

MEDITATIONS FOR THE NINE DAYS



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INTRODUCTION

This year (the notorious 2020), Adonai prompted me to design meditations for the Nine Days for our local Rosh Chodesh group. The Nine Days are the last days of the season of The Three Weeks, a time for mourning and remembering the destruction of the first and second Temple, and the two great sins of Israel in wilderness. The Three Weeks begin with a minor fast on Tammuz 17th, and conclude with a full fast Tisha B'Av. During the Nine Days (Av 1 - Av 9), introspection and mourning increase through the fast on the ninth of Av. For more information about this season, click [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

My premise is simple. But, for those new to commemorating this season, I've included information about how this time affects the Haftarah cycle, and general information about the number nine. I wrote the meditations with the assumption that one already is aware of the duality that exists in the number nine and the letter tet. Nine and tet reveal what is concealed inside through judgment, but with the hope of renewal and rebirth. If you are unfamiliar with this information, please read [Moonbeams and the Moedim Part III](#), and the concise points listed under nine in [Hebrew Numbers 1-10](#).

HAFTAROT CYCLE

The Haftarah Cycle changes every year at this season from being thematically connected to the Torah Portion, to being thematically connected to the Three Weeks and Elul. This change continues throughout the fall feasts, until the scrolls are rolled back to the beginning, and the new cycle begins anew with Bereshit (Genesis). The focus during the Three Weeks and the month of Elul is Sorrow and then Consolation. This encompasses ten haftarah portions (listed below). The remaining Haftarah portions for the year relate to the season of the fall moedim.

Haftarah of Sorrow 2020: Jer. 1:1–2:3 (read with Pinchas); Jer. 2:4–28, 3:4 (read with Mattot- Massei), Is. 1:1-27 (read with Devarim)

Haftarah of Consolation 2020: After Tisha B'Av, the haftarah move from the sorrow of The Three Weeks, to seven weeks of consolation, culminating with the “change” or “turn” of the year. Hopefully, we have repented and changed, and will be made new with the “change” or “turn” of new year at Rosh Hashanah. (1 Cor. 15:50-58)

The readings of consolation are as follows: Isaiah 40:1-40:26 (read with Va'etchanan); Isaiah 49:14-51:3 (read with Ekev); Isaiah 54:11-55:5 (read with Re'eh); Isaiah 51:12-52:12 (read with Shoftim); Isaiah 54:1-54:10 (read with Ki Tetze); Isaiah 60:1-60:22 (read with Ki Tavo); Isaiah 61:10-63:9 (read with Nitzavim / Vayelech).

MEDITATIONS FOR THE NINE DAYS

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 and Galatians 5:18-26. There are nine listed gifts of the Spirit and nine fruit of the Spirit. The following meditations for the Nine Days are based on these Spiritual traits.

DAY 1 – AV 1

Spiritual Gift: Words of Wisdom

Fruit: Love

What is Biblical wisdom? Read James 3:13-18.

True words of wisdom and knowledge will have the traits that James describes. Tisha B'Av recalls the sin of the children of Israel listening to and believing the evil report about the Land made by ten of their leaders sent to spy out the Land of Promise. (Numbers 13-14)

This sin mirrors the reason that the second Temple was destroyed. In tradition, Israel broke the second of the two greatest commandments: to love thy neighbor as thyself. (Lev. 19:18) In other words, though they had the appearance of holiness, in their heart, they hated their brother, which made their worship of Adonai a lie.

Lev. 19:18 (TLV) You are not to take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am Adonai.

Mark 12:28-34 (TLV) One of the Torah scholars came and heard them debating. Seeing that Yeshua had answered them well, he asked Him, "Which commandment is first of all?" 29 Yeshua answered, "The first is, 'Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. 30 And you shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 "Well said, Teacher," the Torah scholar said to Him. "You have spoken the truth, that He is echad, and besides Him there is no other! 33 And 'to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love the neighbor as oneself,' is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 When Yeshua saw that he had answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one dared any longer to question Him.

1 Jn 4:20-21 (TLV) If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has

not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother.

The Greek word for love in Galatians 5:22 is *agape*. Like it's Hebrew counterpart, *chesed*, *agape* is much more than a feeling. Both *agape* and *chesed* require action, not emotion. True love is expressed through acts of kindness such as charity, caring for the sick, spending quality time, exercising patience and longsuffering with the lost or immature, etc.

Yeshua said, "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Mat 9:13 (NASB) He is quoting Hosea 6:6, where compassion is the Hebrew word *chesed*. *Chesed* is love, lovingkindness, mercy, compassion, grace, and loyal-love. To learn more about Biblical love or *chesed*, [listen to this audio](#).

Mediate upon the following:

1 Cor. 13:1-13 (TLV)

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but have not love, I am nothing.

3 If I give away all that I own and if I hand over my body so I might boast but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not brag, it is not puffed up,
5 it does not behave inappropriately, it does not seek its own way, it is not provoked, it keeps no account of wrong,

6 it does not rejoice over injustice but rejoices in the truth;

7 it bears all things, it believes all things, it hopes all things, it endures all things.

8 Love never fails—but where there are prophecies, they will pass away; where there are tongues, they will cease; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

10 but when that which is perfect has come, then that which is partial will pass away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

13 But now these three remain—faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love. All of the spiritual gifts are useless without the first fruit of love (*agape* and *chesed*). One doesn't need to "feel" love in order to act with love. In this way, loving one's neighbor is a choice with clear Biblical parameters to follow.

During the first day of the Nine Days, repent for not fulfilling the commandment to love one's neighbor as thyself. Pray and ask Adonai to help you to love the way that He loves. The following questions can support this endeavor.

QUESTIONS

1. Consider these **nine** verses: Lev. 19:9-18. Have you transgressed any of these instructions on “how to love thy neighbor?” Be honest.
2. Words of wisdom can only come forth from a heart that knows their “first love” intimately. The traits of chokmah (wisdom) mentioned in James 3, mirror Paul’s treatise on love in 1 Corinthians 13. Why do you think this is so?
3. It’s easy to see how the sin of ten spies broke the first commandment – to love Adonai. But, can you also see how this sin portrays “hating” one’s brother?
4. Do you find that your idea of love and God’s idea of love are different?
5. Do you think that we justify our hate (with its resulting actions towards others) and claim that we are acting righteously? Give an example.

DAY 2 – AV 2

Spiritual Gift: Words of Knowledge

Fruit: Joy

As mentioned on day one’s meditation, words of knowledge will be firmly rooted in the traits of James’ “Wisdom from Above.” In Greek, knowledge is gnosis. Gnosis is found in the Septuagint in many places, including this verse from Hosea:

Hos. 4:6 (NASB) My people are destroyed for lack of **knowledge**. Because you have rejected **knowledge**, I also will reject you from being My priest. **Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.**

The Hebrew word for knowledge in the verse above is da’at. Both gnosis and da’at can imply simple head knowledge. But true knowledge (da’at) is intimate, and reproducible. Adam **knew** his wife and she conceived and bore a son. One might have wisdom in an area, but until it can be reproduced or produce life, it is not Biblical knowledge.

