

Shoshannah — A Woman Set Free

After we had drank the Victory Cup, Yasha's training group had gathered together and they began singing, "Ma nish ta na, halayla hasa, mechol halalut, mechol halalut . . . Listen to the hagodah and you will learn. . ." Parats answered someone's question as to what the hagodah was by saying, "The hagodah is the teacher, and tonight she is Grace." So it was, and we went inside to listen to Grace's story.

This is a story about growing up. It's about the ways of life. There's a proverb about wisdom, that it is a tree of life. But it is only a tree of life to a few. "Who are the few," she asked them, "who find it?" Arar Nathats answered, "Those who take hold of her." Grace affirmed him and told all the children and the youth who were sitting around her, "So, I am appealing to you to take hold of wisdom."

I want to tell you a story about a women we can all relate to. I am going to read you something from the Scriptures, so you can have understanding. Some of you younger ones won't be able to understand it so well, but you youth will be able to, and I want you to listen. You will need to turn the volume way up in your ears to pay attention.

Before I read it, though, I want to tell you a few things. There were a certain few people who were chosen in the beginning of the Edah. There was a certain work that our Father wanted to begin on the earth with those chosen few. Had just a little more time gone by, it would have been too late for that work to begin. The Edah wouldn't have been able to come together. I want you to understand why.

Right now, when you go out into the world, do you see women wearing blue jeans? Do you see women wearing tight, immodest clothing? Do you see disobedient children? (For all of these questions we all nodded yes.)

When I was a girl I never saw my mother wear blue jeans. And to this day she doesn't wear them. When I was a girl it was very unusual to see women with short hair. And short hair then was at least to a woman's shoulder. But you never saw women with buzzed off hair. When I was a girl I saw my grandmother take her hair out of the bun she wore it in, carefully taking out all the pins which held it in place. I would sit at her feet and watch her. She would unbraid her long hair and brush it out every night before she went to bed. It was totally white and fell past her bottom. And every day she took care of it. It was her glory.

At that time divorce was uncommon and it was a shame. There was a shame all over the world about divorce. You didn't even mention the word divorce without people's faces turning red. Most of the people of my generation can say their grandparents stayed married all their lives. Many of us can say our parents stayed together all their lives. That was how it was then.

But what you see in the world right now is the result of rebellion. Who began that rebellion you see the effects of all around you today? [Here Grace started to cry.] I did! And so did many of your parents my age.

When I was a girl I was obedient to my parents. I always wore a dress to school; I never thought of wearing pants. But then we grew up, and became youth, and the youth rebelled. They threw off the restraint! They said, "We don't have to wear dresses to school!" and "We don't have to have long hair!" Then they said, "We don't have to marry!"

Now that is what you see in the world today. You see women wearing tight jeans. You see rebellious women. You see overbearing men. There are disobedient children. Now when I lived out in Manasseh I made friends with many of the youth from town. As I got to know them better, they would come talk to me about things they were going through. One of them came in and started to tell me a story about his mother. His friend interrupted him and asked, "Which mother?" He answered, "Well, well, I am with my mother, but she's not really my mother, you see. My mom and dad got a divorce so she's my father's girlfriend. I mean, after he got a divorce he got married again and then he got divorced again, so we are not really related. I just call her mom to make her feel part of the family." So he started to tell me his story and then he said something about his dad, and his friend interrupted him again and said, "Which dad?" And it was the same kind of story.

Another boy I knew had no idea who his father was, or where his father was. Do you know why? Because his mother didn't even know who his father was. She had many boyfriends. That boy grew up with absolutely no identity in his life. It was not even like he was adopted and one day he could trace down who his father was. He'll never know who his father is until the judgment day.

Now I know there are thoughts that come to you children all the time (looking at the youth). There are spirits that come to you, making you think about life in the world and causing you to wonder what things are like in the world. But I want to tell you, that it is foolishness which tells you, "You (your parents and the other adults) don't understand what it's like to be raised in the community."

