

*Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi*¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah Yitro:** **Exodus 18:13-27**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 6:4-7**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Peter 2:5**

When they have a matter of significance, they come to me, and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make known the wise ways of God and His Torah.

[Exodus 18:16]

Today's meditation is Psalm 34:3;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition 14: *Modim Anachnu* [We Give Thanks]

Vayehi mimachorat vayeshv Moshe lishpot et-ha-am – And it came to pass afterward that Moshe sat to speak the Will/Ways/Decrees of the Holy One to the people **Exodus 18:13a.**

Something beautiful and holy is happening in the Camp of the Redeemed. Day after day the Holy One is using a hand-picked, personally trained representative of the human race, Moshe, to communicate His will and teach His Ways in the context of real issues and real-life challenges. Whether an issue in controversy is personal or public, familial or tribal, intranational or international, there is now a trustworthy source for wise and always redemption-focused counsel straight from the Heavenly Throne Room of the Creator. After centuries of slaving tirelessly in Pharaoh's slime pits, the former slaves are finally able to focus on Heaven's business; after generations of learning life lessons from the cruel blows of their power-obsessed taskmaster's whips, they are now being taught the Creator's more excellent ways through calming, healing, solution-focused, worth-affirming, and purpose-connected decrees by one who had actually spoken with the Maker of the Heavens and the Earth face-to-Face as a man speaks with his friend. After years of enduring Pharaoh's campaigns of misinformation and disinformation, how delightful it is for them to drink from the revelation stream the Holy One has opened in His servant Moshe – the fountain from which they receive the Holy One's perfect balance of wisdom and mercy, discipleship and discipline, conviction and redemption. Instead of many taskmasters, each promoting his or her own political, ideological, and/or personal agenda, the Holy One had arranged for them, through Moshe, to experience Heaven's true tone of unadulterated, uncompromised wisdom.

*As an apple tree amid the trees of the forest,
so is my Beloved among the sons of men.
I have sat myself down in his shade with great delight,*

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*and his fruit has become sweet to my taste
He has brought me to His house of wine - and his banner over me is love.*

[Song of Songs 2:2-3]

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
Matthew 5:6.

What A Man Like Yitro Cannot See and Does Not Know

The Holy One has a plan and a strategy for this very special time of ‘getting acquainted’ with His people. He could have raised up multiple prophets from among B’nei Yisrael, of course – leaders of tens, of fifties, of hundreds, of thousands, and so on. But that was not His plan - at least for now. He knows that in these early days of *unleavening from the raging nations’ se’or* and *being purged of the Egyptian captivity’s chametz* the last thing the confused and traumatized people needed was multiple human spokesmen coming at them with multiple agendas. So His plan and strategy involves having one man – his prophet Moshe, who at this point is still the only human being on the planet to whom He has ever appeared, much less spoken to – serve as His single ‘point of contact’. Yitro, a sheik of Midyan, knew only ‘earthly’ ways. He probably believed that what the gaggle of recently traumatized refugees he saw standing before Moshe every day needed was an organizational structure (*i.e.* a new, ‘improved’ set of taskmasters) to ‘manage’ or ‘control’ them. The Holy One, their Redeemer, knew that what they needed instead at this point was a single faithful friend – someone they knew had a direct line of communication with Him - to nurture them. He knew that what the people were not ready to handle was multiple voices (which always means multiple *opportunities for deception, corruption, confusion, and misunderstanding*) telling them what to think, how to feel, what to prioritize, or what to believe, speak, or do. Moshe releases the *balm of Gilead* to heal the brokenhearted and the *wisdom of Heaven to redeem the tortured soul*. He dispenses the *Divine light*, pours out *living water*, and provides help to the helpless, hope to the hopeless, and freedom to the prisoner of fear, depression, and hate. He alone has the level of relationship with and accountability to the Holy One that qualifies him to do so.

The Holy One has therefore established *Moshe’s seat* as a fountain through which Heavenly wisdom and direction flows. The people are loving every minute of it; and Moshe is loving it as well. Nobody questions his calling to leadership now – even he himself. No one is murmuring; no one is complaining. No one is talking about going back to Egypt. No discontent is brewing; no rebellion is fomenting. *Moshe’s seat* is operating in regard to Divine Revelation as Miryam’s well is to water. He is not preaching sermons. He is not teaching theological principles. He is not promoting any brand of ideology, ethnicity, political theory, social justice movement, or religious dogma. He is not explaining homiletic approaches to seminary students; he is merely sharing an unspeakably glorious treasure he has

stumbled upon in the wilderness with a few million hungry and thirsty friends. Freely he has received; freely he gives – and how sweet it is. Right now what he is doing is EXACTLY what the traumatized nation of B’nei Yisrael needs. This is Moshe’s ‘*such a time as this*’. For the people cry: *Sustain me with cakes of raisins; refresh me with apples; for I am lovesick.* Song of Songs 2:4.

Introducing Kisei Moshe As It Was Intended to Function

Welcome to the redemptive, restorative phenomenon known as *Kisei Moshe* – *i.e. Moshe’s seat*. The presence of this mini-Throne room of Heaven from whence Divine wisdom is always flowing through the Holy One’s appointed messenger sets B’nei Yisrael apart from any other nation on the earth. As streams of living water flow from the rock opened by Moshe’s staff, streams of wisdom, revelation, and divine guidance now flow from Moshe whenever he sits on this seat. Whosoever wishes may come to this free-flowing fountain of Divine Counsel, present his or her question, dilemma, or grievance, and receive calm and wise rabbinical *instruction*, direction, and forward-looking solutions.

