

*Shiur L'Yom Shishi*¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah:** Exodus 24:1-18
 Haftarah: Jeremiah 34:21-26 & 33:25-26
 B'rit Chadasha: II Corinthians 6:15-7:1

I will deliver to you tablets of stone, on which I have engraved the Torah.

[Exodus 24:12]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 119:33-40;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is *L'hodot* [The Prayer of Thanksgiving]

V'el-Moshe amar – And He said to Moshe ... *Aleh el-Adonai* – ascend to the Holy One ...
atah v'Aharon Nadav v'Avihu v'shiv'im miziknei Yisra'el - you, Aharon, Nadav,
Avihu, and 70 elders of Israel ... *v'hish'tachavitem mirachok* – and worship from afar.
Exodus 24:1.

Can you believe it - the Creator of the Universe is speaking to human beings again! Ever since we arrived at this surreal desert venue known as 'Sinai' – the place of the thorn piercing our flesh – the lines of communication between Heaven and earth have been wide open and flowing like never before – at least since Eden! Now the Holy and Compassionate One - He Who made the Creation ecosystem and everything and everyone in it – is pushing the envelope of God-man relations further than any man ever dared hope. First, He broke through the 'Finiteness Barrier' of the firmament and descended on Mount Sinai in a flurry of wind, fire, sound, sensation, and glory. He awakened the eternal spirits of His People Israel with Ten beautiful messages of Divine Vision, Wisdom, Inspiration, and Empowerment. Both the sound/tone of His Voice and the content of His words were heard simultaneously by literally millions of physical, mortal human ears. Now He is ready to up the ante by engaging with mortal humans – at least His People Israel - on HIS TURF, in His Beauty Realm. Today He will call a delegation of 74 ordinary human beings to 'come up here', inviting them to enter and explore the *ha-shamayim* realm where He dwells. He intends for this to be just the first of many such visits. He intends to regularly welcome "His Sheep, who sh'ma His Voice" into the courts and chambers of His Heavenlies – there to marvel at and be simultaneously healed by and caught up in the Majesty that attends Him and His Throne.

But how can this be? How can sinful men, reeking of uncleanness as we are, enter where the four living creatures and the *serafim* can only cry 'Kadosh, Kadosh,

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Kadosh’ [KJV, ‘*Holy! Holy! Holy!*’]? And even if, somehow, a meeting such as this is possible - how should we ... how *can* we ... prepare for even the journey, much less for the adventure? What can we possibly bring to Him as a gift of fitting tribute? How are we to keep our flesh, our pseudo-intellect, and our emotions under proper control? What protocols of court apply? Should we ... dare we ... speak? Should we – dare we – lift our eyes? Is it permitted – or wise - to gaze upon His Beauty? All of us are so totally unworthy –infected head-to-toe, stem-to-stern, and *basar-to-nefesh* with *ra*, *shachat*, and *chamas*. Among us there is *none righteous, no not one*. He has invited us ... but dare we go?

Let’s face it - our species has fallen a long, long way since the early days of Eden. The thorn/thistle bushes after which Sinai is named remind us that, as mankind has spiraled out of control due to its dalliances with dark energy, Creation hasn’t fared all that well either. Thank Heaven the Holy One has a brilliant plan! First He intends to restore humanity to *Edenic-level relationship* and return us to our *Genesis 1:26-28 shadowing and fruitfulness calling*. He knows that as soon as human beings, in significant numbers, return to this calling, Creation will respond. Mountains will move. Oceans will roar. Rivers will dance. Forests will clap their hands. And deserts - like this one - will burst into bloom. That will happen one day. But, alas, this is not that day. Baby steps, folks! Baby steps!

Reconnecting At the Point of Departure

The Holy One intends to start His Grand Campaign of Redemption and Restoration at the place where mankind first became corrupted - in the area of our *thinking*. The serpent speak virus hit us hard in our latter days in the Garden. Pop-ups saying things like ‘*Did God truly say*’, and ‘*You will not surely die*’, and ‘*You will be like God, knowing ‘good’ and ‘evil’*’ kept appearing, distracting us from our mission and calling. The malware that those pop-ups brought into operation when we mentally ‘clicked’ on them quickly penetrated our firewall, infected our software, corrupted all the files we had stored in random access memory, and embedded deep in our hard drive. That virus launched a massive assault on our capacities of memory, interpretation, processing, assigning weight and emotion to words, prioritizing ideas, and reasoning/logic. Our Bridegroom-King will get to the other areas affected by the serpent virus – *i.e.* how we speak, how we emote, how we react to stimuli [especially how we handle *temptation, irritation, confrontation, insult, accusation, criticism, intimidation, and competition*] as well as our toxic behavior and interaction patterns - later. First He knows He has to reprogram *the way our minds work*². “*Why*”, most of us ask. “*There is absolutely nothing wrong with the way I*

² Consider the implications of Isaiah 11:2-5, 10-12 in this regard – especially verse 3 which says of the Messiah, to Whose we are to be conformed: ***His delight is in the fear of the Holy One, And He does not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears.***

think”, we all want to declare. ‘*All my opinions are right*’ we want to say. “*All my attitudes are justified*” we want to believe. ‘*All my offenses are merited*’ we want to proclaim. ‘*All my outrage is deserved!*’ we want to insist. ‘*All my reactions to stimuli are completely appropriate!*’ we protest. But alas, if that is what we really believe about our opinions, our attitudes, our offenses, and our outrage, not to mention our behaviors in relation to vanity, jealousy, narcissism, lust, and greed ... well, if that is what we really believe, the serpent’s virus is still wreaking havoc on our hard drive. We are still *horribly deceived*. Consider this modern proverb:

The wise man recognizes that his Creator is much more intelligent, good, and insightful than he himself - a mere creation - could ever be.

He therefore humbles himself and follows his Creator's instructions and decrees.

The foolish man thinks he knows better than - and is more righteous than - the One Who created him. He bristles at his Creator's instructions.

He stiffens his neck, sticks out his chin, and proclaims what he, as a man, considers to be a more enlightened, more equitable, more moral, and more progressive policy.

