

MEDITATIONS FOR AV¹



“And the glory of G-d shall be revealed, and all flesh shall perceive together.” Isaiah 40:5

AHAVAT OLAM – EVERLASTING LOVE

¹ Av in Hebrew means father. It's Aramaic cognate is *Abba*.

"The peoples of all other nations but Jewish seem to look backwards and also to exist for the present; but in the Jewish scheme everything is prospective and preparatory; nothing however trifling, is done for itself alone, but all is typical of something yet to come."²

The following meditations are taken from *Love And The Messianic Age* by Paul Philip Levertoff.³ As we move through the month of Av, may we grow ever closer to the Father's heart and more fully realize the intensity of His love as expressed in Yeshua HaMashiach.

AV - 1

There are two kinds of knowledge⁴...On the one hand there is knowledge of G-d which anyone may acquire by studying creation and acquainting themselves with the character imprinted thereon. On the other hand there is knowledge of the inner being of G-d. The latter is progressive knowledge of G-d. It leads to love of Him, and love for Him brings as its final result the actual vision of Him. To attain this vision - the actual sight of G-d - is the highest aim; it is a consummation which will not be reached until the Messianic age, but it is surely promised then. In this connection the prophetic utterances, Deuteronomy 32:39 ("*Behold that I am He*") and Isaiah 40:5 ("*All flesh shall see together*"), are produced to show that the actual vision of G-d - the beautiful vision - is promised under the Mosaic law, and will be achieved under the Messianic dispensation. It is our business...to live now for the realization of the Messianic Age.

AV - 2

The present age is a time of pregnancy...*The Messianic Age will be a time of spiritual birth and growth*...days in which all creation, even the very animal world, will know G-d as in days before the fall.

AV - 3

In His relations with man on earth, G-d has shown Himself a king who desires to make His abode with us here...not as a sultan ruling in his palace, hidden and ruling only by power, but as a good and wise king whose one desire is to draw his subjects to himself; a king who also, out of love for his own, forsakes his palace and dwells among his people in order to unite himself with them, that they may see more of his glory and learn more of his character.

AV - 4

Creation, indeed, signifies of G-d's perfection. In creation G-d has *by an act of self-limitation* created conscious beings, that these may have the joy, first of realizing their selfhood, and then, of realizing Him, their Creator, and of receiving Him into their

² Samuel Taylor Coleridge

³ Paul Philip Levertoff was born in 1878 to a orthodox Jewish family with a Chasidic ancestry. He became a believer in Yeshua and was a forerunner of the Messianic Jewish movement.

⁴ The two forms of knowledge... can be contrasted by means of illustrations. The picture is not the artist, nor is the voice of a singer the personality of man. We may admire the artist because of the picture, the singer because of the voice, but we do not really know either man. The essence of a man's personality is revealed to the world in the form of holiness and love. In an infinitely higher degree all this is true of G-d. *Love And The Messianic Age*, Paul Philip Levertoff, 33

innermost life as their Father and King. The proof of G-d's love lies less in the fact that He raises creatures to Himself, than in that He stoops to have His tabernacle among men and thus reveal Himself to them.

AV - 5

The prophets always compare the ideal wonders of the Messianic Age with the wonders of divine providence in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, rather than the wonders of divine power in creation. The great significance of the redemption from Egypt is not the revelation of G-d's power but of His unconditional love for Israel.

AV - 6

In Messianic times the Holy Land will be called "the land of G-d's pleasure."⁵ G-d will enter into a spiritual marriage with this land, and it will be transformed into paradise, the land of beauty and fertility. The sacramental nature of this union will be fully revealed. But even now this is, in a measure, true of those who have become temples of the divine love; *they* are the land of G-d's pleasure.

AV - 7

...the world is made for man, but when he becomes a slave of this world and separates himself from G-d, he does harm not only to his own nature but to the whole creation.⁶

AV - 8

Man has been created by G-d in order that he may finish what G-d has deliberately left unfinished. Not that G-d needs the help of His creatures, but it is His love which causes Him to impart His own Nature to the work of His hands, in order that man should have the privilege and joy of becoming His fellow-worker in this work, in natural as well as in spiritual life.

AV - 9

The deepest longing (of a genuine Chasid)...is to become a "living Torah." The keeping of the Law is to him only a means to an end: union with G-d. And for this reason he tries to keep the Law scrupulously, for "G-d's thoughts are embodied in it."...The "reaping in joy"⁷ will be realized in the Messianic Age. For great will be the joy when the divine mysteries hidden in the Law will be fully unfolded by *Him* to whom Isaiah 53:13 ("Behold my servant will deal wisely") is applied.

