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I feel blessed. So, you know what's so funny? And maybe, as you look backwards, when I get done speaking, you'll look backwards on the day and you'll say, wow, somebody had an agenda. It wasn't me, obviously.

And I love it, I love the fact that I got some help with some setup, reminding us where we are, because I never know, you know, I'm getting ready to talk. So, I'm trying to get my breath. So I'm aware that this, what I'm about to say is not just for us, there are gonna be other people who are gonna see this.

So to you, I hope you love it. So the stage begins, where are we, where have we been? We've been talking for a while. They're gathered together, and he's giving his, Moses is giving his last bit of it.

He's, you know, trying to do the verbal dump on them, so to speak, trying to give them the last of this information, what's most important before he's not there anymore, right? So at the beginning of Deuteronomy, it says, these are the words that Moses spoke to all of Israel, beyond the Jordan, in the wilderness, in the Arabah, opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Avan, Hazaroth, and Dishavah. It's 11 days journey from Horeb, by way of Mount Seir, to Kadesh Barnea. So it's not that far away, but it's out there still.

You know, they, Rabbi gave the number of how many came out of Egypt, and then they wandered for 40 years, and some will say, conservatively, the people gathered that were hearing this was about three million. Imagine that, that's a big group of people, big group of people. Moses has been restating a lot of them, and he's told them about the blessings and the curses for certain behavior, and now he reaches the purpose for going over this again.

In chapter 29, verse 11, he says that the purpose is so that you, standing here, may enter into the sworn covenant of Yah, your Elohim, which Yah is making with you today. That he, being Yah, can establish you as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So he's following through on an earlier promise to make them his people.

Who is he directing this statement to? Right? He says, oh, chapter 29, verse 13, not just you standing here, people who are not standing here, too. People in the future, people not of your group. It's a broad range.

He goes on to remind them of all the idolatry they witnessed as they were coming out of Egypt, they were coming out of a land that was just chock full of idolatry, and they were making their way to where they are, and they had seen the idolatry that was practiced by all those other nations. And he warns that if anyone engages in those practices, they're gonna receive the curses that are discussed. The land will become desolate, and the people will be scattered.

Not just randomly scattered, he scatters them. In verse 21, he says, it says, and the next generation, your children, who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a faraway land will say, when they see these afflictions that are on the land, and the sickness with which the Lord has made it sick, all the nations, and it continues, it says, all the nations, not just your next generation and your children and the foreigner that comes from a faraway land, but all the nations will say, why has the Lord done this to the land? What has caused the heat of this great anger? Now, in verse 25, it goes on to say, well, man has an answer. You wanna know what man's answer is? You won't be surprised by this.

It says, then people will say, it is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them. Interesting, isn't it? So apparently there was an allotment of gods to somebody, but not for these people. They had a different God that was sent to them.

So, since this is not just for those standing there, I thought, must apply to me. Assuming I wanna be in covenant with him, and I want to enjoy the blessings and avoid the curses, that's pretty much the way I get through life, right? More pluses than minuses. Let's try to avoid the minefield.

Let's just get through it. And I'll take blessings if they come. That would be great.

The modern, so how are we gonna do that? So, he says that those people went and served other gods and worshiped them. So I thought to myself, well, what is, I mean, worship in a modern sense might not be the same as what they were thinking. So let's have a look at that.

Merriam-Webster's definition for worship currently, it's a transitive verb, they say, to honor or show reverence for a divine being or a supernatural power. That's pretty much the one we're talking about. But the one that's more common that people experience on a daily basis is to regard with great or extravagant respect, honor, or devotion, so as a celebrity is worshiped by her fans.

Oh, now I can connect with that because I see that in other people a lot. Do you know that there is a mental health condition now called CWS, Celebrity Worship Syndrome? Literally, I'm not making this up. Picture Swifties, Potterheads, Justin Bieber worship.

Okay, we'll go back in time. Jim Morrison, Elvis Presley, I know, right? Who's that generation? Elvis Presley, are the people who followed him? It's amazing. Being a fan was one thing, but being obsessed or being in a love affair with them is another thing.

