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BLESSINGS OF THE
COSMOS
BENEDICTIONS FROM THE ARAMAIC WORDS OF JESUS

Beatitudes in Luke

Handout #5

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Original Prayer

The Hidden Gospel

The Healing Breath



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*For Nur Jehan, who reminds me how much
unexpected blessing and joy life can provide.*

THE BEATITUDES IN LUKE
Blessings in Unexpected Places

4

“And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

*Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled.
Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.*

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake.

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

—LUKE 6:20-26, KING JAMES VERSION

FEELING POOR

“Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.”

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ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ

Tubwaykhon meskina dilkhonehi malkuta d'alaha

Ripe are you who feel your personal strength drained away,
your real power lies in the reign of Unity.

In tune with the cosmos are you who feel completely
dissolved,
your new form appears by the vision-power of the One.

Suited for the divine purpose are you who are exhausted,
your power to stand then arises from the First Cause.

In the right time and place are you whose sense of Self
becomes less,
to you belongs the integrity of the divine “I Can!”

Blessed are you who hold onto very little,
yours is the wealth and rule of your original divine image.

Textual Notes

The word that Jesus uses for “blessed” (*tubwaykhon*) comes from the Aramaic and Hebrew root *TB*, which means that which is suited for its purpose, which is in right timing and tune with the divine reality. This blessed “ripeness” resists the corrosive influences of formed existence (its entropy in our terms), because it connects directly to the Sacred Unity. In Matthew’s version of the Beatitudes, Jesus uses the “they” form of this word of blessing (*tubwaykhon*): “blessedly ripe are they (or those) ...” Here Luke quotes Jesus using the “you” form (“blessedly ripe are you ...”).

The word for poor (*meskina*) indicates a state in which one’s individual existence, or any possessions attached to it, including a limited sense of Self or “I” is weakened, dissolved, or enervated. The “kingdom” (*malkuta*), indicates the reigning power and vision of the cosmos. On the personal level, this is one’s own divine image, created at the first Beginning by the Holy One. On the communal level, this reign is the sense of spontaneous agreement that happens when voices come together with a new sense of heart and purpose. As mentioned, the roots of the word, *MLK*, reveal in symbolic form a voice saying “I Can” at the heart of every being. The word for God is the Aramaic *Alaha*, which in all derivations indicates Sacred Unity, idealized as the furthest extent of power, breath, and life. This word is related to its Hebrew predecessors, *Elohim* and *Eloha*, as well as to the later Arabic form *Allah*.

Here we see Jesus affirming a condition that most of us would not choose. From his point of view, however, those who have little to lose, also have little to “unlearn” in order to be taught and empowered by the divine. They have, so to speak, less baggage with which they have encumbered their soul-self.

In addition, we can see the psychological power of including the “least,” the most underrated part of one’s being, in a

healing process. Jesus constantly uses this sense of including opposites—weak and strong, light and dark, honored and dishonored—in these Beatitudes in order to point toward Sacred Unity. These are not only different “individuals,” the outwardly poor and the rich members of a society. We can also see them as parts of our own being. Some aspects are overrated; some are devalued or denied. All need to find their appropriate place in divine Unity. In the psychology of both the ancient Hebrew and Aramaic languages, the soul-self, called the *naphsha*, includes all of the voices in us that are waiting to be transformed, to remember their original divine image. In these sayings, Jesus speaks directly to these parts of our *naphsha*, which for many of us wait in darkness, that is, in the unknown part of our beings.

Body Prayer 4: Returning to Ripeness

Take a moment to consciously breathe in and out. Place one hand lightly over the heart and feel the breath rise and fall. Then notice whether you can also feel your own heartbeat. Feel your heartbeat coming into a rhythmic harmony with your own breath, that is, so many beats for each in-breath and out-breath. This sense of rhythm and harmony is a measure of TUB-WAY-KHON, blessed ripeness. If you wish, add this Aramaic word to the feeling of your breath and heartbeat as you inhale and add the word MESKINA to the out-breath, opening a channel of communication with any part of your being that feels in need of more strength or abundance. Affirm that simply taking a moment to come back into rhythm is the first step toward being in rhythm with your sacred purpose in life, which is the source of all power.



LISTEN TO TRACK FOUR

Returning to Ripeness

FEELING EMPTY

“Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled.”

ܬܘܒܘܝܟܗܘܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܟܦܗܢܝܢ ܗܫܐ ܕܬܝܫܒܘܢ

Tubwaykhon aileyn d’kaphneyn hasha d’tesba’on

Ripe are you who feel an empty, gnawing space inside,
you shall be surrounded by what’s needed to fill it.

Blessed are you who are capable of holding on,
you shall grasp the force that causes creation.

