

# Elul 5782

## Tzelem Elokim – The Likeness of God

### MOVEMENT MEDITATION FOR ELUL 2022 WEEK 5

By Helaine Sheias

The Hebrew month of Elul can be seen as an invitation for *cheshbon nefesh* (Accounting of the Soul) to a collective “us” realigning; an opportunity for *Teshuva* (returning to the home of our inner Self); a gentle, but firm “nudge” from the Creator suggesting that we take stock of this past year and to consciously choose what we innately know must change for us in the year to come. All of this requires a deep willingness and vulnerability to take the step forward and become a spiritual seeker, to be the curious explorer who looks both backwards into our ancestral lineage and forwards towards the future that we are aspiring to cultivate, which is firmly based on our Jewish tradition of Torah and Mussar.

In this fifth week of Elul teachings, I invite you to engage with me in a brief movement meditation of spiritual inquiry – a physical, mental, emotional and energetic journeying inwards to that sacred space within our souls, in which the *Tekiya* of the Shofar merges with the *niggun* of the *S’lichot* - the ancient biblical chants of Forgiveness and awakens within us tiny holy sparks of the Creator’s Divine Presence.

In preparation for this moving meditation, I invite you, if the weather and time of day allows, to venture outdoors. Find a space that you are drawn to – a walking path that is surrounded by trees, an open meadow infused with wildflowers, a small nearby brook in which you can listen to the trickles of water on the smoothed stones. Take an easy breath in and exhale, an expansive breath in and a releasing breath out. With a very gentle yet focused gaze allow this space of natural beauty to touch you – physically, mentally, emotionally, and energetically. Listen, *Shema*, to the natural sounds that spontaneously arise; smell and touch the beauty of these Creator infused surroundings. And then pause, quiet your mind and body, listen to the ebb and flow of your breath as it merges with the ebb and flow of this nature sanctuary. We are reminded that “the King is in the fields”/ *hamelech beh’sadot* during the month of Elul. Bring one hand to your heart center and one hand to your belly. Can you feel your King/Queen of the Universe nearby? Can you experience Their Presence next to you? Allow some time for this Divine Presence to be revealed to you. Return to your breath, the rise and fall of your inhale and exhale.

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***In: Vayikra / Leviticus 19:17-18 we encounter the following teaching:***

לֹא־תִשָּׂא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ  
הֹכֵחַ תּוֹלִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ  
וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֶטְא:  
לֹא־תִקֵּם וְלֹא־תִטַּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ  
וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה'.

***You shall not hate your kin in your heart;  
you shall certainly rebuke your friend,  
and you shall not bear a sin on their account.***

***You shall not take revenge or bear a grudge against the children of your people;  
you shall love your fellow [Jew] as yourself, I am HaShem.***

During this fifth week of Elul we are being asked to let go of the anger and hurt inflicted upon us by the wrongdoings of others, that has become bottled up within us. We are being asked to release any feelings of hate or revenge, and to let go of grudges. And instead, to gather the courage and strength to rebuke from a deep place of love and compassion.

Begin to walk slowly, with a heel-toe touch to the earth. Each step is an expression of your *hishtadlut* / your genuine heart-felt “giving it your all” to release and let go of the toxicity of this past year. Continue to mindfully cultivate your unique rhythm of meditative moment – each step you take bringing you closer to your unblemished truth, your innate *ratzon* (desire) for *Teshuva* – returning to your authentic soul-self.

As you continue your meditative walk, bring into your mind’s eye a relationship in which you are being called to rebuke a friend or colleague. Bring a mixture of strength and loving kindness, *gevurah* and *chesed*, of truth and trust, *of emet and bitachon*. Notice how you are experiencing this interaction. Become aware of the spaciousness it is creating within you. Allow the layeredness of the situation to unravel and unfold. And then pause – look into your friend’s eyes – imagine that you are putting one hand on their heart center and that they are doing the same to you. Breath in, breath out. Becoming One, Unity - *Echad, Ichud*.

In her moving poem Dawna Markova shares:

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*I will not die an unlived life,  
I will not live in fear  
Of falling or catching fire.  
I choose to inhabit my days  
To allow my living to open me,  
To make me less afraid,  
more accessible,  
To loosen my heart  
Until it becomes a wing,  
A torch, a promise.*

*I choose to risk my significance; to live  
So that which came to me as seed  
Goes to the next as blossom  
And that which came to me as blossom  
Goes on as fruit.*

Continue your heel-toe mindful walk for a few more minutes. Re-connecting with your surroundings and the natural beauty around you. Elul, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot ...The High Holy Days, The Days of Awe.

*hamelech beh'sadot* ... The King/Queen is in the fields...

The Divine Presence is so very close, and you are now closer and more aligned with an inner awareness to their unique presence.

Thank you for partaking in this meditation for the fifth week of Elul.