The *Mishpatim Discourse* has provided us a *short introductory-level course* describing for us how the Holy One – to Whom we have just gotten betrothed – thinks and approaches life. We have been invited to explore the workings of His Brilliant Mind. We need to know how He thinks, what stirs His passion, and what motivates Him to action – because we are supposed to become like Him. We are not His slaves – we are His *apprentices*. We are supposed to learn everything about Him, so we can do His Will, model His Wisdom, and reveal His Redemptive Plan to the world. We are supposed to be an *ezer kenegdo* to Him, co-laboring with Him as He does His great restorative works, and co-regenting with Him as He brings the kingdoms of this world under His chuppah of covenant. That is why this glorious makeover process is unfolding.

Send us the Cure – We’ve Got Plenty of the Sickness Already!

Why is the thinking of human beings so horribly messed up? Why is our mental and emotional approach to life so counter-productive? There are a couple of reasons. First of all, there is the problem of *the Fall*. As a result of what happened in the Garden all men are now born pre-programmed to think more like the Serpent than like the Holy One. By and large we emerge from the womb – or at least the weaning party - obsessed with the Serpent’s obsessions, namely [1] viewing everything and situation through a lens of ‘good’ and ‘evil’, ‘fair’ and ‘unfair’, ‘true’ and ‘untrue’, ‘moral’ and ‘immoral’, and ‘right’ and ‘wrong’; [2] *defying death*; [3] fixing our attention and energy on *worldly things that appeal to our eyes*, [4] wasting our time and mental energies pursuing *worldly ideas and ideologies and causes that stir up our fleshly desires and inflame our fleshly passions*, and [5] craving information or experiences that tend to *make us feel wise and therefore important*. Secondly, there is the problem of *the Exile*. We have been

hypnotized by the cultural perversions of the lands in which we live. We have been immersed in slime and baptized in uncleanness by far too intimate fellowship with people who know not - and fear not – the Holy One. For our ancestors it was the ‘Egyptian Dream’ and the seduction of Potifar’s wife. For us alive today it is the American Dream, the South African Dream, the British Dream, the Australian Dream, etc. [i.e. fill in the name (s) of the national, secular, philosophical, and religious culture(s) in which you have lived], and the seduction of the modern entertainment, marketing, propaganda, educational, and financial Pharaohs of our day.

The Holy One loves us – indeed betrothed us to Him - *despite our flaws*, of course; but He also loves us far too much not to offer us a way to overcome and transcend the dysfunction of our fallen minds. Our Divine Bridegroom wants us free from the folly of human opinion and man-generated wisdom. Hence He has kicked off the Great Bridal Makeover Process He has in store for us by leading us lovingly and patiently through the three-chapter ‘case book’ I call ‘*the Mishpatim Discourse*’. The Holy One has wisely designed this short but powerful wisdom download to serve as our essential textbook for the required course ‘*Thinking Like the Bride of Messiah 101*’. To understand why such a wisdom download is necessary at such a time as this we need first to understand a little more about what the human mind in its fallen and exiled state is, how dysfunctional its operations, and how desperately it needs renewing.

Understanding Why Our Minds Desperately Need Renewing

Though both have been adversely affected by the Fall, the human *mind* and the human *brain* are not the same. The human brain is a physical organ of the body that can be seen, tested, photographed and operated on. The human *mind*, on the other hand, is not physical at all. It is instead a *spiritual life force*. It cannot be seen, or tested, or photographed, or operated on. The Hebrew word we most often translated as ‘mind’ is *kilyah*³. See e.g. Job 19:27; Psalm 7:9, 26:2, and 73: Jeremiah 11:20, 12:2 and 20:12. *Kilyah* is a noun derived from the verb *kalah*, meaning *to prepare, to complete, to make ready/bring to a state of readiness*. The *mind* [Hebrew *kilyah*] is thus the aspect of our being which takes us from a mere blob of bones, muscles, nerves and organs and actually makes us function as a *person*. The mind is thus the *spiritual organ of consciousness and illumination* and the *ultimate generator of human will, choice, decision-making, conscience and priorities as well as all voluntary forms of speech and behavior*.

The human brain is just a computer attached to our physical senses. It scans, takes mental note of, and stores in memory whatever we see, hear, smell, taste and physically feel. The brain’s micro-processor then begins to apply various

³ The Hebraic spelling of the noun *kilyah* is *kaf, lamed, yod, hey*.

‘programs’ to the files it has gathered – *i.e.* the ‘analysis’ program, the ‘evaluation’ program, the ‘categorization’ program, the ‘logic and reason’ program, the ‘common sense’ program, the ‘prioritization’ program, etc. This is the point at which our mind takes over. The mind is the spiritual organ of will and choice. In its fallen state the mind takes all the information the brain has gathered for it and processes that information through the ‘*how does this affect me?*’ program. In our fallen state our diseased minds then start to formulate attitudes, opinions, preconceived notions, prejudices, paranoias, emotional responses raging from terror to outrage to bursts of human compassion, and diatribes-waiting-to-be-released as they process the sensory information forwarded by the brain. Our fallen minds do all this through the unproductive lens of how the information received and stored - or more precisely our brain’s self-obsessed analysis and categorization of that information – is perceived to affect our lives.

The Brilliance In Us That is Lying Dormant Waiting to Be Re-Awakened

As we have discussed, it was not always so. Man was originally created with the *infinite capacity to know, to meaningfully interact with, and to walk - and work effectively - alongside His Creator.* We were to be His *earthly tzel, or shadow.* That is still man’s primary purpose⁴. But we have a problem - we have *a disease of the mind.* We have become ‘*dumbed-down*’. Our mind is corrupted. Our thinking is futile. Romans 1:21-25 explains the problem:

***... Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God,
nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts,
and their foolish hearts were darkened.
Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God
into an image made like corruptible man—
and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.
Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts,
to dishonor their bodies among themselves,
who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served
the creature rather than the Creator Who is to be blessed forever. Amen.***

Generations of immersion in *Serpentine thought patterns* and *pagan cultures* have *dulled our spiritual senses.* But that is not the worst part. They have also *polluted our sense of what life on earth should consist of.* The mind of man was originally patterned after the mind of the Creator - and was thus *absolutely brilliant* and *fully functional.* Unfortunately for us, the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil by our ancestors changed that. When our ancestors ate that fruit, the serpent virus was downloaded. The virus attached itself to our DNA.

