

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: *Torah Ki Tavo:* Deuteronomy 27:9-26
Haftarah: Isaiah 60:5-9
B'rit Chadasha: Luke 21:3

This day you are becoming a people/nation unto/for the Holy One
[Deuteronomy 27:9b]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 32:1-5;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 4th Petition, *Ge'ulah* [Kinsman Redemption]

Vayedaber Moshe v'ha-kohanim ha-Levi'im el-kol-Yisra'el l'emor – Then Moshe and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying ... *Ha-s'ket ush'ma Yisra'el* – Now keep silent and pay close attention, listen, hear, and begin to respond appropriately, O Israel ... *hayom hazeh niheyeta l'am l'Adonai Eloheicha* – this day you will become a people/nation unto/for the Holy One your God. Deuteronomy 27:9b.

What is happening at the entrance to the Mish'kan? The silver trumpets have been blown, and the tribes are responding *en masse*. Moshe, flanked by the kohanim and Levi'im, is speaking. The first thing we hear is '*ha-s'ket*' – Keep silent. Wow – we've never been told that before! But the next phrase is more familiar: '*Sh'ma Yisrael!*'

Pageantry – and Vocabulary - Fitting for this Solemn Day!

Keep silent? Let's face it - that is difficult to do sometimes. We have attitudes. We have feelings. We have moods. We have thoughts, opinions, and grievances. We see glaring injustices – individual and systemic. We have personal, ethnic, family, institutional, and cultural agendas to promote. We have stories to tell. We have questions to ask. We have causes to champion. We have matters of philosophy, abstract theory, political polemics, ideology, and/or theology to debate. We have a well of stored-up venom to spew at whoever gives the slightest provocation. *Keep silent?* Holding our tongue – running silent, running deep - requires things like discipline, patience; wisdom; long-range vision; trust in the Master's plan; even faith! *Selah*. Having to '*keep silent*' for a season, for Kingdom purposes, according to Kingdom timing, can be a bitter pill to swallow, right?

Ah, but *sh'ma* – i.e. *pay attention, listen, hear, and begin to respond, resonate, and rebroadcast what Moshe is saying!* Yes, that is why we need to be silent. To *sh'ma* means to lay down our agendas, our priorities, our attitudes/moods, and our self-

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will!

The reason given by Moshe and the great choir of kohanim and Levi'im that are standing with him is then clearly stated: *This day you will become a people/nation unto the Holy One?* This, apparently, is going to be a very special day! There is a special surrender being made – and a special bond being formed – today!

But wait!?! Was not the day we passed dry-shod through the Sea of Reeds the day we became the people of the Holy One? Or was not the day of *Matan Torah*, when every man, woman, and child among us heard the Creator speak the Ten Great Prophetic Empowerments that lie at the root of all Torah, that day for us? Were we not yet the Holy One's people on 1 Nisan the next year, when we dedicated the *Mish'kan*? Or a month later when we all declared our tribal identities and rearranged our camp according to tribes and clans? Wow! Is Moshe saying that *none of those things made us a people/nation for/unto the Holy One?* Well – if those things did not make us the nation of the Holy One ... what does? What is the final piece of the puzzle? What *seals the deal*? What is so special – and so identity determining and destiny shaping - about *hayom hazeh* – i.e. 'this day'?

What Is It That Officially Seals/Confirms/Marks Us As the Nation of the Holy One?

The land of the patriarchs – the place from which Messiah will reign – calls to us. This is the land the Holy One described to Avram as *ha-aretz asher areicha* [i.e. '*the land I will show you.*'] **Genesis 12:1**. The Jordan River; the Mediterranean, Kinneret, and Dead Seas; the mountains of Hermon, Tabor, Karmel, Gilboa, Olivet and Tziyon; the lush forests and sprawling fields of the Galil; the stunning deserts of the Negev and the Judean Wilderness; the great valleys of Jezreel and Kidron; the orchards; the vineyards; the wadis and the flowing springs; the cities and the villages – these are the stages upon which the Holy One had ordained that the Great Redemptive Drama will play out in the sight of the nations. Getting us to our assigned places in this land is what the Great Journey from bondage to freedom has been all about. And we are almost there. We are almost *home*. So what exactly is it that we are supposed to do when we get there? Moshe has been discussing this with the Holy One in detail for four decades now. He has the download – and he is in the process of sharing it with us.

When You Come Into the Land ...

The first thing we are to do when we enter the land the Holy One promised to Avraham and his descendants forever is not to wage war. What we are to do in our first moments after entering the land is to set up a memorial – twelve great 'stones of remembrance' – on which we are to write the words of the Torah for the world

to see. As Moshe put it in yesterday's aliyah:

Vehayah bayom asher ta'avru et-haYarden

And it will come to pass on the day you cross over the Jordan

el-ha'aretz asher-Adonai Eloheicha noten lach

into the land that the Holy One your God is entrusting to you in stewardship

vaha-kemota lecha avanim gedolot v'sadeita otam basid

and you set up great stones and coat them with lime

V'chatavta al-ha-avanim et-kol-divrei ha-torah hazot ba'er heytev

then you are to write all the words of this Torah on those stones in a good, clear script.

