

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Ha'azinu:*** **Deuteronomy 32:19-35**
 Haftarah: **II Samuel 22:17-35**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Revelation 14:14-20**

***I will hide my Face from them -
and behold ... what their acharit [latter days] will be!***
[Deuteronomy 32:20]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 33:10-12;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 8th Petition, *Mishpat* [The Petition for Judgment]

Vayar Adonai – And the Holy One saw ... ***vayin'atz mika'as banav uv'notav*** – and He scorned/had contempt on the provocation of His sons and daughters. **Deuteronomy 32:19.**

The *Song of Moshe* is ringing out across the earth. Let us join the *shir* in progress.

Oh no - it looks like there is trouble afoot! A new generation of Avraham's seed has replaced the old one. This generation is so profane, so flesh-obsessed, so sensuality-driven instead of Torah-submissive that the minstrel has now taken to calling them by the derisive stage name 'Yeshurun' instead of as 'B'nei Yisrael'. Are these misfits really supposed to be recognized – and respected – as heirs of the Avrahamic covenant? Look at them – they are *nothing* like their Divinely-beloved ancestor! They are profane, not reverent. They are arrogant, not humble. They are self-absorbed and lazy, not the least bit eager to serve their fellow men. They are brutish, not gentle. They are haters, not lovers. They are self-righteous and judgmental, not merciful. They are condemning, not forgiving. They are cruel, not kind. They do not even acknowledge, much less fear the Holy One; much less do they love Him, or cherish and treasure His words of covenant, or incline their ear to His voice. They delight in perverseness and uncleanness, blatantly rejecting the Holy One's call to model to the world His more excellent ways of *tahorah* and *kedusha*. They have zero passion to participate in His Grand Plan for the Redemption of Mankind as a species, bloodline by bloodline, household by household, individual by individual, as many as will come. They have no vision for restoring all Creation, continent by continent and watershed by watershed, to its intended Edenic state of beauty, fruitfulness, and *shalom*. How could these self-indulgent gluttons, drunkards, and narcissists be anyone's '*am segulah*' – much less the 'holy nation' of the Most High God? How could a people who think, talk, act, and mis-prioritize things as profanely as the raging nations possibly function as

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Heaven's appointed ambassadors to earth? Turning self-obsessed and rebellious, 'Yeshurun' has repeatedly *yielded to the insatiable appetites of her flesh and pseudo-intellect to a series of sordid affairs with the gods* of other cultures. Something is rotten in *Dan* and *Beit-El* – and everywhere in between. If she were just another nation, it would not be so bad. But she is NOT just another nation – or at least she is not supposed to be! As B'nei Yisrael goes, you see, so goes the world.

The picture Moshe is presenting regarding future generations of B'nei Yisrael has not been inspiring so far – but thank Heaven the story isn't over yet! Several verses have yet to be sung; numerous overtures remain to be played. Be careful not judge the song - or give up on *B'nei Yisrael* – I mean 'Yeshurun' - quite yet. Be patient – stunning movements of redemption and restoration are coming!

But First – Getting an Understanding of the Great 'Falling Away'

The song that will be sung along with the *Song of the Lamb*² in the World to Come is at a stunning crossroads. The waters of the prophetic river flowing forth from Moshe's lips are about to *rush into* and *settle on* the *lowest places of our communal and individual history*. What is at work in B'nei Yisrael, the heroine of our story, you see, is the age-old malevolent force I call the *attraction of spiritual gravity*. Fortunately, this is just going to turn out to be one verse of an epic ballad, not a one-line chorus. Provocation is an essential part of all love stories – but it is not going to control how the song of the redeemed will end. It is merely one of the gauntlet-challenges that all lovers – and indeed all relationships - must go through. We will, as they say, one day all look back on this – shake our heads, and laugh. But we should not laugh NOW. There are so many things – important lessons – that we need to learn while we are at this crucible.

All who would serve the Holy One need to understand – and overcome – the attraction of spiritual gravity. All who would represent the Holy One before the nations need to know where the Great Threshold of Divine Provocation – and how to steer clear of it. We need to know what attitudes, words, and behaviors cross the doorsill that leads into dark seasons of 'Yeshurun' - and why those attitudes, words, and behaviors cannot be allowed to become part of our lives. We need to know the consequences that flow from the crossing of the dark . And we need to know the required protocols for getting back to where we belong, once those consequences awaken us to the mess we have gotten ourselves – and our spheres of influence – in through no one's fault but our own.

The Inexplicable Attraction of Spiritual Gravity

² This is according to Revelation 15:3.