⁴ See Genesis 1:26: *Then Elohim said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*

In every subsequent generation this virus increased its operation, taking larger and larger bites out of our capacity to know and walk with the Creator. As a result now – without Divine empowerment – man is severely handicapped in the ability to know and walk intimately with the Holy One. Given over from youth to *uncleanness*, surrendered to the *indulgence of vile passions*, and *constantly immersed in depravity*, our minds have become a faint shadow of the creative, relational masterpieces they were designed to be⁵. We have become dysfunctional as to the single most important thing we were designed to be able to do – *i.e.* to *know the thoughts and ways of and interact meaningfully with the One Who designed and breathed life into our progenitor*. Hence our minds have little defense against the serpentine siren songs of Tower-of-Babel style idealism, of Sodom-and-Gomorrah style perversion, of Kena’ani-style avarice, Lavan’s-household style materialism, of Amaleki-style violence, and of Egyptian-style self-obsession.

The Poisonous Fruit of the Diseased Human Mind

As a result of the corrupted state we hardly even notice the unhealthy and corrupt things in our culture that constantly bombard our minds. We have no functional ‘firewall’. We fall prey to every popular trend, every political drama, every group dynamic, and every urge and appetite – not to mention every manipulative governmental, ideological, political, religious, marketing, media and entertainment strategy and agenda. We get food poisoning from the ‘Kool-Aid’ of the culture without even realizing what we have been drinking it. We start exhibiting ‘attitudes’, voicing ‘opinions’ and engaging in philosophical and religious ‘arguments’ that are totally inconsistent with both our identity and our purpose on earth. Our hearts grow lukewarm toward the Creator - and more and more suspicious and intolerant of our fellow men. We cease to focus on the redemptive plan and high calling of the Holy One, and start instead to *obsess over numbers, organizational models, titles, authority, respect, money*, and our culturally corrupted ideas of what is ‘right and wrong’, ‘fairness and unfairness’ and ‘morality and immorality’. Other people notice us becoming *increasingly self-absorbed*. We see/view everything – except ourselves – with a cynical, critical eye. Our tongues start to spew sarcasm, criticism, accusation, and malevolent arrogance. Our lives become a human toxic waste dump. Our *shalom* – and the *shalom* the Holy One has empowered to release over our households – disappears.

Identifying Environmental Toxins

But ... *how did this happen* to me, you ask? What on earth caused this state of toxicity to develop – on *my watch*? Are you sure you can handle the answer? Well,

⁵ See Shaul of Tarsus’ thorough discussion of this process, and its results, in Romans 1:24-32.

if you are, here goes. Some things we accept in the mixing bowls of our mind without even thinking these days are downright *poisonous* to it - and have immediate deleterious effects. This includes all by-products of the fruit of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* - *i.e.* opinions, theological ‘God-boxes’, philosophies, and political, social, psychiatric and ‘scientific’ theories which overemphasize the importance of man and ‘belief’ and deny the Holy One’s right to be Who He Is and Do what He does. Also ‘poison’ to the mind however is everything else that is serpentine in origin – prime examples being *idolatry*, *sorcery*, and *augury*. Many other things that fallen men and women introduce into the mix of their minds are not poisonous *per se* but when introduced in combination with other stimuli - or in excessive doses – overwhelm the mind’s self-cleansing capacities and cause it to malfunction. When that happens to us our minds begin to regress instead of grow. The result is that we begin to: [a] withdraw from meaningful interaction with the Holy One and with other people, [b] disengage from our mission, purpose and destiny on earth, and [c] initiate a process of self-destruction. The next stage in the process is for our interactions with other people and with Creation in general to begin to become more toxic than beneficial, more superficial than meaningful, more sarcastic than encouraging, and more painful than pleasurable.

Two of the quickest-acting *contaminants of the human mind* are *offense* and *unforgiveness*. Another agent of corruption is *worry*. *Shalom* and worry cannot dwell in the same mind. Either *shalom* will displace worry, or worry will displace shalom. Also highly toxic to *shalom* is any form of *fear*. An especially toxic – and unfortunately very prevalent - type of fear is the *fear of what other men think or might think*. Other common manifestations are: fear of *commitment*, fear of *intimacy*, fear of *humiliation*, fear of *confrontation*, fear of *change*, fear of *rejection*, fear of *animals*, fear of *enemies*, fear of *failure*, and fear of things like *germs*, *contamination*, *disease*, *incapacity*, and *death*.

A little slower working cocktail of toxins, but every bit as damaging over the long term, are things like *narcissism*, *self-righteous judgmentalism*, *uncontrolled over-indulgence of a physical appetite, desire or lust*, *materialism*, and the kind of *conflict avoidance* which involves shutting down all communication with anyone one does not agree with of whose look, lifestyle, or approach he does not approve. To this is added the toxic effect of mind-numbing media overload – from a steady diet of *bad ‘news’ reports*, *harsh opinion talk-show broadcasts*, *manipulative marketing strategies*, emotionally charged *political polemics*, *sensuality-focused entertainment and music*, *educational and religious systems designed to suppress innate creativity*, *violent video* and *mindless smart-phone games*, a deluge of *negative social media posts*, and a constant flow of worldly holiday celebrations focused upon *everything but* our identity and mission.

All the beauty, all the brilliance, all the potential, and all the capacity for goodness that the Creator designed into us now lies hidden – waiting for the Bridegroom-King to find us, breathe on us, and cause us to revive. We just need *to have our minds renewed*. We do not have a clue how to do this – but the Holy One has a plan. David described this plan poetically in Psalm 51:7-12:

*Purge me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken can rejoice.
Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Your Presence,
and take not Your Empowering Breath of Holiness from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*

The Holy One’s plan for renewing of the mind of the redeemed does not happen all at once. It is a *process* consisting of orderly stages. The first four such phases will be discussed in this shiur. There will be more, much higher-level stages introduced later in Torah, but we are not ready for those just yet. Let's not rush the process. Let's start at the beginning – and let the Master do *His Work His Way*.

Phase I of the Divine Mind-Renewal Process

The first phase of the renewal of the mind for the Redeemed Community involved the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov revealing Himself to us as *a worthy Divine Suitor*. The Holy One stepped into our world and introduced Himself as Redeemer Extraordinaire. He intervened on our behalf over and over again. He changed the course of history. He dazzled us. He courted us. He earned *our awe, our admiration, our affection, and our trust* with wonderful deeds. We came to see Him ‘*like a gazelle or a young stag*’ majestic in His splendor as He came ‘*leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills*’ to call us to *arise and come away* with Him. **Song of Songs 2:8-10**. I have a name for this initial phase of Divine mind renewal. I call it the ‘*season of Divine Romance*’.