Pro 24:3-4 (NASB) By **wisdom** a house is built, and by **understanding** it is established; 4 and by **knowledge** the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

One is destroyed for lack of knowledge, like a tree that fails to produce fruit. Essentially, this is a lack of intimacy with Adonai and His Torah (law). Forgetting the Torah stunts growth and leads to destruction. Without intimacy with Adonai and His Word, one cannot reproduce, and building (of the House) stops. Consider Peter’s words below, especially verse eight. Knowledge is something that grows, like a tree, and increases as one continues to seek the will of Adonai.

2 Pet. 1:2-11 (NASB) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the **true knowledge** of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, **knowledge**, 6 and in your **knowledge**, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; **for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble**; 11 or in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

The result of operating in godly da'at is spiritual fruit, harvest, and joy! This fills the rooms of Adonai's House with treasured vessels, which are His people.

Is. 26:19-21 (NASB) Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. 20 **Come, my people, enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you**; hide for a little while until indignation runs its course. 21 For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; and the earth will reveal her bloodshed and will no longer cover her slain.

When Yeshua quoted Hosea 6:6 in Matthew 9:13, He equated chesed (love) with knowledge through parallelism:

Hos. 6:6 (NASB) For I delight in loyalty (chesed) rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge (da'at) of God rather than burnt offerings (olah).

Chesed and Da'at are much more desirable than the holy sacrifices, even the whole burnt (olah) offerings. Why? Because when we fulfill these actions, we are elevated, by a much higher force. They embody the fullness of Adonai, and those that practice chesed and da'at, grow and transform much more quickly into the image of Messiah. By pursuing these righteous virtues, one has little time or energy to pander to the wiles of the flesh.

One that has the knowledge of Adonai knows that His correction, discipline, and punishment is for one's good, which will eventually produce joy and blessing. Our loving Heavenly Father chastises those whom He loves. (Heb. 12:6, Pr. 3:12) Those that know Him to be a loving Father, do not fear discipline, but seek to apply the wisdom it bears so they may learn from it.

Pr. 23:12 (NASB) Apply your heart to discipline and your ears to words of knowledge.

Pr. 18:15-16 (NASB) The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. 16 A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men.



When the House of Judah went into Babylonian captivity for her sins, she mourned, just as we would. One thing they didn't forget, as her sister Israel did, was the Holy City, Jerusalem. While you remember the glory of the former Temples, the Holy City, and the exile during these Nine Days, keep the following Psalm close to your heart. It is recited every day, except on Shabbat and the moedim, during the Birkat Hamazon (blessings after meals). Even when we are full and satisfied, may Jerusalem be at the forefront of our minds as our chief JOY.

Ps. 137:1-9 (NASB) By the rivers of Babylon, there **we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.** 2 Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps. 3 For there our captors demanded of us songs, and our tormentors mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." 4 How can we sing the LORD'S song In a foreign land? 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her skill. 6 **May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth If I do not remember you, if I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy.** 7 Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, "Raze it, raze it to its very foundation." 8 O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, how blessed will be the one who repays you with the recompense with which you have repaid us. 9 How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock.

QUESTIONS

1. Read Psalm 51. David repents and mourns over his sin with Bathsheba. Yet, he trusts that Adonai will renew and restore him. Where does David say that joy comes from? (vs. 8,12)
2. How do you define joy?

3. The last Torah Portion during the month of Av is Re'eh,¹ meaning "See." Count the number of times rejoice (joy) is found in this portion. Is joy a feeling or a choice?

4. Recall a time when you lacked intimacy with Adonai. How did this affect your da'at or knowledge of Him? Was your "joy" affected as well?

DAY 3 – AV 3

Spiritual Gift: Faith

Fruit: Peace

In Hebrew, faith is emunah (ee-moo-nah). It comes from the root aman, which means to support, confirm, establish, be faithful, to trust. It's first occurrence is with Abraham:

Gen. 15:5-6 (NASB) And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 Then he **believed** (aman) in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Aman is often translated as "believe," because it implies something that can be trusted with confidence. It is firm. Amen (amein) comes from this same root. When one says, "Amen!" they are affirming the words being delivered and counting them as trustworthy. Truth, emet shares this same root. Truth is firm, established, and trustworthy. One can put their faith and trust in the truth of God's Word.

Emunah differs from western thought. Having "faith" is not a mental or verbal agreement to a set of statements. This is why you won't find a statement of faith at Grace in Torah. While emunah does have an element of mental belief, it is something that is proved through action. Abraham trusted and believed in God, and demonstrated his faith through his deeds. James said that "faith without works is dead." As a Hebrew, he understood this concept very well, and reminded the scattered tribes² that even demons have head knowledge or mere belief.

Jas 2:18-21 (NASB) But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

¹ Deuteronomy 11:26–16:17

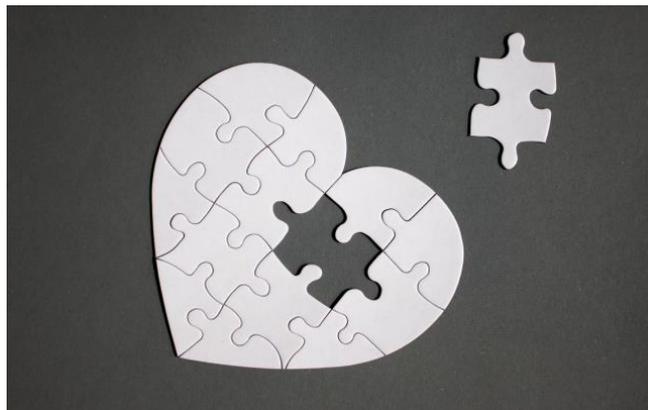
² James 1:1

Eemunah has substance and evidence. The writer of Hebrews says that this is the kind of faith that our elders had (saints in the Tanakh –O.T.), that garnered them a good report. Since Tisha B’Av recalls the evil report of the ten spies in Numbers 13-14, perhaps it would behoove us to also recall the actions of those in the “hall of faith” in Hebrews 11.

Heb. 11:1-2 (KJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Much could be (and has been) written on emunah. For the purposes of this meditation, consider how faith and peace are related. If one’s faith is true and firm, it naturally produces peace. That doesn’t mean that one will not suffer or struggle; it means that one’s faith gives confidence and shalom in the midst of trials.

Rom. 5:1-5 (TLV) Therefore, having been made righteous by **trusting (faith)**, we have **shalom** with God through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. 2 Through Him we also have gained access by **faith** into this grace in which we stand and boast in the hope of God’s glory. 3 And not only that, but we also boast in suffering—knowing that suffering produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Ruach ha-Kodesh who was given to us.



In Hebrew, peace or shalom is not the absence of war, pain, or conflict. Shalom is more akin to wholeness, in the various respects of a person – mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Being made whole implies that at some point, “parts” were separated. In order for shalom to occur, these pieces must be brought back together, even if they are in opposition to one another. In this sense, shalom is about integrating these things, becoming “one.”

In this realm, one can have shalom in one area and not another. One’s faith can supersede the missing part, because one knows that in the end, all will be made whole again. (1 Cor. 15) It is possible to have shalom while walking through great difficulties or even danger. Having “peace like river” is quite contrary to the idea of still waters. Thus, faith and trust in Adonai can sustain

one's mental and emotional state as they float through the rapids of life, because they TRUST Him and have hope for the future.

