

In The Day of Trouble – B^eYom Tzarah/Yom Tsuris

May יהוה answer you in the day of trouble! (מַעַן? הַיְהוָה בְּיָמֵי צָרָה) May the name of Elohei Ya'akov protect you (set you securely on high)! (Ps 20:1) I have said these things to you so that, united with me, you may have shalom. In the world, you have tsuris (tribulation). But be brave! I have conquered the world! (John 16:33)

The Day of Tsuris (Trouble a.k.a. Tribulation)

Just a few hours before “His Passion” Yeshua gave His *talmidim* a distressing message: “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now.” He called this period *The Days of Great Tribulation (Yom Tzarah G’dolah)*. The word rendered tabulation means grievous affliction, distress, pressure or burden upon the spirit. As we move closer to the end of this age, catastrophic distresses and pressures upon mankind shall increase.

Days of Great Pressure

The days of decreasing desire of government, school systems, and law enforcement to restrain moral decadence are upon us. We live in a time when a significant portion of our society is in open and defiant rebellion toward G-d. The prophetic words of Psalm 2 are being fulfilled before our eyes as world and local leaders “*Why are the nations in an uproar, the peoples grumbling in vain? The earth's kings are taking positions, leaders conspiring together, against יהוה and his anointed.*” Their militant cry is: “*They cry, let's break their fetters! Let's throw off their chains!*”

Yeshua warned of this day, saying that “*many people's love will grow cold because of increased distance from Torah*” (Matt. 24:12). If you are one who has stood unyieldingly against the increasing darkness, you know how intense and multifaceted the battle is. Whether you are fighting to heal your city's wounds or warring against abortion, pornography, and child abuse barely do you make headway against one evil before it seems that ten others storm in.

In spite of breakthroughs occurring in several cities, many Believers are weary. A number are just going through the motions; still others have stopped fighting altogether. Daniel warned of a time when the enemy would “*...try to exhaust the holy ones of the Most High. He will attempt to alter the seasons and the law; and (the holy ones) will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.*” (Dan. 7:25) In order to emerge victorious from this day in which we live, we must discover how to dwell in “*the secret place of the Most High*” that He has prepared for us.

This week’s Torah portion—*Acharei Mot & Kedoshim*—starts out by reminding us of the death of Aharon’s (Aaron’s) two sons. It appears from the explanation that they died just prior to the Feast of *Yom Teruah*. The month prior to *Tishri 1* is the month of *Elul*, the month of repentance and reflection on one’s sins. Evidently, they were neither repentant nor did they reflect on what they were doing before they did it. This *Parashah* also gives us a glimpse of things that are specified in black and white for יהוה’s people that are routinely ignored by our society. {See Lev. 18:1–20:27, CJB} It culminates with: “*Therefore you are to distinguish between clean and unclean animals and between clean and unclean birds; do not make yourselves detestable with an animal, bird or reptile that I have set apart for you to regard as unclean. Rather, you people are to be holy for me; because I, יהוה, am holy; and I have set you apart from the other peoples, so that you can belong to me.*” (Deut. 20:25-26)

For example: “²²You shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination. ²³You

shall not lie with any animal to defile yourself therewith; neither shall any ishah (woman) stand before any animal, to lie down thereto: it is confusion. ²⁴Do not defile yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the goyim (nations) are defiled which I cast out from before you; ²⁵the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity of it on it, and the land vomits out her inhabitants. ²⁶You therefore shall keep my chukim (statutes) and my mishpatim (judgements), and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the home-born, nor the ger (stranger) who sojourns among you; ²⁷(for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled); ²⁸that the land not vomit you out also, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. ²⁹For whoever shall do any of these abominations, even the nef'shim (souls) that do them shall be cut off from among their people. ³⁰Therefore shall you keep my charge, that you not practice any of these abominable customs, which were practiced before you, and that you not defile yourselves therein: I am יהוה your Elohim.” (Vayikra 18:22-30)

Scripture then continues to list all the things man should not do, warning that anyone who did them would be *cut off from among his people*. This terminology refers to “death,” “excommunication” or “expulsion from the community.” Whatever the case, it is serious! I would like you to observe the national consequences of disobedience. Upon reading, it was also evident that the US is in trouble! We also see יהוה telling us that the nation of *Yisrael* was going to possess a land that He was going bring them into; a prosperous land, a spacious land, where they would benefit from another people’s efforts and live in houses they did not have to build, etc. All this happened because those people did those the things He was warning them not to do!

I saw a documentary on the news channel where a sting operation was set up to catch sexual predators. A news anchor posing as a thirteen year old girl made contact with older men over the internet. It did not take long before the topic of their discussion turned to sex and the men made appointments to meet the girl for a party and sex. One of the men caught in the sting was a family man, worse than that, he was a pastor. I am not coming down on pastors because we all know from the news reports that, pastors, priests and other so-called religious people have also been snagged in sex scandals. How far we have fallen from the morality of our *Elohim*! Truly, יהוה would have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah if He does not judge us.