Phase II of the Divine Mind Renewal Process

The first wild, ecstatic phase of mind-renewal has now given way to a more subdued yet *much more intimate* process of *Divine interaction* and *slow growth*. The Holy One led us through the driest and most desolate part of the desert *to train us to trust Him* – not Pharaoh or our own talents, abilities and efforts - *for even the basics of life* like food and water. We have learned to eat and to drink what our Bridegroom-King has provided. We have learned to trust Him to know what we need – and to be confident that He will supply what we need – albeit not what we want – in His *time* and in His *manner*. We *have* learned that, haven’t we? I call this second phase of Divine mind renewal the ‘*season of Divine Trust Building*’.

Phase III of the Divine Mind Renewal Process

Then the Holy One kicked up the excitement level yet another notch. He called us out of our comfort zones again – this time into the Manifest Glory of His Divine Presence, under the *Chuppah of Betrothal*. Once we arrived at the Chuppah He had set up at Sinai the Holy One declared His intentions concerning us in no uncertain terms. First He had Moshe tell us exactly *how He sees us – i.e. as His special treasure people, as His kingdom of priests, and as His holy nation*. Then He prophesied to us in His own Words, proclaiming over us all a series of ten creative, prophetic **‘Light Be!’** type messages. Each of these ten messages was specifically and uniquely designed to *reprogram a specific portion of our fallen minds and activate and energize a specific part of our fractured spiritual inner man*.

The 10 Empowering Words our Bridegroom-King spoke over us in this phase constituted His solution to what I call the *‘Humpty Dumpty syndrome’* that afflicts our souls. His words do what all the kings’ horses and all the kings’ men never could – they *put our scattered Humpty Dumpty souls gloriously back together again*. Bursting with Divine Energy those words *empowered us* to enter into an ever deepening and never-ending covenant relationship with Him. By virtue of the cumulative effect of those words – which of course add up to the persona of Messiah - the doors are now wide open for us to have the kind of covenant relationship with Him that the patriarchs had – the kind of a covenant relationship that will change not only *us*, but *all people and nations of the world*, forever. I call this third phase of renewing the mind the *‘prophetic empowerment’ stage*.

Phase IV of the Divine Mind Renewal Process

With the *Mishpatim Discourse* the prophetic empowerment phase took a new turn. *The Holy One began methodically teaching us through a series of case studies – i.e. mishpatim* –how to start to think like Him. He used the power of His speech to retrain us how to approach real-life situations the way He would, rather than the way the *serpent virus* would have us to. The Holy One has therefore been laying out before us hypothetical fact situation after hypothetical fact situation. He then has been explaining to us exactly how He would react and respond – and hence how He expects His Bride-People to react and respond - in each of those, and similar, scenarios. Through this process we are getting a feel for *‘What Messiah would do’* – hence what *we* are called to do – in various situations. What an invaluable impartation! First our Bridegroom dazzled us with His Power – now He is stunning us with His wisdom! But it is even more than that. He is actually teaching us *how to blend Wisdom with Compassion in real life situations the way He does – i.e. how to follow His lead in maintaining just the right percentage of both Wisdom and Compassion in not only every aspect of our thought-lives, but also in all of our interactions, conversations, relationships, and tasks*. I call this fourth phase of

renewing the mind the ‘*Introduction to Divine Thought-Process*’ stage.

Next on the Agenda – Another Dramatic Paradigm Shift!

The Holy One loves us in our present state of course – even with an unrenewed mind - but as the seed of the *Aseret HaDibrot* and the *mishpatim* which He has placed within us begins to germinate, sprout, and bear leaves He intends to bring about *much, much greater things* in us in the days to come. Remember *the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations*. The Holy One is leading us through a radical transition. The ‘*slavish*’ orientation to life we learned in Egypt – namely *doing whatever it takes to stay one step ahead of the whip and to please the cruel taskmasters Pharaoh set over us* is going to have to give way to a ‘*Bridal*’ orientation to life. Instead of fearfully and reluctantly approaching life in such a way just to minimize the pain we experience, we are about embark on a lifestyle of confidently and enthusiastically moving and flowing in response to and rhythm with the words and silent movements of the Holy One, our loving and nurturing Bridegroom. We have wasted most of our lives thus far ‘*just covering up*’. We have survived – but merely surviving has taken all our energy. We have not become anything close to who we were created to be. We have not even yet begun to do what we were created to do. We have built Pharaoh’s storehouses - but *our own vineyard we have not tended*. But the Holy One is in the process of changing all that. That is why He is readying yet another mind-blowing paradigm shift for us.

Ascending Sinai – Sans the Shofar, the Lightning and the Thunder

Now the Holy One has another encounter in mind. It involves Moshe, Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, and 70 elders of Israel. In today’s aliyah Moshe, seventy-four men ascend Mount Sinai and draw near the dense all-encompassing cloud in which the Holy One is manifesting His Presence. These 74 men did not make this difficult journey on the spur of the moment or on their own notion. They were invited. The aliyah of their ascent begins with an *upward call*. The Holy One is, it appears, about to host *the initial conference of the Friends of the Bride and the Friends of the Bridegroom*. I like to call it *the ‘Immaculate Reception’*.

The Holy One tells this group:

V’hishtachavitem merachok

[All of] you must bow down at a distance.

V’nigash Moshe levado el-Adonai

Only Moshe shall then approach the Holy One.

V’hem lo yigashu v’ha-am lo ya’alu imo

The others may not come close, and the people may not go up with him.

[Exodus 24:1-2]

The protocol is now in place. But before anyone takes the first step up the mountain Moshe had a number of things to do at the base of the mountain in preparation for the great expedition. First Moshe gathered the Redeemed Community together as one man and recited to all its members the full contents of the *shitre eyrusin* – i.e. the terms of the covenant of betrothal. This consisted of both the *Aseret HaDibrot* of Exodus 20 and the *mishpatim* we have studied this week. After Moshe read all these Divine pronouncements the people shouted with one voice:

Kol ha-devarim asher-diber Adonai na'aseh

All the things that the Holy One has spoken we will asah.

The reaction of the people was ecstatic and climactic. With every Divine pronouncement Moshe read their enthusiasm grew. And when he was finished, and looked at them for response, the multitudes of men, women, and children, natural-born Hebrews and foreigners, all declared in ONE SINGLE UNIFIED VOICE: *Everything the Holy One has said* – i.e. everything from the broad ‘general principles’ laid out in the Ten Empowering Words to the very specific details of the *mishpatim* the Holy One has taught Moshe this week - *we will asah*.

