

Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah Ki Tavo:** Deuteronomy 26:16 - 27:8
Haftarah: Isaiah 60:3-4
B'rit Chadasha: Luke 21:2

Today you have declared

[Deuteronomy 26:17a]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 27:13-14;

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

Hayom hazeh - This day ... *Adonai Eloheicha metzaveicha* – the Holy One your God is charging you ... *la'asot et-ha-chukim ha-eleh v'et-ha-mish'patim* - to focus your creativity on making these redemptive directives and situation-specific decrees of restoration become visible, tangible, and functional Deuteronomy 26:16a.

The Moavian Plain offers a spectacular vista. The pulsing energy of covenantal ceremony fills the air. The Bride has finally made herself ready. Precious gifts have been exchanged. Beautiful vows of consecration, exclusivity, and fidelity are being spoken. The Heavens and the Earth stand in witness. Solemn commitments are being recorded. Kingdom vocabulary is flowing like rain. This is a day to be remembered and talked about for generations.

What is That in Your Hand?

Back at Horeb, what seems like ages ago, the Holy One once asked Moshe a cryptic question: 'What is that in your hand?' See Exodus 4:2. Moshe's answer, at that time was 'Mateh' – i.e. 'a rod/staff'. Now, however, the time for the rod/staff of Moshe is fading away. Both the land of Egypt and the wilderness road, where that rod/staff was necessary, lie behind us. The prophet's rod/staff has served its purpose well, but it is no longer needed. What we are called to carry into the land is not a rod/staff – it is another kind of sign altogether. We are called to carry a sign of commitment and consecration. What is that in our hand? It is not a rod/staff; it is a *bridal bouquet*. The name by which we call this beautiful, fragrant, twelve-piece Bridal arrangement is 'Torah'. It consists of a dozen distinct proofs of both our special relationship with and our consecration to our King. When all twelve are joined together they release the sweet, majestic fragrance of Messianic Reign into the world. The components that make up our bouquet of *nissuin* (consecration) are:

1. *mitzvot* [KJV, 'commandments' - i.e. proactive life, health, and shalom-

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- generating strategies];
2. *mishpatim* [KJV, ‘judgments’ - *i.e.* situation-specific wholeness-restoration approaches flowing out of Pure, Peaceable Divine Wisdom];
 3. *edut* [KJV ‘testimonies’ - *i.e.* parable-like proof-texts showing the Holy One’s faithfulness to His Covenant partners and their progeny];
 4. *toldot* [KJV ‘genealogies’ - *i.e.* generation-transcending stories teaching us the repeating patterns of *tikkun* [redemption/restoration] the Holy One has established for different critical bloodlines];
 5. *torot* [KJV ‘laws’- *i.e.* wise, practical life-skill instructions taught by a Master to a son, an apprentice, or a protégé];
 6. *derachot* [KJV ‘ways’ – *i.e.* journey-completion ‘hacks’; destination-minded focuses, priorities, and practices];
 7. *devarim* [KJV ‘words’ – *i.e.* true-tone, spirit-awakening, inspiring, energizing, and empowering speeches];
 8. *piqudim* [KJV ‘precepts’ – *i.e.* announced inspection protocols],
 9. *chukim* [KJV statutes/ordinances – *i.e.* ‘just-because-my-loved-one-said-it-and-I-love-and-trust-Him-so-that’s-enough-for-me’ directives];
 10. *mishmeret* [KJV ‘charge’ – *i.e.* clearly announced prioritization protocols];
 11. *brit* [KJV ‘covenant’- *i.e.* mutual commitments to relationship enhancing and Creation-restoring thoughts, emotions, priorities, protocols, appointed times of meeting and accountability, and behaviors]; and
 12. *brachot* [KJV ‘blessings’ – *i.e.* forward-looking, identity and mission reshaping verbal empowerments that break off self- or society-imposed limitations and/or restrictions and free a person, family, or community up to step into its Covenantal destiny].

That is quite a bouquet, isn’t it! So ...are you carrying it? Are you holding fresh stems from each variety firmly in your grasp? Are the leaves, buds, flowers, and fruit of each of the twelve species visible? Can you – and the world around you – smell the sweet scent of Messiah’s anointing oil emanating from the spray? Or – Heaven forbids – are you attempting to walk the Narrow Road leading to your next encounter with the Bridegroom-King *empty-handed*?

As For Me and My House ...