Just as in the natural realm rushing water always seeks out the lowest elevations – *i.e.* the physical *wadis*, valleys, crevices, pits, and marshes of the landscape - so the prophetic Word of the Holy One is always laser-guided by *Ruach Ha-Kodesh* [*i.e.* the Holy Spirit] to find and attach to man in the lowest elevations to which our species migrate – *i.e.* the spiritual *wadis*, valleys, pits, and marshes of human folly, stubbornness, rebellion, arrogance, cruelty, oppression, flesh-obsession, and sin. Think of what happens when it rains. Puddles form in the depressions of the earth. Water accumulates in ditches. The force of gravity draws the water in the ditches to lower elevations still – to creek beds, and to ponds, and to lakes and river valleys, and then all the way to the seas and oceans. And alas as the rushing water flows into the low places of the earth it causes the filth and scum that has migrated to those low places to float to the surface and become exposed.

Think for a moment of the Holy One’s first recorded conversation with Kayin. The Holy One approached Kayin in the midst of his sulking and scheming, and whispered to Him:

*Why are you kindled/triggered? [Hebrew. charah]
And why has your countenance fallen?
If you do **tov**, will you not be accepted?
And if you do not do **tov**, **chata’at** lies at the door.
And though its desire is to rule you, but you can conquer and control it.*

[Genesis 4:6-7]

Kayin was in the lowest place imaginable. That is where *Ruach ha-Kodesh* sought him out and released the Empowering Words of the Holy One over Him. So it goes with the Holy One’s Words. They never fall short of their target. They never fail to accomplish their objective. When they do not find a receptive ear on the mountaintops of human experience, they rush to the valley of the shadow of death. When they do not find a heart willing to respond in the palaces of this world’s kings, political and religious leaders, or the moguls of education, entertainment, and commerce they hasten to the huts and hovels of the poor, the downtrodden, and the disenfranchised. As the prophetic word reaches its target and sets things in motion, it stirs up and brings to the surface for all to see a *toxic soup of spiritual debris in human beings*. Our initial response is often to cover our eyes against the revolting images that appear in our mirrors, to stop up our ears against the vile outbursts of our own vanity, and to *hold our noses* against the nauseating stench of our own putrid flesh.

That may describe the first response of some readers to today’s verses. We will, you see, read in these verses about the ‘dark night’ portion of the history of *Am Yisrael* – *i.e.*, the long and painful ‘*times of the gentiles*’ epoch which will lead us inexorably to the era of ‘*Jacob’s Trouble*’. Movement #5 of Moshe’s final *shir* will

introduce the theme: *‘The Low Points To Which the Chosen People Sink When They Break Away from the Holy One and His Covenant’*.

Moshe prophesies that Avraham’s descendants will not always treasure the Covenant they received at Sinai. In many generations they will dissect it with their minds, will add form to it and subtract substance from it, and will thus rob it of its beauty and its atmosphere-shifting power. They will cause it to lose its intended influence not only in the world, but in their own lives, and in the lives of their children. This movement is seen in Deuteronomy 32:19-22.

Movement #6 of the *shir* will introduce the theme of *Calamities and Dire Straits Start to Befall The Covenant People’*. As the Holy one warned us in parsha *Ki Tavo*, the Path of the Runaway Bride is a broad path that leads to destruction. Vast numbers of the Covenant People will, because of the terrible lifestyle and relational choices they have made, and their abandonment of the Covenant and its mitzvot, suffer many calamities and pass through a series of ever narrowing straits. This is the theme of Deuteronomy 32:23-28.

Movement #7 of the *shir* begins in verse 29 and will continue through verse 42 - part of which we will study tomorrow. The theme of this movement is *‘The Holy One is Faithful to His Covenant Through All Generations, Notwithstanding His People’s Rejection of It’*. And this brings us back to the story of the Holy One and Kayin, Dear Reader.

Alas, Kayin did not even acknowledge the Holy One’s visitation, much less accept the Holy One’s prophetic empowerment. That was his choice. That is, indeed, the choice of multitudes. Despite the personal visitation, the chilling warning, and the inspiring exhortation of the Holy One in the direst of circumstances, most insist on doing life ‘their way’. They insist on thinking they are ‘right’ and everyone else is ‘wrong’. They sulk. They criticize. They accuse. They scheme. They lash out at others. They cover up. They lie. They indulge the Thief’s lifestyle of stealing, killing, and destroying for the sake of stealing, killing and destroying. If that is our choice, the Holy One will not override it. If we want to justify our bad attitude, negative speech, and bad behavior by blaming others or just declaring that life is not fair, He will not stop us. But one thing we *can never* say is that the Holy One did not offer us a far, far better alternative than the route we chose.

The River of Life from the Fountain of Wisdom always rushes to the lowest place; but we have to make the choice – and expend the effort – to drink from it.