The First Writing of the Torah

As wonderful and passionate as this declaration was, it was not a sufficient declaration of commitment for such a covenant. This Glorious Bridegroom deserved a response from His Betrothed more far-reaching than this. So Moshe took it upon himself to become the Holy One’s first Torah scribe: ***V’yichtov Moshe et kol-divrei Adonai*** - i.e. *Moshe wrote down all of the Holy One's words*. This is *very important*. Keep in mind, if this episode is in chronological order, that this means that a portion of the Torah – at least Exodus 20:1 – 23:33 – was written down *by Moshe* days before the Holy One’s finger inscribed anything on tablets of stone. That will not happen [the first time] until Exodus 31:18 – i.e. seven chapters and many days from now.

What do you think became of the scroll Moshe wrote before ascending the second time and spending 40 days with the Holy One?

Introducing the 24/7 Pathway⁶

The words of the Holy One were not only written down by Moshe - they were *read aloud to the Sinaitic Throng*. This made the *third time* the Redeemed Community had heard the *Aseret HaDibrot* - and the second time they had heard the Divine

⁶ In modern English business usage the phrase 24/7 refers to being on the job or available to serve the public 24 hours/day, 7 days/week – in other words constantly, continuously, without interruption, and without limitation to prescribed hours. The commitment ancestors made to *na'aseh v'nishma* – a 24/7 commitment - is fittingly found at Exodus chapter 24, verse 7.

Words of the *Mishpatim Discourse*. The repetition did not diminish the people's enthusiasm one whit. The masses enthusiastically accepted these Divine empowerments and mind-renewing wisdom declarations with another great shout:

They replied, kol asher-diber Adonai – i.e. 'All that the Holy One has declared.'

na'aseh v'nishma - i.e. We will asah and we will sh'ma.

[Exodus 24:7]

The words Moshe presented to the people on both occasions appear to have been identical. But please note that *the response of the people* was different the second time around. This time the people did not just say '*na'aseh*' [we will *asah*]; this time they added something new to their commitment – this time they also said *v'nish'ma* [and we will *sh'ma*]. The redeemed of the Holy One have heretofore responded to the Holy One by saying *Na'aseh* – we will *asah* – twice – once in Exodus 19:8, and again in Exodus 24:3. But such a response, translated into English as '*we will do*' is, by itself, an immature and *insufficient* response. While it testifies to a level of acceptance, you see, it does not represent the *complete surrender* that our Divine Bridegroom deserves.

Let me illustrate this crucial point with a hypothetical. Imagine your father or mate or boss tells you to clean up the garage. If you are not really 'on board' you can grudgingly say '*I'll do it*', but inwardly have no enthusiasm for the project. You will then probably put it off as long as possible, then on the last possible day crawl out of bed as late as possible and do a half-hearted job of garage-cleaning. An hour or so after beginning, having done a superficial 'touch-up' on the garage, you'll probably look around, say "that's good enough", and declare yourself to have 'fulfilled' the directive. That is what it means to [only] '*asah*'. As you can see, to agree merely to '*asah*' [do – i.e. make it happen, build it] can lead to *legalistic observance only*. It can become a surrender of the *head* and the *hands* and *feet*, but *not the heart*, and *not the soul*.

That is why Moshe never was comfortable with *na'aseh* [we will *asah* – we will make it happen and/or build it] as the people's response to the Holy One's proposal. Moshe knew that the Holy One did not want a bunch of people treating his loving instructions – words of love which He intended as *prophetic, creative empowerments*, as if they were 'commandments' which had to be grudgingly performed/fulfilled. Moshe therefore kept probing the people for a more appropriate response.

How did Moshe know what response the Holy One desired? It is simple. The Holy One had told him specifically what response was required back in Exodus 19:5. At that time the Holy One had said specifically "*... if/when you will sh'ma My voice, and sh'mar My covenant, then you will be My am segulah* [treasured possession-

people], *My mamlaket kohanim* [kingdom of priests], and *My goy kadosh* [holy people]”.

The Words Our Bridegroom Longs To Hear

At last, after hearing both the testimony of the Holy One and the words Moshe spoke on his behalf, the Redeemed Community was ready to respond affirmatively and enthusiastically (thus affirming and formally entering into the covenant) with a *qol echad* – i.e. a single, unified voice. At the climactic moment of this last ceremony Moshe arranged for us, our declaration went for the first time beyond merely agreeing to *asah* the Holy One’s Torah. Now however, with our minds renewed, we were finally able to speak the words the Holy One longed to hear. Hence, we proclaimed, with one voice: ***Na’aseh*** [*We will make/build/do*] *everything the Holy One has said ... v’nish’ma* [*and we will tune our ears to, listen to, pay heed to, hear, internalize, and bring our speech, reactions, and behaviors into alignment*].

Why did this last phrase – *nish’ma* - make such a difference to the Holy One? To understand the answer to this question you have to *think Hebraically*. The Hebrew concepts expressed are, as always, much more passionate and meaningful than the English translations we are given. Let’s look at the word pictures presented by the Hebrew verbs our ancestors used.

The Word Picture Presented by Na’aseh ...

The first verb used, *na’aseh*, which our English texts translate as “we will do”, is a derivative of the verb root *asah*⁷. The verb *asah* paints the picture of a potter fashioning something recognizable and useful from a lump of clay. To *asah* the *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* of Torah means to apply creative energy toward them, to “build” something useful with them – to *take them out of the realm of the theoretical and into the world of the practical*. It means to conform one’s human thoughts, priorities, values, words, and conduct to the shape of the Torah the way a potter conforms the clay with which he works to the blueprint he has in his mind or on his drafting table.

To *asah* the *dibrot* [i.e. Words] and *mishpatim* [teachings as to how to blend Divine Wisdom with Divine Compassion] of the Holy One requires one to *work with his thoughts, his priorities, his values, his words, and his conduct* like a potter works with the clay to make it into the shape on the blueprint. If the potter wants to make a water pitcher, for instance, he must know what a water pitcher looks like, and must keep working with the clay until it conforms to that shape and image. He will only be successful however if he is *inspired and gifted with the ability to make the clay become the water pitcher he has pictured in his mind*. That requires that he *sh’ma* even as he *asahs*.