[Deuteronomy 27:8]

The Torah is, of course, to be written on our hearts. But that is just the beginning. It is to be a sign before our eyes. It is to be written on our hands. It is to be inscribed on the doorposts of our houses. It is to be the adornment of our gates. And it is to stand as a monument at the point of entry to our land. Why? Why is the Torah to be written virtually everywhere – and spoken of even in the places where it is not written? Because the Torah is much more than ‘law’. The Torah is *Divine Energy*. It is alive and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword, it pierces even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow. It has the power – and the skill - to discern the thoughts and intents of the human heart. It is both the revelation stream and the power source out of which will become everything our Bridegroom-King has called us to become and accomplish everything our Bridegroom-King has called us to do. With the twelve stones we erect on the shore of the Jordan River stones we will declare over all who pass this way – as pilgrims, as prodigals, or as predators - that *man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Holy One*. Our essential message is to the world is to be: *Do you not hear it? Even the stones cry out! Sh'ma Your Creator's Voice! Sh'mar His Covenant! Receive and Embrace Him and His Ways – and love and trust Him enough to asah His instructions for life on earth!*

After erecting the ‘stones of remembrance’ memorial Moshe instructs us to go directly to the valley between the mountains of Eyval and Gerizim, and hold a solemn ceremony – one that is strategically designed to shift the atmosphere in us, in the Land of Israel, and in the world.

The Third Devarim-Recitation of Parsha Ki Tavo:

An Amazing Offer – and a Stunning Warning – to All

People, Nations, Tribes, and Tongues

The third prescribed devarim-recitation of *Ki Tavo* begins with a resounding ‘*Sh'ma Yisrael!*’

Sh'ma Yisra'el

Tune your ear, take heed, listen, and respond accordingly, O Israel

hayom hazeh niheyeta l'am l'Adonai Eloheicha.

This day you are becoming as a people/nation for/unto the Holy One your God.

[Deuteronomy 27:9]

After we come forth from the “*mikveh*” of the Jordan we are to proceed to the first place Avram set up camp when he came into the Land. There we are to reaffirm our prophetic identity, mission, and destiny as Avraham’s descendants. It is fitting that this reaffirmation ceremony should take place here. After all, it was in this very location that the Holy One first revealed to Avram that the land of Kena’an was going to be his and his descendants to steward forever. **Genesis 12:7**. It was also here that Ya’akov set up his family’s first encampment in the Land. **Genesis 33:18**. This was also the site of the first purchase of land in Kena’an by the Hebrew people. This is where Israel’s redemptive history began.

What was the reaffirmation ceremony that was to take place here to look like? It was to consist of both a blessing and a warning. The blessings of the Torah are to be recounted on Mount Gerizim. But on Mount *Eyval* it was to be declared that for any son or daughter of the Covenant to exit the *sh’ma* lifestyle by means of any twelve specified exit points would result in them putting themselves and their households under something our English Bibles calls a ‘curse’.

What Exactly is a ‘Curse’?

The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as “curse” in this passage is ‘*arar*². Before we begin to address the Hebraic meaning of ‘*arar* - curse - I will try to bring the **relevance** of the issue ‘home’ to all of us who have been introduced to Yeshua. In Matthew 16:19 the Master gave to *Kefa* [Peter] the “keys to the kingdom”. He said to Kefa: ***Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*** In Matthew 18:18 our Rabbi broadened this responsibility of “binding” and “loosing” from Kefa to all the talmidim who walked the dusty road with Him. In the context of dealing with the transgression of a *brother*³ who refuses to *sh’ma*, Yeshua said to ***treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-collector.*** **Matthew 18:17**. Then he explains: ***Yes! I tell you that whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.***

What you may ask does “*binding*” and “*loosing*” have to do with pronouncing *b’rachot* [blessings] and declaring ‘*arar’im* [curses]? Could that be one of the secrets unlocked by today’s study? You see, the Hebrew word *b’racha* refers to words

² In other passages, such as Deuteronomy 11:26, a different Hebrew verb – *qalal* – is translated as ‘curse’. Literally, *qalal* merely means to make small, insignificant, unnoticed, and/or disrespected.

³ In this context a *brother* would be *anyone* who has responded at one time to the Divine Call to *sh’ma*, but who now was backing away from that commitment in some particular.

spoken tenderly and lovingly and encouragingly over one who kneels or adopts a submissive posture, before the speaker. In traditional observant families, on Erev Shabbat, after making *Kiddush*, *Ha-Motzee*, and *Eishet Chayil*, children come to their father and stand or kneel before him in submission. One by one, the father lays his hands upon the children, caresses their heads, and speaks tender words of love and encouragement, over them. Sometimes it is as simple as: “*May you be as Efrayim and Menashe*” (over boys); “*May you be as Sarah, and Rivkah, and Rachel, and Leah*” (over girls). What is the point? What is the father doing? He is drawing down the kedusha energy of the Sabbath into his children’s lives - “loosing” them from the restrictions and limitations of their carnal natures, in order to give them both a vision and a passion to become the spiritual princes and princesses they were created to be. That release from restrictions and into maximum potential is the essence of the Hebrew word *b’racha*. Remember – blessing *releases the person in question from limitations and restrictions, and sets the person on course toward maximal potential*. Do you have that? Good. Now let’s consider the exact opposite. Let’s consider what would *cause a person to stagger under a heavy load of restrictions and limitations* – and *set him on course toward a calamitous failure of essential purpose*.