Aligned with Unity are you who are raising your faces,
hungry,
you shall be returned to fullness in the One Being.

Resisting decay are you who are hollowing yourselves inside,
you shall be brought round to satisfaction by divine power.

Tuned to the Source are you who feel stuck on the wheel
of need,
that wheel will turn, and you will be filled.

Textual Notes

In the second Beatitude, the word for “hungry” is from the Aramaic *kaphna*, which shows several images by its word-roots: an emptiness inside, a container curved and capable of holding something, a sense of grasping and turning the face to receive something. Here it is a temporary condition or state. The word for “satisfied,” from the Aramaic *saba*, shows one being surrounded by something that arrives as a natural process of being in tune with the One.

As in many of his sayings, Jesus’ use of Aramaic allows him to “turn the tables” on the image presented. If his listeners feel that they are containers of emptiness, they need to feel the bigger picture—they are contained by a divine universe of fullness and power.

Body Prayer 5: Touching Emptiness

Begin by centering in the heart, breathing a natural breath in and out, as in the previous body prayer. Then breathe in with the word TUB-WAY-KHON and breathe out feeling the word KAPH-NA. Allow your breath to touch any place in your inner being that feels unfulfilled and empty. With compassion and respect, listen to these voices within you without the need to react or do anything. Perhaps the feeling of emptiness allows space for something new. Continue to breathe. Then replace KAPHNA with the word SA-BA and feel instead that you are surrounded by divine abundance, including especially the diversity, power and energy that we feel in nature. Bring this outer feeling inside using the breath and the Aramaic word to center yourself. This power is already within you. By realizing it as part of your inner self, do any new images or feelings arise? Is there a way to feel full without being dependent upon “owning” or “having”?



LISTEN TO TRACK FIVE

Touching Emptiness

MOURNING

“Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.”

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Tubwaykhon l'dabekeyn hasha detgehekon

Tuned to the Source are you who are dissolving in tears,
you will be carried with power toward hope itself.

Ripe are you who have been wrung dry by life,
you will grasp the worlds of form and carry them with you.

Blessed are you who are flowing with mourning,
you will dance over the waves of superficial appearance.

In the right time and place are you who face the grief inside,
you will be embraced within by the arms of the One.

Lucky are you who feel empty with weeping now,
in the next circle of life, you will be filled with
cosmic laughter.

Textual Notes

In this Beatitude, Jesus uses the Aramaic word *beka*, meaning to weep or mourn. Its roots show the image of something being compressed or contracted and so dissolving, becoming liquid, flowing with tears. The other side of the coin, the Aramaic *gehek*, means to laugh or dance. Its roots show something that grasps what it wants and can carry it where it wants to go.

In all of these sayings, Jesus repeats the word *hasha*, usually translated as “now.” It means not only the present time, but also this particular circle or cycle of existence, what one currently sees or what is illuminated in this moment. All of these seeming opposites—poverty/riches, hunger/satisfaction, weeping/laughter—are always joined. One can’t have, or even recognize, one without the other.

Body Prayer 6: Discovering a Fluid Self

Begin again by centering in the heart and breathing. Imagine the heart as a mirror or lens through which you can view your life. Breathing with the sound ALA-HA, review several situations from your past life in which you were either devastated or elated, mournful or overjoyed. Is it possible to see all of these experiences from the standpoint of Sacred Unity, that is, to fully feel each situation, and yet to let it go when its time is past? Is it possible to hold a more fluid image of yourself, not as a “happy person” or a “sad person,” but as someone whose feelings can respond appropriately to what is occurring now?



LISTEN TO TRACK SIX
Discovering a Fluid Self

A PARTICULARLY BAD DAY

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."

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Tubwaykhon ma dahasneyn l'khon bneynasha wa meperasheyn l'khon wa mehasedeyn l'khon wa mephageyn shemkhon ayk bisha helaph bar d'nasha.

You may not think so, but it can be blessedly ripe,
 just the right thing to discover your true purpose,
 when people see you in a bad light,
 coloring your true colors with their own
 inner hue and cry;
 when people single you out for abuse,
 because of the wounds they have felt inside;
 when you are conspired against and
 things get said behind your back;
 when your good name gets tossed about,
 shut out, and carried here and there
 as if it were a waste of time to mention you.
 All this happens because people see in you someone
 who is trying to fulfill the divine image,
 who lives according to their real purpose.
 Yet in the distorted, fun-house mirror
 of a heart they currently carry within,
 they see you backwards,
 which is the way they see themselves.