Heb. 11:39-40 (NASB) And all these, having gained approval through their **faith**, did not receive what was promised, 40 because God had provided something better for us, **so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.**

Those with faith in Hebrews 11 did not receive the promise, because Adonai will not make them "perfect" without us. All the "parts" will be gathered together as a whole (echad), which is shalom. This was the prayer of Yeshua. (John 17:19-26) It will occur under the perfect government of the Prince of Peace! How fitting is that?

Like our forbearers in the faith, we also remain faithful as we look forward to That Day. This brings peace to broken hearts and lives. We have a great Hope! This life is not the end. There is so much more.

Heb. 12:1-2 (TLV) Therefore, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also get rid of every weight and entangling sin. Let us run with endurance the race set before us, 2 focusing on Yeshua, the initiator and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame; and He has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

In the meantime, may we be known as peacemakers.

Jas 3:18 (NASB) And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Mt. 5:9 (NASB) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

QUESTIONS

1. If you want to ask someone how they are doing in Hebrew, you say, "Ma **shlomchah**?" (mas. – speaking to a male) The feminine form is "Ma **shlomech**?" (speaking to a female) But, what you are really asking is, "What's your peace?" Today, I'm asking you this question. Ma shlomeach?
2. Do you have "parts" that need to be integrated into the whole? Or, do you need help with unbelief?
3. How does one's faith affect their sense of shalom?
4. Read through Hebrews 11. When you tell someone about "your faith," does it look like these examples? If not, what is the difference?

DAY 4 – AV 4

Spiritual Gift: Gifts of Healing

Fruit: Patience

In 2020/5780, this day is the weekly Shabbat. Because of that, let's begin this meditation with Shir Hama'alot, which is Psalm 126. In meditation 2, we looked at Al Naharot Bavel or Psalm 137, sang on weekdays and non-holidays during Birkat Hamazon (Blessing after meals). On the Sabbath and holy days, Psalm 126 is sung/recited instead.

Ps. 126:1-6 (NASB) A Song of Ascents. When the LORD brought back the captive ones of Zion, we were like those who dream. 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with joyful shouting; then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." 3 The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad. 4 Restore our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the South. 5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. 6 He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Consider the contrast between these two Psalms. They depict exile for rebellion, and then the promise of return and restoration. A wound, and yet there will be healing. That pretty much sums up the entire Bible from man's perspective. But, like our spiritual gift for this day's meditation, healing doesn't always occur instantaneously. Often, it requires patience or long suffering.

In the preface of the list of spiritual gifts, Paul uses a few key phrases to help the reader understand the diversity not only in gifts, but in the people that have them.

1 Cor. 12:4-7 (NASB) Now there are **varieties** of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are **varieties** of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are **varieties** of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

He reiterates this again after listing the gifts of the Spirit:

1 Cor. 12:11 (NASB) But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

The Greek word translated as "varieties" by the NASB, is *diairesis*. It means distinctions, variety, and diversity. There are a variety of gifts, ministries, and effects, but they all come from the same Spirit of God. The word "effects" is the Greek word *energēma*, from which our English word energy comes. Different people are given different energies to perform the gift that Adonai has given each. They won't always "look" the same, even if two people operate in the same gift. And yet, they all are empowered by the Holy Spirit, His energy.



The gift of healing is one of those energies or ministries. Healing has many forms, all with the goal of being made well or whole. One's mind, emotions, physical body, life circumstances, or even their finances can be broken or wounded. Sometimes, a healer can touch or pray and the area affected is renewed. Sometimes a healer will direct the afflicted to do something such as repent, wash in the Jordan, or give charity. There isn't a one-size-fits-all box.

Since the fruit for this day is patience, how can suffering through brokenness of soul or body be beneficial? Sometimes healing is a process that one must walk through, because instant healing wouldn't really heal the root issue, or it wouldn't bring Adonai glory, or it wouldn't fulfill His purpose in some way. In cases like this, where we can't possibly understand with finite minds, we might cry out like David and the saints that are told to patiently wait.

How long, O LORD?

Ps. 6:2-4 (NASB) Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed. 3 And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, **O LORD—how long?** 4 Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness.

Ps. 13:1-2 (NASB) For the choir director. A Psalm of David. **How long, O LORD?** Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? 2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

Ps. 79:5 (NASB) **How long, O LORD?** Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire?

Ps. 90:12-14 (NASB) So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom. 13 **Do return, O LORD; how long will it be?** And be sorry for Your servants. 14 O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

Rev. 6:9-11 (NASB) When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, **"How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"** 11 And there was given to each of them a white

robe; and **they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.**

We must trust that Adonai is Good, and that His mercy (chesed) endures forever, despite the way things seem to us at the moment. If Adonai can heal Egypt and Assyria, He can definitely heal us! But, like these persecutors of Israel, it will come in His perfect timing.

Is. 19:22-25 (NASB) The LORD will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the LORD, and He will respond to them and will heal them. 23 **In that day** there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. 24 In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, 25 whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, **“Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”**



In the meantime, we remember that we are like those that dream. (Ps.126) The Hebrew word for dream is chalam (חלם). It is like shalom with a chet instead of a shin; and like shalom, it implies recovering and being restored to health. This Shabbat, we sing and we remember, and we patiently consider that our suffering and tears will produce many sheaves for the Kingdom.

Ps. 126:5-6 Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. 6 He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you operate (energema) with one of the gifts of the Spirit? Which one(s)? If not, ask Adonai to reveal to you how His Spirit (energy) works through you.
2. Do you suffer with a chronic illness or another affliction? If so, I'm praying for your complete healing and for your patience. May Adonai grant you reprieve this day.

3. If you know someone that is suffering patiently in some way, reach out to them with words of encouragement.

4. Dreams are corrective and restorative. If you haven't been paying attention to these night parables, start keeping a journal of them.

Job 33:15-18 (NASB) In a dream, a vision of the night, when sound sleep falls on men, while they slumber in their beds, 16 then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction, 17 that He may turn man aside from his conduct, and keep man from pride; 18 He keeps back his soul from the pit, and his life from passing over into Sheol.

DAY 5 – AV 5

Spiritual Gift: Working Miracles

Fruit: Lovingkindness (chesed)

Love and lovingkindness go hand in hand. In the meditation for day one, we looked at agape and chesed in relation to wisdom. In this meditation, we will consider the miraculous power of chesed. When acted out in earnest, wondrous things happen.



Yeshua said, “go and learn” what chesed means in Matthew 9:13. In that case, he was being questioned for eating with tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees and many religious people today have firm ideas of what is acceptable and unacceptable. Yeshua was more concerned for those that needed to repent and be healed, than He was for even the holy sacrifices. Consider the story below.