As Rachel groaned in the throes of her delivery of Benoni/Binyamin into the world², Moshe is laboring loudly to bring forth the *sh’ma*-people of the Most High God. Released at long last from the responsibility of guiding *B’nei Yisrael* out of Egypt, then around the wilderness, past sin-scenarios, and through the valley of the shadow of death, he has finally begun to see the bigger picture that the Holy One has been trying to show him all along. He has finally begun to understand the magnitude of our Covenant calling. He now recognizes the depth

² Genesis 35:17-18 reports this event as follows: *And when there was but a little distance to go to Efrat, Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor. So it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Binyamin.*

of post-Fall humanity's need for a nation of *sh'ma-ing*, *sh'mar-ing*, *asah-ing*, *visionary*, *fruit bearing*, *shalom-spreading*, *patiently enduring*, and *faithful-to-the-end* role models patterned after Avraham Avinu. He has begun to see the world-changing possibilities and potential that the Holy One designed into and is calling forth from us - but he has also begun to see the very real distractions, the extremely powerful seductions, and the serious challenges the *yetzer hara* within us and others will cast before us. He knows there will be enormous challenges to overcome along the way. He knows that if we are to meet those challenges, overcome the *yetzer hara*, and go on to accomplish even a small part of the goal the Holy One has in mind for us, we are going to need to have at least ten times as much practical wisdom about how to live well-lived lives on earth among our fellow man as we have about how to worship in the Courts of Heaven.

Sefer D'varim is the *magnum opus* that flows out of Moshe's new level of understanding. It consists of a series of inspired wisdom discourses that Moshe delivered on the plains of Moav over the course of the final 36 days of his life. Moshe's second speech – the one I call the '*Diverging Pathways Discourse*' – is nearing a climax. *Ki Tavo* provides a segue between the prophet's call for the birthing of a nation to a father's call to long lost sons and daughters to come home – to 'turn and return again'. In this part of the discourse Moshe presents us with *critical challenges and areas of critical choice lie before us to get back to – and complete our assigned journey on - the Narrow Road pathway*. Moshe has been explaining to us how, in light of our Covenant with the Holy One, we are going to need to learn to:

1. *stay tuned into and consistently receive and rebroadcast counsel, instructions, and communications from the Holy One;*
2. *visualize and approach the world and every human being in it through the lens of Covenant and the Grand, Cross-Generational Plan of the Holy One for the Redemption of Mankind and the Restoration of Creation to its Edenic state of fruitfulness;*
3. *evaluate, process, and respond to what we see, hear, and experience in this world with the common good and the agenda of the Kingdom of Heaven in mind, instead of through eyes of self-interest;*
4. *be emotionally healthy – remaining full of shalom at all times;*
5. *speak eloquently – but only as and when the Holy One directs;*
6. *behave wisely and righteously – but only as and when and to the extent the Holy One directs;*
7. *relate to and interact with other human beings - when they at their best and when they are at their worst;*
8. *make fruitful every square inch of Creation we are given to*

steward, and

9. *live out our allotted days upon the earth* in a way that will inspire our families, our communities, and even our enemies, to seek to know and serve our God.

The ‘Diverging Pathways’ discourse has been *a soaring masterpiece of spiritual empowerment*. It should come as no surprise therefore to learn that this speech – the one that contains the *sh’ma* as well as specific instructions for everything from Divinely enhanced vision to *sanctified Kingdom Administration to worship in spirit and in truth* to our *individual responsibilities to care for the poor, the widow, the fatherless, and the foreigner that come within our spheres of influence* to *how to remain righteous and represent Heaven’s goodness even in the throes of warfare* – is the section of the TaNaKh most quoted and referenced by Yeshua³. This section of sacred writ is also the foundation of all the Master’s teachings about His absolute favorite subject – the *Kingdom of Heaven*. If I could sum the second speech of Moshe on the plain of Moav up in a few words, I would probably do so by saying that it is in this section of Holy Writ, more than any other, that *we find the explanation of what we have been called, chosen, redeemed from bondage, and empowered from on High to ‘build’ upon earth*. We are, it seems, like our ancestors, destined by birth to be in the *construction business*.

