

YK 5783.2 “And who knows, you may have been chosen for just such a time as this.”
(Esther 4:14)

Shannah tovah!

Now that Yom Kippur has officially begun, let's turn our attention for a moment to Yom Kippur's related Holy Day! Any guesses for which holiday am I thinking of? It's a day (*yom*) that is like (*k-*) today. It's a day (*yom*) like...Purim!

In chapter 4:14 of the megillah, Esther tells us: **“And who knows, you may have been chosen for just such a time as this”** (Esther 4:14). And this certainly is quite a time.

Tonight's sermon has 5 components:

1. In a moment I'll share an ancient Tibetan prophecy that offers a surprisingly accurate description of right now, across the world and certainly right here in the U.S.: the Shambhala Warrior Prophecy.
2. We'll see how the prophecy offers a clear path toward *what we can actually do ourselves*.
3. We'll then go from that clear language and see how that same pathway is actually embedded in the structure of our regular Jewish prayers, if we know how to look. For as the Torah portion that is always right before Rosh HaShannah, *Nitzavim*, reminds us, “*lo ba'shamayim hi;*” the answers we are searching for are not in the heavens, but are in fact in our very own hearts.
4. Next, we'll see how a central prayer of **these** holy days actually provides the framework for clear and successful action.
5. And finally, we'll look at the opportunities you have here at Oseh to step into structures to support you on this pathway!

As you know, we always love to know what other structures and support we might experiment with as we continue to explore the intentional and impactful co-creation of this world in which God invites us to partner. So please reach out to Rabbi Josh and myself with your ideas!

Now let us begin:

1. The Shambhala Warrior Prophecy, as shared by Joanna Macy:

"There comes a time when all life on Earth is in danger. Barbarian powers have arisen. Although they waste their wealth in preparations to annihilate each other, they have much in common: weapons of unfathomable devastation and technologies that lay waste the world. It is now, when the future of all beings hangs by the frailest of threads, that the kingdom of Shambhala emerges. You cannot go [to the kingdom of Shambhala], for it is not a place. It exists in the hearts and minds of the Shambhala warriors. [Nor can you] recognize a Shambhala warrior by sight, for there is no uniform or insignia, there are no banners. And there are no barricades from which to threaten the enemy, for the

Shambhala warriors have no land of their own. Always they move on the terrain of the barbarians themselves. Now comes the time when great courage is required of the Shambhala warriors, moral and physical courage. For they must go into the very heart of the barbarian power and dismantle the weapons...”

“Yikes!” you might be thinking. “What can “little ol’ me” do against such destructive power?!”

2. Joanna Macy shares the pathway of the Shambhala Warrior, and a pathway for us:

"The Shambhala warriors know they can [dismantle the barbarian weapons because] these weapons are made by the human mind. So they can be unmade by the human mind! The Shambhala warriors know that the dangers that threaten life on Earth do not come from evil deities or extraterrestrial powers. They arise from our own choices and relationships, our habits of mind, and our fears of facing our fears. So, now, the Shambhala warriors must go into training....”

“How do [they] train?’ you might ask.

"They train in the use of two weapons:...compassion and insight into the radical interdependence of all phenomenon. Both are necessary. We need [compassion] because it provides us the fuel, it moves us out to act on behalf of other beings.

“But by itself it can burn us out. So we need the second as well, which is insight into the dependent co-arising of all things. It lets us see that the battle is not between good people and bad people, for the line between good and evil runs through every human heart. We realize that we are interconnected, as in a web, and that each act **with pure motivation** affects the entire web, bringing consequences we cannot measure or even see.

"But insight alone ...[cannot] keep us going. So we need as well the heat of compassion, our openness to the world's pain. Both weapons or tools are necessary to the Shambhala warrior." (Here is one direct source where you can find Joanna Macy telling this prophecy directly:

<https://greatturning.net/shambhala-warrior-prophecy-as-told-by-joanna-macy/>)

3. A connection to our Jewish prayers:

Before we look at a core set of our Jewish prayers, let us understand the tools I just mentioned a little more:

What is compassion? An expansive state of being that **results from love, being loved and knowing - in our bones!- that we are deeply loved.** In our liturgy we sing out: A Great Love loves us/ *ahavah rabbah ahavtanu*. With Eternal Love you love us/ *Ahavat olam beit yisrael am'cha ahavta*. Blessings and offerings of gratitude for the Great Mystery that loves us/ *Barukh atah Adonai, ohev amo Yisrael*.

What is the insight of Interconnection? A deep knowing and seeing that we are all part of a single web of existence. We are all part of the One/ that which is *Echad*. There is nothing else. *Ayn od*.

Perhaps you are beginning to see some of the most well known places where we have these themes in our tradition! Let's look more closely:

Jews traditionally pray three times a day. Two times a day, in the morning and in the evening, when we would traditionally be with others in community, we recite the Shma and what's called "her blessings." "Her blessings" are prayers about light, love, and redemption that immediately precede and follow the Shema. The language that is used in the morning differs slightly from what is said in the evening, but the core theme is the same. This structure was codified about 1800 years ago.

So what's the hidden wisdom and parallels to the Shambhala warrior pathway?

