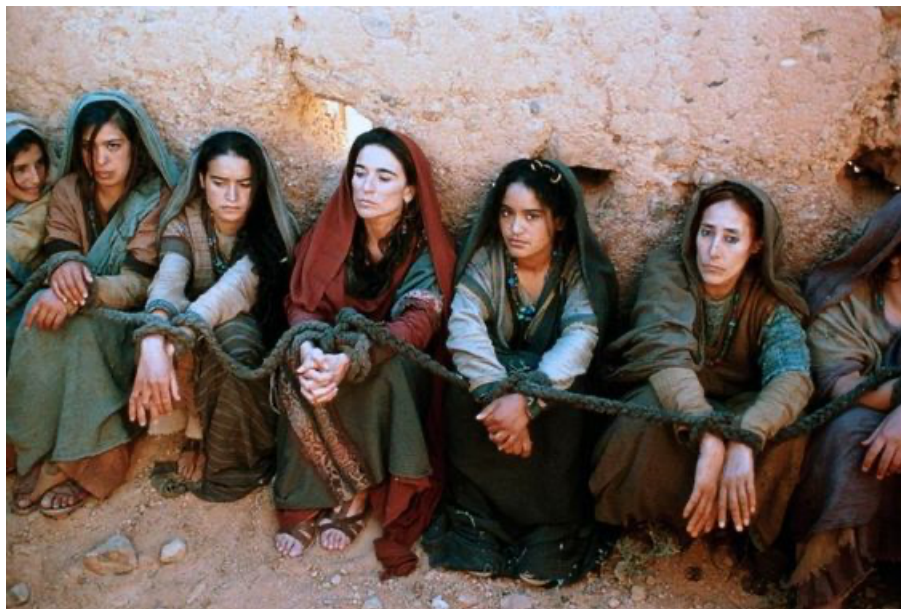


Introduction to Parsha #49: Ki Tetze¹

READINGS: ***Torah Ki Teitze:*** **Deuteronomy 21:10 - 25:19**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 54:1-10**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Corinthians 5:1-5**



You Must Not Hide Yourself.

[Deuteronomy 22:1]

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 3rd Petition, *S'lach* [The Prayer for Forgiveness]

Ki-teitze l'milchamah al-oyveicha - *When you go out/stretch/extend yourself to make war with your enemy ...* ***unetano Adonai Eloheicha b'yadeicha v'shavita shivyo*** - *and the Holy One entrusts then into your hands and you take captives* **Deuteronomy 21:10.**

Welcome to the week of *Ki Tetze*, literally meaning 'When you go out, or when you stretch/extend yourself' Next week we will study an offsetting parsha, entitled *Ki Tavo* – a name that means 'When you come in' May you be blessed, according to the Will of the God of Avraham, *in both your going out and in your coming in!*

Context! Context! Context!

The *Ki Tetze* and *Ki Tavo* downloads are the crown jewel of Moshe's great 'Come Up Here and See What I See' Discourse. The message so far is:

In light of our Covenant with the Holy One, we are not to be like other people – either in focus, worldview, attitude, appearance, speech, or behavior.

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***Our thought life is to be elevated. Our homelife is to be exemplary.
Our demeanor is to be humble, peaceful, and gentle –
yet carry the weight of our King’s glory.***

***Our speech is to be inspiring.
Our joy and shalom are to be contagious.
As a result, our culture is not to look anything even remotely resembling
any other culture.***

***Our nation is not to be administered anything like, or after the pattern,
of any other nation.***

We have been raised up at such a time to prepare the way for the Glorious King.

***What we are here to do is build, maintain, and administrate
a beautiful, fruitful, joyful, peaceful Kingdom-of-Heaven Scented Society.
Everywhere we go, we are to leave the sweet fragrance of the Bridegroom-King
along with the unmistakable footprint of Mashiach.***

***We are to do this ‘going out’ – in our dealings with strangers;
and we are to do it ‘coming in’ – i.e. in our dealings with the Holy One,
with each other, and with our houses and allotted areas of land.***

***This is our honor and our joy – but it is also our solemn responsibility.
This is why were born. This is why we were sought out, called and chosen.
We do not by any means have to do it alone; but we do not have the right
to demand that He do it alone either.***

We are His Covenant Partners; we are His co-laborers.

This is your mission on earth, Dear Reader. This is the reason you have been given the precious gifts of life, breath, thought, speech, and influence at such a time as this. Do not let fleshly things entice you. Do not let temporal matters distract you. Do not let fear stop you. Do not let either flattery seduce you or rejection turn you cold and hard. Use all the things - physical, material, and spiritual – that He makes available to fund and further this mission wisely, honorably, unselfishly, enthusiastically, and responsibly. In all things, at all times, no matter what the circumstance, whether we are going out or coming in, the overriding instruction you should hear will be: *you must not hide yourself!* Invisible people make horrible role models. Wallflowers never produce fruit. Sleeper cells are for terrorists – not for light bearers. Stealth is not a Kingdom tactic.

The Holy One has set a table for you *in the presence of your enemies*. **Psalm 23:5**. So *come out! Come out!* Come out from your *safe rooms!* Come out from your *bunkers*