⁷ Asah is Strong’s Hebrew word # 6213. The Hebraic spelling is *ayin, shin, hey*.

Similarly, the *dibrot*, *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* of Torah are not merely things the Holy One wants us to “do”; they are the righteousness of the Holy One, to which we are – through *sh’ma*-ing the Voice that inspires and empowers us - to conform every aspect of our lives.

The Word Picture Presented By “v’ni sh’ma ...”

The word our English texts translate as “be obedient” in the verse in question is *sh’ma*⁸ with which we are becoming more and more familiar. As discussed previously, this word means *to give one’s complete attention to, to truly hear, to receive as truth, to yield or surrender to, and then to think, speak, act and live in conformity with*, something spoken or written. For the Redeemed Community to say it would *sh’ma* meant that it - through its individual members - would respond to the Holy One’s words (His Torah) the way the primordial goo of the deep responded to His words “*Let there be light!*” on the First Day of Creation. The words of the Holy One would, our ancestors pledged, be allowed to have their full prophetic and creative effect, gradually making us into what the Holy One had spoken concerning us.

Na’aseh ... v’nish’ma – The Natural Response of a Redeemed Soul

These two Hebrew verbs, *asah* and *sh’ma*, are very important covenantal terms. They assume and *presuppose* the existence of a covenant relationship. The process of transformation these verbs pledge are neither an end unto themselves or a basis on which man is to approach the Holy One. The words of Torah, as wonderful and freeing as they are, can be *misused* – just as the wonderful and freeing words the Holy One spoke to Adam in the Garden of Eden were misused. If we seek to win the Holy One’s favor, or “become righteous”, by “obeying” Torah, or by building a “Torah community” we will fail miserably. The Holy One’s *favor is poured out in abundance*, without charge, to anyone who seeks it. We cannot earn it. And we cannot win it by striving for some ideal of *Halakhic perfection*.

We have only to recognize and be humbled by our imperfection and undeservedness to the point we ask for and accept the Holy One’s favor, and *let His marvelous love transform us into new creations*. That is where – and when, and how – the “***na’aseh, v’nish’ma!***” covenant commitment kicks in. Only new creations in the Holy One – people who have been both redeemed by and betrothed to Him - can cry with a *kol echad* [single, unified voice] “***na’aseh, v’ni sh’ma!***”

Our Rabbi taught us how to be sure we do not underestimate the depth or the transformative power of the words of Torah. Yeshua taught us not to look upon the words of Torah as a finite checklist of do’s and don’ts, which if performed in the

⁸ Sh’ma is Strong’s Hebrew word #8085. The Hebraic spelling is *shin, mem, ayin*.

flesh, independent of intimate communion with and empowerment by Him, will make us acceptable to the Holy One. He taught us to see the words of Torah as *an infinite river of life* in which those who already know the Holy One intimately constantly make *mikveh* in order to refresh ourselves and others.

Some ask: why do you do *mitzvot* and live out *mishpatim* – *despite the fact that you are already loved by the Holy One, are already redeemed, and are already possessing and walking in eternal life in Messiah?* The answer is simple yet stunning. We joyfully do so because it is in our walking out of the *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* of Torah that we meet and *commune with* and *draw strength from* our Bridegroom every day! *Mitzvot* and *Mishpatim* are where He is. They are what He's doing. As we join Him in the *mitzvot* and *mishpatim*, therefore, the Messiah *embraces* us, *speaks to* us, *teaches* us, *disciplines* us, *encourages* us, and *transforms us* into His image. That is why He said – and what He meant by - ***'if you love me, keep [sh'mar] My Mitzvot.*** John 14:15; see also Deuteronomy 7:9, 11:1, 11:22, 30:16, and Joshua 22:5. Torah is - Messiah taught us - a *dance of love*, in which He leads, and we follow. Whatever He does, we cling to Him, and rest our heads upon His breast. We move when and as He moves, always in a way totally consistent with what He is doing. That is the kind of dance He danced with His Father; and it is the dance we are learning from Him.

Note that the Bridal pledge at Mount Sinai is not just to *asah*, nor just to *sh'ma*, but to do both. If we were merely to *asah*, we would quickly get carried away with our own work, our own creating, our own “doing”. This would incline us toward the pseudo-intellectual folly trap that Westerners delight in labeling as ‘legalism’. If we were merely to *sh'ma*, on the other hand, we might tend to neglect our participation in the process, and forget to move when He moved. This tends toward what the Hebrew mind fears even more than ‘legalism’ – total lawlessness. But, if/when we *asah* all things *according to His voice, in response to His whispered inspiration, and in His timing*, we fulfill our Bridal covenant, and fulfill our destiny as His Beloved.

This is the Blood of the Covenant ...

In our emphasis on the proper response of a human soul to the Holy One's Torah we have skipped over something else that our aliyah presents to us that is very interesting. Note that after writing down all the Holy One's words Moshe did what we should have regarded as a strange thing – something the Holy One had *clearly not instructed him to do*⁹: He built a *mizbe'ach* - an altar - at the foot of the

⁹ See Ex. 24:1 for the Holy One's instructions. Moshe was simply told to ascend and bring Aharon, Nadav, and Avihu, and 70 elders along. Moshe decided on his own to build the altar and have a covenant ratification ceremony before complying with the Holy One's instructions. The only instructions concerning a *mizbe'ach* the Holy One had given so far were given generically, back in Exodus 20:24-26.

mountain, and slaughtered animals on it. Why did he do this? The Holy One was WAITING for Him and 73 others. He had been told to ascend with them. Why did Moshe keep the Holy One waiting? Why did he delay in taking Aharon, et al, up the mountain to meet with the Holy One? Was Moshe just following Yitro's 'bad' example [see Exodus 18:12]? And, if he insisted – without being told to – to present *korban* [animal and/or grain surrogates through which an attempt at intimate approach is made to the Holy One] - why didn't he just use the altar Yitro had built? Why take the time and trouble - while the Holy One was waiting - to build a new one? Alas, Torah does not answer these questions for us. Here is all it says:

V'yashkem b'boker v'yiven mizbe'ach tachat ha-har

He got up early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain,

ushteym esreh matzevah lishneym asar shivtei Yisra'el

along with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

V'yishlach et-na'arei b'nei Yisra'el

He sent the [consecrated] young men¹⁰ among the descendants of Israel,

V'ya'alu olot v'yizbeichu zvachim shlamim l'Adonai parim

*and they presented oxen as **olot** and as **shlamim** to the Holy One.*

Vayikach Moshe chatzi ha-dam vayasem ba'aganot

Moshe took half the blood [of these offerings], and put it into large bowls.

v'chatzi ha-dam zarak al ha-mizbe'ach

The other half he sprinkled on the altar.