Every Day’s Challenge

As stated above, we will read today of a long season of waywardness, folly, and

rebellion in the ranks of many – indeed the overwhelming majority – of those within the Redeemed Community. Refusing the overtures and offers of the Holy One will result in long seasons of barrenness, followed by enemy invasion, culminating in foreign oppression, exile, dispersion, persecution, calamity, Holocaust, and Jihad. The foolhardy soulish responses of people to the ‘low points of life’ will lead to even lower points. But the pagan hordes that invade and oppress us and destroy our children could have no power over us whatever if not for our *rebellion against the Holy One and His Ways* and our collusion with the darker part of our own hearts and minds.

The verses we will read from Moshe’s prophetic song today will therefore necessarily tell us a few things about ourselves which we will absolutely NOT want to hear. Ah, but *faithful are the wounds of a Friend*³. Rest assured that the Holy One’s purpose in exposing these things is not *vengeance*. It is all aimed at, and a necessary part of, our *redemption – of how and when all Israel will be saved*.

There is, you see, *another side* to the effects of spiritual gravity. Just as the prophetic waters of revelation go to the lowest places of sin and waywardness, so do the waters of healing and restoration. Everywhere the water of revelation goes, fountains of cleansing and healing and redemption are opened. And hence the ultimate fulfillment of the principle of spiritual gravity is that *‘all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Holy One – like the waters cover the sea!’* It is with this in mind that after revealing our sin the focus of the Friend of the Bridegroom will shift from an ‘expose’ of sin and rebellion to a passionate invitation to make *t’shuvah* and be cleansed and purified once again.

Pulling Against the Holy One’s Cords of Lovingkindness

Our opening verses today constitute Moshe’s description of the Holy One’s emotional reaction to our willful rejection of Him and His Torah. Our Divine Bridegroom in Heaven is not, we discover, a cold, calculating Vulcan. He is *intensely passionate*. He *broods* over His Beloved. He *loves us – and has sealed us - with a love as strong as death, as zealous as the grave*. Consider the following prophetic explanation from *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah] 49:

***Can a woman forget her sucking child,
that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.
Behold, I have graven you upon the palms of My hands;
your surrounding/hedge is continual.***

And so for our own good, and in order to further His plan for the redemption of all mankind and Creation, our Creator responds to our waywardness as a faithful but

³ Proverbs 27:6.

wise covenant partner.

What Moshe is going to deal with in today's verses is not *sin* in the sense of minor imperfection or temporary diversion from Torah's instructions – the covenant clearly provides for that kind of thing to be dealt with. What Moshe is going to talk about is something far more insidious – *i.e.* namely *flat-out rejection of the Holy One*, and total abandonment of the Covenant lifestyle – while still claiming to be the 'chosen people'. What he is going to address is a return by the people of the Covenant to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He will address their willing immersion in the *tumah* [*i.e.* uncleanness] of foreign cultures. Instead of honoring the distinction between that which is *tahor* [clean] and that which is *tamei* [unclean] as we are called to do by the Covenant, we will mix and mingle the two, thereby corrupting the 'clean' with sensual perversions and fleshly indulgences wrapped up in a thin veneer of pagan religion. Instead of being a burning and shining light to the nations on behalf of our King, the Covenant people will absorb – and give their heart and sell their soul to - those nations' love of darkness. They will misapply the creativity they have been given to inspire the world by making idols of the things those cultures value and of the things and concepts in which those ethnic groups delight. They will fill their houses and their hearts with graven images. Instead of modeling intimate communion with the Creator of Heaven and Earth and Torah wisdom to the nations, they will model cynicism, sarcasm, self-obsession, self-reliance, sensuality, greed, *lashon hara*, economic oppression, violence, judgmentalism, and pseudo-intellectualism. What Moshe is talking about is an era of stubborn, ungrateful, *shrew-like* refusal by His Beloved to *sh'ma* Him as Divine Bridegroom, complete with haughty rejection of all His loving calls to return to Him and receive forgiveness and rife with violent reaction against His attempts at loving, redemptive discipline.

As a people, at Sinai and beyond, the Creator of Heaven and Earth has *drawn near* to us. We are conceived and born into that nearness. As Moshe taught us in Deuteronomy 4, the nations are to marvel at this, saying: ***What great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Holy One our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? Deuteronomy 4:7. The*** nearness of the Creator is a wonderful thing, of course – if, as, and to the extent we respond accordingly and appropriately. If, as, when, and to the extent we respond to the Bridegroom-King's nearness by responding to Him in childlike wonder, with humility, gratitude, and graciousness, and lean into Him, *sh'ma* His Words of Life, and *sh'mar* His covenant, we get blessed marvelously by reason of His nearness. He actually *wraps cords of lovingkindness around us* - and those cords *warm* and *comfort* us. They give us *shalom rav* [*i.e.* great peace and security].⁴

⁴ See Hosea 11:4 for the source of this particular imagery.