and basements. Come out from your man caves and she sheds. Come out from your pleasant fleshly distractions! Come out of your comfort zones. Come out from your culture's bondage houses. Come out from the dark caverns of Media Mind Control. Break free of the ideological pornography being spread by talk shows and 'news' programs of either the 'left' or the 'right'. Come out from the Marxist fantasies promoted by virtue-signaling celebrities, by propaganda-spewing talking heads from the killing fields of public education, pseudo-science, weaponized medicine, Trojan-horse technology, and by the seductive reprogramming of entertainment-streaming purveyors of perversion. Come out from your ivory towers – and from the serpent-infested screens of modern technological devices that constantly vomit misinformation, disinformation, hate, and division. Come out from the stale musty dungeons of institutional religion. Come out from behind the deception-soaked veils and masks of contemporary theology. Come out from the echo-chambers of sectarian self-righteousness. Come out from the counsel of the ungodly. Come out from the way of sinners. Come out from the seat of the scornful. Come out! Come out! Come out and be REAL! Come out of your hiding places and live life in REAL TIME! Have nothing more to do inciters of ethnic cleansing, moral shaming, arrogance and outrage. Come out and model the Avrahamic Covenant Lifestyle and show the world what Kingdom-of-Heaven shalom, simchah, tikvah, and love look like in the context of a fully human being living a fully human, and supremely challenging, life - a life that is different from our neighbors not because it is easier, but because we live it without panic; without indulging fits of outrage; without lusting for vengeance; without judging others; and without losing either our childlike wonder, our innocence, or our gentle meekness. A life without pity parties. A life without whining. A life of zero rants. A life in which offenses and aggravations are overcome and transcended through praise, prayer, thanksgiving, patience, and forgiveness. A life with occasional strategic retreats - but never even the slightest hint of surrender except to the Holy One, His Will, and His Ways.

Moshe is smiling at the thought of us living this kind of life. He knows that through the revelation stream He is releasing untold millions, over untold generations, will be called forth, commissioned, empowered, and unleashed to present to the world an alternative to the devastating effects of the ingestion of things not meant for human consumption.

All Creation is groaning in eager expectation. Sons and Daughters of the Creator of the Universe, *Come out! Come out, come out, wherever you are! You must not hide yourself!*

This is your cue. The nations are your audience. The world is your stage. *Ki Tetze* is our strategic debriefing for the next phase in the Grand Plan.

A Ki Tetze Travelogue – The King’s Agenda for the 49th Week of the Torah Cycle

A critical strategic briefing is in process. We are being instructed in the all-important matter of how to effectively establish and maintain a viable beachhead/Command Center for the Holy One’s campaign to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to planet earth. The Friend of Bridegroom is about to set forth a list of substantive illustrations of what a *Kingdom-of-Heaven-Scented Society* – a culture where *the people of the King co-labor effectively with the Holy One in redeeming humanity with love, restoring Creation to its intended state of beauty and fruitfulness through faithful stewardship, and overcoming evil with good* – looks like in real time. Imagine that: a **KINGDOM-OF-HEAVEN-SCENTED-SOCIETY** - in our day, in our time. We have been called and empowered to not only build such a MODEL SOCIAL ORDER on this planet, in microcosm at least, but also to *live and grow and thrive – and raise children and grandchildren - in the good soil of such a society*. We are thereby empowered to *model our Glorious King’s wisdom, mercy, and goodness for everyone* – especially the widow, the orphan, the poor, the brokenhearted, the infirm and the imprisoned among us, and the captive, the oppressed, and the outcast that we encounter from the nations. This mission is not about creed, belief, or morality; it is about *mercy, wisdom, healing, salt and light*. It is not about ivory tower ascetics hiding out in monasteries or communes; it is about *faithful witnesses, fruitful stewards, and dutiful servants* making real communities better places to live. The Avrahamic Experience is the seed from which a society grows; Torah is the soil in which it flourishes. The Holy One is the Sower; our lives and various spheres of influence are the field from which the harvest comes.

The Foundation Stones of Our Bridegroom-King’s Throne

Our Divine Bridegroom intends for every person that He has redeemed to step up to the plate and model *tzedeq u’ mishpat* for the nations. He intends for these two foundation stones to be accompanied by *goodness* – especially in the form of *covenant faithfulness, kindness, and mercy* [i.e. *chesed*]. He intends for these things to be mortised together with *steadfastness and faithfulness* [i.e. *emet*]. After all, as the Psalmist said: ***Tzedeq and mishpat are the foundation of His throne; and chesed and emet are ever before His face.*** Psalm 89:14. If we are to build a model of our Divine Bridegroom’s kingdom on earth, our lives absolutely must reflect the perfect balance of the four powerful Divine forces that represent the foundational platform for His Reign. Parshot *Ki Tetze* and *Ki Tavo* form the central sections of

the training manual the Holy One had Moshe write to teach us how to achieve and maintain this delicate balance of these factors.

The most fundamental thing Moshe is going to teach us this week and next is that we must not ‘hide ourselves’ from either the social or the spiritual responsibilities to which our Divine Bridegroom has called us. Moshe will say this over and over and over. We have been called to build the foundations of a KINGDOM-OF-HEAVEN-SCENTED SOCIETY *in our hearts, souls and minds*. We have been called to build such a society OUTWARD FROM our hearts, souls and minds to the HEARTHES and DINNER TABLES and DOORPOSTS of our homes. We have been called to then extend such a society EVEN FURTHER OUTWARD FROM our hearths, tables and doorposts to the PATHWAYS and GATES and MARKETPLACE of the cities and villages in which we live. We have been called to then extend a KINGDOM-OF-HEAVEN SCENTED-SOCIETY outward YET ANOTHER STEP, from the cities and villages and shtetls in which we live to the HIGHEST SEATS OF LEARNING, to the HIGHEST THRONES OF GOVERNMENT, to the FURTHEST BORDERS of our nation ... and to the FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH.

Please note, however, that the process absolutely must proceed *from the inside out*, and that *it absolutely must follow the sequence described*. If we skip any step, our mission – for our lifetimes at least – is doomed to failure. If we try to leapfrog any step, we will become self-righteous hypocrites, engaging in high-profile public ministry for hire while allowing our spouses and children to drift aimlessly on the stormy sea of our rhetoric instead of basking in the warmth of our love. If we bypass any step - and get ahead of what the Bridegroom-King is doing - we will quickly become known for how strongly we hate rather than how passionately we love, and people will eventually come to know us more for what we are against rather than for what we are for; we will thus make the Kingdom of our Bridegroom seem as a stench in the nostrils of society rather than the sweet fragrance of hope that Kingdom is designed to be. We have not been called to *foment revolution*, you see; we have been called to *spread revelation*. And we have not been called to bring social reformation; we have been called to *usher in spiritual restoration*.