If You Build It

We are, it seems, destined by birth to be in the *construction business*. In Egypt our fathers built *store cities*. At Sinai they built a *Mish’kan* [Tabernacle]. Moshe’s speeches on the plains of Moav teach us that we are also to be builders. What we are to build is a City set on a hill that cannot be hidden. The blueprint for the City of the Holy One that we are to build with the fabric of our lives is contained within the second speech of Moshe on the plains of Moav - in much the same way that the blueprint for the Sinaitic *Mish’kan* was contained in chapters 25-29 of Exodus.

Messiah is the project superintendent for our eternal building project; we are merely day laborers. The key to the City we are to build on earth is the *sh’ma*-principle – that *we move/build only in response to and in accordance with the Project Superintendent’s instructions*. Put another way, it could be said that we build by *doing only what we see our Father in Heaven doing*. We are not building the City for the Holy One, you see, the way our ancestors built the store cities of Egypt for Pharaoh. We are building the City of the Holy One with Him – in His strength, following His lead. As it is written: *Except the Holy One build the house its builders labor in vain. Unless the Holy One sh’mar’s the City the*

³ See, for example, Matthew 4:4, 7, and 10; Mark 2:28-29.

watchmen stand guard in vain. Psalm 127:1.

That brings us to today's aliyah. Today Moshe will lead us across a *literary bridge* into his third great speech on the Plain.

It is Time for A Renewal of Our Betrothal Vows

The last four verses of Moshe's second speech consist of Moshe *leading B'nei Yisrael* in a *renewal of the betrothal covenant vows of Mount Sinai*. This time there will be no *shofar*, no thunder or lightning, and no thundering Voice from Heaven. Instead Moshe, the 'friend of the Bridegroom', will quietly lead *B'nei Yisrael* to the altar, will place her hand in the Hand of the Holy One, and will have B'nei Yisrael repeat a passionate set of renewal vows written just for the occasion. Do you know the words the Eternal One longs to speak over you? And perhaps even more important, do you know the words His Heart longs to hear from your lips?

The Vows the King Has Written For His Bride

Moshe describes the commitments the Eternal One longs to hear from our lips and our hearts as follows:

l'asot et-ha-chukim ha-eleh v'et-ha-mish'patim

*to do*⁴ [Hebrew *asah*] *these statutes and ordinances:*

v'shamarta v'asita otam

and to keep [Hebrew *sh'mar*] *and do* [Hebrew *asah*] *them*

b'chol-levavcha uv'chol-nafsheicha

with all your heart, and with all your soul.

lehiyot lecha l'Elohim v'lelechet b'drachav

And He is to be your God, and that you would walk in his ways,

v'lish'mor chukav umitzvotav umish'patav

and keep [Hebrew *sh'mar*] *his statutes, and his mitzvot, and his ordinances,*

v'lish'moa b'kolo

and listen [Hebrew *sh'ma*] *to his Voice.*

[Deuteronomy 26:16-17]

The Holy One deserves a people who will memorize and meditate on the Words He longs to hear – and who will be ready, willing, and enthusiastic when the time comes to speak those words and make the commitments those words describe.

⁴ The Hebrew verb utilized here is *asah* [*ayin, sin, hey*]. It means *to craft, or form, something, as an artisan*. Picture a potter, sitting at his wheel. He takes clay, and interacts with it, and forms something precious from it. The actions the potter takes in regard to the clay is what it means to *asah*. It means *to inject creativity according to a plan, with a desired product in mind*.

The Vows the Bridegroom-King Makes To Us

What will be the Bridegroom's vows over us? What promises and declarations do we need to hear from Him anew and afresh in this season? In response to our vows, our Divine Bridegroom promises:

Liheyot lo l'am segulah

...to make of you an am segulah [a people peculiarly His]

v'lish'mor kol-mitzvotav

for the keeping [Hebrew, l' sh'mar] of all his mitzvot;

Uletitcha elyon al kol-ha-goyim asher asah

and He will set you high above all nations that he has made,

l'tehilah ul'shem ul'tifaret

in praise, and in name, and in honor;

v'liheyotcha am-k'dosh l'Adonai Elohecha

and you will be an am k'dosh [holy nation] to the Holy One your God,

ka'asher diber

according to all He has spoken.

