

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Ekev:*** **Deuteronomy 9:1-29**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 49:22-26**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Romans 8:35**

Sh'ma Yisrael! Your day to cross over the Jordan is coming!

[Deuteronomy 9:1]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 85:8-9;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the Third Blessing, *Kadosh [The Prayer of His Holiness]*

Shema Yisra'el – Tune in, listen, get your briefing, pay close attention, and respond appropriately, Israel ... *atah over hayom et-ha-Yarden* – your. Day to cross over the Jordan is coming Deuteronomy 9:1a.

Shhhhhh! Listen, Beloved - do you hear it? The sweet sound coming forth from just across the valley is the sound of *our manifest destiny* calling. Our first hands-on assignment in furtherance of the Holy One's Grand Redemptive Plan is being announced. It will not be long now until the *shofar* sounds, the Cloud moves, tents start to collapse, and Divine Impetus causes the forward movement – across the Jordan River, into the Land the Holy One has designated as our 'Kingdom Beachhead'. The time for study – and preparation of heart, hearth, and home – is rapidly drawing to a close. A season of Extreme Impact, when all eyes will be on us, awaits us just beyond the thin rim of the horizon.

All Eyes Are About To Be On Us!

The Holy One is arranging it so that soon all eyes will be on us. The people of the world are soon going to start wondering *who we are* and *why we are here*. Soon we will begin to feel like we are living in a glass house. It will feel like everyone in the neighborhood is spying on us - watching everything we do. Everything about our lives will be scrutinized. People will take note of – and criticize - what we eat ... and what we do not eat; what we do and do not drink; and what we do and do not do to entertain our pleasure ourselves. They will nitpick how we choose to dress, adorn, and present ourselves. They will have plenty to say about how we handle business transactions; how we raise and educate our children; how we spend our spare our time, energy, and money; how we keep ourselves informed about what is going on in the world; how we treat animals, the ecosystem, and each other; how we respond to everything from flattery to temptation to seduction to distraction to intimidation and to persecution; and generally how we behave both in public and in

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private. Whew! Are we ready for this kind of scrutiny? Of prying eyes? Of critical lips? Of suspicious minds? How will we handle the pressure of being the center of everyone's attention? How will we react to becoming the focus of both paranoid delusions and convenient scapegoating? How will we respond to all the hoopla, hype, and harangue we will encounter from the 'real world'? How will we adjust when the very people to whom we are called to model *the Beauty of our King, the Wisdom of His Ways, and the Righteousness of His Kingdom* respond to our presence with predictable countermeasures. How will we handle their *distraction tactics*; their *deception and misdirection schemes*; their *flattery and seduction strategies*; their *persecution crusades*; and their *witchcraft campaigns*? How will we react when people that do not even know us *are told that they should be afraid of us*? How about when they *hate us*? When they *slander us*? When they *spin blood libels about us*? When they *try to intimidate us with everything from inflammatory rhetoric to public and private bullying, to ever bolder and more elaborate kinds of terror attacks, to full-on, all-out campaigns of genocide*? All these things we are about to face; and all these things we are called to learn to understand and overcome ... without ever losing our *shalom*, our joy, our hope, our trust of the Holy One, our love of our fellow man, or our preference for mercy over judgment in the process. *Selah* - how can this be?

Nevertheless, Not My Will, But Yours Be Done

Moshe has the answer for us – if we will but *sh'ma*. Our prophet-turned-rabbi wants us to learn to overcome all the negative reactions of our world by embracing and displaying a beautiful kind of gentleness and humility that is found only in our Redeemer-King. In Hebrew writings the trait he is introducing is often summed up by the phrase *aino maczh'zik tova li'atzmo*. This is sometimes translated into English as "*not claiming credit for oneself*"; it could also be translated as "*not attributing goodness to oneself*." Stop for a moment and think of *humble, grateful, selfless, voluntary servanthood*. Think of Yeshua saying '***nevertheless, Father, let not my will, but Yours be done***' – and then proceeding to behave 100% consistently with that prayer. Think of Avraham finding a way to coexist with the sons of Chet. Think of how he, Yitzchak, Ya'akov and Yosef all embraced *minority status* and the *social powerlessness* that comes with it. Think *vulnerability without fear, adaptability without compromising Covenant, and resilience without hardness of heart*. Think *skillful gentleness*. Think *calmness under pressure*. Think of unswerving dedication to the Holy One, day after day, in the face of great injustices and intense persecutions. Think what it would look like for someone to stay *real people with real-faces-and-real-names focused instead of descending into concept, theory, idea, ideology, or utopian mind-games*. Think what it would look like for a person to *stay focused on what is actually going on in his or her assigned sphere-of-influence instead of worrying and/or pontificating about what horrible things he/she has heard or imagined are going down in areas and/or among people*