V'yikach Moshe et ha-dam vayizrok al ha-am

Moshe then took [the rest of] the blood and sprinkled it on the people

vayomer hineh dam ha-brit

He said, 'This is the blood of the covenant

asher karat Adonai imachem al kol ha-d'varim ha-eleh

that the Holy One is making with you regarding all these words.'

At this second assembly Moshe sprinkled the blood of the surrogates presented as *korban olahot* [approach offerings representing total dedication] on all the people. He made a 'bloody mess'. And he thereby sealed the people in covenant. Notice the words Moshe used to describe the blood that was sprinkled on them: *He said, **hineh dam ha-brit** – Behold the blood of the covenant*

Did Someone told you that Yeshua instituted something new, unrelated to Torah, when He spoke those words in Luke 22? You do *know better than that*, don't you?

Why did Moshe choose this moment, when the Holy One was waiting for him and 73 others? And where did the 12-pillar idea come from?

¹⁰ Who are these 'consecrated young men'? The context would suggest they are Nadav and Avihu [see verse 1] – the only *young* persons who were called by the Holy One to ascend the mountain.

What is of Divine origin cannot be improved upon. Yeshua did not institute *new* covenant terms. He simply made the ancient *na'aseh v'nishma* covenant terms fresh and new *again* – by opening our eyes to see the bigger picture, awakening our spirits to our potential, and sprinkling us with His blood. While Moshe sprinkled the blood on our garments and skin – on the *external part* of us - Yeshua called upon us to *drink deeply from the cup* with Him, and to thereby internalize the Holy One's Torah the way He had.

The Holy One's Mountaintop Dining Experience

After the people – all 2 or 3 million of them – are sprinkled with blood, Moshe gathers together all those that the Divine Bridegroom has called, and starts up the mountain. What Torah tells us occurred next is absolutely amazing. But let's let Torah tell the story:

Vaya'al Moshe v'Aharon Nadav v'Avihu

Then Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu,

v'shiv'im miziknei Yisra'el

and seventy of the Zakenim of Yisra'el went up.

Vayir'u et Elohei Yisra'el

And they saw the God of Yisra'el.

v'tachat raglav kema'aseh livnat ha-sapir

And under his feet was like a paved work of safire stone,

uche'etzem ha-shamayim l'tohar

like the skies for clearness.

v'el-atzilei b'nei Yisra'el lo shalach yado

He didn't lay his hand on the nobles of the children of Yisra'el.

V'yecheizu et-ha-Elohim v'yochlu vayishtu

They gazed upon the Elohim, and they ate and drank.

[Exodus 24:9-11]

The Friends of the Bride met with the Friend of the Bridegroom. They gazed upon the glory, and basked in the presence, of the Bridegroom Himself. *Selah!* This *Erev Shabbat* may you experience with your family such a mountaintop dining experience. And may it be but a foretaste Beloved of even *greater things to come!*

Once Again, Moshe Finds Himself Pressing On Alone

Corporate experiences can be wonderful. To access the deepest levels of intimacy with the Holy One, however, a man must press on into His Presence alone. Moshe knew this better than anyone. And so, after the dramatic dinner meeting of the Friends of the Bride and the Friends of the Bridegroom concluded, Moshe did not rest. He left the others to their celebration, put on his hiking boots, and he responded to the Holy One's called to pursue the Deeper Things of His Presence.

Vayomer Adonai el-Moshe aleh elay ha-harah vehyeh-sham

The Holy One said to Moshe, 'Come up to Me, to the mountain, and remain there.'

v'etnah lecha et-luchot ha-even

I will give you tablets of the stone,

v'ha-torah v'ha-mitzvah asher katavti l'horotam

And the Torah and the mitzvah that I have written for [the people's] instruction.'

Vayakom Moshe v'Y'hoshua mesharto

Moshe and his aid Y'hoshua set out.

[Exodus 24:12]

Note that Y'hoshua actually started out following Moshe up the steepest part of the mountain. It seems that the hunger of Moshe for the Presence of the Holy One was getting contagious¹¹ - at least to the son of Nun the Efrayami!

As Moshe and Y'hoshua left the camp Moshe gave the elders some instructions as to what to do while he is gone. In his absence they are to go to Aharon or to *Chur* [Hur] for counsel on any matter of importance.

V'el-ha-zakenim amar sh'vu-lanu vazeh ad asher-nashuv aleichem

He [Moshe] said to the elders, 'Wait for us here until we return to you.'

V'hineh Aharon v'Chur imachem

Aharon and Chur will remain with you.

mi-v'al d'varim yigash aleihem

Whoever has a problem can go to them.'

Alas there is no 'vayadaber Adonai el-Moshe' literary clue in the text of Torah preceding this decree of Moshe. The Holy One *never told him to put Aharon and Chur 'in charge'*. This is one of those things Moshe took upon himself to speak without instruction from the Holy One. We will find out soon enough exactly *why* the Holy One did not tell Moshe to put Aharon and Chur in charge. They, like the men Moshe established in positions of leadership per the unsolicited advice of Yitro the Midyanite, were simply *nowhere close to being up to the task*.

Moshe Enters the Radiant Cloud And Is Transfigured

Y'hoshua will start out with high aspirations. But he will only be able to go a short ways with Moshe on this trip. The final – and most critical - stage of the ascent Moshe must make alone. At this point in time the *Radiant Cloud of the Presence*

¹¹ This is the second time we have met Y'hoshua. The first time was as the head of the military force which the Holy One empowered to defeat Amalek. **Exodus 17**. Y'hoshua was from the tribe of Efrayim, the youngest but pre-eminent son of Yosef. He is described in this passage as Moshe's 'aid' [Hebrew, *m'sharet*]. The verb root is *sharat, shin, resh, tav*, Strong's Hebrew word #3334, pronounced *shaw-rawt*, meaning to 'minister', to 'serve as an attendant [or *attache*]', or to wait upon someone as a squire waits upon a knight.

will allow admittance to only one man - Moshe. Y'hoshua will have to wait for another day.

Vaya'al Moshe el ha-har v'yechas he'anan et ha-har

As soon as Moshe reached the mountaintop the cloud covered the mountain.