Because we know what it is like to grow up under restraint, to grow up knowing right and wrong, and to throw it off recklessly. I ran recklessly after foolish, empty, vain things that turned out to be broken promises. To this day I suffer greatly over the things I gave myself to. I'll have to wage war with these things until the day I die. Don't you think that what you see in the world is something new, because we started it. Don't think that some people can throw off the restraint and not be judged for it.

That boy who doesn't know who his father is has such a hard time knowing what is right from wrong. He hardly can stand for what is good. Things are so poorly formed in his conscience. He doesn't know that divorce should embarrass you. If the Edah had started a little bit later, this is all there would have been to work with, people who grew up hardly having any good examples of right and wrong to even rebel against. It couldn't have happened.

So, this is why I wanted to read you this Scripture, and you younger ones won't understand it, but you older ones will, "That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So, there is nothing new under the sun." (Ecc 1:9) Evil has been on the earth since the evil one fell. Don't ever think you are experiencing something new.

Now this story is about a little girl. She was a wonderful, little girl. She grew up in Israel and she was of the seed of Abraham. She understood this. She lived in very hard times; the Romans ruled over Israel. Since she **was** of the seed of Abraham she knew these times had come upon Israel as a discipline. She loved her parents. She was happy and full of life. She was not self-conscious. She just wanted to please her parents and obey them, and give her whole life to being a part of what was happening. She grew up like that, but then something happened. She changed.

I know it has happened to everyone in Keziah's group (the older children in training in Boston, ages 11 to 14), and I am pretty sure it has happened to some of the children in Arar Nathats's group (the next younger group, ages 7 to 9 or 10). Something happens when you start growing up and you hit a certain age. Maybe about ten years old. Suddenly you are aware of something. Before you were just aware of loving your parents and receiving correction. But something happens.

You run out into the dance one day like you always have, and you hear a snicker. You used to sing with all your heart, and then you hear something, and you don't anymore.

This girl's name was Shoshannah. She used to sing with all her heart until one day she heard someone say, "Look! Do you hear how loud she sings?" Suddenly she was self-conscious. Then, this awful thing happens. Suddenly what you have done all your life until now is something that you are embarrassed about.

You don't sing loud anymore. You don't dance as much anymore and you are certainly not the first to go out and dance because someone might snicker. Someone might make fun of you. From that point on, self-consciousness affects every single little area of your life. Suddenly you are aware of how big your eyes are, how small your eyes are, what color your eyes are; how big is your nose, how small it is, the color of your hair, and how long it is, or how short it is. If you are big or if you are little, if you are tall or if you're short. If someone looks at you funny, you wonder, "What are they thinking?"

You worry about how curly your hair is, and what color your skin is — is it black, is it white? Are you dark, or are you too light? If you are big or if you are strong, or if you are weak with little muscles? Everything is like a vice-grip on your brain! You're self-conscious!

And then this girl was dancing in a lively, happy way one day and then she heard a laugh, and she thought, "Oh, I better not dance anymore." There's a word for the spirit those spectators had. Today people would call it cool.

And that's a good word to describe the way these girls were. They were without love or life. Being cool is not having love. Whoever you snicker at or whoever snickers at you, you can be sure that person is not your friend. Don't associate with them. Don't have anything to do with them. Don't have anything to do with those people. They are mockers and scoffers and they'll lead you down a dark path. Shoshannah was happy and then, there it was — self-consciousness.

She became one of those girls who made sure that they always wore the latest dyes in their clothes. They made sure their hair was combed perfectly and they wore their dresses a certain way. They wouldn't ever wear worn-out sandals. At first when Shoshannah followed that crowd she was happy because she was accepted. She followed these girls, and slung her hair over shoulders like they did.

What happens when you hang around with people like that is you find out after a while that they talk about you when you are not around. Shoshannah had found that out the hard way, the painful way. Perhaps you have found that our yourself.

She also carried herself a certain way to be attractive to the boys, and they would go along with her when she was around, but then she found out that the boys said, "I would never marry a girl like that!" Behind her back that's what they said. So all of Shoshannah's hopes and dreams crumbled. She found out she had to live her entire life being totally conscious of what she looked like and what her friends said. I was like her. I said to my best friend one day, "You know, I have been thinking and I don't want to do this anymore. I really want to know what God is like." And my friend said, "I don't know what you are talking about. I really can't relate." And I didn't say things like that anymore.