over which he/she has been assigned no influence whatever. Think what it would look like for a person to stay human pain, need, and potential focused instead of resorting to a focus on other people's present childish attitudes or foolish behaviors. Think what it would look like for a person to stay in a relationship-nurturing mode instead of descending into an easily offended and outraged, self-promoting 'how does who you presently appear to be and how you are presently behaving-make-me-feel' mode.

You have probably figured it out by now, but this is a very, very weighty matter. Indeed, it is an essential key to our great redemptive, restorative mission of *tikkun olam*. You see, Beloved, *aino maczh'zik tova li'atzmo* – not claiming credit for oneself or attributing goodness to oneself - is the Biblical antidote for one of the most destructive forms of mental illness that result from our species' steady diet of the fruit of the poison juices of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of 'good' and 'evil'. The mental illness I am talking about is sometimes referred to as *the pride of life*. It is a form of arrogance that chooses to view the world, the medium of time, the Divinely given capacities of thought, speech, and skill, and even the people we encounter in life, primarily through the extremely shortsighted prism of *self-interest*. We need to know and understand that the entire fallen world – as well as every ethnic group, culture, economic class, community, and nation we will ever encounter – are presently suffering horribly from this condition – and they don't even know it. We are called to become a drastic counterculture to all the 'self-interested ones'. We are called to be *humble healers* – never [a] *haughty judges*, [b] *offended crusaders*; or [c] *self-promoting ministries*. Our calling is to always look beyond 'what's in it for me' – and focus instead upon *what will advance the 'common good' of all men, not only in this generation but also the next two*. Our task is to always speak words, engage in behaviors, respond to challenges, and live lives, that *bring honor to the Holy One* – and which, in the process, bring to earth as many aspects of the Will of the Holy One and the Kingdom of Heaven in our lifetimes as possible. Each of us is strategically placed in Divinely created ecosystems – spheres of influence that are shared by people of different ethnic groups, from diverse cultures, of several economic classes, from very different communities and nations, but all sharing one disease – the dangerous, destructive anti-social disorder that flows with being obsessed with self. That malady can take many forms – an *entitlement mentality*; a *victim mentality*; an 'ends justify the means' mindset; a 'hater' approach to life, *arrogance; jealousy; paranoia; bigotry; vigilantism, judgmentalism; condescension, political activism; ethnic, cultural, and/or economic self-hate; personal and/or familial shame; and social guilt* being some of the most common.

Rav lachem. The world already has far, far more than enough of such self-

interest/self-obsession poison; the Holy One is calling for a *self-denying people* to arise – one that will endure insult and provide a healthy, healing counterbalance. Shaul of Tarsus will put it this way:

*I say, through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you,
not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think;
but to think soberly,
according as the Holy One has dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

Do not be wise in your own opinion.

[Romans 12:3, 16]

The Simplicity Approach

Rebbe Nachman called the essential Covenant trait that we are presently exploring as ‘*simplicity*’. He saw this Covenant trait as being designed to counteract and counterbalance the prevalent, anti-Covenant trait he called ‘*sophistication*’. The Rebbe famously said that men should *serve God with complete innocence and simplicity, with no sophistication whatever*. He instructed his followers to *throw aside all wisdom and clever ideas and serve God with simplicity*. He admonished: *Make sure that your deeds are greater than your wisdom, because the main thing is not study but its practical application. This obviously applies to most ordinary people's clever ideas, which are mere folly, but it even applies to genuine wisdom. When it comes to serving God, even a person whose head is filled with genuine wisdom should set it all aside and serve God simply and innocently*. He acknowledged that sometimes it may even be necessary to behave in a way that seems foolish in order to serve God and carry out His will. We may have to roll around in mud and mire for the sake of serving God and keeping His commandments. *One whose love of God is sufficiently strong becomes His dearly beloved child. God will show him abundant love and kindness, permitting him to explore the King's hidden store-chambers and even to understand what is beyond wisdom, including the deepest of all secrets, such as why the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper. Make sure that whatever you do, God is there. Don't heed your own honor. If it enhances God's glory, do it. If not, then don't. This way, you can be certain you will never stumble. Likutei Moharan II, 5, 12.* The Rebbe therefore summed up the duty of a man in Covenant with the Creator as follows: *The essence of serving God is simplicity and sincerity. Pray much, study much Torah and carry out many good deeds without seeking out or inventing unnecessary restrictions. Simply follow the path of our forefathers. Sichot Haran #235.*

Yeshua expressed the same line of thought in slightly different terms, saying in one instance: ***Whoever humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*** – Matthew 18:4. In another instance the Master expounded on this, saying: ***Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the***

kingdom of God belongs to such as these - Luke 18:16. In yet another instance He even went so far as to declare: **Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all** - Mark 10:15.