The Hebrew word ‘*arar* is the latter. While a *b’racha* is spoken concerning one who submits to the voice and touch of the speaker, an ‘*arar* is spoken concerning one who rebels, who has heard the call to *sh’ma*, but who willfully refuses to submit. It is spoken to, and of, one who *refuses* the *b’racha* of the Holy One. The *arar* is not *the cause* of the resulting downward spiral – it is just the diagnosis of the acute condition that results from the true cause. And the true cause is always rebellion against the Creator, His eminently wise ways, and His Glorious Redemptive Plan.

The first Biblical instance of the use of the Hebrew word ‘*arar* is in the garden, in Genesis 3:14. The Holy One there speaks to the serpent, and diagnoses him as being ‘*arar*.

*...you are ‘arar more than all the livestock and wild animals.
You will crawl on your belly and eat dust as long as you live
I will put animosity between you and the woman,
and between your descendant and her descendant;
he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel.*

[Genesis 3:14-15]

Note what the “curse” consists of. A *restriction* and a *limitation* is imposed upon the serpent. He will not be able to stand on his feet and walk like the other livestock and wild animals. He will crawl on his belly. His upward mobility is severely crippled. More than that, He will *forever be under the power and control*

– *the restriction of movement – imposed upon him by the ‘seed of woman’.*

The next usage of the Hebrew word ‘*arar*’ in Torah is Genesis 3:17 - where the Holy One says that, on Adam’s account, the earth will be ‘*arar*’ – namely, in that instead of yielding fruit in response to the Holy One’s Word, it will produce only thorns and thistles except it be subjected to man’s hard labor, whereupon it will grudgingly produce fruit at the *sweat of man’s brow*. The productive capability of the land is severely restricted and diminished. See also Genesis 4:11, where in response to Kayin’s shedding of the innocent blood of his brother *Hevel* [Abel] yet another ‘*arar*’ restriction and limitation is placed on the soil - it will no longer yield its strength for Kayin.

The Twelve Diagnostic Signs of the Arar Soul

At the scene of Israel’s biggest disaster to date – the rape of Dinah, and the subsequent massacre of the male inhabitants of Shechem – the Holy One wants us to warn the world of the twelve diagnostic signs of Arar. What were the 12 critical exit ramps from the Pathway of the Bridegroom about which the *world is to be warned*? Some of them may surprise you. Here is the complete list:

1. *making a carved or molded image and setting it up as an object of reverence* [compare Exodus 20:4-5];
2. *treating one’s father or mother with contempt* [compare Exodus 20:12];
3. *moving another’s boundary marker* [compare Exodus 20:15];
4. *causing a blind man to stray off the path* [compare Matthew 15:14];
5. *acting in legal proceedings in such a way as to prejudice or deny the poor, the widow, the fatherless, or the foreigner that to which they need* [compare Exodus 20:16];
6. *having a sexually intimate relationship with one’s father’s wife* [compare Exodus 20:14]
7. *engaging in bestiality*;
8. *engaging in an incestuous relations with a sister or half-sister*;
9. *engaging in incestuous relations with a spouse’s mother*;
10. *secretly or surreptitiously attacking another* [compare Genesis 34:24-25];
11. *taking a bribe* [compare Exodus 20:13];
12. *failing/refusing to affirm, confirm, and aspire to walk in all the words of the Torah* [compare Deuteronomy 5:31-33 and Deuteronomy 28:14].

Looking at the list of the *12 diagnostic signs of the Arar soul*, one can see twelve off-ramps by which men can opt out of the Torah lifestyle. If a person engages in these specific actions - all of which are *secret sins* - he voluntarily cuts himself off from the *sh’ma* lifeline even as he voluntarily takes on the burden of limitations and restrictions that he has been warned he will encounter on the pathway he has chosen. Once the person rejects the Bridegroom-King, His ways, and His pathway

of blessing and shalom, he intentionally *removes himself from the realm of covenant protection and blessing*. The Holy One does not remove him from that realm – *he does it to himself*. This also means that his creativity, challenge-overcoming potential, and productive capabilities, all of which were unlimited when *sh'ma*-ing the Holy One and flowing in unity with Messiah, become severely limited - through no one's fault or decision but his own. Just as once the Holy One cursed the land on account of the sin in the Garden its productive capabilities were diminished such that it would only produce through the sweat of the brow of man, so a man or woman who does one of the 12 listed things about which the warning is given will see his productive capabilities diminished. His destiny will start to become farther and farther away from that which was planned for him. He will become “bound” by his own hand so to speak. Deuteronomy 28:20 explains the concept:

*The Holy One will send on you curses, confusion, and rebuke
in everything you put your hand to, until you are laid waste and come to sudden ruin
because of the ra you have asah-ed in forsaking Him.*

Our covenant with the Holy One is wonderful, and His blessings are beyond our wildest dreams. However, life *outside* that covenant is not so wonderful, and, until we make the necessary corrections, is likely to be a veritable nightmare. The ‘*arar* [binding] is a ‘first warning’ of greater judgment to come. No further punishment is stated at this initial point. The person is merely said to be burdened with restrictions and limitations and rapidly fading possibilities. The idea is to *warn* and *deter*.