Ah Dear Reader, but when we willfully *rebel against Him* When we trample *His Betrothal covenant* [i.e. His wonderful *Torah*] under our feet When we choose to *clothe ourselves in layer after layer of willful sin* And when we *refuse loving call after loving call to make teshuvah* Well, when we do things like that the very same nearness of the Holy One which blessed us so wonderfully before actually becomes a *threat* to us. The same cords of lovingkindness by which we were once so comforted suddenly – by reason of our straining against them - start to burn ... and chaff ... and bind.

Does My Ring Hurt Your Finger?

I am by no means a country music aficionado. Occasionally on my many automobile trips in connection with my business however I will flip through the radio stations trying to find something to listen to in an attempt to keep myself awake. In the rural areas of Arkansas and Texas one normally finds only stations playing country music. On one such occasion, as I was driving in a late-night daze through the backwoods of Arkansas, the ‘seek’ button on my radio kept returning me to a tune in which a country singer poignantly was asking his wife, in his song, why she did not wear her wedding ring when she went out [to nightclubs?]. I do not remember the melody or any of the words. I only heard part of the song. All I really remember is the title. It was “*Does My Ring Hurt Your Finger*”. That title pretty much describes, in my mind, what the Divine Bridegroom would ask us as we squirm and struggle against His cords of love – i.e. the *Shabbat*, the *mo’edim*, and the *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* of *Torah*.

As we seek to increase the distance between our hearts and His, the cords of lovingkindness with which He bound us to Him in a lover’s embrace begin to *chaff against our flesh*. The harder we pull against those cords, the more it hurts. The longer we strain against those cords, the more likely we are to sustain permanent injury. If one of us does not ‘give in’, we will die. And so, if we continually refuse to make *teshuvah*, in order to keep us from fatally injuring ourselves, the Holy One eventually *looses the cords of lovingkindness* - and *lets us go*. It is tough love at its ultimate level. We read about such love in today’s verses of *Torah*.

The Redemptive ‘Abhorrence’ of the Holy One

In verse 19 Moshe sings to the Heavens and the earth the following description of His response to His Betrothed People’s rebellion. This is how the verse reads in most English translations:

The Holy One saw, and He scorned/had contempt on [KJV ‘abhorred’]
the provocation of His sons and his daughters.
[Deuteronomy 32:19]

Abhorred? The Holy One *abhorred* His own people? In English, to *abhor* means ‘to regard with horror or loathing; abominate; to reject vehemently; to shun.’⁵ Could that really be? Oh, that’s what the English versions we read in America say alright. But is *abhorrence* what the Hebrew text really means? Let’s look closer.

The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as *abhorred* in verse 19 is *yin’atz*, a derivative form of the Hebrew verb root *na’atz*. This verb root is first encountered in Numbers 14:11, in the context of *chet ha-meraglim* [the sin of the spies]. After the whole *k’hal* [i.e. *called-forth witness throng*] of Israel⁶ accepted the evil report of the 10 spies, announced that they would rather die in the desert than enter and attempt to possess the land of promise, and planned to stone Y’hoshua and Kalev, the Holy One spoke and said:

*How long will this people despise [na’atz] Me?
And how long will they not believe in Me,
despite all the signs which I have worked among them?*

[Numbers 14:11]

What the Hebrew verb *na’atz* means is to *willfully pull away* from someone or something. Unlike the English word ‘despise’, *na’atz* is not emotion driven. It is just about the act of pulling away. It can on occasions involve or imply a *sense of revulsion, abhorrence* or *despising*, as our English translations and lexicographers have chosen to infuse, but that is not the essence of the verb. The verb itself deals not with the *emotions* accompanying or engendering the pulling away, but with *the act of pulling away itself*. One can pull away in revulsion, or one can pull away for other reasons. I pull away from the embrace of [i.e. *na’atz*] my wife and children every morning in order to go to work. That does not mean I am repulsed by them, or abhor them, or despise them. It means I *love them*, and *desire to do what is best for them* – providing food on the table, clothes to wear, a home in which to live and celebrate the *mo’edim* of the Holy One, and other necessities of life. The latter is the primary sense in which the Holy One *na’atz* those among His people who willfully rebel against Him, and who pull violently against His cords of lovingkindness. However, that said, there is undeniably something like an emotion involved in the Divine Bridegroom’s loosing of His cords of lovingkindness.

Arousing the Jealousy of God

Moshe’s song tells us that the reason the Divine Bridegroom pulls away from us is ‘*the provocation of his sons and daughters.*’ The Hebrew word translated by the King James translators as *provocation* in this verse is *mika’as*, an active, flowing noun form of the Hebrew verb root *ka’as*, and means *to displease*.

⁵ The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991, at page 67. The English word *abhor* is not Hebraic at all, but is from a Latin word meaning *to shrink from*.

⁶ Except, of course, *Kalev* and *Y’hoshua*.

