

21 Elul, 5772 (8/9/12)

## *Dynamic Spiritual Martial Arts*

### *Bringing Out The Heavy Artillery*

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Ki Tavo

When You Enter In

It Cuts Both Ways

Torah:

Deut. 26:1-29:9

(1) **26:5.** *My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt, where he became a great nation.* Our people did not have a spectacular beginning, but they were conceived in Canaan, nurtured in the womb of Egypt and birthed by the Exodus to return and take possession of the Holy Land.

(2) **26:11.** *Then you shall rejoice for all the good the L-rd has provided you with, along with the Levite and the stranger who is in the midst of you.* Two comments. Tithe is about increase, not cutting into your seed grain. Second Israel has always been a mixed community, composed of Jews and Gentiles, with equal blessing and equal right (see 27:19 – a curse on those who violate the rights of strangers, orphans or widows).

(3) **28:46.** *The curses will forever be for you and for your descendents as signs and wonders.* The history of Israel in the Bible is as much about His blessings upon His people as it is about His discipline when we have wandered away from His Word. Life is all about sowing and reaping. As we approach Rosh Hashanah, may we purpose to sow in order that this New Year would be one where each of us and all of us at B'nai Chayim reap His blessings (and respond well – in repentance- to His discipline).

(4) **29:4-6.** *A understanding heart, seeing eyes, hearing ears, for forty years, clothes not wear out, feet not swell, not eat grain or drink wine or strong drink so that you may know that I am the L-RD your G-d.* The entire testimony of Israel is about knowing G-d or about refusing to know Him, what is your testimony? What is our testimony?

Haftarah:

Isaiah 60:1-22

(5) **60:8.** *who are these who fly like the clouds, like doves towards the dove court?* This is a lovely vision of the return from Babylon – G-d's hand extends to the ends of the earth to bring back His people from wherever they have been scattered.

(6) **60:19.** *It will no longer be the sun to give you light during the day, nor shall the brightness of the moon to give you light at night, for the L-RD be your light forever.* Israel has always had her eyes focused on eternity, because we serve the L-rd who reigns from eternity past to eternity forever.

Brit Chadashah:

Lk. 24:44-53

(7) **24:44.** *It must be that all which was said by Moses, the prophets and the Psalms is accomplished.* We serve the G-d of the biggest big picture, whose Word weaves a single thread and even the thread cuts both ways.

Psalm 51

**Jewish Hero:** The children of the desert wandering who had a cloud, a night light, clothes which did not wear out and feet who did not swell, who understood with their heart, saw with their eyes and heard with their ears all the goodness of the L-RD (Dt. 29: 4,5).

This is the last message in my series on dynamic spiritual martial arts and in a way; we have saved the best until last, because today I want to talk to you about prayer. Let's read Ephesians 6:18:

***“Pray at all times and in all occasions in the Spirit, making all kinds of supplications and requests. With this in mind, be alert and keep on praying for all the saints.”***

One of the most effective weapons of modern warfare has been heavy artillery, where shells have blasted away at enemy positions and softened them so that the troops would not encounter as much resistance when they went into combat.

The first effective modern use of the cannon was sadly against the thickest walls in Europe, as the Turks blasted through the walls of Constantinople and began to ravage southeastern Europe. The Germans also perfected this technique with what they called blitzkrieg, where a swift infantry attack was preceded by massive artillery and air bombardment and with it they quickly subdued most of continental Europe.

They got their comeuppance later in the war when allied bombers reduced their cities to ruin and Soviet rockets obliterated the defences of their retreating armies. Much of the damage in modern war is done before the troops actually enter the battle field.

And so it needs to be with us in our spiritual warfare. If we learn effective prayer blitzkrieg, then the enemy will be in disarray before we actually enter the battle field.

I want to say four things about prayer today. (1) There is defensive and offensive prayer. (2) There is long distance, long term prayer against stubborn targets (where we should not enter the battle field until it is softened). (3) There is focused prayer where the results of our bombardment help us to know what to aim at AND how to respond to stiffened resistance. (4) There is prayer for the saints and prayer for people to become saints.

This passage is the seventh weapon of our spiritual warfare and one we can use the most frequently and often the most effectively, but it is never one we should ever use against each other or against anyone, no matter what they do to us. We need to use it against the enemy and against the spiritual wickedness in the world, not against the victims of the enemy or those who are caught in the spiritual wickedness of the world. I am greatly troubled when believers feel they can use this weapon against each other instead of on behalf of each other.

Prayer is intended to be a communication with G-d for the spiritual, emotional and physical benefit of believers and for our own personal benefit – since we are also the saints for who we should be praying. But what is the difference between offensive and defensive prayer?

Offensive prayer is directed at the fulfillment of spiritual objectives and defensive prayer is directed against the attacks of the enemy, both against our spiritual objectives and against our spirituality itself. An effective army in the field needs to guard against counter attacks if it does not want to have to win back the same territory over and over again.