The ‘*ararim* of Deuteronomy 27 were to be given/declared as a matter of care, concern, and love. They are not “black magic”. *Arur*, the tribes are to warn the world, *will be a person who “denies the justice [due] to the foreigner, fatherless, and widow”*, or one who *“removes his neighbor's landmark”*. If one tempted to go astray will merely heed the ‘*arar*, and realize it is his or her refusal to submit to the Holy One's revealed Word that limits and restricts him, he or she can be restored to the realm of *b'racha* through the process of *teshuvah* [repentance]. If he will not heed the first warning, the ‘*arar* progresses, ultimately, to the point of final judgment. To be *cursed* [‘*arar*] did not mean one got punished in the conventional sense. It merely meant that he stepped outside the realm of blessing. It means he chose a pathway that voluntarily limited his productive capabilities –and threatened to shut the door on his grand prophetic destiny. The message is simply: *Stop! Look up ahead at where you are going! The bridge is out! There is calamity ahead!* A person who did not heed the warning did not die on the spot – but he had *been warned*. The bridge *really is out* – and *calamity really is ahead* if there is not a rapid and permanent reversal of course.

There is Redemption from Every Phase of the ‘Curse’!

Lest we be tempted to despair however let us all pause and consider the assigned meditation passage for today - Psalm 32:1-5. The Holy One’s “curse” is *redemptive in purpose*. It is therefore removable and reversible. All it takes is *teshuvah* – a returning to covenant on our part. Consider the psalmist. Because he *sh’ma*-ed the Holy One, and heard and made a part of his innermost being the *promise - the d’varim* - of Messiah and His redemption, David, who lived long before Messiah walked the earth in the form of Yeshua, nevertheless experienced forgiveness of sins and redemption from the curse. How much more should we who live in the days of Messiah’s shadow. For His talmidim have taught us: ***If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*** I John 1:9.

The Mountain of Blessing – Gerizim

Six tribes are to stand upon a mountain named Gerizim and receive a blessing. The tribes are: Sh’mon, Levi, Y’hudah, Yissachar, Yosef, and Binyamin. These are, of course, the most influential tribes of Israel. The mountain in question, Gerizim, rises above the ancient city of Shechem, which lies to the North. The slopes of this mountain are covered with trees all the way to the top. It was on this mountain that the Samaritans would one day build their own temple. What blessings were to be declared here? Moshe spells out the contents of the blessings – as well as the essential precondition of Torah observance. They are:

*Blessed may you be **in the city**, and blessed may you be **in the field**.*

*Blessed may **the fruit of your womb** be, as well as **the fruit of your ground**, of your beasts -
the offspring of your cattle, and the young of your sheep.*

*Blessed may you be **in your basket** and your storehouse/granary.*

*Blessed may you be **when you come in**, and blessed shall you be **when you go out**.*

*May the Holy One **cause your enemies that rise up against you to be smitten** before your face;
may they come out against you on one path, and **may they flee before you** on seven.*

*May the Holy One command the blessing upon you **in your barns**
and **upon all unto which you set your hand**;*

*and may He bless you **in the land** which the Holy One your God is giving you.*

*May the Holy One **establish you a holy people to Himself**, as He has sworn to you,
if, as, when, and to the extent you **sh’mar** the commandments of the Holy One your God
and walk in His ways.*

*May **all the people of the earth see that you are called** by the name of the Holy One
and **may they be afraid of you**.*

*May the Holy One make you plenteous **in goods**, in **the fruit of your womb**,
in **the fruit of your cattle** and in **the fruit of your soil**,
in the land that the Holy One swore to your fathers to give you.*

*May the Holy One open to you His good treasure, the heaven, to give the rain
to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand;
may you lend to many nations, and not borrow.
May the Holy One make you the head and not the tail, and may you be above only,
and may you not be beneath, if, as, when, and to the extent
you sh'ma the commandments of the Holy One your God which I command you this day,
to observe and to do them, and do not turn aside from any of the words
which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left,
to go after other gods to serve them.*

Receive and embrace these blessings, Dear Reader – along with the injunctions. This is the heritage, the calling, and the destiny of the sons and daughters of the Avrahamic Covenant.

The Very Different Message of Reuven, Gad, Asher, Zevulun, Dan, and Naftali

As part of this solemn ceremony, six of Israel's lesser tribes⁴ are to participate in the release of something altogether different into the world. What they are called upon to release is a dire warning. From a mountain called *Eyval*, the tribes of Reuven, Gad, Asher, Zevulun, Dan and Naftali are to stand as witnesses as the Levi'im declare twelve statements each beginning with the phrase "**Arur**" [*i.e. the opposite of blessed is*].