How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Ways!

How are we expected to *model the Holy One’s unique brand of righteousness and Divinely inspired and decreed justice in all our spheres of influence*? Torah’s answer may surprise you. We are not told change society through political theory, through ideological crusade, through populist movement, through political campaign, through class warfare, through expressions of outrage, through incendiary slogan,

through social media rant, through soapbox speech, through marches in the streets, through incitement, infliction, or condonation of violence, or through plotting revolution. We are not to try to fix the world with a sword, with an injection, with a ballot, or with a legislative agenda. We are not to accomplish the grand objective of overcoming evil through forming and operating tax-exempt religious entities, or through building or funding educational institutions, ministry organizations, or charitable foundations. Neither taxation nor philanthropy is supposed to be our methodology of reform, because throwing money at problems never makes them go away; money dumps deal only with the symptoms, leaving the underlying disease fully operational, empowered, enabled, and stronger than ever. How then, according to Torah, are we supposed to co-labor with the Holy One to bring the light of Divine righteousness and Divinely inspired and decreed justice to the societies in which we live? What are our Divine Bridegroom's ways of dealing with the things that, if left unchecked, will cause individuals, regions, nations, and cultures to self-destruct? We are to infiltrate the society quietly - with pure salt and healing light. We are to introduce our King and His Kingdom Ways very, very gradually and patiently. We are to inspire and assist one person at a time, one household at a time, with words and actions flowing in unselfish kindness on the one hand and bursting with cross-generationally focused wisdom on the other. The Holy One lists a series of very practical ways He has empowered to accomplish this. These ways are all wisely designed so as to not *draw inappropriate attention to ourselves*. All honor must go to the Bridegroom-King, and to Him alone. All the instructions of the Holy One about how to sprinkle salt and light into our world in real time are brilliant designed in such a way that they never make the Holy One seem like an angry ogre that is out to spoil everybody's fun. They instead reveal Him as He is - a kind, merciful, wise, and benevolent Creator that is out to maximize every human being's potential and to lead each person, household, and culture into an abundant life, filled with health, wholeness, wellness, delight, and peace.

Here are just four of the specific society-changing actions Torah tells us will infect human society with the rapidly spreading germ of righteousness and justice:

1. Special Instructions Regarding Seeking/Caring for that which is out of its assigned place

*You are not to watch your brother's ox or his sheep going astray,
and hide yourself from them;
you are to certainly bring them back to your brother.*

2. Special Instructions Regarding Thinking of and Providing a Safe Place for Others

*When you build a new house you are to make a parapet for your roof,
that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it.*

3. Special Instructions for Sharing Material Goods With the Less Fortunate

*When you lend your brother anything,
you are not to go into his house to get his pledge.
You are to stand outside, and the man to whom you lend is to bring the pledge out to you.
And if the man is poor, you are not to keep his pledge overnight.
You are in any case to return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may
sleep in his own garment.*

4. Special Instructions Regarding Honesty and Transparency in Business Dealings

*You are not to have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light.
You are not to have in your house differing measures, a large and a small.
You are to have a perfect and just weight,
a perfect and just measure*

Notice how much *personal involvement* and *individual responsibility* is called for in these examples. We truly are called not to *hide ourselves*. Isolationism – what I call the *Fortress Approach* to life - is simply not an option in a Kingdom-of-Heaven-Scented Society. We are called to be salt and light. We simply cannot fulfill our mission if we bury our heads in the sand – or in a book, or in any philosophical, ideological, or theological box. And we cannot leave behind the fragrance of the Messiah if we refuse to see – and then personally engage in the great enterprise of bringing real and lasting relief to - our neighbors' plight.

If we are going to be who we are called to be and do what we are called to do we simply may not hide ourselves in any way. And while we are not to hide ourselves, neither are we to *promote* ourselves, our organizations, or our ministries. We are just to do what our Divine Bridegroom would do in the simple things of ordinary life – and to do those simple things in gentle ways that will both cause the Name of the Holy One to be lifted up and the spirit of man to be inspired. This call to simple actions of strategic, Kingdom-focused kindness with wisdom is to extend to every facet of human involvement – even WAR.

In Righteousness He ... Judges? And ... Makes War?

Our Bridegroom loves peace, but He is by no means a pacifist. A *salt, light and faithful witness society* cannot a pacifist society. While such a society does not ever go looking for wars, it also does not shrink from them when they are inevitable. When an enemy amasses arms and armies and threatens or signals an attack on the helpless, infirm, and innocent in our midst - especially in the Land of Promise - and when the Holy One does not respond to the passionate prayers of repentance submitted by His People and defuse the threat, a Kingdom-of-Heaven-Scented society will ask the Bridegroom-King if His Will is to lead them in battle. And when is a time for war, He will do just that. At that point, the People of salt, light and

faithful witness will be called upon to wage war. But even this must be according to protocols of wisdom. War must be waged the Bridegroom-King's WAY – not the way of men, and in His Timing and subject to His Rules of Engagement, not what seems right or expedient to our fallen human way of thinking.

Like our Bridegroom-King, the *Salt, Light and Faithful Witness Society* we produce will always seek a just, righteous, and sustainable peace. But in such a society we can – absolutely must - never allow any esoteric, intellectual, theoretical, ideological concept of 'peace' to become an *idol* ... or a political rallying cry. True peace, you see, is neither the *stoppage of war* nor the *absence of conflict*; true peace is *embracing and walking in the Just and Righteous Decrees of the Creator*. Any covenant of peace - and for that matter any cease-fire – that we negotiate or accept must both 1. agree with the Holy One's Priorities and Plan and 2. be workable by real people in real time. Any agreement for peace must be Kingdom-of-Heaven-Priorities Oriented, Heavenly-Courts-Patterned, and *Tikkun*-Agenda advancing. Any other form of 'peace' we might be tempted to craft or support is an illusion. Such a 'false peace' is guaranteed to be nothing more than a feeding trough of evil.