Textual Notes

The Aramaic word for "hate," from the word *sena*, means to see someone in a particular light, one that is reflected from a person's own inner state of mind or feeling. The Aramaic use of this word (unlike the Hebrew) took on an unfavourable color, in this case, red, which meant to see someone with rancor. The word for "separate" comes from the Aramaic *perash*, meaning to specify or disperse, also to pierce or hunt. The word for "reproach" is the Aramaic *hased*, which indicates a secret action, done with conspiracy or connivance. The word for "cast out" is from *nephaq*, which means to carry something here and there, or to force something out. The word for "name" is from *shema*, from the root *ShM* for sound, vibration, or wave. This word can also mean one's reputation or the sound of one's name.

The expression "for the sake of" is the Aramaic *helaph*, which means "instead of" or "as a reaction to" something else. The image here is that the reaction a person has to us can return to its source, when it has nowhere to "stick." The expression usually translated "son of man" is *bar d'nasha*, essentially child of humanity. As mentioned earlier, *nasha* indicates that which is transient or temporary in formed existence. The embodied light (*bar*) of this existence can be seen as the original divine image in which we were each created by the Holy One at the ever-present Beginning.

Body Prayer 7: A Particularly Bad Day

If you are having a particularly bad time in life just now, take some moments to go within. Breathe with and in the heart, and open the mirror of your heart to your inner Self. Which of the inner voices are feeling hurt, abused, misunderstood, unjustly dealt with? Hold them all with a breath of compassion in your heart. You might breathe with the sound ALA-HIA if this

helps to center you. Take a moment to open to your truest and highest sense of guidance from the divine. What is the message that is coming to you from your own breath-spirit, your divine Self in becoming? What inner opportunities to learn and grow do the outer circumstances of resistance make possible?



LISTEN TO TRACK SEVEN
A Particular Bad Day

INNER LEAPING

“Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.”

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አካላን ለመስጠት ከሆነ 'ሰላም' ለሆነ ለሆነ ለሆነ

*Hedau b'hau yauma wa dautz d'agrakhon sgy bashamaya
hakana ger abdeyn hauwa abihtahon l'nabiya*

So feel life's sharp point, the jab of circumstance
at this one moment in time's harsh spotlight.
Whatever is extremely bad, take the extreme part
and use it to feel abundant, to make an inner leap,
to be transported by the free energy it provides.
These are your wages on the level of divine vibration,
the world in which light, sound, and name
mingle in the heart of the Holy One
before it gave birth to everything we see.
This fee, your reward, is in payment for
the job of living your true image and purpose,
the only work worth doing.
The prophets before you,
those who also listened to the
voice always coming from within,
received the same fee from their ancestors,
who often confused their own
confused reflection of the divine knowing
with what they think they see in you.

Textual Notes

The Aramaic word usually translated “rejoice” is a form of *hedi*, which carries the images of being poked or pricked by something, or any extreme feeling. This word is also related to a sense of being led or guided somewhere. The words translated “leap for joy” are from the Aramaic *datz*, which means to live in abundance, or to be transported with joy by abundant energy. The word for “reward” is from the Aramaic *’agra*, which refers to wages, a fee for service or hire. Its roots show a movement that is continued, that brings a being back to itself. This presents a beautiful image of our real “reward,” which is the knowledge and realization of our original divine image or reflection, created by the Holy One at the first Beginning described in Genesis (1:26).

Living the creation story as one’s own story was an important spiritual practice at the time of Jesus. One can find a great deal of evidence for Jesus’ teaching of this practice in all of the canonical Gospels as well as the Gospel of Thomas, when viewed from the Aramaic or Semitic language perspective.²

The word for prophet in Aramaic (*nabiya*) does not mean one who foretells the future, but rather a person who listens to the divine voice within and acts upon it.

Body Prayer 8: Food for the Journey

Center in the heart and again begin with a gentle yet full breath in and out. Bring into the breath the word ALA-HA (Sacred Unity) while breathing in, and HE-DI (rejoicing, guidance) while breathing out. As you feel the words, imagine your heart as a cauldron, in which each and every negative emotion, feeling, or impression that

² For instance, see Mark 4:11-12 and the commentary on it in HG (p. 123-127).

you have received, from yourself or another person, can be stewed and transformed into food for your life’s journey. Allow all the negativity to sink to the bottom of the pot. Skim off the broth at the top. Feel all of the free energy there that you can use for your inner process, as well as for continuing to pursue your sacred purpose in life. A chant using these words completes the body prayer. It adds the Aramaic word for life energy (HAYYE), embodied here and now: *Alaha Hedi Alaha Hedi Alaha Hedi Hayye Hayye*.



LISTEN TO TRACK EIGHT

Food for the Journey

FEELING WEALTHY

"But woe unto you that are rich! For ye have received your consolation."

ܒܪܝܢܐ ܘܝܘܬܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Beram wai l'khon 'atira d'qabalton buyakhon

Out of life's flow are you who have heaped up life's things,
when their time is over, you will be left with emptiness.