Essential Diagnostic #1: Arur ha-ish asher ya'aseh fesel umasechah
The opposite of blessed is the one who makes a carved or molded image

What is it about the making of a carved or molded image for veneration that puts a person under restrictions and limitations, and on a course toward calamity? Think about it. We are given the Divine Gift of *capacity for creative expression* – including the making of carvings and molded images in wood, in stone, in metal, in fabric, in jewelry, on canvas, or in skin – for one reason, and one alone: *i.e. in order to bring glory to – and bring the people in our sphere of influence closer to - the Holy One*. The glory, worth, Beauty, Goodness, Kindness, Redemptive Plan, and Great Deeds of our Bridegroom-King – these are to form our exclusive message. Anything else is at best *a distraction*, and at worse *an invitation to idolatry*. For any human being to apply his creative energies and talents to making some other object of veneration – anything that would draw men's attention away from the Holy One – flies directly in the face of the Grand Redemptive Plan. Let's call any form of artistic expression not expressly mandated and commissioned by the Holy One for exactly what it is - a blatant act of self-will. Such misuse of creative energy and talent constitutes a bold declaration of independence from the One Who gave us the creative energy and talent in the first place. This sort of thing

⁴ Reuven disgraced himself and dishonored his father with Bilhah. Rachel's maid Bilhah bore Dan and Naftali. Leah's maid Zilpah bore Gad and Asher. Zevulun was the youngest of the sons born of Leah.

simply cannot end well – for the ‘artist’ or ‘artisan’, for his or her household, or for the people who allow themselves to be distracted, impressed, or affected by the ‘artwork’ of the self-expressing artist or artisan.

Do you want a Biblical example? Think of Lavan and Rachel. **Genesis 31:19**. Think about the Egyptians. **Exodus 12:12**. Think of the men who made and worshipped the golden calf. **Exodus 32:1-4**. Moreover, the clear call of the Bridegroom-King is to tear down and destroy carved and molded images – not make and venerate them! **See Exodus 34:13, Numbers 33:52, Deuteronomy 7:5 and Deuteronomy 12:3**. He is not having us tear down and destroy carved and molded images so we can come behind and make more of the very thing we have torn down and destroyed! To do that is clear evidence of a serious disconnect between the Will and Ways and Plan of the Holy One and the individual who participates in this kind of *chol, tamei*, man-obsessed, man-honoring behavior.

Essential Diagnostic #2: *Arur makleh aviv v'imo.*

The opposite of blessed is he who treats his father or his mother with contempt.

What is it about treating one’s father or mother disrespectfully that puts a person under restrictions and limitations, and predicts he is on a course that leads to calamity? The Holy One chooses our parents. In the course of natural-born Hebrews, our parents form the link that connects us to our ancestor Avraham, and the Covenant that defines our calling. Even for those who are not natural-born Hebrews, it is the Holy One that chooses the specific DNA strands from which our bodies will be formed. He chooses each bloodline with which we are connected. He chooses each family into which we will be born. To disrespect or resent *the parents He has assigned to us* is therefore to disrespect and resent *Him*. To rebel against them is to rebel against Him. One may disagree with one’s parents as vehemently as one wants; indeed it is to be expected that disagreements will from time-to-time occur. One may recognize his parents’ flaws and weaknesses – and even be painfully aware of their sins. But recognition and disagreement are never to be allowed to morph into disrespect, resentment, or dishonor. For a Biblical example, see the difference between the reaction of Cham on the one hand, and Shem and Yafet on the other hand, to Noach’s night of drunkenness and exposed nakedness. **Genesis 9:20-23**.

**Essential Diagnostic #3:
*Arur masig g'vul re'eihu***

The opposite of blessed is he who moves his neighbor’s landmark.

What is it about moving a neighbor’s landmark/boundary marker that puts a person under restrictions and limitations, and constitutes sure evidence that he has embarked on a course that leads to calamity? The Holy One owns everything in this world. He has rights of sovereignty. He sets every boundary according to His

timing, His purposes, and His Redemptive Plan. If a boundary is set incorrectly, He knows how to fix it. He does not need our intervention. He is not dependent upon our help. So if a person moves his neighbor's boundary marker, what he is really doing is rebelling against the Holy One. Whatever his motivation, his proving 1. that he does not really trust – or reverence – the Holy One in a meaningful way; and 2. that he absolutely cannot be trusted - with material things or anything else. He may or may not get by with moving the marker; but the negative trend will catch up to him. *Fret not because of evil doers*, David exhorted us: *for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.* Psalm 37:1-2. *Evildoers will be cut off; but those who wait on the Holy One, they will inherit the earth.* Psalm 37:9.

Essential Diagnostic #4 & 5:

Arur mashgeh iver badarech ...o mateh mishpat ger-yatom v'almanah

*The opposite of blessed is he who causes the blind to stray from the path,
or perverts the justice due the stranger, orphan, and widow.*

What is it about causing a blind man to stumble or preventing the disadvantaged from getting what the Holy One has ordained for them to have that puts a person under restrictions and limitations, and constitutes sure evidence that he has embarked on a course that leads to calamity? The 'less fortunate' in our world are very, very precious to the Holy One. Their presence in our sphere of influence is a great honor – and a great test of stewardship. If we see them as less valuable than the Holy One sees them, we will start to see everyone as less valuable than we are. If we treat them as if their lives, their needs, and their destinies do not matter to us, we are declaring that all that really matters to us is getting what we want, when we want it. How we deal with the disadvantaged tells us how close we are – or are not – to our King's Heart. See Yeshua's teaching in **Matthew 25:31-46**.