True peace does not ever come through accords of compromise negotiated by secular governments. True peace only comes through the triumph of the Holy One, His Decrees, His Priorities, and His Ways. True peace comes only through overcoming evil with good. We are each called to '*overcome evil* - but we are to do it only as, when, and how, the Holy One directs. We are to do it according to the rules of engagement the Holy One has established for us. We are to do it only in ways and according to protocols that are kind, wise, and good – as our Bridegroom-King and Redeemer is kind, wise, and good. We are to do it only with an attitude and approach that promotes the redemptive purpose of the Holy One – never our own, or our ethnicity's, or any organization, cause, or nation's, agenda.

The Bridegroom-King's Will is the only realm in which true peace is found. Anything else that calls itself 'peace' is a fleeting mirage - a cruel deception that will ultimately lead to more and more conflict. Torah therefore contemplates that an essential part of the calling of the people of the Holy One is a willingness to *go to war* when the Bridegroom-King declares that war is necessary to thwart the genocidal plans of men and nations obsessed with the desire to destroy the people through which the world's chance for deliverance and redemption is destined to come. Some intractable tyrannies and aggressions, you see, demand that the righteous *stand up against them* – *after humble submission to the Throne of the Bridegroom-King in prayer, that is*. If one considers nothing *worth fighting for*, the truth is that person considers nothing *worth living for*. Some things are actually

worth dying for. What kind of world we will leave the generations after us is sometimes determined by what we will refuse to surrender to. And while the way of our Bridegroom is not to shed the life of even an animal *unnecessarily*, the way of our Bridegroom is to recognize that some things are so irretrievably given over to evil and so inherently dangerous that they are even *worth killing for*. That is why we read in Torah of what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. That is why Torah makes it clear that we are to always consider ourselves at war against Amalek. That is why Scripture says there will be great battles at Yerushalayim [**Jerusalem**]² and at *Har-Megiddo* [**Armageddon**]³. But what we are not to do is wage war for *glory*, or *honor*, or *greed*, or *offense*, or *malice*. We are not to wage *private, personal wars*. We are not to wage *ideological wars*. We are not to wage *cultural wars*, or *religious wars*. We are not to wage *philosophical wars*, or *political wars*. We are not to wage war out of *fear*, or *greed*, or *offense*, or even *revulsion*. *Neither are we to wage war based on prejudice, hate, or a desire for vengeance.*

Like our Divine Bridegroom, only in *righteousness* and in *justice*, counterbalanced perfectly with *mercy* and with *truth*, are we ever either to judge or to make war. For us going to war is never to be a knee-jerk reaction to the provocation of or the insults of others; it is only to be a *sh'ma*-response to an unmistakable shofar call of our Bridegroom-King. Only if, as, when, how, and as long as the Holy One directs us to wage war are we to engage in offensive campaigns.

One caveat: do not try to apply the Torah's instructions regarding war to modern secular government. Secular governments are not – and should not be expected to act like - the Kingdom of Heaven. Secular governments are not, and should not be expected to act like, *B'nei Yisrael*. Secular governments are run by secular people, for secular reasons, according to secular priorities. They are not *the chosen vessel/servant of the Holy One*. They are not *the Kingdom of Kohanim*. They are not *the Bridegroom-King's holy nation*. They are, in fact, the antithesis. They operate in the spirit of anti-Messiah.

But wait. If Torah's instructions about war are not for the modern governments, political hatchet-men, in-the-pocket-media-propaganda outlets, arrogant pseudo-intellectuals, fear-mongers, new-world-order ideologues, conspiracy theorists, and roving bands of brown-shirt loyalists that prop up secular states – *i.e.* the ones we always see making war on the evening news and on social media – well ... pray tell who *are* those instructions for? They are for *you* and for *me*! They are not for us to use as a standard against which to judge or condemn anyone else. They are instead

² See Zechariah chapters 12-14.

³ See Revelation 16:14-16.

for us to use *to advise, counsel, and direct the way we ourselves, individually and collectively with other members of the Torah community, interact and deal with those we consider to be our enemies.*

Dealing With the Dangerous Passions Given Opportunity By Warfare

We are never to let war *harden us*; nor are we to let it *weary us*. We are not to let it turn us into monsters, or murderers; nor are we to let its burden turn us into pacifists. We are to guard our hearts diligently so as not to let any warfare in which we either participate directly or regarding which we are exposed to propaganda predispose us to fear, to anger, to cynicism, or to appeasement – much less to either aggressive or oppressive behavior. Our parsha thus begins by telling us in no uncertain terms that our future will inevitably include appointed times for war. It will then lay out for us some basic principles we are to follow when we find ourselves in the passionate throes of wartime in order to maintain our *goodness* and *moral purity*. The opening words of the parsha are: *When you go out to war against your enemies, the Holy One your God delivers them into your hand, and you will take some captive ...*. The parsha will end on the subject of warfare as well, by reminding us that one people group in the world – the nation Torah calls *Amalek* – is to be regarded by us as a dangerous enemy forever.

*Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt,
how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks,
all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.*

With a people who *attack the defenseless, who do not fear the Holy One, and who are bent on annihilation of the race through which redemption is Divinely ordained to come*, we are never to consider ourselves at peace. We are specifically told: *blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You must not forget.*

Woven into and repeated often between these two bookend passages involving our responsibilities regarding our appointed times of war, the two predominant messages of *Ki Tetze* to the people of the Holy One are ‘*you must not hide yourself*’ and ‘*rid/purge yourself of the evil in your midst*’. The former message will be repeated three times in the parsha; the latter message will be repeated five times. Both are important elements of our assigned Kingdom quest to *overcome evil with good*.

