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PERMISSION
TO SHINE

1

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

—MATTHEW 5:16, KING JAMES VERSION

מבנה נשואי תורה ומוסר
בביתך ובביתך
בביתך ובביתך
בביתך ובביתך

*Hakana ninhar nuhrakun qedam bneynasha d'nehzun
abadeykun taba waneshbahun l'abwukun dbashmaya*

Let the light of your being,
the consciousness of knowing
your real Self,
radiate and illuminate
the human beings
you find before you,
as well as the
community of voices
you find within.

When they see and feel
your atmosphere of ripeness,
your ability to act

at the right time and place,
they will be reconnected in praise
to the song and harmony
of the Parent of All,
the nurturing Force
that re-creates the cosmos
each moment,
unfolding a universe
of sound, vibration, and light.

Textual Notes

The word for light in Aramaic (*nuhra*) means the illumination of what is unknown. Light and dark are not warring opposites as they are in Greek philosophy. For an ancient Aramaic or Hebrew speaker, the Creator brought forth both light (what is known) and darkness (what is unknown). The creation stories in the Hebrew bible describe an interplay between these two, essential parts of the ongoing, sacred, creative process of the universe. A Western way of thinking also presumes an inside-outside split not present in Hebrew or Aramaic, so we can also see light and dark as two aspects of our own consciousness. What we *know* in our being is the fullest sense of our self, the unifying element of the psyche that allows us to say “I am.” What we don’t yet know are the divine resources within us that we have yet to discover. All of the words usually translated “shine” and “see” are also directly related to *nuhra*.

The word translated “men” by the King James version is the Aramaic *nasha*, which means “human beings” (male and female) or a particular aspect of being human—the instability of our enfleshed life and its susceptibility to change. The fragility of life was probably one of the first conscious awarenesses of human beings, as they began to recognize themselves as separate from their natural surroundings. It was the source of “I-ness” as opposed to “we-ness.” The word for “good” in Aramaic is *tub*, which means ripe—indicating action at the right time and place. The word for “father” (*abba*) and “heaven” (*shemaya*) indicate, from an Aramaic viewpoint, a process as much as a being. This process of cosmic, divine creation started “in the Beginning” and continues through the present moment. The word for “glorify” (from the root word *shabab*) reveals a sense of praise together with song. Praising knits our voices back into the universal harmony. The word *shabab* is related

to the ancient Hebrew word that became the source of the word “Sabbath,” a day for remembering our connection to the whole of creation.

Hearing this blessing of permission with Aramaic ears, we find Yeshua showing what happens when the light of our being—a tangible sense of our personal “I am” connects to the sacred “I Am” and allows itself to shine. First, we bless those around us by reminding them subconsciously that there is a greater reality to which we are all connected. Second, we bless our own inner self, the inner community of voices called the *naphsha* in Aramaic (similar to *nephesh* in Hebrew and *nafs* in Arabic). Often this part of our being feels the weakness and fragility of human life. When we allow the *nuhra* of our connection to the divine to pour through us, we also allow these voices “in the shadow” to be illuminated and feel a more expanded, connected sense of divine Self. The individual “I am” comes into contact with the divine “I Am.”

Body Prayer 1: Invocation of the Light

With one hand lightly over the chest, slowly intone the Aramaic word for light, NUH-RA. Place one hand gently over your heart and allow the sound to begin there. As you intone the word, feel your connection to the sacred in this moment. Then, after a few breaths, embrace the fullest awareness that you feel of the inner community of voices in your psyche. Imagine a safe place within where more aspects of yourself are welcome to gather. Let *nuhra* shine there with respect, welcome, and confidence.

During the day, try breathing with the sound and feeling of *nuhra* in your interactions with others. At the end of the day, intone the word a few more times with thankfulness, feeling your voice as part of the cosmic harmony of

sound. The CD contains a melody that you might use for this prayer of gratitude: *Ninhar nurakun qedam bneynasha*: “Allow the sacred light of your being to illuminate all of your communities, inside and out.”



LISTEN TO TRACK ONE

Invocation of the Light

SNAKE AND DOVE
The Blessings of Holy Wisdom

2

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

—MATTHEW 10:16, KING JAMES VERSION

ሰንጠረዥ ሆኖ ለሰጠው ጊዜ ለሰጠው
ሆኖ ለሰጠው ጊዜ ለሰጠው
ሰንጠረዥ ሆኖ ለሰጠው ጊዜ ለሰጠው

*Ha ana mashadr ana lkhon
ayk ‘emraa bney dibaa
hu hakil hakima ayk hewata
wa tamima ayk yauna*

I am sending you out
like a plant shoots out roots
deep into the earth
opening a new channel for
life to flow, back and forth.
You are going like sheep,
with half-formed speech
and a gentle message,
into the wolf-pack of this world,

the roar and murmur
of hungry inner selves.