Stunning – indeed, absolutely mind-blowing. Inspiring and exhilarating – yet deeply humbling. So how, in an age of ‘reason’, humanism, and ideological pontification that constantly exalts the exact opposite approach, do we handle this great calling? In the midst of a swirling cesspool of human opinions, self-promoting agendas, offenses, delusions of grandeur, Messiah complexes, outraged crusaders, and martyr syndromes, how are we supposed to stay both ‘simple’ within the contemplation of Rebbe Nachman and ‘childlike’ within the meaning of Yeshua’s words? How are we supposed to remain *humble, teachable, awestruck, and gentle* in the midst of an age of exploding information, education, and sophistication? How are we supposed to keep from getting infected by the smugness, the arrogance, the self-righteousness, and the ‘*I am right and anyone who disagrees with me is wrong*’ syndrome that is so prevalent in the world today? The antidote to the arrogance epidemic is spending regular time in the Presence of, and listening carefully for and to the Voice of, the Creator of the Universe. It is, you see, really hard to think too much of yourself when you are standing awestruck and amazed – and regularly falling on your face - in the Presence of Real Wisdom, Real Goodness, and Real Majesty!

So ... What Does Rebbe Moshe Have to Say on This Subject?

Our aliyah begins with a resounding: “*Sh’ma Yisrael ...* [Hear O Israel] ...” So ... *are you listening?* Moshe wants all with ears to hear to pay close attention to and mark well what he is about to say. Permit me to paraphrase:

Oh, Beloved ... You cannot even fathom what you are about to see, much less grasp the significance of what you are about to be called upon to do.

You are about to see the Hand of God do mighty and wonderful – and sometimes downright frightening – things in your midst.

Your lives and your fortunes are about to be completely transformed.

You who have roamed the desert as nomads all your life, with no home and no land, are about to come into a millionaire’s inheritance of houses and fields and vineyards and orchards, pools, streams and ore-producing rocks.

At the same time, those who seem so powerful and appear to be in control and authority now are about to be rendered so weak that you will drive them out like lambs.

No, Dear One ... you cannot even conceive of what Your Divine Bridegroom is about to do through – or will it be despite - you!

Looking Ahead To The Next, More Responsible Phase of Covenant Life

In the initial phase of our life as a Community of the Holy One's Redeemed [*i.e.* the period between *the burning bush* and *the miraculous deliverance at the Sea*], we were simply passive beneficiaries of the Holy One's miracles. He did all the work; we simply *watched in awe*. Indeed the most significant thing any of us did was follow His instructions concerning killing a lamb on the evening of 14 Nisan, sprinkling its blood on our doorposts, and eating its flesh roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. *It didn't take a rocket scientist.*

In the second phase of Community life [*i.e.* the period of time elapsing between the *Song of the Sea* and our *encampment on the plains of Moav*], things changed slightly. The Holy One slowly began to incorporate us more and more into His redemptive process. Like a father in a family business slowly gives his young son ever-increasing levels of responsibility as he matures, so the Holy One has slowly begun to give us responsibilities. First we got to know the sound of the Holy One's Voice for ourselves. Then we accepted the *mitzvot, mishpatim and chukot* of Torah as our *Betrothal Covenant* and began to incorporate those life-giving words into the fabric of our day-to-day lives. Then we successfully *tested our ability to hear and understand the Holy One's instructions*, by following His instructions for the building of the *Mish'kan* to the letter. Then we *installed Aharon and his sons as kohanim*, and the Levi'im as their assistants, just as the Holy One told us. Then we applied some 'elbow grease'. *We carried out the Holy One's righteous decrees of punishment* with regard to the *Blasphemer, the Sabbath-desecrator, the Amaleki, the Kingdoms of Og and Bashan, the Midyani, and the deceiving prophet Bila'am*. But let's get real. Torah has made it abundantly clear that both the *creative genius* and the *moving force* behind every one of these accomplishments was the Holy One. As at Creation He spoke forth His Will into the atmosphere and what He said was exactly what happened. What was our role in the process? We were *simply invited – and provided the opportunity - to participate in what 'the Father was doing'*. Even Moshe's unique contribution consisted merely of opening his mouth and raising his stick when the Holy One told him to.