It is the Sixth Month – The Appointed Time to Prepare the Way of the Bridegroom-King

The overriding messages ‘*do not hide yourself*’ and ‘*rid yourself of the evil in your midst*’ provide us with a particularly appropriate focus for the month of the Biblical

calendar [the month often called *Elul*]⁴ - in which we currently find ourselves. *Elul* - spelled, *alef, lamed, vav, lamed* - is regarded by some as a Hebrew acronym for “*ani l’dodi v’dodi li*” [meaning, “*I am my beloveds, and He is mine*” – from Song of Solomon 6:3]. This month is the time, after summer’s *busy-ness* every year, when the Divine Bridegroom *woos* us back to intimate fellowship with Him. During this month the Holy One causes each of us to look carefully at our lives, our relationship with Him, our relationships with our families, with our fellow men, with our enemies, and with the Creation, to see where we have strayed from His Divine Plan for our lives, and from intimacy with Him, and to make *teshuvah* [i.e. a. return to the Holy One as ‘Avinu’ (our Father), b. renewal of commitment to the Torah Way, and c. restoration of passion for the Kingdom mission] so as to renew our life, and re-engage with the Holy One’s Grand Redemptive Plan, before the earth begins another cycle.

The sages teach that the 1st of Tishrei – known popularly as ‘*Rosh HaShanah*’ - is the anniversary of the Holy One’s creation of mankind on the sixth day of creation. Much as businesses tally their books at the end of each year, so the people and community of the Holy One are called to account at the end of each year. For the day the modern Jewish community calls *Rosh HaShanah* is not just a “new year” celebration – it is, prophetically and Biblically, the *coronation day of Messiah*. The King has been in the field – like His predecessor David. But He is coming to the Throne. His kingdom is *at hand*. And if His kingdom is at hand, we must prepare our hearts to receive him as king. And to do that we absolutely must not *hide ourselves*. We must be transparent. The walls we have erected must come down. The defense mechanisms we have employed must be dismantled. We must invite Him to search and sanctify every area of our life. We must yield every thought, every attitude, every opinion, every hurt, every unforgiven offense, every wound and every scar, to His touch. And when these things are exposed, we must be faithful to *purge the evil from our midst*.

Following Messiah’s Example and Direction

Purging the evil from our midst is a *very, very tall order*. There is evil all around us, pressing hard against us from all sides. There is also evil *within us*, hiding,

⁴ Much as the nation of America recognizes both a *calendar year* [January 1 through December 31] and an overlapping *fiscal year* [October 1 through September 30], so there are two calendars recognized by the Hebrew people. First is the Creation Calendar, or ‘Civil’ Calendar. This year begins on the anniversary of the *creation of man*, which is by tradition established at 1 Tishri. The other, overlapping annual cycle recognized by the Hebrew people is the Governmental/Fiscal year, which according to Exodus 12:1 starts with the new moon of Nisan, and commences the momentous twelve-month period in which Israel was set free from Egypt, crossed the Sea of Reeds dryshod, was introduced to manna and water from a Rock, experienced the Grand Theophany known as *Matan Torah*, received the two tablets of the Testimony from the hand of Moshe, and worked together a nation to build the Tabernacle.

lurking, and growing like cancer. Just as we are called to build a just society from the inside out, we are also called to purge the evil from our midst from the inside out. The process does not start with the world around us; it has to start instead with our own hearts, souls, and minds. Everything that hinders love and devotion to the Divine Bridegroom in those most private areas of our lives must be purged. Then, once we have purged the evil from our hearts, souls and minds, we must proceed to purge the evil from the hearths, from the dinner tables, and the doorposts of our homes. Then, once we have purged the evil from the hearths, dinner tables, and doorposts of our homes, we must proceed to purge the evil from the streets and marketplaces and gates of our communities. And then - and only then - once we have purged the evil from all these areas, can we proceed to purge the evil from the seats of learning and the halls of government and the borders of our land.

How exactly are we supposed to accomplish such a demanding task as ‘purging the evil from our midst’, you ask? There is only one way - we must look at and follow the example that has been established for us by the earthly ministry of Yeshua of Natzret. We must ‘draft’ off of Messiah much like a race car driver ‘drafts’ off of the racecar in front of him. How did Yeshua meet the challenge? Our Rabbi described His *modus operandi* quite simply, saying:

***... the Son cannot do anything on his own,
but only what he sees the Father doing;
whatever the Father does, the Son does too.
For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does
I cannot do a thing on my own. As I hear [i.e. sh'ma], I judge;
and my judgment is right because I do not seek my own desire,
but the desire of the one who sent me.”***
[John 5:19-20, 30]

Wherever Yeshua went, in whatever circumstances He encountered, He just *did what He saw the Father doing*. And here is a little secret most of the world does not understand - what Yeshua saw ‘*the Father is doing*’ was – is – and will always be ... *Torah*. If you want to know what the Father is doing – if you want to know what the Father is saying – if you want to know what the Father’s will is for your life – I will tell you how. Here it is: *study the Torah given us through Moshe*.

The Torah *is* what the Father is doing. That is because Torah is the constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven. Each *mitzvah*, each *mish'pat*, each *chuk*, each *edah* of Torah is Divinely designed and empowered to serve as *a spiritual portal into the realm of Heaven*. Each such portal provided by Torah is a separate ‘mile marker’⁵

⁵ The reference is to the common governmental practice to post on highways in the United States a ‘marker’ [*i.e.* a sign] at strategic intervals along the way advising the motorists where they are in relation to the

on the ‘straight and narrow’ road about which Messiah taught⁶. Therefore every time you invest the time and spiritual energy to place your will, your heart, your mind, and your body in the instructions for living spelled out in Torah – not with the mindset of earning brownie points in a mythical works-based righteousness scheme, but merely in passionate pursuit of the One your soul loves - you enter the portal ... and *Messiah meets you there*. How can I say this? I rely upon Yeshua’s own words. Yeshua said:

*Don't think that it is I who will be your accuser before the Father.
Do you know who will accuse you? Moshe, the very one you have counted on!
If you really believed Moshe, you would believe me;
because it was about me that he wrote.
But if you don't believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"*
[John 5:46, Complete Jewish Bible]

Sh'ma the voice of Moshe. *Sh'mar* everything he wrote. Appreciate that everything he wrote was *about Messiah*. Understand that intimate familiarity with and building your life upon and around what Moshe wrote is an absolute prerequisite to the abundant, fruitful, life ‘in Messiah’ spoken of in the apostolic Scriptures.