Luke 10:25-37 (NASB) And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” 27 And he answered, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” 28 And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.” 29 **But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”** 30 Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. 31 And by

chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, **he felt compassion**, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' 36 Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" 37 And he said, "The one who showed **mercy** toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "**Go and do the same.**"

Almost any commandment, tradition, or halachic ruling can be broken to save another person's life. YHWH is the God of the Living, and all human life is immeasurably valuable to Him. We are told in Leviticus 18:5, "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD." (NKJV) Rabbi Akiva clarifies this verse by saying, "That he shall *live* by them, and not that he shall *die* by them." (Yoma 85b)

He infers that the heart of the commandments **is** life and love. To save a life or one's own life (or even the health of either), is the highest priority so long as one doesn't deny Adonai, commit murder, idolatry, or adultery in order to do so. Piety should never hold a higher place in one's mind than the value of another human. Choose Life!

The story that Yeshua told the lawyer in Luke 10 is just as valid today as it was in the first century. In the US, segregation is oddly being promoted by some groups. In the first century, various groups also separated themselves from one another based on religious sects, regional affiliations, and race.

The Samaritans were half Jew, half Gentile. During the Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel, the king of Assyria sent people from Cutha, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim to inhabit Samaria,³ and they intermarried with the remaining people left from the northern tribes of Israel. They became known as Samaritans. While they accepted a version of the Torah (5 Books of Moses), they rejected the Prophets and the Writings. They also mixed idolatry with their worship of the Holy One. They even set up their own temple on Mt. Gerizim. When Nehemiah worked to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, the Samaritans tried to stop the work. (Neh. 6:1-14)

Needless to say, the Jews were not fond of the Samaritans. Tensions between these two groups were high. In John 8:48, the Jews called Yeshua a demon possessed Samaritan. This was meant to be a highly offensive slur. In John 4:9, the (Samaritan) woman at the well was perplexed that Yeshua, a Jew, would even speak to her.

³ 2 Kings 17:24, Ezra 4:2-11

Yeshua gently corrected her understanding in several ways. He pointed out her “5” previous husbands, an allusion to the Samaritans false belief that their version of the Torah was legitimate. He also revealed Himself to her as the Messiah, the Living Waters, and extended salvation to this lowly Samaritan, something the religious leaders in Jerusalem would have never done. The woman dropped her water pot and ran to tell her countrymen the Good News. The men of Samaria believed the woman’s report and came out to meet Yeshua. She was actually the first effective evangelist!

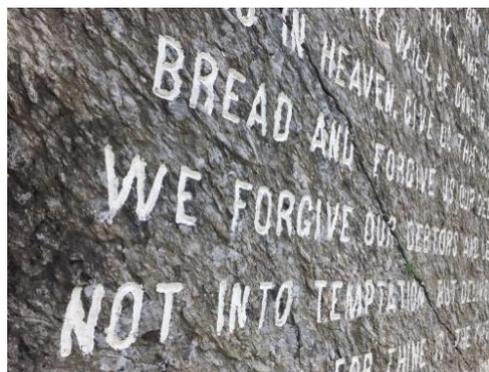
Yeshua’s encounter with the woman at the well is chesed in action. She and the Samaritans didn’t deserve anything from Him; and yet, He extended mercy, grace, and kindness to them anyway. Because, He is chesed. He brought reconciliation to two alienated groups, which the apostles continued after the resurrection. (Acts 8:25)

Chesed doesn’t ignore past sins; rather, it chooses kindness over retribution, mercy over vengeance, grace over disdain, love over hate. Chesed doesn’t know the “tit for tat” scores that we keep. It is not intimate with wisdom from below.

Love covers a multitude of sins. (Pr. 10:12, 1 Pet. 4:8) That includes the sins of those that have been a bane to your existence. Yeshua, as the living embodiment of the Word and the image of God, chose chesed rather than sacrifice. This resulted in the miracle of salvation to those that were perishing in Samaria. Often our vision is impaired, and is need of adjustment.

The only way that one can love the way that Adonai loves is to KNOW the love He has for us. (1 John 4) Then, we won’t fear that our enemy might not get his “just desserts.” Instead, we can truly rejoice that forgiveness and salvation has been extended to them as well. The lawyer reluctantly admitted to Yeshua that in the story, it was the “evil” Samaritan that fulfilled the Law more fully than the priest and Levite by extending chesed to the brutalized man. Caring for human life, in all forms, is greater even than the two greatest commandments. Why? Because it is the epitome of chesed love, and the two great commandments hang from it. Yeshua says, “Go and do the same.”

Rom. 13:10 (NKJV) Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.



The natural, earthy man struggles with the concept of chesed. Chesed is supernatural. To operate with chesed, one must continually have their mind renewed to align with the mind of Messiah. (Romans 12) Consider testimonies and stories that have had the greatest impact on your thinking. Do stories of radical forgiveness and sacrificial love inspire you more than rote commandments? In our heart of hearts, we hope that we can act with such sacrifice and loyalty to HaShem. We want to believe that we can radically forgive those they don't deserve our forgiveness.

Chesed is so powerful that it can penetrate even the most callused heart. It is miraculous. It is the gift that keeps on giving. When one experiences true chesed, they are moved to extend chesed to another. It is freely given, undeserved, and it certainly doesn't expect anything in return. Though it is rooted in covenant love, it surpasses the letter of the Law, because it is pure Holy Spirit in action.

The Hebrew and Greek words for miracles (oht, pala, semeion, etc.) are often translated as signs and wonders. They are heavenly, like chesed. Miracles occur when heaven kisses earth (and earth beings). Thankfully, Adonai built (and continues building) the world with chesed (Ps. 89:2), which is the epitome of the Messiah. (Col. 1:15-20)

Ps. 85:10 (NASB) Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Perform chesed. Expect miracles.

QUESTIONS

1. Read Genesis 4:1-12. What is Cain told to master? If emotions rule a person, can they fulfill the commandments?
2. In the figurative sense, hating one's brother/sister (or any other human) is akin to murder. Why?
3. Read Romans 12. What is love without hypocrisy?
4. Miracles encompass a range of wonders, including the plagues that fell upon Egypt. What is the purpose of miracles?

DAY 6 – AV 6

Spiritual Gift: Prophecy

Fruit: Goodness

The rabbis have assigned a letter to each Hebrew month.⁴ Interestingly, the letter for Av is tet. In the creation week, the first occurrence of the letter tet is in the word tov or **good**. On Day One of creation, the “light was good.” Something tov functions in its intended purpose. When one functions in the fruit of goodness, they are like the pure light of creation. They GIVE Light to the earth, and separate the light from the darkness. Goodness doesn’t take from another, it gives of itself freely.



In the acrostic of Psalm 119, David wrote eight verses for each of the twenty-two Hebrew letters to extol Adonai and His Torah. Though this poetic device doesn’t appear in its fullness in English, it shines brightly in the original Hebrew. Notice how David’s choice word was **tov** or good in the eight verses for the letter **tet**:

Ps. 119:65-72 (LITV) **UTET**: You have done **good** with Your servant, O Jehovah, by Your Word. 66 Teach me **good** judgment and knowledge, for I have believed Your Commands. 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept Your Word. 68 You are **good** and do **good**; teach me Your Statutes. 69 The proud have forged a lie against me; I will keep Your Precepts with all my heart. 70 Their heart is like fat, without feeling; I delight in Your Law (Torah). 71 For my **good** it was for me that I was afflicted, to learn Your Statutes. 72 The Law (Torah) of Your mouth is **better** to me than thousands of gold and silver.