Often during this second phase we made an ugly mess of the things the Holy One let us participate in – sometimes horribly and with disastrous consequences. But the Holy One, in His marvelous covenant love, caused each of our failures to ultimately become a *springboard for a higher level of proficiency*. Even more than that, He caused each mistake we made along the way to become a *passageway to an even greater degree of responsibility* for us to participate with our Bridegroom in what He was doing in the earth.

Can you handle *another dose of reality*? The reality of the matter is, even as we conclude this 40-year second phase of Deliverance, we cannot even feed ourselves [hence we have to be given Manna each day], nor can we provide our most basic needs [such as obtaining our own water]. None of us should therefore be too proud about of any of the things we have accomplished. After all, *we are not even weaned yet*.

Welcome to the Third Stage of Our Deliverance

Ah but in today's aliyah Moshe prophesies of a coming *third stage of our Deliverance* - a stage on the threshold of which we find ourselves precariously perched. In the third stage of deliverance the Holy One's miracles will become less and less obvious, and *our actions* will appear more and more prominent and efficacious. The focus of the world around us is about to shift – be shifted by the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Ya'akov on purpose – from Him and His miracles ... to *us*! He is about to say to the world, about *us* – something like: ***I will bless those who bless these, and those who curse these will be cursed.***

Let's get more specific. Moshe describes for us prophetically *the next phase* we will experience of the covenant-faithfulness of the Holy One us-ward. Manna from Heaven, water from rocks, and the Divine Voice from a fire and cloud *Chuppah*², as awesome as they have been, are not our ultimate destiny. Such things have merely been provided as our 'schoolteacher', preparing us *for what we are about to see and do*. We are about to enter *another, more glorious, phase* in the process of the Holy One's redemption. The transition is already beginning. Moshe describes this *next phase* of the Holy One's redemption as follows:

Sh'ma Yisra'el

Tune in, listen, get your briefing, pay attention, and respond appropriately, Israel!

atah over hayom et-ha-Yarden

your day to cross over the Yarden is coming,

L'vo l'reshet goyim g'dolim va'atzumim mimeka

You will go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself,

arim g'dolot uvetzurot b'shamayim

cities great and fortified up to the sky,

Am-gadol v'ram b'nei Anakim asher atah yadata

a people great and tall, the sons of the `Anakim, whom you know,

v'atah shamata

and of whom you have heard,

mi yityatzev lifnei b'nei Anak

Who can stand before the sons of `Anak?'

² A *chuppah* is a canopy used for covenant ceremonies (incl. weddings), and other diplomatic meetings.

It will look to all the world, of course, as if we - the Holy One's people - did all the work of dispossessing the Kena'ani. The season of battles upon which we are about to embark is even going to eventually be referred to as 'the Conquest'. It will, you see, look to outsiders as if we suddenly became *great warriors*. It will look to observers as if we have somehow developed the skill sets of *superior military strategists*. It will seem to some that we have suddenly become an *invincible armed force*. That is because that is the way the Holy One is content for it to appear to the outside world – *for now*. But He wants us to know better. Hence He has Moshe tell us:

V'yadata hayom

Know therefore this day,

ki Adonai Eloheicha hu-ha-over lefanecha

that the Holy One your God is He who goes over before you;

esh ochlah hu yashmidem

as a devouring fire he will destroy them,

v'hu yachni'em lefanecha

and he will bring them down before you:

v'horashtam v'ha-avadetam maher

so will you drive them out, and make them to perish quickly,

ka'asher diber Adonai lach

as the Holy One has spoken to you."

[Deuteronomy 9:1-3]

Did you really think something this important to the Holy One's great redemptive plan for restoring Creation to its original level of Edenic potential would be left up to *us*? Did you really think *Y'hoshua* [Joshua] son of Nun, from the tribe of Efrayim, was suddenly going to morph into a *great general* and military strategist once he crossed the Jordan? Did you really think our armed men were actually going to become *better fighters* than the armed men of Kena'an once the *shofar* blew and shouts of war rang out? Did you really think the *Joshua Generation* was suddenly going to 'get it all together' somehow and make a conquest of epic proportions happen? Don't kid yourselves. It is the Holy One Who is going to do this. He just loves us so much that it is His good pleasure to *make us look good* while He is doing it. When it comes right down to it we are just going to be *the clean-up crew*.