[Deuteronomy 26:18-19]

Making a Choice This Day

You may note that the phrase “*this day*” [in Hebrew, *ha-yom hazeh*] is repeated three times in the brief passage. The point is that the covenant that is being spoken of in this book of Deuteronomy is a covenant for *this day* – for *today!* It is a covenant for *this instant*, as you read these words on this page. It is a covenant *for your heart and for mine* – for *your household* and for mine – for *your world* and for mine. It is a not a matter of mere history. It cannot be written off or passively observed as the archaic creed of a prior generation, or a people strange to you, or of some other time, place, or nation. It is a NOW word. It is a NOW calling. It is a NOW covenant. He is a NOW God. There is a sense of urgency. So, right now, in the sanctity of this moment, respond to Him! Answer His call. Say “yes” or say “no” – it is *your choice*. Choose this day whom you will serve. But do not let “this day” go by without responding to Him.

On the one hand is a life of interaction with the Holy One, in Messiah, through *mitzvot*, allowing yourself to be *taught by* and *accountable to* Him day-by-day, moment-by-moment. But there are many other trails you can choose to wander down. There are many other ways you can choose to live your life. None of those other ways is the way He has chosen for His creation to interact with and fellowship with Him.

Do you hear the prophetic call from the mountains of Eretz Yisrael? *Hayom HazeH!!! Hayom HazeH!!! HAYOM HAZEH!!! This day*, Beloved - *this very day*. *This day* is our day for *renewing the vows* we made to our Divine Bridegroom at Sinai. Do it now, right where you are. Make your commitment to Him fresh, and current, and wild, and raw again. He deserves nothing less. And you could aspire to nothing more glorious than to complete the great mission you have started – and to finish the race with every bit as much passion, if not more, as you had when you began it.

Introducing the Third and Final Speech of Moshe

It is almost time for Moshe to bid us farewell and for us to let Y'hoshua lead us into the land of our destiny. But Moshe has *one last speech* to deliver to us before he goes. In his final speech – and in the epilogue to that speech - Moshe will don the mantle of the Holy One's end-times *navi* [prophet] for one *last time*. He will declare for us what will occur *in times to come*.

Some of what Moshe has to say in his third speech we will probably not like. He is going to prophesy of some very, very bad times ahead for us – followed by some very, very good times. But he will leave no question about the end of it all – that, after all is said and done, and the smoke clears, and the dust settles, *the Holy One's will is going to be done, on earth as it is in Heaven* – and we will be right there in the middle of it.

The Holy One's plan of redemption of Creation – a plan in which He has ordained that we are to play a significant role – will succeed. In the process of his discussions regarding the outworking of this Great Plan over the course of history, Moshe will leave no doubt that - despite our failures and sins - the Kingdom of Heaven will in fact come to planet earth. And the City of the Holy One will indeed be built. That City will shine for all the world to see. Multitudes from all nations will come to its Light.

The Great Prophetic Day Of Crossing Over

The third speech on the plain begins with Moshe and the *zakenim* [tribal elders] planning *the first act in which the Redeemed Community will engage after crossing the Yarden* [Jordan]. As soon as the crossing is complete, this is what is to happen:

V'hayah b'yom asher ta'avru et-ha-Yarden

It will come to pass on the day when you cross over the Yarden

el-ha-aretz asher-Adonai Eloheicha noten lach

to the land which the Holy One your God gives you,

v'hakemota lecha avanim gedolot
that you will set yourself up avanim gedolot [great stones],

v'sadeita otam basid
and plaster them with plaster:

V'chatavta aleihen et-kol-divrei ha-torah hazot
and you are to write on them all the words of this Torah,

b'ovreicha l'ma'an asher tavo el-ha-aretz
when you are passed over; that you may go into the land

asher-Adonai Eloheicha noten lecha
that the Holy One your God gives you,

eretzt zavat chalav udevash
a land zavat chalav udevash [flowing with milk and honey],

ka'asher diber Adonai Elohei-avoteicha lach
as the Holy One, the God of your fathers, has promised you.

V'hayah b'ovreichem et-ha-Yarden
And it is therefore to occur, when you are passed over the Yarden,

takimu et-ha-avanim ha-eleh asher anochi metzaveh etchem ha-yom
that you are to set up these stones, as I enjoin you this day,

b'har Eyval v'saideta otam basid
in Mount `Eyval, and you are to plaster them with plaster.