Something good or functioning in goodness, doesn’t neglect correction when needed. The Greek word for goodness in Galatians 5:22 is agathōsunē. The Hebrew Word Dictionary defines it as: good and benevolent, profitable, useful. Something that “feels” good isn’t necessarily Biblically tov or agathosune if it is not profitable or useful in Adonai’s eyes. Thus, correction might be needed so one can adjust their course to realign with Adonai’s standards, which is the Torah (Law) that David speaks about in the above verses.

The Greek word for the gift of prophecy is prophēteías, which is the ability to receive a divinely inspired message and deliver it to others in the assembly. Such messages can vary from

⁴ This comes from the *Sefer Yetzirah* or *The Book of Formation*. (See chapter 2) This book describes how the alphabet has three mother letters (aleph, mem, shin), seven doubled (sounding) letters (bet, gimel, dalet, chaf, pay, reish, tav), and twelve simple letters (hey, tav, zayin, chet, tet, yohd, lamed, nun, sameach, ayin, tzade, kuf.) The twelve simple letters correspond to each of the twelve Hebrew months in their alphabetic order.

exhortation, correction, comfort, inspiration to revelation. All are meant for the equipping and edification of the Body of Messiah. (1 Cor. 14:3-6) It is for our **good**.

Before the destruction of the first and second Temple (of which this season commemorates), Adonai warned His people that the result of their idolatry and disobedience would bring judgment from heaven. A siege would be laid on the walls of Jerusalem, resulting in a breach that would lead to the complete destruction of the Holy City. The prophets foretold of this destruction, and called for the people to repent and return Adonai. If they had obeyed the voice of the prophets, things would have gone much differently. Sadly, man often prefers to do what is right in his/her own eyes, even when God graciously warns what is to come.



Someone with the gift of prophecy can be shown a vision, picture, or dream that is meant to guide, edify, or change the perspective of someone that “thinks” they are on the correct course, when in reality they are in opposition to Adonai. In this way, prophecy and prophesying keeps the Body in check. It does the Body good.

In modern vernacular, it’s like having a **well** visit with the Great Physician. However, some caution is in order. Like the letter **tet**, prophecy can be good or evil, true or false. Thus, prophets and prophecies are to be well received, but also tested. If found to be **tov**, prophecies are vital for the spiritual health of the Body.

1 Th. 5:19-24 (NASB) Do not quench the Spirit; 20 **do not despise prophetic utterances**. 21 **But examine everything carefully**; hold fast to that which is **good**; 22 abstain from every form of evil. 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.
1 Cor. 14:31-33 (NASB) For you can all prophesy one by one, **so that all may learn and all may be exhorted**; 32 and **the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets**; 33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you fear, ignore, or deny modern day prophets or gifts of prophecy? Why or Why not?
2. How does goodness relate to the gift of prophecy?

3. Can you name a prophet that was called tov? (Hint: You will find him in the Torah. – Ex. 2)

4. Since we are in the last Nine Days of the Dire Straits, ask Adonai if He has sent a prophet or one with the gift of prophecy to bring you correction that you rejected. If so, you have an opportunity to repent, and perhaps your house will be restored.

DAY 7 – Av 7

Spiritual Gift: Discerning of Spirits

Fruit: Faithfulness

To remain faithful to Adonai, one must be able to separate, distinguish, discern, and judge between “spirits.” This is a broad topic that deserves a much deeper treatment than what will be offered in this meditation. For our purpose, we will examine how discerning of spirits or the lack thereof affects one’s faithfulness to Adonai and His Body.



In the meditation for day three, we looked at the spiritual gift of faith, emunah. Faith and faithfulness are rooted in what is firm, stable, and trustworthy. Emunah has substance and evidence. According to James, the evidence of faith is works or one’s deeds. (James 2:18-21) One acts out what they truly believe. Thus, the fruit of faithfulness is revealed through action or acting upon belief.

What beliefs are contrary to faith in the Word of Adonai? Fear, doubt, and unbelief are good examples. Could such beliefs be called “spirits?” In Greek, spirit is pneúma, and in Hebrew it is ruach. Both words relate to breath, wind, air, spirit, or even one’s disposition. Each definition expresses a different aspect of pneuma and ruach (spirit). In some places, the Bible uses these words to express the thoughts, beliefs, and temperament of a man. After his sin with Bathsheba, David asked Adonai to renew a steadfast (faithful) spirit within him:

Psa. 51:10 (NKJV) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and **renew a steadfast spirit within me.**

In the passage below, Paul contrasts the spirit of slavery, which is fear, with the spirit of adoption, which is loving acceptance.

Rom. 8:12-17 (NASB) So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— 13 for **if you are living according to the flesh, you must die**; but **if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live**. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a **spirit of slavery leading to fear again**, but you have received a **spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”** 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him** so that we may also be glorified with Him.

In these examples, spirit or spirits are not speaking about demons, but flesh centered thoughts and beliefs. They are akin to worldly wisdom, or as James puts it, “wisdom from below.” This sense of the word “spirit” is deeply intertwined with belief. Understanding these high places of the mind will help one to distinguish or discern between the Spirit of God and other “spirits.”

1 Cor. 2:9-14 (LITV) 12 But we have not received the **spirit of the world**, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. 13 Which things we also speak, **not in words taught in human wisdom, but in Words taught of the Holy Spirit**, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things. 14 **But a natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

Words from the Spirit of God are not received by the natural man. They seem to him to be foolishness. They are spiritually discerned or distinguished. Only one intimate with the Holy One and His voice can make such a distinction, because they are faithful. They believe His Word. But, even a believer can fall prey to fear, doubt, and unbelief when they fail to remain steadfast in the Word.

Tisha B’Av is landmark on the calendar that recalls one of Israel’s greatest faithless moments – the evil report of the ten spies. Ten men caused the entire nation of Israel to believe the “spirits” of fear, doubt, and unbelief rather than the promises of God. They trusted their natural eyes rather the spiritual reality.

Num. 14:11 (NASB) The LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people spurn Me? And **how long will they not believe in Me**, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?

Unbelief or a lack of faithfulness cost an entire generation the Promised Land. The next generation suffered along with them until the last one died in the wilderness. The people failed to discern the “spirits” of the ten spies.

However, one with a “different spirit” escaped the judgement of having to die in the wilderness. Rather than doubting the promise, Caleb followed God fully. He remained faithful. He chose to believe despite seeing the giants with their fortified cities.

Num. 14:24 (NASB) “But My servant Caleb, because he has had a **different spirit** and has **followed Me fully**, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.”

Joshua joined Caleb in encouraging the people. They tried to inspire them to faith and belief.

Num. 14:6-9 (NASB) Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “The land which we passed through to spy out is an **exceedingly good land**. 8 If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. 9 Only **do not rebel against the LORD**; and **do not fear the people** of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; **do not fear them.**”

Fearing man or circumstances is the antithesis to the Spirit of Yirat Adonai, which is reverence for the Holy One. (Is. 11:2) Dr. Hollisa Alewine teaches in [The Creation Gospel](#) that “anything we fear, we make holy.” Rather than reverencing Adonai, we are giving our homage to an unholy man, thing, or circumstance. One has essentially built a “high place” in their mind for it.