AV- 10

It is possible "*to keep all the commandments, and yet be far from G-d.*" To such a man the Law can become, to use a Pauline phrase, "a savor of death unto death."⁸ The Chasidic writers similarly use the old Talmudic term *sam maven* ("a deadly poison"). This

⁵ Isaiah 62:4

⁶ Romans 8:22

⁷ Psalm 126:6

⁸ 2 Corinthians 2:16

poison can be cured only by the “salt” of the spirit of G-d, as Elisha cured the poisonous water with salt. (2 Kings 2:19-22) ⁹

AV- 11

The Torah is the “descending of the Divine wisdom from the highest heights and embodying itself in ‘earthly’ commandments.”

AV - 12

The law of love is derived from the love of G-d. The more we love Him, the better we will love men. We must look at man with the eyes of G-d and love him as G-d loves him.

AV - 13

Love is not the same as natural kindness. “Israel is by nature merciful,” but love means something more: conquering our natural tendencies and sacrificing our own will on G-d’s altar, loving even him who is unlovable, having mercy upon those who seem to us to be unworthy, bringing down the grace of G-d to sinners and to Gentiles.

AV - 14

Our love for G-d should not be less than our duty for our fellow men.

AV - 15

The grapes must be trodden and the skins left behind in the winepress in order that the good wine should gush forth; so does pure, joyous love towards G-d pour forth from our hearts only when it is trodden out humbly in G-d’s winepress and the skin of our self-righteousness left behind.

AV - 16

“G-d can only dwell in broken vessels.”

AV - 17

If we concentrate all our mental and spiritual faculties on Him, He will come down and concentrate His infinite creative power and love on us.

AV - 18

The motive for repentance should not be fear of the pangs of hell, but “the sorrow for our own soul which has fallen from it’s highest state to the depths of sin, from G-d’s place to the lower places of impurity.

AV- 19

When the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies, the place where G-d dwells *alone*, in order to make atonement for the people, dressed in linen garments, he represented G-d’s forgiveness as being something *unique* and independent of man’s piety and his good works.

⁹ Mark 9:50

AV - 20

True repentance consists in the longing that G-d would let His countenance shine upon us, that His relationship to us should be the relationship of one personality to another.

AV - 21

The Messiah is the personification of divine love. He showed what real love is. Therefore, to imitate Him means to love as He did.¹⁰ The imitation of Him is the imitation of G-d.¹¹ To live for Him is to live for G-d.¹²

AV - 22

Christ's love is not only an *example* for the fellowship, but is the power which awakens love in it. His love is powerful because it is G-d's Love: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Neither death nor life...shall be able to separate us from *the love of G-d* which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."¹³

AV - 23

The Son is the organ of G-d's love, and the intensity of this love is shown in the gift: "G-d so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

AV - 24

When the Son summarizes the work that He has done on earth, He does not refer to any empirical success, such as the love and faith which He had awakened among men, but the service which He had rendered to G-d: "I have *glorified* Thee on earth" (John 17:4). He lives and dies for G-d's honor. His love is a conscious self-oblation to the will of G-d.¹⁴

AV - 25

The whole Messianic consciousness of Jesus is expressed in this expectation of love. He seeks not His own glory (John 7:18), but through awakening faith in Himself He awakens faith in G-d. Thus G-d Himself is either loved or hated in Him (John 15:23).

AV - 26

Only he who is loved can love, and only he can love like Jesus who is loved like He is. The love wherewith the Father loved Jesus was a love in eternity (John 5:24), and believers were loved by G-d with the same love "before the foundation of the world."¹⁵

AV - 27

¹⁰ Matthew 20:28; John 13:34; Romans 15:2ff.; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Corinthians 11:1

¹¹ Ephesians 4:32-52; cf. Philippians 2:4ff.; 1 Peter 2:21ff.; 1 John 4:17

¹² Romans 6:11

¹³ Romans 8:35, 39

¹⁴ The words about self-denial in John 12:25 refer not only to the disciples but also to the Master.

¹⁵ John 17:24. CF. Ephesians 1:4

The power to bring forth fruit - that is, to be active in love - rests on communion with Him. (John 15:1-7) Love is thus the aim; freedom from sin is only a means to an end.

AV - 28

The compassion of Yeshua (Jesus) for human suffering and need is in no instance a mere emotion, but is always translated into action. His miracles are acts of His all-powerful love, revealing the will of the Father.

AV - 29

The love of G-d for the world remains to the world something outside itself. His love for the believers expresses itself in the fact that He gives them His spirit, as He does to the Son...G-d by His Spirit makes the heart of the believer His habitation, and thus the highest expectation of the Messianic Age is fully realized.

AV - 30

The purpose of the Divine love is not anything that might be selfishly appropriated and rejoiced in by its recipients, but is for the sake of the world, in order that the discipleship may be extended to all - "that the world might believe."

"I pray not only for these, but also for those who will trust in me because of their word, that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, are united with me and I with you, I pray that they may be united with us, so that the world may believe that you sent me."

~ John 17:20-21

Love And The Messianic Age is available for purchase at www.FFOZ.org