[Deuteronomy 27:3-4]

The land the Holy One promised to Avraham, to Yitzchak, to Ya'akov, and to their descendants looms just ahead - just across the Jordan River. It has been a generation now since any of our number [i.e. the 12 spies] walked there. We are very, very close, now – just awaiting the Holy One's word to enter and occupy. What are we to do *when our feet first touch that hallowed soil?* Moshe wants us to know that the first thing the Redeemed Community is to do upon entering the Promised Land is *to set up Stones of Remembrance* – like gigantic *mezuzot* - and write on them *the Torah of the Holy One*. Like raising a flag on a beachhead during wartime, *we are to declare the Torah as our standard* - and are to claim it, in the hearing of all, as the *Constitution according to which we live*. The Torah will be *the 'cornerstone'* of the new life we will lead.

Written In Stone

Stone tablets *are us*, right? The covenant nation and stone tablets have a glorious history together! Why wouldn't we carry that forward when we enter the Land? May all who will enter the land need to know the substance of the covenant we have with the Creator of the Universe – and *the effect that covenant is expected to have upon the thought-life, speech, and behavior of the human beings called to*

participate in that covenant.

The Kingdom-Building Program Starts With the Erection of Stones Of Remembrance

The author of these studies lives in a city in America that straddles a boundary line dividing two American *states*. Large signs tell me clearly when I leave the state of exile in which I presently reside [Texas] and cross over into the neighboring state of Arkansas. Large signs also warn me that as I cross over I am about to become *subject to a wholly different set of traffic laws*. I therefore understand both *the purpose* and *the significance* of the “Stones of Remembrance” Moshe instructed the people to set in place at the boundary of the land of promise.

V'hayah bayom asher ta'avru et-ha-Yarden

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

el-ha-aretz asher-Adonai Eloheicha noten lach

to the land which the Eternal One your God is giving you,

v'hakemota lecha avanim gedolot v'sadeita otam basid

you are to set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime.

V'chatavta aleihen et-kol-divrei ha-torah hazot b'ovreicha

write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over,

l'ma'an asher tavo el-ha-aretz asher-Adonai Eloheicha noten lecha

that you may enter the land which the Eternal One your God is giving you,

eretz zavav chalay udevash

a land flowing with milk and honey,

ka'asher diber Adonai Elohei-avoteicha lach

just as the Eternal One, God of your fathers, promised you.

Stones from the Jordan River. Large ones. Taken from the waters, set up, whitewashed with lime, and inscribed with the very life-instructions of the Living God – what Moshe calls ***kol-divrei ha torah hazot*** [*i.e.* ‘all the words of this Torah’]. Heaven’s instruction manual for human life on planet Earth – written in plain language for all to see. *Selah!* And we have this treasure in earthen vessels! England has *the Magna Carta*; the United States of America has *the Constitution* - and the Kingdom of Heaven has its governing document as well.

All Who Enter This Kingdom, Take Note!

Ah, Beloved, may all who shall ever pass by those Stones *take note*. *The land* you just entered is different from any other land you will ever see. *The people* who live by the words inscribed on these Stones are different. This is the mystery: The Creator of the Universe has made a covenant with the residents of

this land that sets them apart from all the other peoples of the earth. And the secret to the mystery is the words of life that are inscribed upon these Stones. Many people may pass through the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. They are welcome to visit. They may remain foreigners if they choose, and if they do they will be cared for, treated well, given special consideration while they are here, and bid a fond farewell when they leave. Those who desire to naturalize – i.e. become citizens – must assimilate into the Kingdom and accept it as the source of their new identity. Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth must agree to both live for Heaven's King and adjust their lifestyle, bit by bit, to the eternal principles of the Kingdom He has established.

The Stone Altar Commemorating Our Entrance

And after we have erected the Stones of the Covenant, whitewashed them, and written the Torah on them for all to see, then we are to build an altar of stones. This is the last altar the Eternal One will have us build. It is a special altar commemorating and celebrating our entry into the promised land. Here are the exact building specifications the Eternal One gave Moshe to lay out for us:

Uvanita sham mizbe'ach l'Adonai Eloheicha

There you are to build a mizbe'ach [altar] to the Eternal One your God,

mizbach avanim

mizbach avanim [an altar of stones]:

lo-tanif aleihem barzel

you are to lift up no iron [tool] on them.