What Moshe is dispensing from this seat is not the personal justice, vindication, or condemnation jurisprudence common to men. It is not a type of jurisprudence sourced in the tree-of-the-knowledge-of-good-and-evil, that focuses on individual rights, or what individuals or cultures tend to think of as ‘right vs. wrong’, ‘good vs. evil’, ‘fair vs. unfair’, or ‘moral vs. immoral’. What is flowing from Moshe’s seat is on another level entirely. It is not of this world. It is a tree-of-life sourced jurisprudence geared toward nation building because it consists of Kingdom counterculture promoting wisdom. Unlike ‘judges’ in secular societies, who issue rulings aimed at only the litigants physically present before them using their own matrix of ‘moral values’ combined with judicial precedent, Moshe was not assigned to make decisions or issue rulings that would advance anyone’s personal interest, much less encourage any kind of private vengeance. That kind of self-promoting, negative-emotion exalting, nation-destructive folly only comes when the source of ‘justice’ or ‘judgment’ a person chooses to stand before is a *seat of the scornful*. Moshe’s seat is not a seat of condemnation; it is instead a seat where Divine wisdom and justice are always finely tempered with Divine mercy. It is a seat that does not make rulings based on what has happened in the past as much as it does on what needs to happen to make the future a safer, more peaceful, and more fruitful place for the sake of not only the litigants involved, but also for their families, for their progeny, and for everyone whose bloodline that will be affected by any of the foregoing, in any generation. What is spoken from this seat is a higher, far more trustworthy, incorruptible form of wisdom, designed to accomplish two things: 1. *promoting the common good of the budding nation known as B’nei Yisrael over the long term*, and 2. *upholding and advancing the priorities of the Avrahamic Covenant* - *i.e.* that his descendants, and those that keep

company with them ‘*keep the way of the Holy One, to do tzedakah umishpat, in order that the Holy One may bring to Avraham all He has spoken to him*’. **Genesis 18:19**. Not just any man could sit in Moshe’s seat. Not just any man is walks closely enough to the heart of, and speaks face-to-Face with, the Creator of the Universe on a day by day, moment by moment basis. In fact, only two men will ever fill Moshe’s seat like Moshe did. One will be Sh’lomo [Solomon], in his early days (**I Kings 4:29-32**); the other will be Mashiach, when He comes in His Kingdom (**Isaiah 11:1 – 12:6**).

Why, Among Moshe’s Generation, Is Moshe Alone Capable/Equipped to Sit in ‘Moshe’s Seat’?

Back at the burning bush the Holy One said to Moshe: ***Go forth, and I will be with your mouth, and will teach you what you are to say***. **Exodus 4:12**. No one else – even Aharon – has been given this promise, this authority, or this direction. Not by the Holy One, at least. Not yet, anyway. In the nation-building phase of the great *sh’ma*-people of the Holy One, a unified communication network is of critical importance. So, Moshe is the one, and the *only* one, to whom everyone in the camp – whether Hebrew by birth or part of the mixed multitude – can come when they need counsel from the Holy One as to how to deal with any issue of life. When seeking guidance, they all come *al-kise Moshe*² – i.e. to ‘*Moshe’s seat*’. And that is exactly the way the Holy One set it up to happen. That is the main way Moshe was supposed to ‘serve’ the Holy One on this mountain. See **Exodus 3:12**.

Moshe’s relationship with the Creator was unique in his day. Unlike anyone else in the camp, He, conversed with the Creator. In fact, He was receiving *daily, face-to-Face briefings*. For that reason, when people in the camp had a real question or issue, they knew where to go - to Moshe. Not to Aharon. Not to Chur. Not to Hoshea (later to be renamed Yehoshua). Not to Miryam. Not to a tribal elder. Not to the closest or most charismatic ‘expert’ who they could count on to tell them what their ears itched to hear. They were confident that, because Moshe was in

² Archaeologists have confirmed that in many ancient synagogues a permanent stone seat was situated next to the ark in which the Torah scrolls were kept². The assumption is that, in the early days, before there was a *bemah*, whoever was reading the Torah would sit in this lofty chair to read aloud the words that Moshe wrote. Some, therefore, have come to identify this throne-like structure with ‘*Moshe’s seat*’. As Yeshua taught, ***The scribes and the Pharisees sit al-kisei Moshe – i.e. in Moshe’s seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to sh’mar [cherish, treasure, prioritize, and carefully guard], sh’mar it. But do not asah [make, build, frame, shape your life, interactions, and relationships] according to their works, for what they say, they do not asah***. See **Matthew 23:2-3**. According to what appears to be the most likely interpretation of Yeshua’s intent, the Master was at least counseling us that when the scribes and Pharisees *read from the actual text of Torah*, we should heed and take to heart all the words they read; but that, when it comes to the practices they demand, we should not blindly follow either their halakah or their traditions, but should carefully scrutinize every practice to determine if it is consistent with, or is at variance with, the actual words of the Torah.

constant communion with the Holy One, whenever he was presented with their question or issue, he would merely state his opinion. Much less would he lecture them about abstract concepts of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, ‘fair and unfair’, ‘moral’ and ‘immoral’, ‘justice’ and ‘injustice’, etc. They knew that he would see them as real people – as sheep assigned to his sheepfold – and would immediately take their question, situation, challenge, or controversy before the Throne of the Only Wise God. They fully expected – with good reason – that if Moshe did so, he would receive, and relate to them, beautiful words of practical guidance directed at real solutions and meaningful resolutions. They knew that Moshe would never, as the leaders and judges of the world’s other nations were and still are wont to do, dish out clichés drawn from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They knew that what he would release into their situation would be streams of fresh, living water straight from the tree of life. They knew that Moshe would never advise them based upon capricious human concepts like ‘justice’, ‘fairness’, or ‘morality’; they knew that instead he would only speak the words the Holy One gave him to speak - sweet droplets of the kind of wisdom that comes down from above – *i.e.* that wisdom, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. **James 3:17.**

Everyone in the camp – besides Yitro – knew very well that, as of yet, at least, no one else had anywhere close to the kind of relationship with the Holy One that Moshe had. So, people came to him – and Moshe just said what the Holy One told him to say and did what the Holy One told him to do. No one else in the camp had the inspired words of life the people needed. And everyone in the camp knew it. But then ... *along came Yitro*. Yitro had no clue how dramatically the wisdom from above differs from the wisdom from below. He had not been around to observe the marvelous way the Holy One was working in and through Moshe. And though, before Yitro showed up, the protocol the Holy One had established was working just fine – well, Yitro disapproved. He decided it wasn’t working at all – and came up with another plan altogether. So ... *mi zeh Yitro – i.e. who is Yitro? Mi zeh mach’shich eitzah b’mili’in b’li-da’at – who is this who darkens counsel, by speech without knowledge?* **Job 38:2.**

Mi Eleh - Who is This?

As human beings go, Yitro is charismatic, intelligent, and articulate. As a sultan/sheik, he carries an aura of authority. It is difficult not to be mesmerized by the magnetism of his personality and the passion of his sentimentality. It is a challenge not to be fascinated by the enchanting allure of his sensually stimulating pagan/occult practices. And the supreme test for a people just learning to *sh’ma* the voice of the Holy One, and Him alone, is to resist the intoxicating appeal of Reuel/Yitro’s high-sounding organizational/institutional theories of crowd control.