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence

Hmmmmn. Did you ever see the old American Western movie entitled '*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*'? In that John Wayne/Jimmy Stewart/Lee Marvin/Vera Miles Western of the 60s Jimmy Stewart's character was a young lawyer who came out to the Old American West to start a law practice. Though he had neither aptitude nor appetite for gun fighting, Stewart's character quickly found himself

face to face in the street with a dastardly, profane villain - Liberty Valence. Valence had been totally terrorizing everyone in the town for as long as anyone could remember. Everyone was afraid of him – and for good reason. The law could do nothing to stop him. Everyone who got in his way he gunned down. Seeing the naiveté and weakness of Stewart’s character, Valence licked his lips. He mocked and threatened the terrified young lawyer. But while Valence was mocking and threatening, Stewart’s character raised his shaking hand, pointed a gun in Valence’s direction, closed his eyes, and fired. To everyone’s delight, Valence fell to the ground. Miraculously the terrorist was dead. His reign of terror was over. In the excitement no one asked any questions. Stewart’s character was quickly hailed as a hero. The next election he was sent off to America’s Congress, and the press made him a veritable legend of the West – all on the strength of being ‘the man who shot Liberty Valence’. That was the contrived narrative. But the truth - which was revealed only at the end of the movie - was that it was not really Stewart’s character that shot Liberty Valence at all. The shot from the pistol that had been waved in Valence’s general direction by Stewart’s character had predictably missed the outlaw completely. What had really happened was that, unseen by anyone, from a hiding place behind the shadows, John Wayne’s character had fired the fatal shot with a rifle in such a way as to coincide with Stewart’s character’s errant shot. Stewart’s character knew the truth. Wayne’s character knew what had happened as well. For purposes of a grander plan, however, both kept silent, allowing the world to go on believing exactly what it thought it had seen.

So it will be with us. We are like *Stewart’s character*; the Holy One is like *Wayne’s*; and the Kena’ani are like *Marvin’s*. The world will see what it wants to see and believe whatever it wants to believe. But we know the truth, don’t we? It’s not the IDF. It’s not the *Mossad*. It’s not all the sophisticated weaponry. It’s not the technology. It’s not economic or military assistance or satellite reconnaissance from America. *Pssst!* It’s the One hiding in the shadows, pulling the trigger!

Why Is the Holy One About To Make These Wonderful Things Happen For Us?

Before you get engrossed in the events and crises of this new phase of life in the Redeemed Community however Moshe says, I have *a revelation for you* – I want to tell you *why* this is about to happen. And Moshe does not intend to spare our collective or individual egos in the process! Moshe tells us that all these wonderful things that are about to happen are not just about *us*. They are *part of a much larger Divine Plan*. The reason the Divine Plan includes these things *at this point in what we know as time* is two-fold:

[1] the thoughts, speech, and actions of the peoples who possess the land across the *Yardin* [Jordan] are *unspeakably toxic*, and they have for centuries

polluted the land with bloodshed and idolatry and perverse lifestyles which, if left unchecked, would destroy mankind **Deuteronomy 9:5(a)**; AND

[2] a covenant the Holy One made before you were born - centuries ago - with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Ya'akov – declared it would happen. **Deuteronomy 9:5(b)**.

Before we entered the Land Moshe wanted us to know that we were not chosen by the Holy One because we followed His Torah, nor because of any inherent righteousness or superiority we possessed. He therefore let our egos have it *with both barrels*:

Zachor al-tishkach

Remember - don't forget,

et asher-hik'tzafta et-Adonai Eloheicha b'midbar

how you provoked the Holy One your God to wrath in the wilderness:

l'min-hayom asher-yatzata me'erezt Mitzrayim

from the day that you went forth out of the land of Mitzrayim,

ad-bo'achem ad-ha-makom hazeh

until you came to this place,

mamrim heyitem im-Adonai

you have been rebellious against the Holy One.

* * *

Mamrim heyitem im-Adonai

You have been rebellious against the Holy One

miyom dati eitchem

from the day that I knew you.