Essential Diagnostic #s 6, 7, 8 and 9:

Arur shochev im-eishet aviv o'im-kol behemah o'im achoto o'im chotanto

*The opposite of blessed is he who lies with his father's wife
or with any animal ...or with his sister or with his mother-in-law.*

What is it about putting one's sensual and/or sexual appetites and urges above the Holy One's instructions and plan for human sexuality that puts a person under restrictions and limitations, and constitutes sure evidence that he has embarked on a course that leads to calamity? Our calling from the Holy One is to so love and occupy ourselves with delighting in our Bridegroom-King that we leave no room in our minds, wills, or emotions for the fantasy to even form, much less take root and grow to maturity. If we can keep our eyes focused upon what our Creator has instructed us they should be focused upon, we can keep our thoughts on Kingdom matters and advancement of the strategic Kingdom objectives of Tikkun and Redemption. [See Psalm 1:3, Matthew 6:33, and Philipians 4:8]. If we can keep our eyes

from straying away from what He has lovingly ordained to be delightful and fulfilling to us, we can keep our physical and spiritual desires, appetites, and urges actively engaged in the Great Adventure of walking and communing with our Bridegroom-King, learning and doing His Will. **Matthew 6:10**. For this reason, back at Sinai, in parsha *Acharei Mot*, the Bridegroom-King made it very clear we are not to ‘look upon the nakedness’ of those ‘near of kin’ to us by blood or marriage. **Leviticus 18:5-17**. The Holy One knows that whatever we allow ourselves to look at curiously the adversary of our souls will eventually succeed in getting us to lust after sensually. He knows that does not ever turn out well – either for us or for the people we care most about. **Matthew 5:27-30; see also Genesis 3:4-6**.

Fast forward to the situation presented by Diagnostic #s 6-9. Notice how far the person in question has moved. Anyone who actually ‘lies with’ [in Hebrew, *shochev*] one of these relatives, or with an animal, has gone far beyond the proscribed behavior of ‘looking upon the nakedness’. This is incontrovertible evidence that the person in question is way over his or her head in a cesspool of perversion. Having *lo sh’ma*-ed the direct injunction of the Holy One not to look upon the nakedness of a near relative [or animal], the poison fruit of that choice is now present for anyone who has eyes to see.

Essential Diagnostic #10: Arur makeh re'ehu basater

The opposite of blessed is he who attacks his neighbor

What is it about attacking one's neighbor that puts a person under restrictions and limitations, and constitutes sure evidence that he has embarked on a course that leads to calamity? Perhaps our neighbor had been irritating us. Perhaps he had been saying bad things about, or even doing bad things to, us, our friends, or our family members. Why not 'teach him a lesson'? Why not 'take things into our own hands'? Why not give the guy – or girl – what they 'deserve'? Ah, Dear Ones – because it flies in the face of everything the Holy One has taught us about loving, forgiving, and having interactions with our neighbor. Leviticus 19 – the 'love chapter' of Torah – has spelled out in detail what we are and are not to do in relation to our neighbor. We are not to take vengeance. We are not to hold a grudge. We are not to take advantage. We are not to attack. If we ignore all these clear, and identity-shaping injunctions of our Bridegroom-King, we are so far off of the Bridal Pathway that we have put not only ourselves and our neighbor, but everyone whose path we cross, in harm's way. We have become a bloodletting waiting to happen. We have become toxic ourselves and to others.

Essential Diagnostic #11: Arur lokei'ach shochad

The opposite of blessed is he who takes a bribe

What is it about taking a bribe that puts a person under restrictions and limitations, and constitutes sure evidence that he or she has embarked on a course that leads to calamity? Torah is very clear that the main thing by which men will know if we are in covenant with the Holy One is if what we pursue with passion is **Tzedek!** [i.e. What the Holy One would do!] **Tzedek!** [i.e. What the Holy One would do!] **Tzedek** is so important to our mission that we are to **seek after/pursue it, so that you may live, and possess forever the land which the Holy One your God gives you.** **Deuteronomy 16:20;** see also **Matthew 6:33.** What is *tzedek*? *Tzedek* refers to the Divine plan and goal for creation where every creature is entitled to receive the caring and nurturing that it needs *in order to fulfill its purpose in creation.* Taking a bribe – which includes receiving or acknowledging any incentive toward bias - means that we have totally abandoned the desire for and commitment to *tzedek*, in favor of some other priority. It means selling out our Covenant calling as shalom-asah-ers (i.e. 'peacemakers'; restorers of the breaches) – all for money or favor from men. That is guaranteed to result in trouble for us and everyone we know.

Diagnostic #12:

Arur asher lo-yakim et-divrei ha-torah hazot la'asot otam

The opposite of blessed is he who fails to confirm all the words of this Torah by building them.