Who, *to us*, is Reuel/Hobab/Yitro? Historically, the sages were not always as enamored with him as Christian writers and modern rabbis seem to be. Some Hebrew scholars regarded him as an arch-idolater, and one of the arch-nemeses of B'nei Yisrael. One ancient tradition teaches that Reuel/Yitro and Amalek were both counselors to Pharaoh, and as such were the ones - perhaps along with one of Israel's other archenemies, Bila'am - responsible for counseling Pharaoh to order all male Hebrew babies to be thrown into the Nile. After all, they, like Yitro, were all about seeing population numbers instead of real people, with names, faces, and destinies. Another tradition holds that Yitro only permitted Tzipporah to marry Moshe on condition that their firstborn be raised to worship Reuel/Yitro's idols.

But some writers maintain that Yitro 'converted' from paganism to the ways of the Holy One. This is never stated in Torah. Nor is it ever referenced even once anywhere in the Bible. But just for the sake of discussion, let's assume that though Torah omits any reference to or suggestion of it, Reuel/Yitro did become a *ba'al teshuvah*. Can any man, including a *ba'al teshuvah*, ever be allowed to take the place of the Holy One in our hearts? Are not all things any man says to be filtered through the revelation stream that the Holy One Himself has established, and the downloads He has released through that revelation stream's operation? Does any man belong on a pedestal of human making? Nevertheless, that is exactly where Reuel/Yitro sits in the eyes of some commentators. And it is where he sat in the personally conflicted eyes of Moshe and in the starstruck eyes of the people in the camp of the Redeemed in the year of the Exodus. Everyone in the camp has, it seems, suddenly caught the 'Eyes-On-Man' Distraction virus at the same time. Moshe is no exception. He, too, has fallen victim to Reuel/Yitro's oratorical enchantment. Yitro had Moshe - and most of us - at the Midyani equivalent of "Oh, you poor overworked, underpaid schmuck! I feel your pain!" And no one even seems to notice that for the first time in *Sefer Sh'mot* the One we are supposed to be listening to - *i.e.* the Holy One - has fallen strangely silent.

What is the Holy One Doing While Reuel/Yitro is 'Trending'?

The Holy One is content, it seems, to let our silly little man-crush with Reuel/Yitro run its course. He knows that while our fleshly fling with Yitro seems powerful in the instant, it is just a fleeting, childish infatuation. The Creator of the Universe knows Yitro will grow tired of/bored with us soon enough, will mount his camel, and will ride off into the Middle Eastern sunset. Our Bridegroom-King is completely *secure in Who He is*. His feelings are not easy to hurt. His feathers are hard to ruffle. He is *slow to anger*. He is *impossible to offend*. He knows men like Yitro far, far better than we do. He knows that soon Yitro will be taking his two-bit dog and pony show down the road again to another audience. The Creator of the Universe knows that when our infatuation with the pagan prince is over and

done, He will be there to pick up the scattered, broken pieces Yitro leaves behind. He knows that anything Yitro messes up He can repair – indeed, make new. He knows He can - and will - win our hearts back again. He has utter confidence that when He speaks again the sheer beauty of His Voice and the awesome power of His Words will quickly make us forget all about Yitro and his silly human ideas. He will *take us back*. He will *heal us up*. And He will *never breathe a word of it*.

***Our Wonderful Bridegroom-King Knows All Our Vulnerabilities
and Proclivities For Distractions –
And He Loves Us Anyway!***

The Holy One knows human beings very, very well. After all, He created us. He knows all our vulnerabilities. He could write a book about them. In fact, He has. The Holy One has seen all the worst of man's folly, operating up close, in person, and in real-time. He watched the Serpent manipulate both the naïveté of Chava and the fleshly appetite of Adam. He wept as Kayin murdered Hevel in a jealous rage, all the while foolishly convincing himself that the anger that drove him to the dastardly deed was 'righteous indignation' at what he perceived as an 'injustice'. He looked on in sadness as the people of Noach's day cowered before and became corrupted by 'men of renown'. He is not going to suddenly over-react just because we have gone all gaga over a charismatic pagan sheik. The Holy One is in this for the long term. He is patient. He is kind. As He will point out to Moshe, after the golden calf debacle, He is, above all, 'merciful', 'compassionate', 'slow to anger', 'faithful to covenant', and eminently forgiving of transgression, iniquity, and even rebellion. The Holy One knows that in our fallen state human beings all suffer from an *extremely short attention span* and a *high curiosity index*. He knows we all have an *intense craving for sensual stimulation and fleshly gratification*, an *easily manipulated predisposition toward paranoia*, an *embarrassingly low tolerance for both irritation and pain*, and a *strong aversion to authority*. He knows that at the root of all these things is a *powerful addiction to control* and a *severe and chronic delusion of self-importance*. He knows how extremely easily we get distracted off course and task due to these vulnerabilities. He knows how we tend to slip into unproductive ruts of repetitive thought and behavior. He understands that with fallen humans included in the mix nothing in the Great Covenant Agenda under which He has bound Himself to us is going to come easy. He knows that while these vulnerabilities vary in intensity from person to person and from season to season, there is some level of each of them always operating in all of us. And knowing all this, He joyfully chose to include fallen humans in the mix anyway.

The Holy One is fully aware that right now we in the camp of the redeemed are having a substantial exacerbation episode. He knows that we have fallen victim to an *eyes-on-man distraction virus*. And He is willing to let this little episode play its

way out – for the sake of the lessons we are going to learn from it.

The Eyes-On-Man-Distraction-Virus Mutates and Spreads

Even Moshe has caught the ***Eyes-On-Man-Distraction virus***. He has not cried out for – much less had - a God-encounter all week. He is totally pre-occupied with Yitro. This will therefore be the first chapter of Torah since Exodus 2 in which the Holy One neither speaks a word nor performs a miracle. As Torah puts it: “***Moshe sh’ma-ed his father-in-law and did everything he said.***” Exodus 18:24. Since his father-in-law showed up Moshe has *never once sought the Voice or the Fellowship of the Holy One*. Yitro has seized the moment. He has virtually ‘taken over’ our camp. Moshe has, as a result, virtually abdicated his leadership role in the Camp; and Yitro, a Midyani, has stepped in to fill the void. Heaven’s agenda has been pushed to the back burner. One day we will realize that the mission to which we are being called and the exaltation or glorification of mortal men are mutually exclusive enterprises. But alas ... it looks like this is not that day!

