

The King Is in the Field: Where Are You?

TESHUVAH IN PREPARATION FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

BY VICTORIA SARVADI, TH.D.

Where *are* you? This question is not so much to determine your physical location but rather a provoking inquiry that begs of a comprehensive assessment of your spiritual condition.

From times past, it has been a common practice to welcome the Jewish New Year with a sort of rigid balance. We celebrate with exuberant joy that God has kept and sustained us through another year by his mercy. And yet by the same token, we take a personal and pensive inventory of our actions, our secret thoughts, and our true state of heart.

Perhaps a more appropriate question instead of “Where are you?” should be “Are you ready to meet the King?”

The last month of the Jewish calendar is called Elul and is spelled אֱלוּל in Hebrew. This expression of the king in the field originated from Rabbi Shne’ur Zalman of Liadi, better known as the “Alter Rebbe,” the founding spiritual leader of Chabad-Lubavitch. The vivid imagery of a king who leaves the luxuries of his palace to be accessible to the laborers of the field has become an engaging teaching for the month of Elul throughout the world.

There are also several interesting sayings associated with this final month. The most well-known adage is “*Ani v’dodi v’dodi li*” or in English “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine” (Song of Songs 6:3; 7:10).

The sentence is created as an acrostic from the word *Elul*:

Ani (begins with an *aleph*—א)
L’dodi (begins with a *lamed*—ל)
V’dodi (begins with a *vav*—ו)
Li (begins with a *lamed*—ל)

This endearing statement is often used in wedding ceremonies and written in Jewish marriage contracts called *ketubahs*, engraved on jewelry, and depicted on countless mediums of art.



Essentially, *The King in the Field* is a pictograph for the Bridegroom or the Messiah who is coming for his bride. The shofar is blown every day during the month of Elul as if to announce the coming King and the relentless desire to arouse love. The Bible calls the shofar *the voice of God* (Exodus 19:19) and in this case specifically *the voice of the bridegroom* (Jeremiah 33:11). He is calling for a prepared bride, spotless and refined. He is beckoning her presence and yearning to ignite passion in the heart of his beloved.

It is also important to note that the King is also observing and discerning *who* is in the field. Are you as the wheat that bears fruit? Or are you a tare (weed) growing alongside the true bride? When the Day of the LORD has come, the Scripture describes the Messiah separating his beloved from those of the world and then bringing them (his beloved) into his kingdom. The others he will cast away. You could say this will be the time of the **great threshing**.

“His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He shall clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but the chaff He shall burn up with inextinguishable fire” (Matthew 3:12, TLV).

The threshing floor portrays that there will be an appointed time of God sitting on his throne of judgment with absolute power.

“A king who sits on the throne of judgment **winnows** all evil with his eyes” (Proverbs 20:8, LEB).

It is apparent that the field depicts the “field of life” where we all live and have our being. The agricultural metaphors of wheat and other grains that recurrently show up in the Scripture, as they do in many parables and maxims, symbolize the souls of humanity. This idea is made clear in parables like the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13:24-30 and by the idiomatic expression made by Yeshua concerning the fact that fields are “white with harvest” in John 4:35.

Another aspect of this interesting agronomic picture is the idea of *the dew on the surface of the ground*. Dew is likened to the blessing of God from heaven. It was God’s miraculous provision of manna that covered the ground like dew in Exodus 16:1-11.

In Hebrew, the word for dew is *tal* which comes from the idea of covering. The words *tallit* (prayer shawl) and *kittel* (white robe) comes from the same root. Imagine, if you will, one coming under the covering of the *tallit* to pray or read the Word. It is then that the dew of God begins to *cover* them and wash them as the Holy One releases refreshing water to quench a spiritual thirst that only he can satisfy. We are restored as he covers us with his dew from Heaven.

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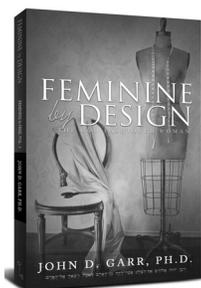
A good Midrash that helps us pull together the two concepts of the *king in the field* and the *covering as in the tallit* is explained in the book of Ruth.

Naomi instructs Ruth that there will be a specific time that her kinsman-redeemer will be winnowing or threshing the grain in his field. She instructs her daughter-in-law to wash and prepare herself (like a bride) then introduce and acquiesce herself to him. “Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best

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clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor” (Ruth 3:2b-3a, NIV).

Ruth goes forth in faith to the field of her redeemer while he is winnowing the barley, imploring him to enter a marriage covenant with her by covering her under the wings of his *tallit*.

The prophet Ezekiel explains this picturesque principle of covenant with similar verbiage:

“When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord GOD, and you became mine” (Ezekiel 16:8, ESV).

The wedding tradition of being married under a *chuppah* (*tallit*) profoundly illustrates this exquisite expression of God’s covenant of marriage. This image fulfilled by both husband and wife willingly entering under his garment, and pledging their faithfulness to their God and to each other, fulfills a heavenly mystery. It’s not surprising that this sacred institution is being attacked from all sides by the evil one. God’s hallowed and sacred model of intimate covenant is constantly challenged, perverted, and corrupted. Maybe a practical exercise to becoming prepared to meet our King and Bridegroom would be first to repair

our relationships with one another. Let us return and reconcile with our spouses, our families, and our friends.

The apostle Paul teaches that the world will endure many hardships before Messiah comes to deliver us into his kingdom (Acts 14:22). As we look at the many devastating

distresses that have plagued the entire world in these past few years, no doubt we know that the time of the King’s visitation must be near. And his desire is that we awaken to his summons and return to him to be restored. This act of return is called *Teshuvah* in Hebrew.

The entire month of Elul is dedicated to individual repentance and purposeful reconciliation with God and man. **It is a special time of Divine grace and mercy**—a time to pray and repent. Elul leads up to the New Year celebration of *Rosh Hashanah* or *Yom Teruah* (The Festival of Trumpets). The preparatory process of Elul helps us to enter the new year fresh, full of anticipation and assurance.

Following the month of Elul, the 10 days between the *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, called The Days of Awe, are the most preparative. It is imperative that we judge ourselves and make the proper changes in our lives in order to overcome and be counted among the righteous. Revelation chapters 2 and 3 emphasize this directive to the followers of Messiah. It is, therefore, essential that we as believers confess, repent, turn away from sin or anything that has lured us away from God and his precepts, and also make restitution as God leads. “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1 Corinthians 11:31, KJV).

The sages of Israel emphasize that although a person can repent at any time, this critical time of the year is anointed and conducive to repentance and making amends as Isaiah 55:6 says: “Seek the LORD while he may be found; call to him while he is near” (CEB).

The King is making himself accessible. He is in the fields of human life and walks among us. Yes, the King is indeed in the field and the question still looms, **“Where are you?”**

Our King commands *teshuvah*: “Return to me and I will return to you.” We must stir up and arouse our love for him and cry out: “Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we will be restored; Renew our days as of old” (Lamentations 5:21, NKJV).

May the Spirit and the Bride be in agreement, and may your name be found in the Lamb’s Book of Life. **“G’mar Chatimah Tovah.”** 

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Learn more about Dr. Sarvadi’s extensive library of inspirational, informative, and challenging materials that are posted at www.thebethanycenter.org.

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