse above, with what seven general characteristics did Shaul say an *episkope* will be graced?

[B] Look up each characteristic in Strong’s; write the Greek words describing each such characteristic, and the definition of each of those words.

[C] Search out the Hebrew words that correspond to the seven Greek words you just found, and describe the Hebraic word picture relating to each.

*May the Holy One grace you with passion for His Word, His Ways, and His Messiah.
And may your spirit and soul cry “Amen” to each of the Holy One’s decrees.
And may the 7 characteristics of an episkope burst forth in your life
Like leaves from a tree in spring.*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Lamentations 1:5-7

*Her adversaries are become the head, her enemies prosper;
For the Holy One has afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions:
Her young children are gone into captivity before the adversary.*

*From the daughter of Tziyon all her majesty is departed.
Her princes are become like harts that find no pasture;
They are gone without strength before the pursuer.*

*Y’rushalayim remembers in the days of her affliction
and of her miseries all her pleasant things that were from the days of old:
When her people fell into the hand of the adversary,
and none did help her,
The adversaries saw her, they mocked at her desolations.*