That's the thing that's unhealthy, right? Now, Jah says, so that's our modern understanding of what that is, Jah says that worshiping is the result of turning away and not following his voice in this case, in this context. Chapter 30, verse 17, it says, but if your heart turns away and you will not hear my voice but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them. So they just turned

away from him.

Put my fingers in my ears, and I'm not gonna do what you said. I'm gonna do my own thing. So the word is, for worship, is shakha, without going into too much explanation about verbs.

So I said, okay, well, what is that? Where else does it tell us about shakha? In Proverbs 12, verse 25, it says, the word is de-agah, de-agah, which is fear or anxiety. It's in a man's, in a man's heart. Fear and anxiety in a man's heart makes it shakha, worship.

But a good word makes it sameach. Makes it sameach, makes it happy. So a good word makes it happy.

Fear and anxiety makes it worship, makes it shakha. Let's look at a couple more examples of it so that we know what they're thinking about worship was contemporaneous with when it was written. In Genesis 33.3, we hear the story about Jacob greeting his brother Esau.

He's come back with his whole family and he's gonna go see his brother. And it says, and he passed over before them and shakha, which is in this version translated, bowed himself to the ground seven times until he came near his brother. Question, do you think he had fear, anxiety, and dread in his heart as he's approaching his brother Esau? Oh yeah, he did.

He wasn't looking forward to that. He had stolen the birthright. He had done his brother wrong.

And here he's trying to come back and come back. So that's what, his heart bowed down to his brother because he was afraid of him there. Another story.

Where Jacob's sons were sent, or Israel probably at that time sons were sent to Egypt to get food. In Genesis 42 at verse six it says, and Joseph was the governor over the land. And he, it was that sold to all the people of the land.

So as Joseph's brethren came and shakha, which is bowed themselves down before him with their faces to the earth. Do you think they were nervous about going to approach the leader of Egypt to try to get food? Yeah, they were in the middle of a famine. They'd been sent a long way and they're hoping they can get a little something to take home, right? So they're anxious at the very least.

Then another story. This one is after Joseph has been reunited with his family. And he brings his sons to meet with Israel to receive a blessing.

These were the two boys that were born in Egypt, but they're still his offspring, right? And he says, and Joseph, this is Genesis 48, and Joseph brought them out from between his knees. So here are these little boys, I'm picturing little because they're down in here, right? Between his knees and he bows himself with his face to the earth before Israel, right? And then we know what happens after that, that his, enter into this dialogue with Israel. He can't see well and Joseph

thinks he's giving the blessing to the wrong child again.

But in that process, do you think that Joseph was feeling some fear and anxiety? Yeah, probably, a little bit. He didn't, those boys didn't grow up with Israel. They didn't really know who he was.

I mean, they probably heard lots of stories, but they didn't really know. There's gonna be some worry in there. So we take that idea that bowing down involves for your heart to be involved in it, involves some fear and anxiety.

And if we go back to the 10 words, it says don't make a graven image and don't bow yourself down to them or serve them. It says because I, the Lord, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children under the third and fourth generation that hate me, right? So looking from the outside, it seems ridiculous that anybody would submit themselves to something that's carved out of wood or an image of something else in the hopes of improving their situation. You're thinking, why do they have to give them an instruction like that? That seems silly.

Probably because he knew we were gonna do it, right? But people are funny. You know, when they're living in a community, they look around at what everybody else is doing around them, right? And they do that. So if everybody else is, you know, getting a this or a that and the other to try to help, well, maybe we need to get one too, right? And imagine that there are those people who make the idols and want to sell them their hawk and their wares.

They're like, you, you need help with your crops. Buy this idol. You over there, you have a health issue.

Well, you need this idol. Oh, you, fertility problems? Well, hold on a second. I keep those in the back.

But this is what you need, right? That's what they're doing. And people would pay and buy them and take them home and set them up in a special place, consult them, you know, ask for what they want. We want good crops this year.

That's what we're looking for. The modern version of that, as I look at myself, are things like a rabbit's foot, a four-leaf clover, a horseshoe over the door, am I right? Hamsa, heads up, penny on the ground. Crystals, St. Christopher medals, a magic eight ball, dream catchers, an evil eye pendant, a scarab amulet.

The list goes on and on. None of those things do a thing for you, use flash, except empty your wallet. Yep, and do junk up your house, right? So here's what Yaa says we need to do to fix the problem.