When the Eyes are On Man, Get Ready for a Grandstand Show!

If there is anything that Yitro knows it is how to *draw a crowd* and *put on a show*. He therefore grabs the attention of every eye in the Camp by doing what pagan priests have been doing for millennia – officiating over a bloody session of *animal sacrifices*. For as Torah tells us in Exodus 16:12: ***Yitro, Moshe’s father-in-law, took a burnt offering and slaughterings for Elohim ...*** My soul wants to cry out “He did *what?* *When had the Holy One told him - or Moshe – or anyone else - to do that?* The ‘burnt offering’ and the ‘slaughterings’ Yitro ‘took’ sound very religious - and indeed ‘*religious*’ is exactly what they were. But I remember something about the kind of people the Holy One has said He redeemed us to be - and it was not a *religious people*. Avraham and Moshe were neither called nor instructed to create a religion called ‘Judaism’ - any more than Yeshua of Natzret was ever called or instructed to create a religion called ‘Christianity’. Neither term – Judaism or Christianity - is ever used by the Holy One, by Avraham, by Moshe, by Yeshua, by His Apostles or Disciples, or by the Bible.

But if we are not called to be a *religious* people – practitioners of Midyani versions of paganism, or Judaism, or Christianity - what kind of people are we called to be? The Holy One has told us. We have been redeemed, called, and carefully taught to be a *sh’ma*-people – *i.e.* a people who do nothing on our own initiative, but act only in *sh’ma*-response to the instructions of the Holy One. We are only to move only when HE – not some intelligent or articulate man - says move. We are only to do only what HE – not some charismatic stranger with a title - says to do.

Remember that at *Marah* the Holy One told us that very plainly that the only voice we are to *sh’ma* is *His* Voice. He made it clear that our lives are HIS – and are thus

to be lived according to *His* teachings and instructions, and His alone. The Holy One's words are *good*. They are *spirit*. They are *life* and *health* and *peace*. As the psalmist has said:

*The Holy One's Torah is perfect, restoring the soul.
The Holy One's testimony is sure, making wise the simple.
The Holy One's precepts are right, rejoicing the heart.
The Holy One's mitzvot are pure, enlightening the eyes.*

*The Holy One's mishpatim are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the extract of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them is your servant warned. In sh'mar-ing them there is great reward.*

[Psalm 19:7-11]

The Holy One's voice we are to *know well*, and are to *sh'ma*. The voice of a stranger, on the other hand ... well, the voice of a stranger we are not even to *listen to*, much less *follow*. Why, you ask? What does the voice of a stranger do – or threaten to do – that is so dangerous?

The Stranger Adds To and/or Subtracts From the Torah

Moshe will later tell us in parsha *Va'etchanan*:

*Do not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it,
that you may sh'mar [carefully guard and keep pure and meaningful]
the mitzvot of the Holy One your God which I command you.*

[Deuteronomy 4:1-2]

Moshe will deem this so important an instruction that he will later repeat it a few chapters later in parsha *Re'eh*: *Whatever thing I command you that you are to sh'mar to do: you are not to add thereto, nor diminish therefrom.* Deuteronomy 12:32.

We are not to add to our lives things that '*seem right to man*'. We are not to be respecters of persons, accepting the pronouncements and opinions of men of high ranking, education, or charisma as if they were equal to the pronouncements of the Holy One our God. We are instead to live by and according to what the Holy One teaches us. Redeemed man is to live by '*every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Holy One*.' Deuteronomy 8:3; see also **Matthew 4:4**, and **Luke 4:4**. If and to the extent we start *adding to* the words of the Holy One we *repeat the sin of Adam and Chava*. Every time we do so, the fruit we eat – and exhibit – becomes the fruit of the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* instead of the fruit of the *tree of life*. We become confused – and what is even worse, we *confuse others* - as to what our *purpose and mission in life* is.

Yeshua described the result of such a *confused, tree-of-knowledge-based* lifestyle as follows:

'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips,

*But their heart is far from Me, and in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."*

Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.

*They are blind leaders of the blind.
And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.*

[Mark 7:8-14]

When and to the extent men add to or subtract from the Torah of the Holy One, you see, they become as blind men who lead other blind men, causing themselves and others to fall into ditches. **Matthew 15:14**; see also Yeshua's discussion of blind guides. **Matthew 23:16-32**.

In Search of a People Who Live By **Blue-Letter Revelation**

Hence, in order that we not fall into this trap, Torah is very careful in its narrative to clearly distinguish for us *when the Holy One is speaking* on the one hand, and when, on the other hand, the text is either a mere narrative or the voice of some human being. The 'key' to knowing when the Holy One is speaking is to look for the simple literary cue ***Vayadaber Adonai ... l'emor ...*** [*And the Holy One spoke ... saying ...*]. Please learn to look for this 'cue', Dear Reader. I cannot stress with enough passion, or declare with enough words, how important this is.

I once went through one of my English Bibles and highlighted in blue all the words in the Pentateuch that were introduced by the phrase '***Vayadaber Adonai ... l'emor ...***' I call this version my 'blue-letter edition', corresponding, of course, to the 'red-letter editions' of the writings of the apostles of Yeshua of Natzret. This process was very helpful to me – to help me learn to distinguish, and pay special attention, to the 'very words' spoken from the mouth of the Holy One.