Jer. 3:6-10 (NASB) Then the LORD said to me in the days of Josiah the king, “Have you seen what faithless Israel did? **She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there**. 7 I thought, after she has done all these things she will return to Me; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 And I saw that for all the **adulteries of faithless Israel**, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister **Judah did not fear**; but she went and was a harlot also. 9 Because of the lightness of her harlotry, **she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees**. 10 Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in **deception**,” declares the LORD.



Reverencing anything other than Adonai is harlotry or idolatry. This is one of the sins that resulted in the destruction of the first and second Temples. Rather than building high places for our fears, doubts, and unbelief, may we discern these spirits for what they are: false gods. When it is revealed by the mouth of a prophet or discerner of spirits that a lying spirit has

breached the walls of our city, may we be quick to repent, repair the breach, and stand firm in our faith.

QUESTIONS

1. Can you be trusted to fulfill or keep your word? (Mt. 5:33-37) Consider that Adonai is always **faithful** to keep His Word. (Is. 55:11) Resolve to do the same as one of His image bearers before the High Days approach this year.
2. Most people, including believers, have been rejected, betrayed, manipulated, or wounded in some way by another person or group. If such sins were committed by another believer, then it is very difficult to trust others within the Body. And yet, the fruit of faithfulness is rooted in trust. How can one learn to walk in the fruit of faithfulness (secure trust) when others have breached the walls of trust?
3. Do you struggle with spirits of the world such as fear, doubt, unbelief, rejection or lust? Read Luke 11:24-28. What was Yeshua's "correction" to the woman? Based on this, what protects one from "unclean spirits?"
4. What is in the high place of your mind? Is something there that shouldn't be? If so, repent.

INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION EIGHT AND NINE

The last two meditations are closely related. The spiritual gifts are "different kinds of tongues" and "interpretations of tongues." The corresponding fruit of the Spirit are "gentleness" and "self-control." As I prayed and meditated on these last two gifts and fruit, it dawned upon me to approach these spiritual gifts in a unique way.

While I fully believe that these gifts are supernatural, there is also a very natural way to look at them that every Believer should practice. In fact, Scripture warns again and again in various ways that the tongue holds the power of life and death. And, Messiah warns that man will give an account for idle word that he/she speaks. Thus, it is fitting that these supernatural gifts are paired with the fruit of gentleness and self-control. In today's world, very few people manifest these fruits when they speak or type the written word.

Pr. 18:21 (NASB) Death and life are in the power (hand) of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Mat. 12:36-37 (NKJV) But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.



So, rather than focusing on the spiritual gifts of tongues and interpretations, which would require a much lengthier treatment than a devotion, I've chosen to primarily address literal language, words, and the tongue. In modern culture, language has become weaponized. Words are being redefined by those immersed in ideologies such as Critical Theory. Standard definitions are being exchanged for confusing revisions. And, social media has become a battlefield of thrusting tongues set on destroying one's opponent. Now more than ever, may the people of HaShem be known as those that have bridled their tongue.

James 3:6-10 (NASB) And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which **defiles the entire body**, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. 7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. 8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. 9 **With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God**; 10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. **My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.**

Last year, I released a series called [Taste Your Words on MyReviveTV.com](https://www.myrevivetv.com). It is about issues of the tongue, proper speech, and lashon hara. You can watch for free by creating an account at MyReviveTV.com. (Creating the account is free too!)

DAY 8 – AV 8

Spiritual Gift: Kinds of Tongues

Fruit: Gentleness

On the fifteenth of Av ([Tu B'Av](#)), there is a transition from mourning to consolation and joy. In the [Three Weeks](#), we recall our ancestor's descent into sin, which resulted in the destruction of Adonai's House. There are fifteen Psalms of Ascent, Shir Haamalot, that were sung by the Levites on the fifteen steps leading up to the Temple. These Psalms (120-134) are a memorial of the Temple rituals, and for us, they are an expression of hope that the Temple service will be restored to the people of Israel.



In many ways, [the number fifteen](#) represents the elevation or ascent from the physical to the spiritual. The poetic name of God, Yah, is also the number fifteen (yohd [10] + hey [5] = 15). As those created in His image, we are called to walk through this process by His grace. Through Yeshua, the Way is accessible to all who believe. Not coincidentally, the first Psalm of Ascent, the first step in approaching His Dwelling Place, deals with issues of the tongue.

Ps. 120:1-7 (NASB) A Song of Ascents. In my trouble I cried to the LORD, and He answered me. 2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, From a deceitful tongue. 3 What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, you deceitful tongue? 4 Sharp arrows of the warrior, with the burning coals of the broom tree. 5 Woe is me, for I sojourn in Meshech, for I dwell among the tents of Kedar! 6 Too long has my soul had its dwelling with those who hate peace. 7 I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.

Our tongues reveal what is in our hearts. After taking an account of our words and deeds during the Three Weeks, hopefully, we too, are crying out for Adonai to deliver us from our own lying lips and deceitful tongues. The destruction of the first and second Temple was caused by idolatry, immorality, and baseless hatred among brothers. Our “temple” is destroyed for the same reasons. The tongue reveals one’s inner nature in each case.

In this meditation, consider the language or languages that you speak with understanding. Words are powerful. In Hebrew, *davar* means a word, thing, matter, or order. They bring things into existence to create order. But, these same Hebrew letters spell *dever*, a pestilence. Words that do not produce order or life, bring pestilence and death. Words build up or tear down. They inspire or they depress. How do you use the language that God gave to you? Language sets man apart from the beasts of the field. It is the star feature that attests to the fact that mankind is made in the image of Adonai. Like the Creator, we speak. We communicate and create with words. We build with our hands and we build with our mouths – if we are wise. Pr. 14:1 (NASB) The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.



Due to today's lightning speed forms of communication, one can speak a single language, and yet, use it in a variety or diverse "kinds" of ways. For example, one can pontificate on social media platforms, they can record audio and video of themselves and send it across the globe. They can write electronic letters, emails, and post opinions on news message boards. One can self publish books, blogs, and websites. (I'm not missing the irony of my own usage of these formats, lol.) There are multitudes of opportunities to spread the poison of the tongue, and the deceit of the heart.

The hands of one's tongue can strangle another person through slander and gossip.⁵ A subtle manipulation of words can cause fear, doubt, and suspicion about the actions, motives, or reputation of another person. (Remember, Korach? Or, the evil report of the ten spies?) When one listens to such tactics of the tongue, they also get caught in the carefully spun web of these merchants of death. These are examples of perverted "kinds of tongues." They are powered by Gehenna, as James says, and are akin to the forked tongues of serpents.

Ps. 140:1-3 (NASB) For the choir director. A Psalm of David. Rescue me, O LORD, from evil men; preserve me from violent men 2 who devise evil things in their hearts; they continually stir up wars. 3 They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; poison of a viper is under their lips. Selah.

Rom 3:13-18 (ESV) Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. 14 Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known. 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

An unruly tongue is anything but gentle, the eighth listed fruit of the Spirit. Gentleness can be translated as meekness or humility. The tongue is a boastful and proud member. It wears pride like a necklace, and rather than wearing the garment of salvation, it wraps itself in violence and parades throughout the earth.