So pretty soon Shoshannah started avoiding people's eyes. She had a bad conscience. She started to look down all of the time. Before too long she started to bend over. She always kept her head toward the ground because she was so tormented inside. She wanted to know the truth and do what was right. I was like her; I had given myself over to the lifting of the restraint. She looked toward the ground and pretty soon she was bent over all the time, she was bent in half. She was bent in half by a spirit that tormented her soul. The spirit had hold of her for a very, very long time. So don't be so foolish as to think, "Well, I'll do this now. I'll be this way now, but it won't bother me later." It will be with you for a long time.

Then Shoshannah started crying out to the God she had believed in as a child. She hated what she had done with her life and the things she had given herself to. She suffered every day the reproach of what she had given her life to. She was bent in half by the spirit that knocks at your door to do the same thing to all of you. She couldn't even lift her head like a person who has a good conscience.

One day she slipped into the synagogue. She had a little hope still, in the love of the God of Israel, so she went in. She tried to do it when no one was paying attention, for surely she was a nobody. But someone noticed, someone wonderful. There was a person in the synagogue that day who was very wonderful. He was a person who understood what she experienced. She had been in this torment for eighteen years. How she wanted to be released! She barely even talked anymore because that spirit had choked her.

When she was a child she had given herself totally to her parents will for her life, and as a youth she had given herself to her friends. Then she had found she had no friends, but in that synagogue was someone who understood. His name was Yahshua. She heard a voice that said, "Come over here." She couldn't call out to him or look up to him. "Come over here," he said. Yahshua was aware of Shoshannah that Sabbath as he saw her slip into the room. So in front of everyone she walked over and she stood up like she had wanted to for eighteen years. She stood up and flung that spirit off her back. And our Master said, "And this woman (for he had to talk to those who were angered that he was healing on the Sabbath), a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

She was not born to be bent over by a spirit. She was born to stand upright and live for Yahshua. And she did. That story was written for you so that you would never have to be bent over. Because your parents know the One who can make you stand upright. Nobody knows about the sons of Cain. Why? Nobody knows about these things and I'll tell you why. Because it is God's word that the wicked will perish off of the face of the earth. That's why you don't know about them. We are living in the last days and the wicked will perish. But consider this. When I say consider, that means take hold of this. (You will know that you are living in the last days if you

listen carefully.)

Realize that in the last days difficult times will come and men will be lovers of what? Something really wicked! They will be lovers of SELF! In the last days men will love money! They'll be boastful! Arrogant! Proud! Disrespectful! Revilers! (That means those who make fun of the way you wear your clothes.) Disobedient! Ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips without self-control. They'll be brutal, haters of God, reckless, conceited, lovers of what pleases them rather than lovers of God. They'll hold to a form of Godliness but deny it's power. AVOID SUCH MEN AS THESE! (2 Tim 3:1-5)

Our Father wants you to be outspoken sons and daughters of Israel. He doesn't want you to be polluted or defiled by evil. Our Father allowed Shoshannah to suffer and be bent in half so that you wouldn't have to be. M'Susah — I see that a lot of times I have had a concept of friends as people I can talk to instead of my parents. I tell my training group if He didn't want us and our children to be different than the world, He wouldn't have established a community.

Hephzibah Harris — I don't want that spirit to be in me anymore.

Raphael — One time I can remember my friends, who are all gone to the world now, talking about me. I felt like vanishing into the carpet. We don't need any one here who are not building with all their heart. We don't need the destroyers here.

Rivkah (bat Lo-Nekar — I needed to hear that story. Lately I have been feeling bent over. I don't want to forget the stand I took. I just want to repent and take a stand. I haven't been sharing at the gathering and I don't want to be silent like that.

Naharah — Shoshannah was disrespectful because her friends were. I don't want to be disrespectful.

Asaph — I saw about Shoshannah that I don't want to go along with the flow like she did. I want to be different than I have been and I want to be pleasing to my parents.

(There was a resounding AMEN from the Body!)

David Solomon — Shoshannah let spirits come to her and bend her over. I don't want spirits to come to me and bend me over.