Please note that there is no '***vayadaber Adonai ... l'emor ...***' anywhere in the Torah narrative relating to Yitro's visit – neither in yesterday's aliyah nor in that we will read today. The voice speaking in these narratives is NOT the Holy One's voice. But, some will say, *it is still Scripture*. That is true. The Holy One has chosen to have Moshe write down for posterity, in the narrative of Torah, what Yitro – a *stranger to the community*, and a *representative of a pagan culture which was going to prove to be a thorn in Israel's side time and time again* - said and taught. The Holy One also had Moshe write down, and record for us in the Torah, the exact words spoken by *the Serpent in the garden*, the exact words spoken by *the people building the tower of Bavel*, and the exact words spoken by *Bila'am the sorcerer*. The Holy One had Moshe record in Torah that the people groaned complained at various stops along the Wilderness Way. He will also soon have Moshe write down in Torah that Aharon once took the earrings from the ears of the people, fashioned a golden calf idol from them, and told the people concerning that

calf idol he had made: ‘*This is your god, Oh Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.*’ Should we incorporate practices like those into our lifestyle because we find them *in Scripture*? Should we marry our wife’s sister because Ya’akov married both Rachel and Leah? Should we feel free – nay, compelled – to sleep with our wife’s handmaiden/servant girl because Avram slept with Hagar and Ya’akov slept with Bilhah and Zilpah? Should we solicit prostitutes because Yehudah solicited Tamar when she posed as a prostitute? No, of course not! The fact that a practice or a teaching is mentioned somewhere in Scripture does not automatically mean that it is something that the Holy One wants us to emulate.

Why has the Holy One caused the actions and counsel of Yitro in our midst to be recorded for posterity? I believe it was so that all generations of the Holy One’s covenant people will, just like the generation that experienced the event, be able to learn the difference between the Holy One’s voice – and the type of instructions He gives – and the voice of a smiling stranger like Yitro. As Tevye sang over his daughters in the *Sabbath Blessing* song from *Fiddler On the Roof*, “*Strengthen them Oh Lord ... and keep them from the stranger's ways.*”³ Yes, O Holy One, *please*. Please hear Tevye’s prayer – and ours. Purge us from the stranger’s ways. Purge from us those things that we have, in reliance upon men of public standing, education, and charisma added to – and taken away from – Your perfect Torah. Please purge us of religious practices that you never told us to incorporate into our lives. Please purge us from doctrines and theologies, philosophies and ideologies that reflect the thoughts and ways of men rather than Your thoughts and Your ways. Please deliver us from this destructive state of ‘Midianization’!

The Voice of a Stranger – Part II: How We Teach and Administrate the Torah of the Holy One

Alas Yitro is by no means finished introducing Midyani influences. In today’s aliyah Yitro will tackle the issue of how the Holy One’s Torah – teaching – is to be made known to the Holy One’s people. Yitro may [or may not] mean well, but he is, I fear, treading on some very dangerous ground. The Holy One has *His own ideas* about how the wisdom of His Torah is to be disseminated. After all, that is the specific reason He brought our ancestors to *Har Sineh*! Before we get to hear *the Holy One’s way*, however, Yitro insists on telling us the ‘*way of man*’. He will speak to us of *secular means of administration* through corporate structure. Yitro’s secular-humanistic way will sound very good. Even Moshe will be enthralled. Thank goodness the Holy One is going to *blow it all away with the Breath of His Mouth* just a few days hence. He is going to undo everything Reuel/Yitro has done.

³ The quote is from ‘*Sabbath Prayer*’, by Sheldon Harnick. For full lyrics, see <http://zemerl.com/cgi-bin/print.pl?title=Sabbath+Prayer+%28from+Fiddler+on+the+Roof%29>

As our aliyah begins however Reuel/Yitro is still in control – and oy vey, is he ever giving Moshe a piece of his mind! What has him all fired up is the social theory that he, as a Midyanite sheik, ascribed to about who he thinks should – and should not - do what in a utopian system that exists only in his mind. He has not heard a single word of what he is saying from the Holy One. He does not know a thing about what the Holy One has planned for His people – either in the immediate future – *i.e.* at Sinai - or long term. He does not know the people that Moshe is leading has been through in Egypt – or have the slightest clue what they need, now or in the future. He does not feel the Holy One’s burden for either the people or the world. His counsel is thus the counsel spoken of by the Psalmist in Psalm 1:1 - the counsel that the blessed man will choose to *walk not in*.

Yitro, is, after all, the sheik of Midyan – a nation founded by one of the sons of Avraham by *Keturah* who had to be ‘sent away’ [see **Genesis 25:7**]. So what on earth qualifies Midyan’s descendant Yitro – a complete stranger to the covenant - to give instructions on this covenant issue? Especially considering that this issue has, alas, caused more problems in the Holy One’s community than perhaps any other, it makes sense that if he wanted to sow dissension, this was the right issue to weigh in on. It is an extremely divisive issue – a *serpent’s tongue kind of issue* - which reveals the hardness of heart, the selfishness, the pride, and the jealousy, in the best of us. It is, after all, this very issue that will foment the *rebellion of Korach* in the Book of Numbers.

The Bitter Seeds of the ‘Who Should Do What’ Controversy

Please note that the time Yitro decided to throw in his two-cents worth on the ‘who should do what issue’ *not a soul was complaining*. The people weren’t complaining. Moshe wasn’t complaining. The Holy One was not complaining. The camp was unified. Nothing was – ostensibly, at least - ‘broken’. And as we say in my home state of Texas – *if it ain’t broke – don’t fix it!* Obviously Yitro was not from Texas. So, he jumps right in to ‘fix’ what is not broken. Torah describes the circumstances surrounding the counsel of Yitro on the non-issue of ‘who should do what’ as follows:

V’yar choten Moshe et kol-asher-hu oseh l’am

When Moshe’s father-in-law saw all that [Moshe] was doing for the people,

V’yomer mah ha-davar hazeh asher atah oseh l’am

he said, ‘What are you doing to the people?’

madua atah yashev levadeicha

Why are you sitting by yourself

v’chol ha-am nitzav aleicha min-boker ad-arev

and letting all the people stand around you from morning until evening?’

V'yomer Moshe l'chotno ki-yavo elay ha-am l'drosh Elohim
'The people come to me to seek Elohim,' replied Moshe to his father-in-law.

Ki-yihyeh lahem davar ba elay
'Whenever they have an issue, they come to me.

V'shafateti beyn ish uveyn rei'eihu
I declare that which is right as it applies between man and his neighbor,

V'hodati et-chokei ha-Elohim v'et-torotav
and I teach Elohim's decrees and instructions for living.'

Vayomer choten Moshe
Moshe's father-in-law said to him,

elav lo-tov ha-davar asher atah oseh
'What you are doing is not good, and does not bring about good.
[Exodus 18:13-17]

Opinions are like belly buttons – everybody seems to have one. Yitro is no exception. Moshe being the sole interpreter of the Holy One's ways for 2 million or so people on every issue, in every circumstance, is, says Yitro, *lo tov* – not good. Note, however, that at no point did *the Holy One* ever solicit either Yitro's opinion or his advice! He is the One Who had appointed Moshe as His sole anointed messenger at this point in the redemption process. We owe it to ourselves to at least ask – was Yitro speaking *on behalf of the Holy One* – or was he, like so many of our day, just speaking '*the counsel of the unGodly*'?