Ps. 73:6-9 (NASB) Therefore **pride is their necklace; the garment of violence covers them.** 7 Their eye bulges from fatness; **the imaginations of their heart run riot.** 8 **They mock and wickedly speak of oppression;** they speak from on high. 9 **They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue parades through the earth.**

Most of us, if we are honest, would declare that we would never use our tongue in such a horrid manner. We serve the Most High after all. Perhaps, we even operate with the spiritual

⁵ In Proverbs 18:21, the word "power" is b'yad in Hebrew. This means, "in the hand." – Death and life are in the power (hand) of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. The tongue functions like a hand that can cut, thrust, slice, jab, strangle or reach out and help or even save.

gift of tongues. Does this mean that every word that spews from our mouth is pure? Are we better than Isaiah?

Is. 6:5 (NASB) Then I said, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

Do we bless Adonai with our tongues, and then turn around and use that same tongue to curse other humans made in His image? One can babble on and on about their love of God, but their mouth (and keyboards) will reveal what is really in their heart.



Luke 6:43-45 (NKJV) For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44 For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. 45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Messiah used the analogy of a tree producing fruit to figure the words of one’s mouth. In Hebrew, the word for fruit is p’ri. It is spelled pey (mouth), reish (man’s head), and yohd (hand). A man’s fruit is the things he says (his words), and the things he does with his hands (actions). James ends his discourse on the iniquity of the tongue by contrasting wisdom from above with wisdom from below. Reread the passage, recalling that the first listed gift of the Spirit is words of wisdom:

James 3:13-18 (NKJV) Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good **conduct** that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

The Greek word for conduct above is *anastrophē*. It means behavior and **conversation**.⁶ One's speech should be offered in wisdom, which is humble, meek, and gentle. According to this passage, envy and selfishness war against godly wisdom. They deceive one to believe that they have wisdom, when in reality, they are bound by the confusion of Babylon. Babylon incites one to violence and war to take what others have. Any tactic is justified because their wisdom is fueled by the earthly, sensual (fleshly desires), and the demonic realm.



Pr. 21:6 (NASB) The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.

Pr. 13:1-3 (NKJV) A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke. 2 A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, but the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence. 3 He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.

Babylon's message appeals to the appetites and desires of the flesh, which feels natural, fair, and just. Consider the juxtaposition of the following commandments:

Lev. 19:16-18 (NASB) You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD. 17 You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

The Hebrew word for slanderer above is *rakiyl*. It describes a merchant, but what he sells is deceit, slander, rumors, and gossip. Gossip and rumors can be about something that is true. But, that doesn't give one the right to spread it around like an evil report. In verse 16, such a merchant is acting against the life of his neighbor. His/her words are meant to destroy the person or group of people that they speak of. And sadly, they often do.

⁶ For example, see: Gal 1:13, Eph 4:22, 1Ti 4:12, Heb 13:7, Jas 3:13, 1Pe 1:15, 1Pe 1:18, 1Pe 2:12, 1Pe 3:1-2, 1Pe 3:16, 2Pe 2:7, 2Pe 3:11.

Those that listen to a rakiyl's message, not only begin to hate the person or group spoken about, but they then propagate and spread it like a disease. Notice the progression of the commandments above. One speaks or listens to lashon hara, a perversion of the "kinds of tongues." The words produce anger and hate toward another person or group. The natural next step is vengeance and murder (just ask Cain). But the TRUTH, the Word of Adonai, says to not take vengeance against your neighbor, and don't even bear a grudge!



This is the context of loving your neighbor as yourself. Without love, even the spiritual gift of tongues profits you nothing. Instead, one is just another confusing, noisy babbling of Babylon. 1 Cor. 13:1-3 (NASB) If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

The gentleness of wisdom speaks justice (Ps. 37:30-33), but it God's standard of justice, not man's. It is based in the Torah, and is full of mercy. Often, when we are wronged, our flesh desires the strictest form of justice for the attacker or oppressor. Yet, when we find ourselves to be the transgressor, we cry to YHWH for mercy. The problem is that we fear that our enemies will not get what "they deserve." But, that is contrary to what the Word declares, and a gross misunderstanding of God's love. (1 John 4) Adonai will not let the guilty go unpunished. (Ex. 34)

Thankfully, for our sake's, His judgment is firmly rooted in His chesed. He punishes, but He also forgives. Each and every soul on the planet should be grateful for this. Once one truly understands the love that God has for us, they can let go of bitterness, envy, hatred, grudges, and thoughts of vengeance. It is only by realizing the depth of our own depravity, that we can appreciate God's chesed, and desire it for others, even our enemies.

Pr. 10:12 (NASB) Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions.

1 Pet. 4:8 (NASB) Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Today, consider all the various (kinds) ways that you can use your tongue with the fruit of gentleness. Prayer should be one of our first thoughts. Prayer changes everything! If you find yourself suffering at the hands (tongues) of those that would sell your soul like a merchant of Babylon, look up. Cry out to Adonai, not social media. Whatever our need, Adonai is our help and our shield.

Ps. 19:14 (NASB) Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

QUESTIONS

1. Read Psalm 34:11-14. According to these verses, how does one procure length of days, so he can see good? Do you think this applies to this life or eternity or both?
2. Name a variety of ways that you can use your tongue for righteousness.
3. Why do you think that Psalm 120 is the first step of ascension to the Holy Temple, or on one's pilgrimage to the Holy City of Jerusalem at the moedim?
4. Read Psalm 141. What sort of delicacies does David fear to eat? Why do you think he chose this term to refer to such things? (Hint: Mt. 26:41, Rom. 7:14)
5. In Psalm 141, David requests that the righteous strike and rebuke him. What does he compare this to? (vs. 5)
6. Do you have David's attitude when Adonai brings correction through one of His servants? Why or why not?

DAY 9 – AV 9

Spiritual Gift: Interpretation of Tongues

Fruit: Self Control

Do you believe that you have control over your tongue? What about your actions? What about your circumstances? While one cannot always control their circumstances, they can control how they speak of them, and how they react. It's all in how one interprets the words of life. A shift in perspective can change everything, even how one hears and understands God's Word, and the words or tongues of others.



In yesterday's meditation, we looked at the Hebrew word for fruit, p'ri. Though Messiah freely offers one the Way of salvation through His shed blood, one must choose to walk in it. We have a choice as to what sort of fruit (words/deeds) we will produce. While it's true that some trees have been planted in ground that has better soil and water conditions than others, we must remember that Adonai is the planter. (Ps. 80:8-19, Is. 5:1-7; 61:3, Jer. 2:21, Hos.10:1, Mat. 21:33-46, Jn. 15:1, etc.)

No matter where Adonai planted you, and no matter how harsh the conditions have been, He sovereignly chose your place for the good. Because, He is good. And, His ways and thoughts are higher than our thoughts. (Is. 55) Often, it is through suffering that a tree or plant produces the most fruit.

Many years ago, we lived in Florida. One day, a colleague of my husband brought him a bunch of Florida avocados from the trees in his yard. My husband commented on how vibrant, large, and healthy they appeared to be. The man then proceeded to tell him how he took a baseball bat and beat his avocado trees! Shocked, my husband asked him why he would do such a thing. The man said, "When the tree thinks it's being attacked or dying, it produces twice as much fruit."

