

Summer, 1995

Ka-yitz, 5755

June
July
August

עוּרִי
URI
Awake!

Sivan
Tamuz
Menakhem Av

עוּרִי, עוּרִי, שִׁיר דַּבְּרִי!

URI!, URI! SHIR DABAYRI!

AWAKE! AWAKE! SING YOUR NEW SONG

Uri, awaken, or, more accurately, awaken yourself, is a causative (hifil) form of the root word ur עור, awakening, or wakefulness. The quote, Uri, Uri, Shir Dabayri is found in the Lekha Dodi, centerpiece of the Kabbalat Shabbat liturgy.

My inside, listen to me, the greatest spirit, the Teacher, is near. Wake up, wake up! *Kabir*

The transformation of consciousness is like the change from dreaming to waking. Guided by a wise and safe part of the soul (which comes especially alive on Friday nights,) we are strengthened to wean ourselves from the hypnosis of conventional reality, the trance of being super-busy and overwhelmed with critical tasks like watching TV or ordering things we don't need from catalogues we didn't request. In the meantime, we find ourselves thinking, I have been asleep, I have been dreaanmiing, comatose. It is now safe to awaken and become fully alive. It is safe to feel, again. A rush of freedom overcomes you as well as panic, or laughter, if you can manage it.

Awakening happens out of many kinds of experiences. Some awaken with a kiss. Some with a pinch. It is good to know that even pinches can have a pivotal effect, shifting you from a dream to what is vital, alive and awake.



Israel Baal Shem Tov and Martin Buber both seemed to convey this message to us, over and over again. Both were interpreters of the words of Isaac Luria, the Holy Lion of Kabbalah, the *Arizal*. The *Arizal* taught about a new layer of interpreting the Torah according to a more feminine metaphor – that of relationship, of mending the brokenness, of birthing and nursing the world, of birthing and nursing even God.

Buber conveyed this idea of relationship to God as an awakening that happened in our ordinary lives. He spoke in terms of Encounters (and missed Encounters). To experience an Encounter with a person, or with an animal, or with nature, is to awaken. Although Encounters are rare, they are powerfully transformative when they occur. In an "Encounter," one is so fully aware and embraced in the rich depth and presence of another being, that God's energy is felt to be extremely close. God is drawn to the energy of an "encounter." All this creates an "awakening."

The Baal Shem Tov spoke about a *Bat Kol*, a heavenly “echo” that filters into our consciousness and whispers to us to awaken. This *Bat Kol* (echo or *Hit’or’rut*, awakening) can explode into a burning bush right in front of us, fully audible and visual; or, we may just notice a barely audible whistling in the ear; or a visual blurring of the periphery for a brief moment out of time.

The heart starts beating quickly, and the mind may not know what is going on. It is as if an unseen presence is paying a momentary visit.

Our mind is like Balaam who is riding on the donkey but doesn’t see the angel in front of him; the donkey on which Balaam rides is like our own body which may have far superior vision to our ordinary perceptions as to whether an angel is present.

A momentary awakening reminds us that our perception of reality, our ordinary awareness of the world, is a kind of dream, illusory and transient; and that it benefits our life to awaken from this sleep. What is the long-term effect of a momentary awakening? When we wake up at a different level; when we respond to the burning bush, the angel in our path, the echo, the whisper on the edge of our awareness, we reap the benefit of Encounter. We



Once, when the Baal Shem Tov was reciting the *Minchah* prayer out in the open field on the eve of Shabbat, all the sheep in the meadow gathered around him, bleating in rhythm with his prayers.

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experience life in a more tolerant, enlightened, passionately disinterested, awakened way. We may remember for the rest of our lives an awareness of unity, a felt sense of interconnection; that all is well in the world; that the boundaries of the world seem more close and personal; that the loving face of guidance has come out from behind the veil, shown herself to us, revealed new levels of reality. We feel loved by God.

Surprisingly, the root word of *uri*, *UR*, that also means wakening, has a derivative word that suggests blindness. *Iver* means to be blind. The heavenly echo whispering *Uri, uri*, asks us, “Why are you so consistently blind to the spirit part of your life? How is it that you are so aware of the half-empty glass and so unconscious of the half-full glass? Your awareness is your choice.”

Israel Baal Shem Tov and Martin Buber have guided us to the

David Wolfe-Blank

Loving Your Child

Loving your child is simple and perplexing – you can’t just feel it, you’ve got to show it! Feeling love in your heart for your child is not enough – to love your baby, your toddler, your adolescent through all the stages and phases of childhood requires that you express your love through your loving actions; and, as you probably already know, it’s a lifetime commitment that requires your energy, demands lots of work, and calls you to rise above your own conditioning and preconceived notions. You will have to grow to your highest calling.

Wonderful Ways to love a Child by Judy Ford p. 2