Here is what Moshe the friend of God tells us about the passions that the Holy One releases when we pull away from Him:

Hem qin'uni v'lo-el

They have moved me to zealotry with that which is not God

ki'asuni b'havlehem

They have provoked me with their vanities.

[Deuteronomy 32:21(a)]

The emotions, which Torah tells us accompany the Holy One's release of His cords of lovingkindness, are thus clearly identified as:

1. ***zealotry*** [Hebrew *qana*] and
2. ***displeasure*** [Hebrew *ka'as*].

It is time for us to come to grips with both of those Divine passions. Our society has an *unhealthy paranoia* about both. We have come to the point, you see, where we are *intimidated by strong emotions*. We fancy ourselves as *Vulgars* - *sans* the pointy-ears, of course – moved only by *Pythagorean logic*, impressed only by *scientific method* and capable of meaningful expression only through *advanced forms of digital technology*. We pride ourselves on being *disaffected*. That allows us to maintain an attitude of *superiority*, an aura of *cynicism*, and a vocabulary of *criticism*. We are *wise in our own eyes* – and imagine ourselves as *detached intellectuals*, above strong emotions, able to be irreverent, sarcastic, sardonic, and just plain obnoxious. We redefine evil as 'good', perversity as 'alternative lifestyle', murder as 'choice', indifference as 'tolerance', and abandonment of personal and national destiny and calling as 'championing diversity'.

If we believe in a 'God' at all we choose to see him as the ultimate all-wise but unfeeling *Spockian* Geek. For all our pretended disdain for strong emotions, however, the truth is that we have allowed those who know and understand how to manipulate emotions to totally take over our world. The media, the widget-hawkers of Madison Avenue, and the political demagogues of our world know this, even if we do not. They have, you see, all learned how to play like a *Stradivarius* the very emotions we deny having.

The Role of Fleshly Sentimentality and Emotions in the Great Deception

Above hatred, are we? Then why have we allowed ourselves to be subliminally brainwashed into turning our repressed hatred-emotion upon *ourselves*? Above jealousy, are we? Then why have we allowed others to cleverly cultivate in us the basest forms of jealousy and class-envy, through which they surreptitiously program us to turn against those who have earned through labor and risk-taking what we would like to be given for free.

Indeed, despite all the intellectual window-dressing we try to employ, emotions have become pretty much *all that matters in our society*. The emotion of *self-hatred* is, our insane society tells us, the ultimate good. And the class-envy-in-the-name-of-equality emotion has become one of the most powerful false gods of the Western culture. Hence we as a society have reached a point consciously and unconsciously pander to – and elect to lead us - those who most successfully play on our self-hatred and class-jealousy emotions. We as a society then find ourselves consciously and unconsciously avoiding contact whenever possible with those who express any form of anger other than self-hatred or any kind of jealousy other than class-envy. If we cannot ignore such people, we simply try to *pacify* and *appease* them. We thus transform them into ‘gods’. We focus all our attention on *neutralizing* their anger or jealousy – and almost none on either identifying or solving whatever real spiritual reality that underlies and motivates that anger or jealousy.

It is not so with the Holy One. The Holy One is very, very passionate, and not a bit of ashamed of it. And yet He is neither afraid of nor ruled by emotions – be they His *or* ours. Emotions are, you see, *gifts of the Holy One to motivate us to take concrete actions to deal with real life emotion-generating experiences*. If therefore we are going to live a life in covenant with the Holy One, we had better get over our tendency to be intimidated by strong expressions of emotion – whether those strong emotions emanate *from the Holy One* or *from our fellow human beings*. If we can understand that, we can understand that neither the Holy One’s zealously nor His displeasure is anything that should cause us to recoil [or *na’atz*] from Him. The Holy One is not an abusive lover. He does not need anger management classes. Both the Holy One’s zealously and His displeasure are *redemptive* and *extremely beneficial*. His zealously and displeasure are *good*, and *holy*, and ***an essential part of His redemptive plan***.

So tremble at His passions, yes. But do not recoil from them. Run to Him - and be healed. Just do not *let human emotions* fool, manipulate, or control you. They are *false flags*; they are *false alarms*; they are the *cruelest of judges*, and they are the

blindest of guides. Get to the essence of the Divine Passion that is supposed to be reflected in your emotions.

If you will receive it, Torah incorporates the Holy One's zealousness and displeasure into His plan of redemption for Israel and for mankind. Here is how the subject is introduced. The Holy One is speaking:

v'ani aqni'em b'lo-am

I will move them to zealousness with those who are not a people;

b'goy naval ach'isem.

With a foolish⁷ nation I will provoke them to displeasure.