What Is Really Bothering Yitro, Anyway?

In today's aliyah Yitro sees Moshe sitting before thousands – indeed millions - of Redeemed people from morning to evening telling them what he believes the Holy One thinks about all their life questions. Yitro is, it appears [giving him the benefit of the doubt] primarily concerned for what he perceives [albeit with his limited, worldly, humanistic perspective] as *Moshe's wellbeing*. Perhaps since Moshe is his daughter's husband and his grandsons' father Yitro reasoned that the busier Moshe is with the Holy One's business, the less attention Tziporah, Gershom, and Eliezer would receive. Any way you look at it, however, what Reuel/Yitro has is a classic conflict of interest.

It is a good thing Yitro didn't come along when Moshe was still in Egypt tasked with confronting Pharaoh day after day! But he is here now – and like so many, he not only has an opinion about things that are none of his affair, he is determined to speak it. Yitro takes Moshe aside, *strokes his flesh*, and *feeds his feelings of self-importance*. “*You are going to wear yourself out!*” he counsels. “*Delegate! Delegate! Delegate!*” he insists. Torah records the exact words of Yitro's counsel as follows: ***Atah sh'ma*** – i.e. ‘*You listen (tune your ears, heart, attention, and prioritization)*

to me'/what I have to say. For a people whose entire way of life is built upon *sh'ma*-ing One Voice - the Voice of the Holy One - for any man to suggest that we give the same honor and attention to him as we are supposed to reserve for our Covenant Partner in Heaven should set off a series of very loud sirens. But the Sheik of Midyan goes on:

B'koli iyatzeicha v'yhi Elohim imach heyeh

I will give you advice, and God [or 'the gods'/authorities] will be with you.

atah l'am mul ha-Elohim v'heveita

Be God's [or 'the gods'/authorities] representative for the people,

atah et ha-devarim el-ha-Elohim

and bring [their] concerns to God [or 'the gods'/authorities].

V'hizhartah eit'hem et ha-chukim v'et ha-torot

Clarify the decrees and laws for [the people].

V'hodata lahem et ha-derech yelchu vah

Show them the path they must take

v'et ha-ma'aseh asher ya'asun

and the things they must do.

***Watch Out for Those Who Make Ministry About Men,
Make it about 'us vs. them', and Make it Seem Tedious***

Please note also that Yitro's perspective SEPARATES Moshe's work and toil from the empowerment and enabling breath of the *Ruach HaQodesh*. Yitro sees Moshe, and leads Moshe to see himself, as a distinct entity from the Holy One, not flowing in the power of the *Ruach*, and *sh'ma*-ing words and directives that carry their own strength, creativity, and capacity to refresh and renew, but as acting out *of his own limited human strength*. Do you now see how potentially *insidious* Yitro's counsel is? It suggests, exactly as did the Serpent in the Garden, that what the Holy One calls us to do is *burdensome*. Then what Yitro counsels Moshe to do is to *set up a bureaucracy*.

V'atah techezeh mikol-ha-am anshei-chayil

And seek out from among all the people capable men⁴

yir'ei Elohim anshei emet son'ei batza

who fear God [or 'the gods'/authorities] - men of truth, who hate injustice⁵

⁴ See Genesis 47:6, where this Hebrew word [*chayal*] is used to translate the instructions of Pharaoh to Yosef, that he should appoint such men as have *chayal* [special ability] to be over Par'oh's livestock. The ability or competence involved seems to be not only knowledge of livestock [or, in this case, people], but both a 'shepherd's heart' and 'shepherd's touch'.

⁵ The Hebrew word is *batza*, and it refers to *unjust gain* from any source, including of course, money or goods obtained by bribery, extortion, deception, oppression or robbery.

V'samta aleihem sarei alafim sarei me'ot

And appoint them over [the people] as leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds

sarei chamishim v'sarei asarot

leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens.

V'shaftu et ha-am b'chol-et v'hayah

'Let them administer justice for the people on a regular basis.

kol-ha-davar ha-gadol yavi'u eleicha

All issues of importance they will present to you,

v'chol ha-davar ha-katon yishpetu-hem

but they can render judgment in less important matters by themselves.

V'hakel me'aleicha v'nas'u itach

They will then share the burden, making things easier for you.

[Exodus 18:19-22]

Yitro elects to 'close the deal' with the following sales pitch:

Im et-ha-davar hazeh ta'aseh v'tzivecha Elohim

If you agree to this, and God [or 'the gods'/authorities] concur[s],

V'yacholta amod v'gam

you will be able to survive.

Kol ha-am hazeh al-mekomo yavo v'shalom

And this entire nation will then go to its place in peace.'

[Exodus 18:23]

Yitro does not, of course, know what the Holy One is about to do at Sinai. He does not have a clue that *the Holy One has a plan to take care of the problem he is focusing his attention – if indeed it is a problem - by appearing and speaking His instructions for living in community directly to His People*. Yitro is oblivious to the fact that *the Holy One is, very shortly, going to undo absolutely everything Yitro is in the process of convincing Moshe to do*. Yitro does not know that, before the Redeemed Community leaves Sinai – a year or so from now – *the Holy One will completely reorganize and restructure the camp*. The Holy One will instruct that everything and everyone in the camp is to be re-arranged on a tribal basis, such that Yitro's 'at large' vision [he counseled Moshe to seek out capable men 'from among all the people', not tribe by tribe] will become *meaningless*.

Moreover, the golden calf episode will demonstrate clearly – and soon - that the leaders selected by Moshe upon Yitro's advice were - despite how capable and spiritual they appeared to Moshe on the outside – in fact *incapable, unworthy, and hopelessly out of tune with the Holy One, His will, and His ways*. That, of course, is the problem with selection of leaders *man's way* – according to appearances and externals. Yeshua would teach concerning leaders so selected:

*He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who doesn't own the sheep,
sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees.
The wolf then snatches the sheep, and scatters them.
The hired hand flees because he is a hired hand, and doesn't care for the sheep.*

[John 10:12-13]

But What of the People?