[Deuteronomy 9:7, 24]

We need to get – and keep - *one thing straight*: we were not chosen because we were bigger than, better than, or morally superior to any other nation. We were not chosen because we had kept or because we somehow had a superior capacity to keep the Holy One's Torah. We hadn't [and still haven't] and we didn't [and still don't]. We – like all of mankind - are a *stiff-necked people*! But that is why we are a *perfect representative* of the transforming effect of the Holy One's gift of Righteousness. That is why we are a vital part of His plan, both for *the redemption of the land of Israel* and for *the salvation of mankind*. If He can do these things with **us**, you see, He can do it with *anyone*.

Ministers of Divine Intervention – and Hasteners of Divine Judgment!

The Holy One then goes on to declare to us His People [Rabbi's son paraphrase]: *You are instruments of My plan of salvation for mankind – but you are also witnesses of the Kingdom Whose Presence in the world hastens the Holy One's release of judgment upon those who refuse to respond to your revelation of His Nature and*

Character, His Love and His Ways. The degree of Divine Light your speech and actions give off is directly proportionate to the degree of Divine Light for which people will be held accountable. Here is how Torah puts it:

*Know therefore this day that the Holy One your God
is He who goes over before you as a devouring fire;
He will destroy them, and He will bring them down before you:
so shall you **drive them out, and make them to perish quickly,**
as the Holy One has spoken to you.*

[Deuteronomy 9:3]

*It was because of the wickedness of these nations
that the Holy One is driving them out before you.*

[Deuteronomy 9:4(b)]

That explains why the Kena'ani have to go. But why are we – the stiff-necked bunch – chosen to displace them? Moshe addresses that subject next:

*It is also because the Holy One is keeping the word
that He swore to your ancestors Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov.*

[Deuteronomy 9:5(b)]

Alas, the salvation of mankind from the toxic soup of narcissism, materialism, pseudo-intellectualism, and sexual perversion, on the one hand, and judgment upon mankind, on the other hand, are intimately connected. The first follows on the heels of the second. The plowman overtakes the reaper. As you read today's aliyah and haftarah therefore look for the two aspects of every move of God - His *salvation/deliverance protocols* and His *judgment protocols*. In my experience most people want *one without the other*. Many willingly embrace the Holy One's plan of salvation/deliverance but want nothing whatsoever to do with His judgment. Others want nothing to do with the Holy One's salvation/deliverance offers, but relish the idea of being allowed to inflict judgment on those they see as wrongdoers or infidels. Both approaches miss the mark of the Holy One's Great Redemptive Plan. A people who truly *sh'ma* the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Ya'akov absolutely receive and accept both the Holy One's salvation and His judgment – and their assigned role in each. And they must do so in humility, with unspeakable gratitude and with newfound compassion.

The Message of the Haftarah

In today's reading from haftarah *Ekev* we are given a stunning prophetic picture of the Holy One's "last days" plan for the nation of Israel. In the Day of the Holy One Israel will not come begging America, or any other nation, for anything – not protection; not investment capital; not weapon systems; and not economic aid. It will be the exact opposite. In that day all nations – including the United States of America - will come to Israel seeking these things – and crying out for *forgiveness, favor, and deliverance*.

*The Holy One GOD says: Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations,
and set up my ensign to the peoples; and they will bring your sons in their bosom,
and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.*

*Kings will be your nursing fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers:
they will bow down to you with their faces to the eretz, and lick the dust of your feet;
and you will know that I am the Holy One;
and those who wait for Me will not be disappointed.*

Who will be there seeking B'nei Yisrael's favor? America will be there – America, who has played Midyan with the descendants of Ya'akov, seducing them away from Torah by the “way of Bila'am”. America, in all its schizophrenic personalities will be there. Germany will also be there – the Aryans who falsely labeled the People of the Holy One as “Christ-Killers” and exterminated them by the millions. Russia and China will be there – the Communists who brainwashed and persecuted Jews for decades, killing almost as many as Hitler. England, France, Spain, and the other European nations will be there – they who cruelly subjected Jews to the Inquisition, and who forcibly expelled and robbed of all their possessions those who would not renounce the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, His Torah, or His Shabbat. And yes, the Arab and Persian kingdoms will be there as well. The Egyptians, the Syrians, the Turks, the Saudi's, the Ayatollahs of Iran, and the so-called “Palestinians”, not to mention Al-Qaida, Hamas, Fatah, the Islamic Brotherhood, ISIS, and the Hezbollah, will all come as well – with their hats in their hands and with dust on their faces ... and B'nei Yisrael will welcome them, one and all, like one welcomes a long-lost brother.

for I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children.