At Horev – The Place of Desolation

In seeking to fulfill the task יהוה has given us we often sacrifice our daily devotional life causing our lives to soon become dry and desolate (we arrive at *Horev*). To restore our souls, the L-rd brings us back to the essentials of our faith. He reminds us that our first and highest priority is to give is not to save our nation but to give Him pleasure and glory (“...*obedience is better than sacrifice...*” 1 Sam 15:22). Without this focus we lose touch with the presence of יהוה. Elijah was drawn to “*Horev, the mountain of G-d.*” In Hebrew, *Horev* means *desolation*. The barren environment of this place mirrored Elijah's soul. This was not the first time the L-rd guided a servant of His to *Horev*. It was here, five centuries earlier, that יהוה appeared in the burning bush to Moshe. In his zeal, Moses had tried, but failed, to liberate Israel from Egyptian oppression. He also had fled to *Horev*. As a fugitive from Pharaoh, Moses lived forty years in desolation.

When the Lord brought Moses to *Horev*, it was for two reasons: to reveal Himself to His servant and to initiate a new beginning for His people based solely on His Word and sustaining power. There in the place of desolation and without the world’s distractions our Jewish people said *Na’ase V’Nishma*—*we will do and we will obey*. In human terms, *Horev* looks like a place of desolation when in fact it was the place where יהוה would manifest His Revelation and Power. In the place of New Beginnings we see יהוה preparing Elijah—or preparing the Elijah generation.

Just How did we Get There?

Among Elijah's greatest virtue was his zeal. We read (twice) in his dialog with יהוה that he has been *very zealous for יהוה*. But zeal unattended by wisdom eventually becomes its own god; it compels us toward expectations that are unrealistic and outside the timing and anointing of יהוה.

To remain balanced and zealousness must be reined in and harnessed with strategic encounters with the living יהוה. Otherwise we will become frustrated with people and discouraged with delays. We step outside our place of strength and spiritual protection. We read that Elijah had come to *Horev* and lodged there in a cave. Soon, the Word of יהוה came to him: “*What are you doing here, Elijah?*” (1 Kings 19:9). This is one of the most important questions יהוה will ever ask us. His question probes the reality of our spiritual state. He is asking: *How did your service to me become dry and desolate?* He wants us to know that when we fail to love Him as *our first love* we will end up in a desolate place—we will find a desert waiting for us.

Our primary purpose must always be to abide in Messiah (“*If ye abide in me...*”). Otherwise we can become so consumed with the deterioration of this world that we fail to see the deteriorating condition of our own soul. In His love, יהוה stops us and demands that we look at our life asking: *Am I living the abundant life promised me in Messiah Yeshua?*

We can be honest at *Horev*. We have nothing to prove and no need to pretend. When we are at *Horev*, the internal mechanisms of defensiveness and pride crumble. If we are disappointed, we are free to express it; if we are frustrated, we can admit it. We must simply and truthfully evaluate, without rationalization, our true spiritual condition. In our vulnerability and transparency, the presence of יהוה draws near to our hearts. Is not intimacy with יהוה the very thing we have neglected? And is יהוה alone our source of strength in battle? If the enemy can distract us from our time alone with יהוה, he will keep us isolated from the power and help that comes from יהוה to overcome our battles.

Some of us are sincerely striving to accomplish יהוה's will without the companionship of *Yeshua*. Recall the story of *Yosef* and *Miryam* after the *Pesach* in Jerusalem. Supposing *Yeshua* was with them, they journeyed home. But He was neither with them nor with their relatives; three days later they found Him in the temple (see Luke 2:41-49). Likewise, many of us have become so consumed with our battles that we are no longer aware of the presence of *Yeshua*. But *Yeshua* is found in the Temple expounding *Torah*! We have been traveling in our own strength.

As the pressures and warfare of this age continue to escalate, we will soon discover that yesterday's anointing will not suffice for today's battles. On this sacred mountain, יהוה brought a new beginning to Elijah's life—one that would ultimately release a *double portion* of power to his successor *Elisha*. By this new anointing, Jezebel will be destroyed, Baal worship abolished, and the only period of revival the northern tribes ever experienced would begin.

To reach this same place of breakthrough in our own times, we may pass through our own *Horev*. Here, יהוה will bring us back to the simplicity and purity of devotion to Messiah (2 Cor. 11:1-3). What seems like a time of desolation is more truly a time of preparation; A revival of great proportions is coming to our land! יהוה is about to bring to your life a new beginning. When we return to the battle, we shall war from secret place of the Most High.