1. If we're in community, it actually first starts with Barchu, as we call out and fully welcome the Divine into our midst! *Adonai tzvaot*- leader of the Divine military"- help us become a powerful army of light warriors with you!
2. Whether as individuals, or as a community, we then turn our attention toward light and darkness. Light- hmmm....what is the light - *ner-neshama*- that we are shining forth? Listen to my Rosh HaShannah Day 1 sermon for more on this if you missed it!
3. Then comes love! In the morning we open to great love/ *Ahavah rabbah*! In the evening we open to eternal love / *ahavat olam*.
4. Upon this foundation we can open our hearts to the powerful **and scary** truth of the interconnection of all as we declare: *Adonai Eloheynu- Adonai Echad!* The Oneness of our God/ Eloheynu permeates all things, connecting us and bringing us all into the Oneness, *Echad*.
5. Which leads us to *g'ulah*/ redemption. Filled with light, and joining others with light, held in love and so able to let compassion easily flow to all, deeply grounded in a felt sense of interconnection with all, we step forward, and co-create the world that we most desire for ourselves, our friends and family, our children, others' children, and future generations.

It's that "simple"!!

The pathway to become a Shambhala warrior lies embedded in the order of our core prayers. Who knew!? And yet, we need help if we want to actually show up in our greater light, held in love, extending compassion, and deeply knowing the interconnection of all.

The world we are living in can feel overwhelming. How do we step into our resilience, courage, patience, and so much more that is being called forth from us? If we're concerned at all about the "*ro'a*/ badness" of what seems to be "decreed" for these times, what can we actually do? How can we *actually* become Shambhala Warriors instead of doing pretty much the same thing over and over, while expecting different results (which is one definition of insanity!).

This leads us to the fourth component:

4. *U'teshuva, u'tefillah, u'tzedakah ma'avirin et ro'a ha'gzerah!*

We actually have more power than we usually recognize, and can in fact change the *ro'a*/ badness of a *gzerah*/ decree by either a) making it such that the "*ro'a*"/ badness doesn't ultimately manifest or b) simply not experiencing a particular result to be as bad as we might have.

Here's a small example. Have you ever been cut off by another driver? What are common responses? Perhaps anger? Feeling unnerved and edgy? Perhaps we chase that driver down and cut them off, or just pass on that anger to others in our car, or simply stop driving as safely!

How *else* might we respond? How can we *ma'avir*/ transmute the badness of that experience? Perhaps it starts with preparation. Looking in our side or rear mirror, we notice a car racing down the highway. We can slow down or switch lanes so that the cut off *doesn't ever happen*. Or perhaps we still get cut off, but instead of anger and reactivity we take a deep breath, grateful that we are safe, and wish the other driver and everyone on the road equanimity and a safe trip.

Let's look more closely at the elements that our key High Holy Day prayers suggests can *ma'avir et ro'a ha'gzerah*/ can lead to these other kinds of other responses:

Tshvuah: This word is often simplistically translated as "repentance." The deeper truth is that it's about setting aside time and getting support in turning towards what is uncomfortable.

Tefillah: This word is often simplistically translated as "prayer." The deeper truth is that it's about setting aside time and getting support in seeing "what is my role in this situation? Is there a way that I might be responsible for 2% of the present issue? How might I begin to understand my habits, beliefs and actions, and make different choices, choices that lead more fully towards *ge'ulah*/ redemption and the world that I most desire for all?"

Tzedakah: This word is often simplistically translated as "charity." The deeper truth is that it's about setting aside financial resources to activate their fuller capacity for spreading more light and moving us toward a more just world. (I invite you to Check R. Josh's Second Day Rosh HaShannah text study on this topic. You can find it on our High Holy Day website page. I encourage you to read and discuss these thought provoking texts with family and friends).

5. What support do you have right here at Oseh?

This year, Rabbi Josh and I are "doubling down" on supporting you with concrete practices and teachings to help us become Shambhala Warriors, on the way to becoming *tzadikim*, through our Jewish practices. These include:

- a) Friday evening services
- b) Shabbat morning gatherings: traditional Shabbat, or alternatives:
 - i) Making Prayer Real class (this Shabbat)

- ii) 3rd Saturday of the month: Jewish meditation and Hebrew chanting
- c) “Growing into You!” class. (An introduction to this class will take place this Sunday) (Details were in yesterday’s eblast, and Friday’s enews)
- d) Another upcoming class titled “Finding Peace in Turbulent Times” (Check “The Shalom” for details.)

But even before then, tomorrow afternoon, from 3-5 pm, we have an opportunity for Torah study and experiential reflection and embodied practices for your spirit, right here at Oseh, led by your fellow Oseh-niks!

In closing, the writing is on the wall, or here at Oseh the etching is on the glass to our Torah ark.



When Moshe asks God what is God’s name, God responds: *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*/ “I **will be** what **I will be**. I am continuing to evolve, grow, and become my potential.”

We are created in the image of the unfolding energy of the Great Mystery. And here at Oseh, this call to emulate the growth and unfolding of our potential, just as the Source of All does, is front and center in our sanctuary. And as the noise outside ourselves and in the world grows louder and louder, *we are each called ever more into our own growth and becoming.*

So what will **you** do? How are **you** being called to grow? What is stirring in you about who **you** are being called to become? Take a moment of reflection. Baskets with post-its are near our “Corridor of Brilliance” banners. Feel free to write down after services- or after the holiday - your response and add that ember of light to the banner in the entryway, naming it so that you can begin to fan that ember into a great light, that joins with that of others in our community, realizing the potential for more light in this world.

This Friday will be our first Oneg group since COVID! Join me for a facilitated conversation on this topic after services.

In a moment, we will encounter the call to community, *Barchu*, inviting the Divine more fully into our midst. This is followed by an invocation of light, a reminder to open to love, and to know more and more deeply the Oneness that underlies all as we take the responsibility that is ours for moving us forward to a redeemed world.

May 5783 be a year of great growth and becoming as we grow into our potential to be more intentional, clear, and impactful, partnering more fully with the Divine. Shannah tovah!