Notice that Yitro does not seem to be overly concerned about the Holy One's will. Even less, however, is Yitro concerned about *the people*. The people, however, are the ones the Holy One is most concerned about. They – not Moshe - are *the Bride-People He has chosen*. So let's consider the people, and the Holy One's grand plans for them - and their deepest needs at this critical stage of their development - *through the Bridegroom's eyes* instead of through Yitro's un-inspired human framework of crowd control logic.

Yitro did not know the Holy One's plans for the people that sat before Moshe all day seeking the Word and trying to learn the ways of their Divine Courtier. He just saw these people as *objects of governance* at best, and as *obstacles to Moshe's enjoyment of life* at worst. Yitro saw the people ONLY through flawed, self-interested, human eyes. To him these masses were nothing more than numbers – statistics – cattle to be herded into convenient stalls. Yitro did not understand that to the Holy One every single one of the people He brought out of Egypt was beautiful, and precious, and uniquely treasured - and that the NAME of every single one of them was *inscribed on the palm of His Hand*. Yitro did not know that the Holy One's plan for the Community He had redeemed from Egypt was for them to become a ***kingdom of priests*** and a ***holy nation*** that would change the face of the world forever. Yitro was too blind to see that what the Redeemed Community needed most at this stage of its development was not a *system of corporate governance*, but an *outpouring of revelation*. Hence Yitro's human ideas of government - like appointing judges over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens - was nowhere close to - and was actually detrimental to - the plan according to which the Holy One intended to accomplish His lofty objectives in relation to this people.

Actual Revelation From Heaven ... Wait for It

Understand that the issues of *who does what and how*, and *by whom Torah is to be applied to real-life situations in the Community* will be revisited several times in Scripture – in Numbers 11:21-30 [for the period of wandering in the wilderness], and in Deuteronomy 16:18-20 and 17:8-20 [for the period of possessing and dwelling in the land]. See also Mark 6:35-42, Acts 6:1-6, I Timothy 3:1-10 and 5:17-20, Titus 1:5-9, among other passages where the issues raised by Yitro in today's aliyah are revisited. Some of these passages merely report man's ideas, opinions, and efforts.

Others are words ‘from the mouth of God’. Our responsibility is to see and differentiate between the two. We are to *sh’ma* [listen attentively for the Holy One’s voice] and *sh’mar* [tend, as a garden, the Holy One’s words of covenant] the Words from the mouth of the Holy One – and we are to *lo sh’ma* the voice of a stranger – however good or reasonable it may sound, or how important it may make us feel.

Keeping “Who Should Do What” Issues in Perspective

The Holy One is fully able to accomplish His purposes quite without our help. He managed Creation just fine without any human assistance. Human assistance usually – as in the Garden of Eden – tends, in the long run, to eventually do much more harm to His ecosystem than it does good. And yet, the Holy One continually invites mortal men – the fallen and the fallible – to work with Him in His redemptive plan.

We keep messing the ‘who does what’ issue up - and He keeps fixing it. Hence, what we – or any man – thinks or believes regarding the ‘*who does what*’ issue really isn’t, if we are honest, all that important in the long run. The Holy One would gladly trade all the self-proclaimed and/or publicly acclaimed apostles and prophets and teachers and evangelists that have ever strutted their stuff across a platform or stood at either pulpit⁶ or *bimah*⁷ for one little boy or girl or one humble man or woman who would just *sh’ma* His Voice and *sh’mar* His instructions for living – and *do what He says and nothing else* - one day at a time.

The Holy One is not waiting with bated breath for the apostolic-prophetic form of government to come forth, or for the five-fold ministry to get its act together, or even for the committee on committees or rabbinic council to nominate the next slate of officers. He is not wringing His hands in Heaven because prophets are pastoring, pastors are prophesying, bishops are evangelizing, and elders are deaconing. The Holy One has got it all very much *under control*. We are the ones who get all bent out of shape over ‘who does what’. And in most cases it doesn’t have a thing to do with zeal for the Holy One.

The Holy One Has the ‘Who Should Do What’ Issue Well In Hand

And that is why in the long run the Bible makes it clear that men who get placed in positions of ‘leadership’ in our communities will all fail us [if you don’t believe me, please carefully read such passages as Isaiah 3:1-7 and 63:3-5, Ezekiel 34, Malachi 2:7-9, II Timothy 3:1-7 and 12-13, and Jude 17-21]. That is why the Bible further promises that the task of ‘judging’ – and teaching the proper application of Torah - will

⁶ A *pulpit* is an elevated platform or lectern used in preaching or conducting a religious service.

⁷ A *bimah* is a strategically located piece of furniture in a synagogue consisting of a raised platform/podium on which a Torah scroll or *megillah* is placed at the time designated for public readings. A *bimah* is often shaped like a drafting table, but is usually much more ornate.

ultimately be returned to *one man* – Messiah. As it says in Sefer Yeshayahu [the book of Isaiah]:

*There shall come forth a **netzer** out of the stock of Yishai,
and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.
The Spirit of the Holy One shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Holy One.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Holy One.*

*And He will not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither decide after
the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness will He judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the humble of the eretz;
and He will strike the eretz with the rod of His mouth;
and with the breath of His lips will He kill the wicked.
Righteousness will be the belt of His waist, and faithfulness the belt of His loins.*

[Isaiah 11:1-3]

That passage describes the Holy One's approach to, and plan concerning, the subject of 'who does what'. He does everything. We just join Him humbly, like apprentices learning from our Master, and do what we see Him doing. When we are doing what He is doing, with Him, we do not get tired.

Yitro's counsel, on the other hand, represents *Man's Way*. It emanates from, bears the fallacies, and carries the folly of fallen human flesh and pseudo-intellect. Doing anything man's way will always end in stress and all the negative emotions, moods, and destructive behavior patterns that flow from it; that in turn always leads to arguments and hurt feelings, performance anxiety, envy, jealousy, power struggles, interpersonal conflicts, frustration, bitterness, burnout, exhaustion, division, and disillusionment.

Yitro's counsel is, alas, still very much alive and well today. It is the counsel upon which most religious organizations of our day - and for that matter the last several generations - are founded. It is never primarily focused upon what the Holy One is doing, but is focused instead upon [a] how men can put on an impressive religious show at religious meetings, and [b] how *man's ideas* of organization and administration - and an emphasis on *numbers* and *organizational perpetuation* instead of the real needs and callings of people - can be superimposed upon every gathering of the people of the Holy One.