What is it about refusing to **asah** [i.e. build, make real, visible, relevant, and valuable] the *mitzvot* of Torah that puts a person under restrictions and limitations, and constitutes sure evidence that he or she has embarked on a course that leads to

calamity? Moshe's speeches on the plains of Moav teach us that we, generations removed, are supposed to interact with the *mitzvot* of Torah in such a way as to build on earth, for all men to see, a Kingdom of Heaven Scented society – *i.e.* a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. The *mitzvot* of Torah provide both the blueprint and the building materials that our Bridegroom-King has instructed us to use in this great building project. Nothing else meets the Bridegroom-King's 'specs'. If we refuse to interact with the *mitzvot* of Torah in real ways, and apply them to the situations and challenges of our lives in such a way as to model the righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, we are AWOL [*i.e.* away without leave]. We are off task. We have abandoned the mission, and are doing our own thing, as each man thinks is right. That is a recipe for disaster – and there is no way that can teach the world to honor and trust, much less desire a meaningful relationship with, the Holy One. Furthermore, to pick and choose which *mitzvot* we will – and will not – value and *asah* is also an unmistakable sign of coldness of heart toward our Bridegroom-King.

The Message of the Prophets

This message is the quintessential essence of the Biblical message of all the prophets of the TaNaKh – from Moshe, to *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah] to Hoshea to *Yochanan the Immerser* [John the Baptist] to Yeshua of Natzret, to Yochanan [John] the Revelator. Indeed any message that is *not rooted* in this calling and containing this message as its essence is not true, Biblical prophecy, but something else – something potentially very dangerous. See **Isaiah 8:20-22**. The essence of true prophecy is always to call people back to the *sh'ma* lifestyle of Torah.

This prophetic call back to the Torah is not a call to 'legalism'. Nor is it a call to a salvation based upon '*works of the law*'. It is, instead, is a call to Bridal passion, to Bridal *intimacy*, and to *the kind of communication* the Bridegroom of Heaven has made it clear He delights to hear. It is an invitation to experience forgiveness and healing and launch out into an even deeper level of relationship with the Holy One. It is a call *away from* 'religion' and theology and creed, to the PERSON OF THE GODHEAD AS EXPRESSED IN HIS WORDS. It is a call to submit to being a Bride to the Holy One – going where He goes, doing what He does, and letting Him lead us in *the Divine Dance of Life*. It is a call to walk in the glorious dust of His feet, rather than shaking off the dust of our filthy, self-centered, shrew-feet on His Words, His Will, and His Heart. Deuteronomy 27:9-10 teaches us that the essence of the true prophetic word is a call to join Messiah in *asah*-ing [shaping, molding, forming into a tangible, visible form] the *mitzvot* of Torah in the very real gardens – *i.e.* spheres of influences - He has given each of us to tend and to keep.

Some Have a Problem With This

The ‘expert in the law’ of Luke 10, it turned out, had a major problem with this approach. He wanted to justify himself, and to do so he defined the *mitzvot* for himself in such a restrictive way that he could actually in his mind limit their application to physical acts that matched up with the lifestyle he had chosen for himself. He wanted to do *his own dance*, independent of the Holy One. He wanted to make Torah observance a work of the flesh, instead of a *sh’ma* response. Yeshua sought to correct this wrong approach, and teach this ‘expert in the law’ that the *mitzvot* of Torah are not a list of ‘to do’s’ or a list of ‘do’s and don’ts’, but a Divinely-designed bridal chamber – a place for the Holy One’s people to interact with Him, communicate with Him, and learn from Him.

You see, it is not in the *performance* of *mitzvot* that we have life – we have life in being *unified with Him* as we join Him in doing what He does. We *step onto the Ancient Paths* of Torah not simply for Torah’s sake – but to *meet the Messiah*. We know that is where He can always be found. So we go where He is. And we *look for Him*. And we *listen for Him*, and *sh’ma* His Voice, and *watch Him carefully to see how He does what He does*. He leads, *we follow*. As we *flow together*, we *become one functioning unit*. We are, thereby, ‘*in Messiah*’. He is the head; we are the members of His Body. He sends out impulses, directing us as He wills. We merely *sh’ma* those impulses. Therefore, what we do is not *our* work, but *His*. And thus we are *the people of the Holy One*.

Questions For Today’s Study

1. In verses 11-14 of Chapter 27 instructions are given for the “renewal of marriage vows” which was to take place after the people of Israel crossed over the Yarden. With regard to the ‘re-affirmation of vows’ ceremony which Moshe told us to engage in when we enter Eretz Yisrael:

[A] What ancient city’s ruins were located in the valley between Mount *Gerizim* and Mount *Eyval*? Name two important Biblical events that occurred at that city during the time of the patriarchs.

[B] List the names of the tribes that were to stand on Mount *Gerizim*.

[C] List the names of the tribes that were to stand on Mount *Eyval* [Ebal].

[D] From which mountain was blessing to come?

2. In verses 14-26 of chapter 27 the actual curses that are to be proclaimed at the renewal ceremony are set forth.

[A] How many ‘*arar’im* are to be spoken?

[B] All of the things for which a person is “cursed” happen to be things done in violation of specific *mishpatim* of the Torah. Look over the things which

will make a person *'arar*.

-Which curses deal with the relationship between man and The Holy One?

-Which deal with relations within the family?

-Which deal with inappropriate sexual activity?

-Which deal with relations between people in general?

-Which deal with the Holy One's special concern for people who cannot help themselves?

-Which deal with the concept of justice?

[C] In Gesenius' Lexicon, look up the word that is translated "*confirm*" in verse 26. [Hint: It is Strong's Hebrew word #6965]. Write the word in Hebrew, and as it is transliterated into English. Then review what Gesenius writes about that word, look at its first five usages in the Torah [Hint: Those usages are all in Genesis, in 4:8, 6:18, 9:9, 9:11, and 9:19], and formulate a shorthand definition of this verb based on what you have read.