Ask your Covenant Partner in Heaven for *Yechidut*⁷ [private audience] with Messiah. Ask the Holy One to have Yeshua walk you through each portal Moshe opens for you in the Torah this week. Ask the Creator of the Universe to have Yeshua share with you his insights regarding each of the portals Moshe opens. Ask Him to have Yeshua proclaim prophetically over every area of sin in your life ‘*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*’⁸. Ask Him to have Yeshua cleanse the Temple of

beginning point of the highway or jurisdictional boundary. In countries on a metric system the markers might be called ‘kilo markers’, referring to kilometers.

⁶ In Matthew 7 Yeshua taught: *Go in through the narrow gate; for the gate that leads to destruction is wide and the road broad, and many travel it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard [i.e. straight] road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Matthew 7:13-14* [Complete Jewish Bible].

⁷ *Yechidut* is a term used to refer to a private audience with a rabbi. Such a meeting is for the following purposes:

- a. to clarify one's own spiritual status and identify the unique purpose and destiny for which the person was created;
- b. to get the rabbi's input regarding an advantageous mode or plan of *avodah* [service, submission to the Holy One's will] that will assist the person in turning away from evil, acquiring Biblical character traits, and walking in his unique purpose and destiny; and
- c. to solemnize the person's commitment to bind himself to the Holy One, in total oneness, and utterly dedicate himself to his spiritual purpose and destiny in life.

⁸ The King James Version of Matthew 4:17 records Yeshua as beginning His ministry by proclaiming these words. A more Hebraic interpretation would be: *Turn back to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!*

your heart with righteous anger and a braided cord⁹, saying: “*Get these things out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market?*”¹⁰ Ask Him to have Yeshua declare to the demons that oppress your soul “*Be quiet, and come out of him!*”¹¹ Ask Him to have Yeshua prune the wild, the barren and the diseased branches from the garden of your life, saying to them “*May you never again bear fruit!*”¹² Ask Him to have Yeshua proclaim over the eyes of your soul which have been covered by a veil of flesh “*Receive your sight; your faith [emunah] has made you well.*”¹³ Ask Him to have Yeshua speak over each spot and blemish of *tzara’at* that is growing in your soul “*Be cleansed!*”¹⁴ And ask Him to have Yeshua pronounce over your spirit, in response to your repentance of and departure from every pathway you have followed, every attitude you have adopted, and every action in which you have engaged which deviates from the Torah, “*Friend, your sins are forgiven you.*”¹⁵

Seeing The ‘Evil’ [Hebrew ra] In Our World – And In Ourselves – Through the Lens of Torah

As we enter this week’s study let us determine to look at the Torah we will be reading as *a mirror into our own souls*. What do I mean by that? I mean that wherever we find in the Torah portion we are reading any activity, any speech pattern, or any attitude which Moshe describes as *ra* [i.e. evil; harmful, in the sense of being a *seed of calamity or disaster*], let us look at our lives – place our souls under the microscope - and see where, in what seed form, that activity or attitude exists in us.

The Holy One does not just see each little violation of Torah in our lives – every area of deviation from the Torah lifestyle - as ‘sin’ in some abstract, theoretical sense. Sin is not an issue of *morality* – it is an issue of *Covenant*¹⁶. The Holy One sees our deviation from the constitution of His Kingdom of Heaven [i.e. the Torah] as

⁹ This action of Messiah is recorded in John 2:15. *He made a whip from cords and drove them all out of the Temple grounds, the sheep and cattle as well. He knocked over the money-changers' tables, scattering their coins ...* The Hebrew word which our English Bibles translate as ‘cords’ in Torah is the plural form of the word ‘*meitar*’, *mem, yod, tav, resh*, Strong’s Hebrew word #4340, referring to the binding cords used in the *Mish’kan* [Tabernacle] to secure the gate and outer hangings of the outer court area. See Exodus 35:18, 39:40, etc.

¹⁰ This utterance of Messiah is recorded in context in John 2:16 [Complete Jewish Bible].

¹¹ This utterance of Messiah is recorded in context in Matthew 4:35 [CJB].

¹² This utterance of Messiah is recorded in context in Matthew 21:19 [CJB].

¹³ This prophetic utterance of Messiah is recorded in Luke 18:42 [CJB]. In most English translations, the word in brackets is ‘faith’. The underlying Hebraic concept is *emunah*.

¹⁴ This prophetic utterance of Messiah is recorded in context in Matthew 5:13 [CJB].

¹⁵ This prophetic utterance of Messiah is recorded in context in Matthew 5:20 [CJB].

¹⁶ Remember, every human being – of Hebrew or Gentile lineage – is born a party to at least the Noachic Covenant [Genesis 9:1-17].

nothing less than a *seed of calamity and disaster* in our lives. Do you see your little sins and deviations from Torah that way? Or do you just shrug at the attitudes and words and actions in which you indulge that conflict with the Torah and say “that’s the way I am” – that’s part of my personality” – and “God loves me anyway”, so “why change?”

Oh Beloved, *sh’ma!* This is Elul, and the Voice of our Bridegroom calls to us “*Open to me, my sister, my bride, my dove, my flawless one.*” **Song of Solomon 5:2.** It is the appointed time to respond to His call. It is the season to put away the *ra* from our midst, and to make *t’shuvah* with all our hearts. After all, where the *seed* [of *ra*, or self-generated *calamity/disaster*, in this instance] is planted, the *harvest* will come. As Ya’akov [known as “James” to English speakers] wrote: *after desire has conceived it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death.* Ya’akov [James] 1:15.