Charismatic strangers like Yitro are everywhere. They – and their ideas – or a dime a dozen. Be polite to them while they are in your house. Make sure they are fed and comfortable. Kiss them good-bye warmly when they leave. Thank them kindly for dropping by. But then quickly purge your mind of everything they told you, forget everything they did in your presence, and burn everything they left in your

home, your heart, or your head to ashes. Bow your head, open your heart ... and look to the Holy One, and Him alone, to give you direction that really means something.

Questions for Today's Study

1. In regard to today's aliyah:

[A] How were disputes being settled, and questions about what the Holy One was doing being addressed, among the members of the Redeemed Community prior to the arrival of *Yitro* [Jethro]?

[B] What did Yitro say was wrong with this situation?

[C] What did Yitro advise Moshe was to be Moshe's task?

[D] What did Yitro advise Moshe to do regarding the other tasks Moshe had been performing?

[E] What qualities or qualifications did Yitro suggest that men who were to function as judges over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens in authority should have?

[F] What specific tasks were these people to perform for the Community?

[G] Considering the number of people that made up the Community (which Torah has given us), how many judges would it have taken to fulfill Yitro's suggestion?

[H] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the verb translated as "bear" [Strong's Hebrew word #5375 – *nun, sin, alef* (pronounced *naw-saw*)] in verse 22. Write the Hebrew word, in Hebrew lettering, with vowel markings. Do a study on this word, looking for two or three usages in Torah (e.g. **Genesis 7:17**), in the Prophets (e.g. **Isaiah 46:4 and 7, and Ezekiel 12:5, 7, and 12**), and in the Writings (e.g. **Psalms 32:1 and 5**). See if you can find the concept in the B'rit Chadasha - either Yeshua's teachings, in the apostolic writings, or in Revelation. What do you think the word translated as "bear" in verse 22 means? [Be sure to explain why you think this].

2. Today's aliyah from Haftarah *Yitro* continues to describe the dramatic appearance of the Holy One to *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah] in the traumatic year that King 'Uziyahu of *Y'hudah* [Judah] died, after having been struck with leprosy. In the verses we read yesterday, in the middle of the personal and national tragedy of 'Eliyahu's death, Yeshayahu saw the Holy One "high and lifted up", surrounded by seraphim who could only declare *Holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory*. In today's verses, we see how this affects Yeshayahu – and changes his life forever. Never again would he place his hope on a *man*. Here is how Yeshayahu himself records the event:

*The posts of the door shook at the voice of him who called,
and the house was filled with smoke.*

*Then I said, 'Woe is me! For I am ruined; because I am a man of unclean lips,
and I am living among a people of unclean lips;*

my eyes have seen the King, the Holy One of hosts.'
Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a glowing coal in his hand,
which he had taken with tongs from the altar.
He touched my mouth with it, and said,

Hineh naga zeh al-s'fateicha

'Look, this has touched your lips;

v'sar avoneicha v'chatatcha t'chufar

your iniquity is removed, and your sin atoned for.'

[Isaiah 6:4-7]

[A] With what was “the house” filled?

[B] Where did the substance that filled “the house” come from?

[C] Our English translations tell us that Yeshayahu felt “undone” as this experience was unfolding. In Strong’s and Gesenius, look up the Hebrew word which our English Bibles translate as “undone” [it is Hebrew word # 1820]. Write the Hebrew word, in Hebrew letters, with vowel markings, and in its English transliteration. Then look at some other usages of this verb root – Hosea 4:6, and Psalm 49:20, for instance. Describe the Hebraic word picture that this primitive verb root presents to us.

[D] Yeshayahu then describes his “lips” [Hebrew, *safatim*], and the “lips” of his nation (Y’hudah), as “unclean” [Hebrew *tamei*, meaning simply unprepared for an encounter with the Holy One]. What was it about Yeshayahu’s *safatim*, and the *safatim* of others in the nation of Y’hudah, which was suddenly revealed to Yeshayahu to be *tamei*? [Hint: could this be a reaction to the pure praise of the *serafim*– in comparison to the kind of speech that was going on in Y’hudah after ‘Uziyahu’s horrible death?]

[E] Describe in your own words – and meditate upon – the process by which Yeshayahu’s condition was “corrected”. Close your eyes and try to envision the seraf leaving his position by the throne, flying to the altar, picking up the tongs, extending the tongs into the fire, retrieving a burning coal, flying with the coal toward Yeshayahu, extending the fiery coal toward Yeshayahu’s face, and touching it to his lips. Write a “journal” entry, imagining you were Yeshayahu, to describe what the experience was like – and what emotions you felt as you watched it all unfold, felt the burning coal touch your mouth, then heard the voice from the Throne speak.

[F] Our English Bibles tell us that the Voice declared Yeshayahu’s “sins” “forgiven”, and his “iniquity” “taken away”. In Strong’s and Gesenius, look up the Hebrew words our English Bibles translate as *sins* [Strong’s #2403], *forgiven* [Strong’s #3722], *iniquity* [Strong’s 5771], and “*taken away*” [Strong’s #5493]. Write each of the Hebrew words in Hebrew script. Then describe the Hebraic word picture each word presents in its *pa'al* verb form.

[G] Describe how the study of these Hebrew words affects your understanding of verse 7, and the whole concept of “forgiveness of sin”.

3. In the B'rit Chadasha reading for today Kefa [Peter] speaks of [a] 'living stones'; [b] a "spiritual house"; [c] a holy priesthood, and [d] "spiritual sacrifices".

You also, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to the Holy One through Yeshua the Messiah.

[I Peter 2:5]

[A] With regard to each of these terms, write what you think he is talking about. Use Strong's where you can to get the original Greek words and their meanings.

[B] What Hebrew words do you think correspond to each of the Greek words you looked up.

[C] How does the Hebrew concept underlying each such word differ in shade of meaning from the abstract idea underlying each such Greek word?

[D] Considering all you have studied in the Hebraic approach to these words, what do you think each of these terms is supposed to mean in practical application in our daily lives?

*May the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding,
the Spirit of Counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge,
and of the Fear of the Holy One, rest in fullness upon each of you.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 34:3

*Oh magnify [g'dol] the Holy One with me.
Let us exalt [ruwm] his Name together [yachad].*