[D] We have learned that *'arar* implies limitation and restriction which prevents one from attaining the potential for which one was created. What is the specific restriction and limitation that flows from not *sh'ma*-ing the Torah?

3. In today's Haftarah we continue to read about the restoration of Israel's fortunes in the day when the Holy One declares "*Kumi Ohri*" [*Arise! Shine!*]. In yesterday's reading we saw that when Israel begins to reflect the Holy One's glory, in response to His creative and prophetic call to *Kumi Ohri*, multitudes of *goyim* – and even their governments - will come to bless Israel, and to assist her exiled sons and daughters to make aliyah [i.e. return to Israel to live]. In today's reading, we see that the goodwill of the nations will extend to financial support – indeed, to pouring vast amounts of capital into Israel's economy.

This obviously is not the case today. Most gentile nations today [with the notable exception of the United States and South Africa, and perhaps a few other scattered nations] vote regularly in the United Nations to censure and condemn Israel. The media regularly blames Israel for all the world's problems – especially the economic ones. No one is *rushing* to bless Israel. Support of Israel is even controversial in America and South Africa. So it will take a miracle. That is altogether as it should be. It took a miracle to make the people of Egypt shower the Holy One's people with gold, silver, and fine clothing on the night of the Exodus. It will take a miracle for the nations to do for Israel what Yeshayahu prophesies clearly that they will do. Fortunately for Israel – and for the nations and peoples of the world - the Holy One is still exactly the same God as He was then. He is still in the business of performing miracles. Listen for the call to *Kumi Ohri* – then watch, Beloved!

Az tir'i venahart ufachad v'rachav levaveich

Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and be enlarged;

ki-yehafeich alayich hamon yam
because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you,

cheyl goyim yavo'u lach
the wealth of the nations will come to you.

Shif'at gemalim techaseich
A multitude of camels will cover you,

bichrei Midyan ve'eyfah
the dromedaries of Midyan and `Efaf;

kulam mish'va yavo'u zahav ulevonah
all from Sheva will come bringing gold and frankincense,

yisa'u utehilot Adonai yevaseiru
and they will publish the praises of the Holy One.

Kol-tzon Kedar yikavtzu lach
All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you,

eylei Nevayot yeshartuneich
the rams of Nevayot will minister to you;

ya'alu al-ratzon mizbechi uveyt tif'arti afa'er
they will come up with acceptance on my altar and I will glorify the house of my glory.

Mi eleh ka'av te'ufeinah
Who are these who fly as a cloud,

V'chayonim el-aruboteihem
and as the doves to their windows?

Ki li iyim yekavu
Surely the isles will wait for me,

va'oniyot Tarshish b'rishonah l'havi vanayich merachok
and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your sons from far,

kaspam uzehavam itam
their silver and their gold with them,

l'shem Adonai Elohayich v'l'k'dosh Yisra'el
for the name of the Holy One your God, and for the Holy One of Yisra'el,

ki fe'arach
because he has glorified you.

[Isaiah 60:5-9]

[A] From what different lands does the prophet say that wealth come into Israel in the Last Day?

[B] What does Yeshayahu say Israel's sons will bring with them to Israel in the Last Day?

[C] For what purpose will the nations bring silver and gold to Israel?

[D] What does verse 9 mean when it says prophetically “*He has glorified you*”.

[E] What modern-day countries are now located in the territory of the ancient nations of:

[i] *Midyan* [KJV, Midian] and Efah;

[ii] *Sheva* [KJV, Sheba];

[iii] Kedar;

[iv] *Nevayot* [KJV, Nabaioth];

[v] Tarshish?

4. In today’s short reading from Lukas’ [Luke’s] account of Yeshua’s earthly ministry Yeshua compares the action of the poor widow who placed two ‘mites’ - the least valuable copper coin of the period - in the Temple’s offering receptacles, with the actions of rich people, who had, just previously [see Luke 21:1] placed large quantities in the same receptacles.

He said, I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all of them.

[Luke 21:3]

[A] What Torah-consistent purpose were the ‘offering receptacles’ located in the “Treasury’ area of the Court of the Women, on the Temple grounds at Herod’s Temple, designed for?

[B] For what do you think the coins placed in the ‘offering receptacles’ at Herod’s Temple were used?

[C] Where in Torah is there an instruction to build offering receptacles at the *Mish’kan* or at the ‘Place where the Holy One chooses to Place His Name’?

[D] Which Biblical types of ‘offerings’ could fit into these receptacles?

[E] How much money/coinage does the Brit Chadasha tell us Yeshua put in these receptacles?

[F] Why do you think the widow put the two coins in the receptacles located in the “Treasury’ area of the Court of the Women, on the Temple grounds at Herod’s Temple?

May you find in Yeshua the spirit of true Biblical prophecy.

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 32:1-5

*Blessed is he whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man to whom the Holy One doesn't impute iniquity,
In whose spirit there is no deceit.*

*When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy on me.
My strength was sapped in the heat of summer. **Selah.**
I acknowledged my sin to you. I didn't hide my iniquity.
I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Holy One,
And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.' **Selah.***