[Deuteronomy 32:21[b]]

Note that Shaul of Tarsus [Paul] picks up on this theme in Romans 10, when he says of Israel:

*I ask then, did they stumble that they might fall? May it never be!
But by their fall salvation has come to the Goyim **to provoke them to zealousness.**
Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Goyim;
how much more their fullness? For I speak to you who are Goyim.
Since then as I am an apostle to Goyim, I glorify my ministry;
if by any means I may **provoke to zealousness those who are my flesh,**
and may save some of them.*

[Romans 11:10-16]

Shaul was not making this stuff up. He was not expounding a new doctrine. He was repeating an ancient refrain – a refrain from the Song of Moshe!

Tough Love—The Next Level

But let us continue. The Holy One proceeds, in Moshe's song, to another even higher level of tough love. He speaks as follows:

*For a fire is kindled in my snorting-like warning, that burns to the lowest She'ol,
that devours the eretz with its crops,
And that sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.
I will heap calamities on them; I will spend my arrows on them:
[They will be] wasted with hunger, with fever and bitter plague;
The teeth of animals will I send on them,
With the poison of crawling things of the dust.
Outside the sword will bereave, and in the chambers will be terror;
[It shall destroy] both young man and virgin,
the suckling along with the man of gray hairs.*

[Deuteronomy 32:22-25]

The preceding verses are seldom – if ever - quoted in modern evangelistic sermons. To most of us, the truths they represent are like a 'dirty little secret' we don't even

⁷ The Hebrew word *naval*, rendered 'foolish' by the Septuagint and *Targum Yonatan*, is rendered 'ungrateful' by Rashi and Ramban and as 'unbelieving' by Abarbanel.

want to acknowledge, much less make known. But *without them* the message of evangelism is incomplete – if not misleading. The message of these verses of the song of Moshe constitutes an essential part of the ‘gospel’ which the world must — and *will in the fullness of time* - hear. If we leave the truth set forth in these verses out of the ‘gospel’ we accept or share ... well, *selah* – pause, and meditate on that for awhile.

You see, Dear Reader, the glorious news is that the Holy One has *a plan*. It is a plan that He will effectuate, indeed is already effectuating - with or without our help. Millions are not ‘going to Hell’ because we fail to evangelize. No one goes to Hell who has not willfully rejected the Holy One and His ways. If you doubt this consider Romans 1:18-20:

*For the wrath of the Holy One is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,
because that which is known of the Holy One is revealed in them,
for the Holy One revealed it to them.*

*For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived
through the things that are made,
even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse.*

[Romans 1:18-20]

And consider also Romans 2:14-16:

*... when Goyim who don't have the Torah do by nature the things of the Torah,
these, not having the Torah, are a torah to themselves,
in that they show the work of the Torah written in their hearts,
their conscience testifying with them,
and their thoughts within themselves accusing or else excusing them,
in the day when the Holy One will judge the secrets of men,
according to [the Good News I declare in this letter] by Yeshua the Messiah.*

[Romans 2:14-16]

Let your light shine. Be who you were created to be. *Sh'ma* the Holy One, and walk out His *mitzvot* for all to see. When He calls you to speak on His behalf, open your mouth and speak with all your heart that which you know, that which Torah has taught you. But never let any man or religion put upon your shoulders the burden of saving the world. That is the Holy One’s job. And He is well able to do it *with or without us*. He has a plan, you see – for Israel, *and* for the nations. And it is, believe it or not, all set forth in Moshe’s song. Let’s see what the Holy One’s plan – and *our part in it* - consist of!

Orchestrating the Events of World History To Bring About Mankind’s Redemption

The Holy One is coordinating and orchestrating the events of world history to

accomplish His great plan of redemption for all mankind. At the center of this plan is Israel. Shaul of Tarsus recognized that fact. That is why he devoted three full chapters of his ‘landmark’ epistle to the Romans to it⁸. The Holy One purposes from the beginning to discipline Israel severely for the apostasy from Him that He foreknew would occur, and for her adoption of the worthless things and empty ways of the nations of the world in which she lives.

Yet the Holy One’s “arrows” are always, in all generations, a *measured response*, not a “final solution”. Everything the Holy One does – or allows – regarding Israel is programmed to present *a challenge to the nations*. The Holy One is speaking:

*I said, I would scatter them afar,
I would make the memory of them to cease from among men;
Were it not that I feared the provocation of the enemy,
Lest their adversaries should judge amiss,
Lest they should say, “Our hand is exalted,
the Holy One has not done all this.”*

And then Moshe turns His attention - and the substance of His discussion - to the nations of the world – the *goyim* [gentiles] and says:

*They are a people void of counsel,
There is no understanding in them.
Oh that they were wise, that they understood this,
That they would consider their latter end!
How should one chase a thousand, two put ten thousand to flight,
Except their Rock had sold them,
The Holy One had delivered them up?
For their rock is not as our **Rock**,
even our enemies themselves being judges.
For their vine is of the vine of S`dom, of the fields of `Amorah:
Their grapes are grapes of gall; their clusters are bitter:
Their wine is the poison of serpents, the cruel venom of asps.*