I'll never forget hearing this story. Though at first glance it seemed horrific, it reminded me of many different passages in the Bible. The truth is that our flesh hates suffering. Period. But, we are called to know Messiah in the "fellowship" of His suffering. This means that we are to SHARE and participate in it.

Php. 3:10-11 (NASB) ... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

To know the power of the resurrection, suffering and death are required. What must die is the flesh. It is to be crucified daily. Daily, flesh is laid on the holy altar, to burn up and ascend in smoke as a pleasing aroma to Adonai. To use another analogy, pressing circumstances and suffering produces oil for our lamps. Just as the flesh of an olive is pressed and squeezed under

a great stone (Adonai is the Rock, and stone of stumbling) to produce pure oil for anointing and lighting, so we must submit to His conforming us into His image.

This isn't a popular message. It doesn't make the ears tickle or the flesh feel comfortable. But, it is a truth consistently taught in Scripture. The English word compassion means, "to co-suffer." If we have compassion for another person, we not only have sympathy for their situation, but we choose to suffer along with them or relieve their pain in some way. When we ask God to have compassion for us, we want Him to meet us right in the midst of our pain, and relieve it.



In Hebrew, compassion is racham, which is also the womb (rechem). The womb is a dark, constricted place of growth. When birth pangs begin, both the mother and child suffer the contractions. This is compassion. Suffering is necessary for new life. I once heard Grant Luton say that, "All pain is birth pain." That phrase has stuck with me and continues to remind me of what pain in this life is for. Again, it is all about perspective. I can control how I perceive my pain. I choose to trust that Adonai loves me and has my best interests at heart no matter how things feel or appear in the natural.

1 Pet. 2:19-25 (NASB) **For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.**²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? **But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.**²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, **22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;** **23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;** **24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.** **25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.**

Suffering comes from two places: as a consequence for sin, or for the sake of righteousness. Either way, all lives will be touched by suffering. If one suffers due to transgression, it becomes a goad to turn one back to righteousness. If one suffers for the sake of righteousness, it leads to resurrection life.

These things might seem unrelated to the topic at hand. Let's connect the dots. Today is Tisha B'Av, a day of fasting, lamentation, and prayer. The Book of Lamentations is chanted with a mournful melody in the synagogue on this day. (To hear a sample, [click here](#).) The construction of the Book of Lamentations is aligned with the Hebrew alephbet. The holy tongue seems to weep along with Jeremiah for the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Adonai's people.

Most of us misuse our tongues when we are suffering. It is extremely difficult to not scream out or curse when we are in pain. This includes our words and attitude toward Adonai. Job is an excellent example of one that exercised self-control, even when his friends and wife offered faulty interpretations of his suffering. The fruit of self-control is the first to be ripped from our vine when we are hurt by someone verbally, emotionally, financially, or even physically. It is the last fruit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23, but it is the first to take a hit when we fall.

Rather than thinking literally about the interpretations of tongues as explaining a heavenly or foreign language, consider other ways that we communicate. Facial expressions, eye movements, body gestures and postures are all types of tongues or language. What are you saying without using words? How well can you interpret these cues in others?

Much has been written in recent times about the coldness of texts, emails, and social media comments. Without the cues of facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language, it is very easy to misinterpret someone's intent. It happens every day in a variety of formats. Though we are speaking the same tongue, we often misunderstand the intended message. This causes one to make false assumptions; or even worse, to make an unrighteous judgment against another person.



Today, consider all the ways that we misread, misunderstand, and assume things that are not true about other people. Instead of actively listening (the sense for the month of Av), we often are preparing our come back. If we have difficulty interpreting the tongues of those that speak the same language we do, how can we expect to hear or understand the multitude of other languages in the world?

The key to any (good) relationship is effective communication. In order to communicate in a healthy way, each party must be respected and allowed time to share and speak. If one assumes that they know the heart of the other or believes they are the only party with the Holy Spirit or with wisdom, then the conversation is doomed from the start. These are issues of pride and fear, which are not conducive for learning or change for the better. While you can't control another person, you can control your own speech and behavior.

1 Pet. 5:6-11 (NASB) Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that **the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.**10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. 11 To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

When Israel sinned against Adonai, He allowed the nations of Assyria and Babylon to overtake them. Though these unrighteous nations believed their own might had won them the victory over Israel, Adonai firmly states that He used them to punish Israel. Anything beyond that, they would be judged for in the end. Beloved, sometimes Adonai allows our enemies to overtake us for the same reason. We can blame them or we can blame Adonai, but the true blame lies at our own feet.



The good news, is that when we suffer, even because our sins, there is HOPE. Despite the dire circumstances of Jerusalem, Jeremiah remembered Adonai's chesed and was comforted. Read the following excerpt from the weeping prophet Jeremiah. May we find comfort in Adonai's chesed too!

Lam. 3:1-22 (NASB) I am the man who has seen affliction because of the rod of His wrath. 2 He has driven me and made me walk in darkness and not in light. 3 Surely against me He has turned His hand repeatedly all the day. 4 He has caused my flesh and my skin to waste away, He has broken my bones. 5 He has besieged and encompassed me with bitterness and hardship. 6 In dark places He has made me dwell, like those who have long been dead. 7 He has walled me in so that I cannot go out; He has made my chain heavy. 8 Even when I cry out and call for help, He shuts out my prayer. 9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked. 10 He is to me like a bear lying in wait, like a lion in secret places. 11 He has turned aside my ways and torn me to pieces; He has made me desolate. 12 He bent His bow and set me as a target for the arrow. 13 He made the arrows of His quiver to enter into my inward parts. 14 I have become a laughingstock to all my people, their mocking song all the day. 15 He has filled

me with bitterness, He has made me drunk with wormwood. 16 He has broken my teeth with gravel; He has made me cower in the dust. 17 My soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness. 18 So I say, "My strength has perished, and so has my hope from the LORD." 19 Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. 20 Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me. 21 **This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. 22 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses (chesed) indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail.**

Tzom Kal! May you have an easy fast!

QUESTIONS

1. If you have not done so already, read the Book of Lamentations and journal your thoughts.
2. Think about your relationships (in real life and online). Ask Adonai to reveal misunderstandings, miscommunications, and false assumptions. Then, ask Him if it is your pain that is creating harmful patterns, blockages, or breaches. If so, repent.
3. Name a time that you misinterpreted another person's tongue (communication). What did you do, if anything, to rectify it?
4. In what areas do you struggle with self-control? Control issues are rooted in fear. Pray and ask Adonai to help you with these areas.

Read 1 Cor. 9:23-27, James 1:2-5, and 2 Peter 1:4-11

5. If self-control is about disciplining the body, including the mind and emotions, where do you lack?
6. Peter reminds us that if qualities such as self-control are increasing in us, we are neither useless or fruitless. If we fall, we get back up and try again. Paul's race analogy in 1 Cor. 9 matches this sentiment. We continue to train, even when it hurts. Have you ever reached a place where you feel like giving up? What was Paul and James remedy for facing trials?

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