Ra Has a Four-Stage Life Cycle

Picture a *seed*. Now picture that seed *sprouting*. And now picture that seed *growing to maturity and bearing fruit*. That is *the life cycle of evil*.

Evil is easier to deal with in seed form than in sprout form. Evil is easier to deal with in sprout form than in mature form. But, in whatever stage we find it, evil absolutely *must be dealt with*. If we will not deal with the evil in our midst, HE WILL! That is not something you want to be close to – or want your children close to - if you can help it. One of the two main themes of Moshe this week, therefore, is going to be “*put away/purge the evil [ra] from among you.*” This is going to be a recurring refrain, repeated in five verses scattered throughout *Ki Tetze*. In Deuteronomy 21:21 Moshe will use the phrase in connection with his instructions as to how to deal with a *stubborn and rebellious son*. In Deuteronomy 22:21 Moshe will use the phrase in connection with his instructions as to how to deal with a young *woman who does not preserve her virginity for marriage*.

In Deuteronomy 22:22 Moshe will use the phrase in connection with his instructions as to how to deal with the situation when a man is found *having sexual relations with another man’s wife*. In Deuteronomy 22:24 Moshe will use the phrase in connection with his instructions as to how to deal with the situation when a man is found *having consensual sexual relations with a betrothed girl*. In Deuteronomy 24:7 Moshe will use the phrase in connection with his instructions as to how to deal with one who *kidnaps a fellow Hebrew* and sells him as a slave, for profit.

This idea of purging of *ra* from the community of God as a principle is carried over

from parsha *Shoftim*, where it was also referenced five times. In Deuteronomy 17:7 Moshe used the phrase to explain why those who *engage in idolatry* should be put to death by the whole community. In Deuteronomy 17:12 Moshe used the phrase to explain why any man showing *contempt for the judge or priest doing his duty* must be similarly put to death. In Deuteronomy 17:13 Moshe used the phrase to explain why those found guilty of *murder* are to be handed over to the avenger of blood to die. In Deuteronomy 19:19 Moshe used the phrase to explain why anyone who gives *false testimony concerning a brother* is to have done to him whatever he was trying to do to his brother. In Deuteronomy 21:9 Moshe used the phrase to explain why the *land where a man is found slain* must be cleansed by the blood of a heifer.

The point is this: in virtually every instance where *ra* is allowed to go from seed form to full growth, its fruit is death. This is why it is the grace of the Divine Bridegroom to point out to us the *ra* in our lives, while it is in seed form, so that we can “nip it in the bud”.

Walking It Out – Taking on the “Light Yoke” Alongside Messiah

As Torah unveils the various kinds of *ra* from which the Holy One says we as a holy community of faithful witnesses must be purged for the sake of His Grand Redemptive Plan, consider what seed forms of that same *ra* are even now present and growing in your life. Ask *Ruach HaQodesh* [the Holy Spirit] to search your heart, your vocabulary, your thoughts, your attitudes, your opinions and judgments about other people, your priorities, and your value matrix, to reveal to you, in each of those areas, as well as your actions since last *Yom Kippur* [the last 11 1/2 months], the seed forms of the *ra* whose fruit is death.

In order to assist you in this process, let us go walk together through the process I have been discussing in regard to one of the *raot* [evils] mentioned in this week’s parsha. The first *ra* referenced in *Ki Tetze* from which the community must be purged is stubbornness and rebellion in children. [Adults, do not “tune out” at this point; it should be noted that this *ra* includes adult as well as young children]. The word translated “stubbornness” is the Hebrew word *sarar*. This word means *to be determined to have one’s own way, do one’s own will, and act as one pleases, no matter what anyone else may say*. The word translated “rebellion” is the Hebrew word *marah*. This word means *to act defiantly, to rebel, and, consequently, to disobey*.

Everyone knows what the full-grown version of this looks like. It *ridicules and ruins everything it touches*. It is *a curse on the community*. It must, indeed, be purged. But, what do *sarar* and *marah* look like in seed form? And what signs and symptoms of these cancers are present in *your life* and *mine*? In searching your life for any of

the forms of *ra* mentioned in Torah [it is like searching a house for leaven before Passover, no?], the first thing to consider is the *tov* [good] that the Holy One's commandments aim for in that area - what is *tzedek* [right, straight, righteous – in the sense of meeting the Holy One's minimum specifications for usefulness]?

By first determining how your Covenant Partner in Heaven says you should¹⁷ *act*, and how you should *think*, and what you should [consistent with your destiny, inheritance, and purpose] *value* and *give priority to*, you can identify where you are “missing the target”- where the seed form of this particular form of *ra* has made inroads into your life. For example, in Torah the Holy One says that His lovingly created, divinely touched children should “honor” their fathers and mothers. Exodus 20:12. The word translated “honor” is the Hebrew word *kaved*, which means to *make heavy with glory*, to *highly esteem*, and to *constantly praise*. The Holy One's divine will – as spoken in Torah - is that every child pile up around his or her mother and his or her father things which will bring them esteem and admiration. By his or her actions toward others [including, but not limited to, basic manners and basic truthfulness], outward attitudes, exercise of self-control, moderation, sexual purity in general, and by his response to the instructions, directions, teachings, and the discipline of his or her mother and his or her father in particular, the child either *fulfills* this mitzvah or *breaks* it. Have you missed the mark in any of these areas? The grace of your Covenant Partner in Heaven has revealed this to you! Now, make *t'shuvah*, and “nip it in the bud”!

To dig deeper in this area, you may wish to meditate on Proverbs 10 through 13. Warning: be prepared to spend awhile on your face before the Holy One your God!