Okay, verse, chapter 30, verse one. It's the part I read. And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, we've been discussing in Deuteronomy, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind amongst all the nations where Yaa your Elohim has driven you.

So you're already scattered out someplace. Verse two, and you return to Yaa your God. You go from, going my way, and you turn back to him.

You and your children, and you obey his voice in all that I command you today with all your heart and with all your soul. This pattern of how you get yourself straightened out is repeated two more times, like in rapid succession. That was verse two.

In verse eight it says, and you shall again obey the voice of Yaa and keep his commandments that I command you today. Repetition two. Repetition three is in verse 10.

It says, when you obey the voice of Yaa your God to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this book of the law, when you turn to Yaa your God with all your heart and with all your soul. It's a three-peat. It's a three-peat.

What do we know about three-peats? They are important. Very important. Okay, so if you're ever wondering how am I gonna fix this situation, turn back, follow the list.

He says, if you do that, here's what I will do. Verse three. Then Yaa your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where Yaa your God has scattered you.

And, verse six, and Yaa your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love Yaa your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. That's the end of my portion. Now, as an aside, I have heard circumcise your heart many times, and I've wondered, what in the world? What is that? You can't get in there.

Like, you'd have to be some super surgeon, like Yaa, to get in there and circumcise my heart. What are you cutting off? I did, I wondered, so I went and looked. This is what I do.

Deuteronomy 10.16 says, circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. Oh, it's a stiff-neck surgery. I need a stiff-neck surgery.

That's what the problem is. Get rid of that stuff so that I can really get into it here, get into the relationship, right? Okay, so, just like he said, I'll restore your fortunes, I'll circumcise your heart, and he says again, at verse 16, if you obey the commandments of Yaa your God that I command you today, by loving Yaa your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandment statutes and his rules, which are misfot, chok, and mishpatim, judgments, is probably a better word for that, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you're entering to take possession of. So, turn towards Yaa, return to Yaa, however you wanna view that in your life, obey his voice by loving him, ahava, that kind of, the love between a husband and a wife, walking in his ways, like let's practice doing it, and keeping his misfot.

So like any relationship within people, there are boundaries and expectations. He's trying to let

you in on what he expects, and what you can expect from it too. Then, after he's explained all this, is when he makes the deal.

He's been telling you what he's gonna do, and then he makes the deal. At verses 19 and 20, he says, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him. Now, Sam would do a mic drop right now, but I'm more of a recap gal.

So, you remember from last week, we've discussed being joyful about blessings that come our way, I think it was just last week, maybe it was two weeks ago. Not being guilt-ridden about it when things are going well for us. Yah is a loving father.

He really doesn't, he wants us to be in a love relationship with him. He's looking for us to bow down to him out of love, not out of fear, not out of anxiety. He wants you to be in that relationship, that you should be genuine.

If you wanna know what that looks like, go read Psalm 139. He already knows what you're thinking. You can't hide anything from him, you can't pretend it doesn't exist.

You can't go hide someplace, go to the dark part of town and think that he doesn't know you're down there. Oh yeah, he does. Oh yeah, he's right there with you.

He knows all about it. So you may as well talk about it with him. Try to walk in his ways.

It's a process. Rededicate yourself repeatedly. Just keep trying to march in the right direction.

And most importantly, study a good word so that your heart will be happy. We wanna have happy hearts? Study a good word. Start by learning what his ways are.

Start by studying Deuteronomy. Become a Deuteronomy expert. That would be great.

Avoid the pitfalls, double down on seeking blessings. Seems like an easy plan to me. Ask questions.

Engage in your study, ask questions. You can search Google and get great answers to a lot of things. You could use Brown's Driver Briggs and find actual Bible verses to explain it.

But you can't use cliff notes. You can't rely on some guy that's gonna stand up here and tell you what it says. You have to engage yourself and read the word for yourself.

There's no shortcut. Show up for your relationship with God. Check in with him regularly.

Communicate. Spend quiet time. Be silly.

Be serious. But he's waiting for you. And that's what he wants you to do.

Engage with him. Not some community, not some guy. Just be with him.

That's the most important thing. Okay? Now mic drop. Shabbat shalom.

Shabbat shalom. Very good.