Here is the awful prophetic truth we *must grasp*. The majority from among the nations – the vast ‘harvest’ - will not come to the Holy One because of evangelism. They will not come to Him through ecumenical movements. They will not suddenly “wise up” and develop a hunger to do things ‘God's way’. But they will come. They will come because the God of Heaven *humbles them*. They will come because the God of Heaven inflicts upon them judgment after judgment, sign after sign, too horrible for us to even fathom [from our severely handicapped fruit of the tree of the knowledge of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ perspective, that is]. They will come because they will repent with awestruck, heartfelt *t'shuvah*.

*I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh;
and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine:
and all flesh shall know that I, the Holy One, am your Savior [Hebrew Mashiach],
and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Ya'akov.”*

[Isaiah 49:26]

The nations will indeed come. They will come because there will finally be nowhere else to go. They will come because the Holy One will sweep away, as He did in Egypt, everything else in which people place their trust. And finally the

world will know who has really shot all the Liberty Valences of the world.

A Word of Hope from the Apostolic Writings

In today's assigned reading from the apostolic writings of Y'shua's talmidim Shaul of Tarsus discusses the Messiah's great and enduring "love" [Hebrew *chesed*, meaning *acts flowing from commitment, benefits flowing from covenant relationship*]. Shaul asks the following question:

*Who shall separate³ us from the love⁴ of Messiah?
Could oppression⁵, or anguish⁶, or persecution⁷,
or famine⁸, or nakedness⁹,
or peril¹⁰, or sword¹¹?*

³ The word our English Bibles translate as "separate" is *choresei*, pronounced *khor-ris'-ay-ee*, from Strong's Greek word # 5563 *chorizo*, pronounced *kho-rid'-zo*. This word is an ancient Greek word for *divorce*. It is the Greek word used to translate what Messiah said in Matthew 19:6, regarding a husband and his wife: "*Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder* [chorizo]."

⁴ The Greek word used for love in this passage is *agape*. However, it is likely that Shaul, a Hebrew of Hebrews, was thinking not of the Greek concept of love, but the Hebrew concept of *chesed*.

⁵ The Greek word translated here as "oppression" is *thlipsis*, Strong's Greek word #2347, pronounced *thlip'-sis*. Strong's lexicon says it means *a pressing, pressing together, pressure*. It is the Greek word to describe the contractions of a woman in labor. See, for instance, John 16:21: *A woman when she is in travail has sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the contractions* [thlipsis], *for joy that a man is born into the world*. That Shaul meant this to be a figurative expression for oppressive situations is made clear by II Corinthians 1:8, where he says: *For we would not, brothers, have you ignorant of our trouble* [thlipsis] *which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. In Hebrew this would probably be yanah, yod, vav, nun, hey*, Strong's Hebrew word #3238, pronounced *yaw-naw'*.

⁶ The Greek word so translated here is *stenochoria*, Strong's Greek word #4730, pronounced *sten-okh-oree'-ah*. This literally means a narrow place, a 'tight squeeze', or a 'dire strait'. Figuratively, it means any *dire calamity or extreme affliction*.

⁷ The word so translated in this verse is *diogmos*, Strong's Greek word #1375, pronounced *dee-ogue-mos'*. Luke used this word to describe the persecution that arose at the time of the death of *Stephanos* [Stephen]: "*And at that time there was a great persecution* [diogmos] *against the called-out ones at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the shalachim* [apostles]." **Acts 8:1.**

⁸ The word so translated in this instance is *limos*, Strong's Greek word #3042, pronounced *lee-mos'*. The word means *scarcity of harvest*, and the resultant shortage of food. This is the word used in the parable of the prodigal son, to describe the condition of the faraway land to which the prodigal had traveled after receiving his share of the inheritance: "*And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine* [limos] *in that land; and he began to be in want.*" **Luke 15:14.**

⁹ The word translated as "nakedness" in this passage is *gumnotes*, Strong's Greek word #1132, pronounced *goom-not'-ace*. The word can mean either *complete absence* of clothing, or *insufficient* clothing. The word is used in the latter sense in Revelation 3:18: "*I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and [that] the shame of your nakedness* [gumnotes] *does not appear ...*"