Avanim shlemot tivneh et-mizbach Adonai Eloheicha

You are to build the altar of the Holy One your God of uncut stones;

This altar of stones was not by any means to replace the brazen altar of the *Mish'kan* as the primary place of drawing near to the Holy One. It was designed solely as an altar of remembrance. On it we were to present only two specific types of *korbanot*.

v'ha-alita alav olot l'Adonai Eloheicha

*and you are to approach thereunto with olot l'Adonai
[i.e. burnt offerings to the Eternal One your God]:*

V'zavachta shlamim

and you are to approach thereunto through shlamim [peace-offerings],

v'achalta sham

and you are to eat them there;

v'samachta lifnei Adonai Eloheicha

and you are to rejoice before/in the Presence of the Eternal One your God.

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

*And inscribe on the stones all the words of this Torah very plainly*⁵.

[Deuteronomy 27:5-8]

This special day is to have a *special altar*. This is one of the very few occasions we are to approach the Holy One somewhere other than at the brazen altar of the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle]. Our approach on this special day is to be limited to offerings through which we declare [1] our wholehearted love for and our complete dedication to our Bridegroom-King [*i.e. korbanot olahot*] and offerings through which we declare our wholehearted love for and complete dedication to the welfare of our fellow man [*i.e. korbanot shlamim*].

These specific types of *korbanot* represent our declaration that we will indeed 'love the Eternal One our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength' and will 'love your neighbor as yourself'.

As you will recall from Leviticus chapter 1 the *korban olah* is the first pathway to intimacy with our Divine Bridegroom. It symbolizes *the total dedication of the worshipper and the complete submission of the worshipper to the will of the Holy One*. And you will recall from Leviticus 3 the *korban shalom* [sometimes called a peace offering or fellowship offering] is the submission of all one's *interpersonal relationships* to the Holy One. It is this offering that declares that we are at *shalom* with - and wish *shalom* for - all the Holy One's Redeemed Community. It is this *korban* that consists of a covenant meal shared by all worshippers. Making *korban shalom* declares: "*He has brought me to His banqueting table; and His banner over me is love.*"

Among the *korbanot* that were not to be presented on this stone altar were *sin offerings, grain offerings, or guilt offering*. The kingdom transactions those things represented were to take place solely at the brazen altar of the *Mish'kan*.

Ya'akov Has Come Back Home!

The construction of a crude stone altar upon re-entering the Land of Promise is reminiscent of our ancestor Ya'akov's promise to the Holy One in Genesis 28. If you will recall, after Ya'akov saw the vision of angels ascending to and descending from Heaven at the place Torah calls *Beit-El*, the Eternal One reiterated to Ya'akov the covenant He had made with Avraham. The next morning Ya'akov *took a stone, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it, and made a vow, saying:*

If the Eternal One will be with me,

⁵ According to the Talmud this means that the Torah was written on the stones in 70 languages. See *Sotah 32b; Targum Yonatan; Rashi*.

*and will watch over me on this journey I am taking,
and give me food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I return safely to my father's house,
then the Eternal One will be my God,
and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be the Eternal One's house,
and of all that You give me I will give you a tenth.*

[Genesis 28:20-22]

Ya'akov – through his descendants – is about to ‘*return safely to his father's house*’. The Eternal One has indeed given him *food* [man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Eternal One], and *clothes to wear* [the *mitzvot* are the linen garments called ‘*the righteous acts of the saints*’ – see Revelation 19:8].

The building of the stone altar referenced in today's aliyah is not, of course, the ultimate fulfillment of Ya'akov's vow to the Eternal One. Ultimate fulfillment of that vow awaits some yet future event, possibly the building of the Millennial Temple described in the book of Ezekiel. And yet each generation descended from Ya'akov – us included - is both privileged and obliged to participate in some way in building the ‘house’ of the Eternal One in Eretz Yisrael:

*And you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house,
to be a holy priesthood making spiritual korbanot approaches
acceptable to the Eternal One in Messiah Yeshua.*

[I Peter 2:5]

Ya'akov is returning Beloved - even as we speak! And the stones are crying out: “*Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Eternal One!*”

Questions For Today's Study

1. The last section of Chapter 26 centers around declarations of covenant being made by the people and by the Holy One. This is like a renewal of the betrothal vows, such as is made at a wedding.

[A] List the declarations made “this day” by the Redeemed.

[B] List the declarations made “this day” by the Holy One.

[C] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the word translated “treasured possession” in verse 18. Write the Hebrew word and its definition.