The nations of the world have thus far always badly missed the point of God’s dealings with the Hebrew People. From England’s Edward to Isabella of Spain to Germany’s Hitler to Russia’s Stalin to Christianity’s popes and theologians, to America’s One-World-Order advocating Presidents, to the Ayatollahs, Bin Ladens, and Nasrallahs of the Moslem world, and to a thousand other world leaders, theologians and crusaders, the nations and the church at large have consistently confused the Divine Bridegroom’s *loving but tough discipline of His people with rejection*. They have failed to appreciate that the Holy One *has not abandoned – and will never abandon* - His covenant with the descendants of Avraham,

⁸ See Romans, chapters 9, 10, and 11, where Shaul explains that both Israel’s ‘hardening’ [crusting over, blinding] and its ultimate salvation [All Israel will be saved] are part of the Holy One’s ultimate plan for the redemption of mankind.

Yitzchak, or Ya'akov. They do not yet 'get' the truth that with the Holy One there is absolutely *no shadow of turning*.

We learn in today's aliyah from the Song of Moshe that the Holy One *has a plan* for dealing with the nations who abuse and afflict and terrorize His people. Moshe tells us that our Covenant Partner in Heaven is "keeping in reserve" His vengeance, and keeping His anger in check, for a *yom eyd* - a day of calamity and destruction - the prophetic "Day of the Holy One".

Those who abuse and afflict and terrorize His People "*lack understanding*" - and will pay a horrible price for their arrogance, presumption, and resulting bloodlust. The Holy One concludes today's aliyah with the following declaration:

*Isn't this laid up in store with me, sealed up among my treasures?
Naqam [KJV 'vengeance'] is mine, and shalem [KJV 'recompense'],
at the time when their foot shall slide:*

*For the day of their eid [KJV 'calamity] is at hand,
The things that are to come on them shall make haste.*

Questions For Today's Study

1. Verses 19-25 from the song of Moshe describe the wrath of the Holy One which results when the people He has chosen out of obscurity, carried on eagle's wings, and exalted above all the peoples of the earth tire of Him and begin to value things that He created more than Him.

[A] What is the first thing that the Holy One says He will do in His wrath? Explain what you think that means, and why it is bad.

[B] In return for Israel's provoking of the Holy One with things that were not God, what will the Holy One provoke Israel with?

[C] List the specific things or "arrows" of the Holy One that Moshe says will be loosed upon the rebellious nation.

2. In verses 26-27 the Holy One says that despite the depth of His wrath and the fact that His people deserve total destruction He will have compassion on them and relent before they are totally destroyed or removed from visible presence amongst the peoples of the world.

*I said I would scatter them afar,
I would make the memory of them to cease from among men;
Were it not that I feared the provocation of the enemy,
Lest their adversaries should judge amiss,
Lest they should say, "Our hand is exalted, the Holy One has not done all this".*

[A] Why does the Holy One say a remnant of His people must survive?

[B] Who will receive glory for what happens to the Jews?

[C] Who will know that it was the Holy One that punished and then restored

His people?

3. In verses 28-35 the Holy One speaks of the nations and peoples of earth who, He says, will always misunderstand His discipline of Israel as a permanent judgment in which they are to participate.

[A] What two things does the Holy One say every nation that misunderstands His dealings and covenant with Israel is “without” or “lacks”?

[B] In Strong’s Concordance, and then in Gesenius, look up the two words with which you answered subpart [A]. Write the Hebrew words and their meanings.

[C] Why does the Holy One say Israel’s enemies were able to defeat Israel so easily [one man puts 1,000 to flight; two men put 10,000 to flight]?

[D] In verses 32-33 the Holy One speaks of the “vine”, the “grapes” and the “wine” of the nations that attack B’nei Yisrael.

*For their vine is of the vine of S’dom, of the fields of `Amorah:
Their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter:
Their wine is the poison of serpents - the cruel venom of asps.*

Write these words in a list format, and beside these words, write the description given by the Holy One of each of these things.

[E] In verses 34-35, we read:

*Isn't this laid up in store with me, sealed up among my treasures?
Vengeance is mine, and recompense, at the time when their foot shall slide:
For the day of their calamity is at hand,
The things that are to come on them shall make haste.*

What is the Holy One keeping “in reserve”, sealed in vaults?

[F] When will what the Holy One is keeping in reserve, sealed in vaults, be released?

[G] The “seal” language of verse 35 brings to mind the scroll bearing seven “seals” in the Book of Revelation. How do you think verse 35 relates to Revelation chapters 6 and 7?

[H] What do you think it is that the Holy One is saying the nations in question do not understand or discern? What is the big misunderstanding? Read Obadiah verses 9-17; Isaiah 34:1-8; Ezekiel 25:1-17, and 35:1-15 before you answer.