Unfortunate are you who have enriched your false Self,
what you have received from it is a bottomless pit.

Caught out of tune are you when relying on surface sensation,
the comfort you think you receive is just a ravenous abyss.

Too bad for you when you concern yourself only with
"more" and "better,"
the final appeal of this proceeding is a bill that cannot
be paid.

Warning: you who are cut off from the energy of the
natural cosmos,
you can't substitute fuel that runs out for this divine life.

Textual Notes

The word often translated "woe" is the Aramaic *wai*, which indicates not only a cry of alarm or warning but also being cut off from the sacred flow of life, from the divine sense of timing. I am aware that, in an attempt to give a meaningful contemporary translation, several historical Jesus researchers have translated this word as "damn." However, from a Semitic language viewpoint, this cannot be justified, since in neither Old Hebrew nor in the Aramaic of Jesus' time was there anywhere to damn a person *to*. The idea of a "hell" as a place of eternal punishment was entirely unknown at the time of Jesus and did not arise until later Greek interpretations of his message and life. Jesus is simply here indicating that, in the realm of opposites, of cause and effect, everything comes around, if not externally, then internally. If we learn to place a higher value on the places within us that feel discomfort, then we also need to relax the hold of some cherished images of our selves and the control we feel they give us over our lives. This makes room for the divine Self to be reborn "from the first Beginning" (as a translation of John 3:3 would read from the Aramaic).

The word for "rich" is from the Aramaic *'atira*, which means to increase that which pertains to material sense, enjoyment, or possession. The roots of the word indicate that these types of "riches" are subject to the decay of time. This is reinforced by words used for "have received" (from *qabal*) and "comfort" (from *buya'a*). The first indicates that this receiving is one's only recourse or appeal. The word for comfort shows by its roots a bottomless abyss. This is a surface comfort that always requires more to fill its desires.

Textual Notes

When Jesus talks of speaking “well” of someone, he uses a word from the Aramaic *shaphira*, meaning that which is bright, clear to the eye, dealing with beautiful appearances. Taking a long view, we find that both Old Hebrew as well as the Aramaic language of Jesus distrust outer appearances and prefer to deal with sound rather than sight, with what is enfolded rather than with the image of “bodies.” Metaphorically, what is important in this way of viewing life is the tune a string makes, not how it looks. Form is not an empty shell or container but is capable of resonating with and responding in a living way as a conveyer of the divine breath-spirit. So in this case, *shaphira* testifies to the Western notion of “thirty seconds of fame,” the outward sensation that is over as quickly as it arose.

Jesus warns one not to become addicted to this condition of being surrounded by positive projection—the “yes-person” syndrome. It is one of the most difficult conditions from which to escape. We see this story constantly played out around the rich and famous, as well as powerful politicians. A “false prophet” (*nabiya dagaluta*) in the Aramaic view is not one who doesn’t foretell the future correctly. It means people who allow their true divine image to become so covered with the projections of others that they can no longer look honestly into the mirror of their own hearts for a true reflection. The voice that desires fame is tyrannizing their inner self. In this sense, the roots of the word *dagaluta* show an action of heaping or piling up something, as well as of deceiving oneself or denying one’s nature.

Body Prayer 12: The Gifts of Light and Darkness

On this sobering note, the Beatitudes in Luke come to a close. As in the version in Matthew, we are again reminded

that living a truly prophetic life is full of pitfalls and possible self-delusions. Looking at the bigger picture of all the different qualities of the Self that Jesus mentions in this talk, we are again reminded that no pitfall (or pratfall) is permanent. One cannot be “eternally damned” (and this is true throughout all his sayings in the Gospels). In an Aramaic sense, the process of realizing our original divine image involves reconciling the opposites within us. The first step toward reconciling is recognizing. If we can see a part of ourselves in each of the “blessedly ripe(s)” and “too bad for you(s),” we are well on the way to this integration.

Like the story of Holy Wisdom, Jesus brought into his company all sorts of people, easy and difficult, rich and poor. He fed them and often healed them. If their trust in the one ground of Sacred Unity was strong enough, the healing happened, the inner split was repaired.

Take a moment to breathe again in the heart and feel the arms of Holy Wisdom, welcoming all the voices inside you. As Jesus said, “Wisdom is justified by all of her children” (Matthew 11:19). Breathe in the Aramaic word HESUKA (darkness, what is unknown) and breathe out NUHRA (light, what is known). Feel darkness and light, what you don’t know and do know about yourself, as a continual dance of creation within you. As Genesis 1 says, both light and dark, morning and evening, are necessary for life to continue.



LISTEN TO TRACK TWELVE
The Gifts of Light and Darkness