¹⁰ The word so translated in this instance is *kindunos*, Strong's Greek word #2794, pronounced *kin'-doo-nos*. Shaul uses this word 8 times in II Corinthians 11:26, "[in] *perils of waters*, [in] *perils of robbers*, [in] *perils by* [my own] *countrymen*, [in] *perils by the heathen*, [in] *perils in the city*, [in] *perils in the wilderness*, [in] *perils in the sea*, [in] *perils among false brethren ...*"

Each of the seven things Shaul mentions has, over the centuries since Shaul spoke, had its opportunity. The Holy One’s people have oft been *oppressed*. *Anguish* has often been our lot. *Persecution* has come to be an expected part of life – in fact, if and when we are not persecuted, we have learned to ask what we are doing wrong. *Famine* seems to follow us around, and lead to our expulsion from whatever nation in which we sojourn. *Nakedness*, in the Hebraic sense of having no covering of the Manifest Presence of the Holy One, has been constant. *Peril* (from assimilation) and *sword* (whether we assimilate or refuse) have hung over us like the two opposite ends of an executioner’s axe. And yet, despite these things, both our love for the Holy One and His love for us continue to grow ever stronger. His hunger to reveal Himself to us and gather us unto Himself and our hunger to know and be united with Him continue to grow simultaneously as well.

Rest secure in this great love. Be transformed by it. Let the Holy One transform Creation through releasing that love in you. The real miracle, you see, is not that you and I can still feel secure in the Holy One’s love in the midst of trials and persecution and famine and nakedness and war. The real miracle is that you and I can through being secure in His love *remain tender and loving toward other people* – even toward our betrayers, captors, persecutors, accusers, torturers, and murderers – and even in the darkest hours of our suffering. The latter miracle, you see, is what being *conformed to the image of Messiah* really means.

Questions For Today’s Study

1. In Deuteronomy 9:4-5 Moshe gives two reasons why God was about to judge and drive out the *Kena’anim* [Canaanites] and give *Eretz Yisrael* [the Land of Promise] instead to the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov.

[A] What were the two reasons?

[B] What did Moshe want the people to know was *not* the reason?

2. In the rest of Chapter 9, Moshe refers to the sin of the Israelites “in Horeb”, “at Tabberah”, “at Massah”, “at Kibroth-hattaavah”, and at Kadesh-barnea. What happened at each of those places? [Hint: Look in Smith’s Bible Dictionary]

3. Rewrite Moshe’s prayer for the Redeemed Community [verses 25-29] in your own words, as if it were a prayer you are praying today in the ‘secret place of the

¹¹ The word our English Bibles translate as “sword” in this verse is *machaira*, Strong’s Greek word # 3162, pronounced *makh'-ahee-rah*. It is what Y’shua said He came to send forth on earth, instead of peace. Matthew 10:34. It is also what the multitudes brought with them to the Garden of Gethsemane, at the time of His arrest: “*And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords [Greek machaira] and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.*” **Matthew 26:47**. It was with such an instrument that Kefa cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. See **Matthew 26:51**. In Acts 12:2 this is what was used by Herod to kill Ya’akov [James].

Most High’.

4. With regard to today’s haftarah reading from the prophet Yeshayahu [Isaiah]:

[A] Write an essay on the Last Days’ plan of God for Israel as that plan is laid out in Isaiah 49:22-26. In that essay, be sure to answer the “what”, “where”, “why”, “when” and “who” questions to the extent you can.

[B] According to Is. 49:23 who does the Holy One say will not be ashamed (KJV)/put to shame (Amplified)? Is it those who follow Torah? Does that mean we are not expected to follow Torah? Why or why not?

[C] The Holy One promises to bring the knowledge of who He is to Israel first, and then to the nations.

[i] How will Israel know who He is?

[ii] How will He be known to Israel?

[iii] How will the nations [the *goyim*] know who He is?

[iv] How will He be known to the *goyim*?

5. With regard to today’s assigned reading from Shaul of Tarsus’ letter to the disciples of Y’shua living in exile in Rome:

[A] List the 7 things which Paul talks about in Romans 8:35;

[B] Define each of the 7 things Shaul talks about in Romans 8:35 ‘Hebraically’ by looking at Strong’s and Gesenius and any other Hebrew reference books you have available.

*May you see the Mighty Hand of God at work in your lifetime;
and may you be privileged to participate with Him, first in His redemption,
and ultimately in hastening His judgment.*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Psalm 85:8-9

*I will **sh’ma** what the Holy One Elohim will speak,
For He will speak **shalom** to His people,
His **k’doshim** [holy ones];
But let them not turn again to folly.*

*Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.*