A Brief Look At Haftarah Ki Tetze **Isaiah 54:1-10**

This week's Haftarah is the fifth of the seven consecutive *haftarot of consolation*. It again is taken from *Sefer Yeshayahu* [the Book of Isaiah], and it once again bespeaks a glorious unfolding revelation of our Covenant Partner in Heaven's plan to *restore His people*. In the 54th chapter division of the scroll of *Ha-navi Yeshayahu* [the prophet Isaiah], the remnant of Israel which has made *t'shuvah* after the visitation of judgment in the form of the Babylonian captivity, and has begun the return from exile, are told to “*enlarge the space for your tent, extend the curtains of your dwelling*”, because “*your descendants will dispossess nations, and inhabit the desolate cities*”. The remnant of survivors, returning to their inheritance and finding

¹⁷ In order to behave in a manner consistent with the character He created in you and the sparks of divinity He placed in you.

it in shambles, are told “*You will forget the shame of your youth, and no longer remember the dishonor of being widowed.*” The Holy One promises His people that “... *never again will I be angry with you or rebuke you. For the mountains may leave and the hills be removed, but my grace [Hebrew, *chesed* - fiercely loyal devotion based upon covenant] *will never leave you, and my covenant of peace [Hebrew, *b’rit shalom* - treaty, contract, pact, of peace, protection, safety, provision, well-being, intactness, and completeness] *will not be removed.*”**

Are you ‘beginning again’ after making *t’shuvah*? Are you returning to the ancient paths, only to find that the rubble so thick it seems an insurmountable task just to clear it away - much less *find your inheritance and build a true Torah lifestyle according to the original Plan of the Creator*? Do you feel you are too few to make an impact, too new at this to make any significant advances in rebuilding the ancient ruins? Do others around you *chastise you* – or *attack you* – as you attempt to shake off the shackles of religion and pursue the *sh’ma* lifestyle? If so, take heart! Your Covenant Partner in Heaven has *seen you and all His compassions are aroused*. His *chesed* [fiercely loyal devotion based upon covenant] is rushing to engulf you, His *b’rit shalom* [covenant of peace, protection, safety, provision, well-being, intactness, and completeness] is even now spreading over you like a *tallit* [prayer shawl]. So ... “*Sing, O barren woman ... burst into song, shout for joy!*”

A Note Of Introduction Concerning the Apostolic Writings

I Corinthians 5:1-5

In this week’s readings from the writings of Shaul of Tarsus, Shaul is attempting to deal with a group of people who never knew Torah [and its description of what our Covenant Partner in Heaven regards as Kingdom-Scented righteousness in real life situations] and therefore could not correctly understand and apply to their lives the work of Yeshua - the fullness of Torah. The Hebrews and *goyim* [gentiles] of Corinth who passed through the entrance to the Kingdom when they accepted Yeshua as *sin-cleanser*, you see, are now having difficulty walking in the sweet fragrance of the Kingdom lifestyle. They are having trouble syncing intellectual belief in and emotional attachment to Yeshua with the practical Kingdom of Heaven life instructions contained in Torah. At best they are far too willing to accept those who are flagrantly violating and rejecting Torah into their home-based fellowships. They do not seem to grasp, much less are they willing to embrace, Torah’s provisions concerning the way to deal with the *ra* [evil] that causes a man to “*discover his father’s skirt*” – that is, to take to himself a woman who was once his father’s wife. See Deuteronomy 22:30 for an explanation of what Shaul is talking about. The issue in this case is not so much sexual sin - this man may have even been married to the woman in question. What was unacceptable to Shaul about the situation was *the dishonoring of this*

man's father in violation of Torah. Shaul, who knew Torah, and who also knew Yeshua much more intimately and for a much longer time than did these new converts, was appalled. He knew that "a little leaven works through the whole batch of dough". I Corinthians 5:6. Shaul knew that what one generation accepts as normal in others the next generation will be inclined to embrace and practice itself. Shaul knew that if the full-grown ra [evil] was being accepted and embraced the seed form of failing to honor one's father and mother had already infiltrated the hearts of all in the assembly. Shaul knew that a death had to occur, just as Torah said. Shaul's instructions as to what should be done to this man may shock you! He says: ... deliver such a one to Ha-Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in order that his spirit may be saved in the day of Messiah Yeshua.

It is our appointed time, in the sixth month of the Biblical year, and the last few weeks of the Torah cycle, to do as the songwriter says and 'return to who we are, return to what we are, return to where we are born and reborn again'¹⁸. This is our appointed time to come out from behind our comfortable theological boxes - however much we love them - to the humble fear and passionate service of our Covenant Partner in Heaven. It is time to honor what He honors. It is time we reached the maturity to be able to walk in Psalm 119:113, 136 and 158 as well as Ya'akov [James] 5:19-20. Our Covenant Partner's *chesed* [covenant-based love] is wonderful and unshakable, but *it is tough!* So now, as you study parsha *Ki Tetze* - when/as you "go out" - purge the evil from among you! Overcome evil with good. It is *that time* on the Holy One's calendar. And if you and I will not build His Heaven-Scented-Society of salt, light, and faithful witness, in our such a time as this, who do you think will?

*May you hear the calling to 'come out', and recognize what it is you are to leave.
And may you then respond to this call with humbly, joyfully, and with all your heart,
after the pattern of our Father Avraham.*

The Rabbi's son

¹⁸ The song is 'Return Again', by Shlomo Carlebach [melody] and Raphael Kahn [lyrics]. Here is a link to the song as it is performed by Sh'lomo's daughter, Neshama Carlebach, the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDrf3VwABAaw>

Amidah Prayer Focus for the Week
The 3rd Petition: S'lach - Forgiveness

S'lach lanu Avinu, ki chata'einu,
Forgive us, Our Father, for we have sinned
m'chal lanu, Malkeinu, ki fasha'einu
Pardon us, Our King, for we have done wrong

ki m'chel v'slach Atah
Pardon and forgive

Baruch Atah Adonai chanun ha-marve l'sloach
Blessed are You, O Holy One, Who graciously forgives