4. In today’s Haftarah reading from the ‘Song of David’ we read:

*He sent from on high, he took me; He drew me out of many waters;
He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me;
for they were too mighty for me.*

*They came on me in the day of my calamity; but the Holy One was my stay.
He brought me forth also into a large place;*

He delivered me, because He delighted in me.

*The Holy One rewarded me according to my righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands has He recompensed me.
For I have kept the ways of the Holy One,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
For all His ordinances were before me;
As for His statutes, I did not depart from them.*

*I was also perfect toward Him; I kept myself from my iniquity.
Therefore has the Holy One recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to my cleanness in His eyesight.*

*With the merciful You will show yourself merciful;
With the perfect man You will show yourself perfect;
With the pure You will show yourself pure;
With the crooked You will show yourself shrewd.
The afflicted people You will save;
But Your eyes are on the haughty that You may bring them down.*

*For You are my lamp, Holy One;
the Holy One will lighten my darkness.*

*For by You I run on a troop; By my God I leap over a wall.
As for God, His way is perfect: the word of the Holy One is tried;
He is a shield to all those who take refuge in Him.
For who is God, save the Holy One? Who is a rock, save our God?*

*God is my strong fortress; He guides the perfect in His way.
He makes his feet like hinds' [feet]; He sets me on my high places.
He teaches my hands to war so that my arms do bend a bow of brass.*

[II Samuel 22:17-35]

[A] List the things David says in verses 17-20 that the Holy One did for him when He heard David's cry.

[B] What did David say was the basis of his righteousness?

[C] In Strong's, look up the word translated as "righteousness" in verses 21 and 25. Write the Hebrew word and its definition.

[D] The author of this song is the same person who wrote Psalm 51. How can he declare himself righteous in today's Haftarah and acknowledge His sin so vividly in Psalm 51? Explain your answer.

[E] According to verse 26-27, in what four ways does the Holy One "show" Himself?

[F] For each of the four ways identified in answer to subpart [A], describe the type of person to whom the Holy One shows Himself in that manner.

[G] In David's experience, what does the Holy One do for the humble?

[H] In David's experience, what does the Holy One do to the proud?

[I] Read verses 30 - 35 of the Song of David. Then reread Deuteronomy 32:30 from the Song of Moshe. What do you think these two men are saying?

5. In today's reading from the Book of Revelation, two "harvests" are prophesied. Here is the prophecy of the **first harvest** – the harvest of the 'former days':

*I looked, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud
one sitting like a son of man, having on his head a **golden crown**
and in his hand a **sharp sickle**.*

*Another angel came out from the temple,
crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud,
"Send forth your sickle, and reap; for the hour to reap has come;
for the harvest of the eretz is ripe!"*

He who sat on the cloud thrust his sickle on the eretz, and the eretz was reaped.

Following immediately after this is the prophecy of the **second harvest**, the harvest of the 'latter days' [note the reference to the '*clusters of the vine*', the last thing to be harvested in Israel]:

*Another angel came out from the temple that is in heaven. He also had a **sharp sickle**.*

*Another angel came out from the altar, he who has power over fire,
and he called with a great voice to him who had the sharp sickle,
saying, "Send forth your sharp sickle,
and gather the clusters of the vine of the eretz - for the eretz's grapes are fully ripe!"*

*The angel thrust his sickle into the eretz,
and **gathered the vintage** of the eretz,
and threw it into the **great winepress of the wrath of the Holy One**.
The winepress was trodden outside of the city,
and blood came out from the winepress even to the bridles of the horses,
as far as one thousand six hundred stadia.*

[Revelation 14:14-20]

In connection with your study of these two harvests, answer these questions:

[A] Where was the one described by Yochanan [John] as looking like the Son of Man seated?

[B] How was He adorned and armed?

[C] From where did the first angel mentioned in today's verses come?

[D] To whom did this first angel speak, and what did he say?

[E] What does it mean in verse 16 that "the earth was reaped"?

[F] Who "reaped" the earth first, men [Christians? Jews? or the Son of Man?]

[G] Read Yeshua's harvest parables - Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43; Matthew 13:47-50; and Mark 4:26-29. What do they tell you about the sequence and timing of two harvests?

[H] In verses 18-20 of today's B'rit Chadasha verses, from where does the second angel come?

[I] To whom did this second angel speak, and what did he say?

[J] What is the difference between the two harvests referred to in today's passage?

*May you never lack understanding; may you,
and your children, and your children's children, all be taught by the Holy One.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 33:10-12

*The Holy One brings **the counsel of the nations** to nothing.
He makes **the thoughts of the peoples** to be of no effect.*

***The counsel of the Holy One stands fast forever,
The thoughts of his heart to all generations.***

***Blessed is the nation whose God is the Holy One,
The people whom He has chosen for his own inheritance.***