So sometimes
be subtle, like Holy Wisdom—
follow her spiral way like a snake,
weave back and forth surprisingly.
Gather all within your wake
excluding none,
like the first Mother of us all.

Sometimes
feel Wisdom's passion—
fly straight to the Beloved like a dove,
moving all at once, clearly, obviously.
Open your wings wholeheartedly,
already at one with your goal.

Textual Notes

The word translated here as “send” comes from the Aramaic *shadar*, which can indicate a plant sending out roots. The word for sheep (from ‘*emra*) is related to the root that means to tell or relate a message. In this case, the message may be incomplete, innocent, or not fully conscious, like the disciples themselves. The word for wolves (from *diba*) also points to the image of communication. Here the corresponding root refers to indistinct sound, murmur, and rumour. Indistinct, chaotic sound “eats up” a word or a message, just as the simple message of love and justice that Yeshua communicates is seemingly consumed by the self-serving, cynical aspects of his culture. And yet, by eating the “message,” perhaps a change occurs. As Yeshua says in the Gospel of Thomas: “Blessed is the lion that eats a man and the lion becomes man.”

The advice Yeshua gives to his disciples is to emulate the stories of Holy Wisdom. “Be wise” (*hu hakim hakima*) uses the Aramaic word for wisdom that connects directly to the Old Hebrew *Hochmah*, the name of Holy Wisdom. In some stories of Wisdom, she gathers everyone to her table (Proverbs 9). Jesus retells this story in another part of the Gospels, adding the recommendation that one include first the “the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind,” because then there is no expectation of getting anything back. On an inner level, this image points to the parts of the *naphsha* that feel poor or disabled, disenfranchised by the life we are currently leading. Include them gently and gradually, says Yeshua. Or rather, exclude them at your peril. This way of Holy Wisdom uses story or parable to communicate with the parts of us that stand “outside” and “in the darkness.” The word for snake used here (*hewata*)

is directly related to the word for “life energy” and to the Mother of Life in Genesis 2, that is *Hewa* or Eve.

The other story of *Hochmah* that Yeshua recommends as a guide for living comes from a different Middle Eastern source, which according to some biblical studies scholars was combined with stories about Holy Wisdom. In this source, Wisdom opens her clothing or her heart (or both) and sends doves as messengers of love flying toward her Beloved.¹ When one feels this sense of passionate love, no indirect movement is possible. Everything becomes clear, obvious, and whole-hearted, which is the meaning of the Aramaic *tamima*.

Body Prayer 2: The Way of Snake and Dove

Breathe in the heart with the words HU HAKIMA. Feel the heart becoming more vibrant and living and at the same time, larger, more able to include all of the feelings, thoughts, and impressions within you with love and respect. Try breathing the sound in the heart in a rhythm of four: HU HA-KIM-A. Feel your breath spiraling deeper within you, including more and more of your inner Self. After a short time, release the words and just breathe a bit longer with a feeling of expansion, love, and respect in the heart.

Then breathe with two other words that Yeshua uses in this saying, WA TAMIMA, and feel the potential for your heart to move toward a goal, with passion and energy. Feel your breath bringing your whole Self together in completeness, allowing you to move ahead like a dove flying home to its nest.

¹ See, for instance, Sylvia Shroer's *Wisdom Has Built Her House: Studies on the Figure of Sophia in the Bible* (2000).

Toward the end, breathe with both phrases, the first on the in-breath, the second on the out-breath. Affirm that everything you see and experience is included in the heart of Holy Wisdom. Some voices need the gentle, indirect approach—the spiral way. Others are already ready for the direct voice of love and passion—the straight way.



LISTEN TO TRACK TWO

The Way of Snake and Dove

3

A BLESSING OF IMPERMANENCE

*“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

—MATTHEW 6:33, KING JAMES VERSION

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ከጠባብ ጠባብ ጠባብ ጠባብ ጠባብ

*Be’wdeyn luqedam malkutah d’alaha wa zadiqutah
wa kulheyn halneyn mithausepheyn lkhon.*

If you’re going to be anxious and rush around about anything,
do it first about finding the “I can” of the universe
and how it straightens out your life.

Line up your starting place with that of the cosmos:
search and ask and boil with impatience
until you find the vision of the One Being
that empowers all your ideas and ideals,
that restores your faith and justifies your love.

All the rest—the universal and endless “things”
of life—
will then attach themselves to you as you
need them.