2. The covenant relationship to which the Holy One calls us has both a “this day” and a future aspect to it. At the beginning of Chapter 27 Moshe and the *Zakenim* [tribal elders] team up in a rare joint enterprise. What is the subject matter of this joint enterprise? They jointly instruct the people what to do upon crossing over the Yarden [Jordan]. This is fascinating. They do not want the crossing of the Jordan to be ‘just another stage’ in the Journey. They want it to be remembered forever. And they want all people, of all generations, to feel the same way, and know what kinds of things to do, when they enter the Promised

Land for the first time.

[A] What two different kinds of landmarks were the Redeemed of the Holy One told to establish after crossing the Yarden [Jordan] into Eretz Yisrael?

[B] What were the Redeemed of the Eternal One to inscribe at/upon the first kind of landmark?

[C] What purposes do you see for such an act?

[D] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the word translated "crossed over" in verses 2, 3 and 4. Write the Hebrew word and its definition.

[E] What were the Redeemed of the Holy One supposed to do at the other landmark they were to construct?

3. The events recorded in today's aliyah are real, and should not be "spiritualized" or made into a mere allegory. In this season of *t'shuvah*, I think they be *personalized*, in order that each of us can accurately assess where we are. In response to the Holy One's question "*Where are you, Adam?*" Keeping this in mind:

[A] In your spiritual life, in what ways, and from where to where, have you "crossed over"?

[B] What spiritual "landmarks" mark the crossing(s) you have made?

[C] In your crossings, what flowing streams [like the Yarden] did you pass through to reach your destination?

[D] What further crossing(s) is the Holy One calling you to make?

4. In the Haftarah reading this week we are focusing upon the prophetic cry of Yeshayahu for all the Holy One's people to *Kumi Ohri!* [ARISE! SHINE!]. In the verses assigned for today, we read:

V'halchu goyim l'oreich

The Gentiles⁶/nations/ethnic groups will come to your light,

umelachim l'nogah zarcheich

And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Se'i-saviv eynayich ure'i

"Lift up your eyes all around, and behold:

kulam nikbeitzu va'u-lach

They are all gathering together, they are coming to you;

B'nayich merachok yavo'u

Your sons will come from afar,

⁶ *Gentiles* is the English translation given to the Hebrew word *goyim* [*gimel, vav, yod, mem sofit*, pronounced *go-yeem*, masculine plural of Strong's Hebrew word #1471]. The term *goyim* is a Hebraic idiom referring to *nations* or *people groups* neither physically descended from Ya'akov/Yisrael, nor having converted to the Torah-lifestyle.

uvenotayich al-tzad te'amanah
and your daughters will be nursed at your side.
[Isaiah 60:3-4]

[A] What will “nations” and “kings” *cross over* from and to?

[B] Who will “be assembled” and gathered to Israel? What do you think this means?

5. In today’s B’rit Chadasha reading we see that in the midst of the Holy One’s warning to His *talmidim* and all the people about the true spiritual condition of the religious leaders of the day, a picture of what He is talking about unfolds right before our eyes. The object lesson is this: gifts are put into the Temple treasury simultaneously by some of the richest people – and one of the poorest - of the country.

*And He [Yeshua] looked up and saw the wealthy depositing their gifts into the treasury⁷,
and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites⁸.*

[Luke 21:1-2]

[A] Look up the word translated “treasury” [KJV] in Strong’s. Write the Greek word and its meaning.

[B] According to Edersheim’s book “*The Temple: It’s Ministries and Services*” the Temple at the time of Messiah had 13 different receptacles for donations, all molded in the shape of a ram’s horn [shofar]. As people put coins in the large opening at the end of the “horn”, the coins would make noise as they slid downward through the curves of the horn to the bottom. What kind of noise do you think was made when a rich person put in a load of coins? What do you think it sounded like when a widow threw in two mites?

*May **this day** be a day of renewed covenant for each of us.*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Psalm 27:13-14

I am still confident of this:

I will see the goodness of the Holy One in the land of the living.

Wait for the Holy One. Be strong, and let your heart take courage.

And yes, wait for the Holy One.

⁷ The term ‘treasury’ refers to a particular area of Herod’s Temple, in the Court of the Women. In Yeshua’s time this area is said to have housed thirteen receptacles, each in the shape of a shofar [curved ram’s horn trumpet], which served as repositories for donations to the ministry of the Temple. See Smith’s Bible Dictionary.

⁸ The word *mite* as used in this verse is a contraction of the Latin *minutum*. The Greek word so translated is *lepton*. It refers to the very smallest copper coin minted and circulated in Yeshua’s day.