It takes time, maturity and wisdom in order to learn to pray effectively and not to confuse prayer with venting and also to learn to vent effectively so that our anger, fear and pain is healed and does not fester into bitterness.

This may take time, because part of the spiritual attack upon believers is to sow negative attitudes (the works of the flesh) into our hearts and lives and defensive prayer seeks to uproot (blow-up) these fifth column inner traitors from our hearts. How good are you at using your spiritual artillery? G-d will only bombard the enemy according to His Word and if we want to use the artillery wrongly, it often backfires and we end up damaging ourselves.

Now we will talk about long term, long distance stubborn targets and here I am not just talking about family members and other difficult people in your life (lol). Sometimes there are issues in our lives and personal problems that are like enemy strongholds that might take as long to conquer as it took Israel to gain permanent possession of Jerusalem (400 years). Sometimes we may even be taken into captivity by some live concerns and have to pray our way home and wait for the wandering to end.

We need to learn to never give up on prayer and to always pray through the spiritual troubles of our lives and of our hearts, until we have both G-d's perspective and His strategy. Sometimes it may come to the point where we are told to stop praying or that it will be something which will only be resolved beyond our own life.

However, prayer connects us personally to G-d and as we learn to pray and learn to live with the answers (no, yes, wait and none of your business), we can become truly effective prayer warriors, who do not lose heart – because we know that when we pray as we should (and not according to our own lusts (James 4:3), every time we pray a barrage is released by heaven, even if the person we are praying for will receive nothing from us.

During warfare, the artillery must learn to adapt to battlefield conditions and sometimes both the timing of bombardments and the kind of bombardments must be altered to suit the target. When Hitler was trying to get enough heavy water to build an atomic bomb (and he was months away several times), he build dams in the mountains of Norway which were hard to bomb accurately with the planes the allies had at their disposal. The British developed a skipping bomb, which they dropped into the water behind the dam and it skipped along the surface and only detonated when it hit the dam.

When we learn how stubborn some people and how stubborn some issues are, we need to learn how to focus our prayer and our behaviour, so that we do not go into battle situations where defeat is a foregone conclusion – Pr. 22:3 (a wise man sees trouble and hides, a fool passes on and is punished) and Pr. 30:32, 33 (if folly motivates you to act foolishly and if you have evil thoughts, put your hand over your mouth, for as the churning of milk produces butter and as the twisting of the nose produces blood, so the pressing of wrath produces quarrels).

Sometimes is we are not told what to do, we need to keep on praying and waiting and holding back in patience and peace, if we do not want to be needlessly slaughtered and defeated again and again. Do your prayers teach you how to fight or are you banging your head against the same wall instead of walking around it seven times seventy times a day until it falls down?

My last point refers to praying for saints and pre-saints. I can pray very effectively about mot everything in a believers struggle against the forces of evil in our world, but what do we pray for unbelievers. First I think we need to see them as pre-believers and pray that all the events of their lives would lead them to faith, even all the good, the bad and the ugly that comes their way. Prayers need to be both individual and corporate, because the more cannons the better, but we need to know why we are praying.

For non believers, we are praying for them to come to faith and for believers, we are praying for them to win their battle against the powers of wickedness in their lives.

How is your pray life doing?

Are you good at both offensive and defensive prayer?

Do you persevere in prayer against long term, long distance, stubborn targets, or have you given up when you should just back off and pray – maybe for a whole lifetime?

Is your prayer life teaching you how to pray and what to concentrate on as you engage in spiritual combat?

Are you praying for the pre-believers in your life?

Are you listening to G-d when He tells you what to pray and how to pray – and even when to stop praying?

Is the L-rd, from His Word the L-rd of your prayer life or is it just a time when you vent your heart instead of giving and receiving from Him?

Are you good at both individual and corporate prayer –like our people where when they camped around the mountain, when the stood in both temples and when they tarried before the L-rd in the upper room?

Do you know how to pray for world leaders and for political candidates? (That we may live peaceful lives, free from fear, so that they may both reward the righteous and punish the wicked, no matter who sits in the Whitehouse or on Parliament Hill?)

Are you praying for the eyes of G-d's people Israel; to be open to the Gospel? Are you praying for all the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve to similarly open their eyes?

Are you praying for deceived believers to come to their senses (2 Tim. 2:24-26)?

Are you praying for that you are personally set free from any deception which tries to take root in your heart or life? (Search me and try me O L-rd and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way of life everlasting – Ps. 139:23, 24)

Are you going to make attendance at our weekly prayer meeting a higher priority in the coming year, 5773?

Finally, let's pray.

Next week, I will introduce the High Holy Days Prayer Book and the documents of the festivals.

Announcements: leadership meeting, Grande Prairie, HHD schedule.