V'yishkon kavod-Adonai al-har Sinai

The glory of the Holy One rested on Mount Sinai

v'yechaseihu he'anan sheshet yamim

and it was covered by the cloud for six days.

vayikra el-Moshe b'yom ha-shvi'i mitoch he'anan

On the seventh day [the Holy One] called to Moshe from the midst of the cloud.

Umar'eh k'vod Adonai

And the appearance of the glory of the Holy One

ke'esh ochelet b'rosh ha-har l'eynei b'nei Yisra'el

Was like a devouring flame on the mountain top in the eyes of the Israelites,

V'yavo Moshe betoch he'anan vaya'al el ha-har

Moshe went into the midst of the cloud, and climbed to the mountain top

vayehi Moshe b'har arba'im yom v'arba'im laylah

And Moshe remained there on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

[Exodus 24:14-18]

This time it must have seemed to those below that Moshe had been snatched away from them right before their eyes. It was frightening enough that he had walked right into a cloud, disappearing completely from view, on the first day. But on the 7th day – the *Shabbat* – all hope was lost among those who did not understand when the cloud into which Moshe had disappeared became an *esh ochelet* [devouring fire]. But do not worry about Moshe. Moshe knows that the fire of the Holy One *burns* and *purges* but *does not have to destroy what it touches*. He learned that lesson at the thorn bush a long, long time ago. Moshe has been given permission to go where angels fear to tread. And he will be shown things only one other man has ever seen. The rest of Torah will tell us what that was.

Questions for Today's Study

1. In today's aliyah Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu and 70 "elders" of Israel will ascend the mountain upon which the Holy One manifested His Presence in a dense, all-encompassing cloud.

[A] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the word that our English Bibles translate as "elders" in verse 1. Write the Hebrew word [in Hebrew letters, with vowel marks, as well as transliterated into English] and its meaning. Who do you think these "elders" were?

[B] Why do you think there were seventy "elders" selected to ascend Har

Sineh with Moshe? Is there any symbolic significance to the number seventy?

[C] Why were “the people” told not to “come up” with Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu, and the elders?

[C] What was the first thing everyone in the “Moshe expedition” was to do before approaching the all-encompassing cloud of the Holy One’s Presence? Why?

[D] Why was Moshe the only one who was told to actually enter into the all-encompassing cloud with the Holy One? [Hint: See Exodus 20:15-17]

[E] What was the response of all the people when Moshe told them all the words of the Holy One and all the *mishpatim*? You might want to memorize this response.

[F] How many of the Holy One’s words/directions did Moshe write down? Were any of the Holy One’s instructions not written down? How can this be reconciled with the idea of an “oral Torah”? [Note: Be fair and open minded, and consider the whole Torah before making your response. Do not read into this verse more (or less) than the Holy One intended; and be careful - you may show your own lack of understanding!]

[G] At the same time Moshe wrote the words of the Holy One, what things did Moshe build at the base of the mountain? Why did he build each of these things?

[H] In Strong’s, look up the words translated as “altar” and “pillars” in verse 4. Write the Hebrew words and their meanings.

[I] What two types of *korban* [surrogates of approach] did Moshe direct the people to make before he and the “elders” ascended to meet with the Holy One?

[J] How did the Israelites know how to make these offerings?

[K] Who did Moshe instruct to actually prepare and present these offerings?

[L] In Strong’s and Gesenius look up the word translated in verse 5 of our English Bibles as “young men”. Write the Hebrew word and its meaning.

[M] What did Moshe do with the blood from the animals that served as *korban*? Why did he do these things- even before the sin of the golden calf?

[N] In Strong’s and Gesenius look up the words translated as “book” and “covenant” in verse 7. Write the Hebrew words and their definitions.

[O] Who wrote the “book of the covenant” that Moshe read to the people? When was it written?

[P] What do you think the “book of the covenant” Moshe read contained?

[Q] By way of summary, list all the things that Moshe did with the people at the base of the mountain in preparation for the trip up into YHVH’s presence.

2. Now Moshe is ready to begin the ascent. What an experience!

[A] Who got to “see” the Holy One?

[B] What description of the Holy One’s manifestation is given?

[C] What did Moshe and the “expedition team” do in YHVH’s presence?

[D] Did the expedition team look upon the Holy One's face?

3. After the meeting of the Friends of the Bride and the Friends of the Bridegroom the Holy One called Moshe to come up into His Presence alone.

[A] What three things did the Holy One say He was going to give Moshe?

[B] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the words "tables", "stone", "law" and "commandments" as those words are used in verse 12. Write the Hebrew word for each as well as the definition for each Hebrew word.

[C] Who wrote the things Moshe was to be given?

[D] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the word translated as "written" in verse 12. Write the Hebrew word and its definition.

[E] What was Moshe to do with the things the Holy One gave him?

[F] Who accompanied Moshe into the area of the cloud? What does this person's name mean?

[G] What instructions did Moshe give to the people as he ascended?

[H] Who did Moshe leave in charge? [Note: Remember this, because those in charge should be considered responsible for what happened next - the golden calf sin].

[I] How many days did Moshe wait upon the Holy One, in His Presence?

[J] On what day did the Holy One speak to Moshe?

[K] While Moshe was in the midst of the cloud, was the Holy One's glory hidden from the people?

4. In today's Haftarah aliyah we read the end result of the breaking of the covenant of *Tzidkayahu* [Zedekiah] regarding the freeing of Hebrew servants from their indenture. The Holy One has indicated that His judgment upon the nation of *Y'hudah* [Judah] for this blatant disregard for Torah will be severe.

*I will give Tzidkiyahu king of Y'hudah and his princes into the hand of their enemies,
and into the hand of those who seek their life,
and into the hand of the king of Bavel's army, who have gone away from you.*

***Behold, I will command, says the Holy One,
and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it,
and take it, and burn it with fire:
and I will make the cities of Y'hudah a desolation, without inhabitant.***

[Jeremiah 34:21-22]

[A] What does the Holy One say he will do to the King of the people who broke a vow to the Holy One and to their poor brethren?

[B] Why do you think the King was held responsible?

[C] According to verse 22 how did the Babylonians get authority over *Y'rushalayim* [Jerusalem] and the surrounding cities?

5. Also in today's Haftarah aliyah however, lest we or anyone else get the mistaken idea that the Holy One has utterly abandoned His people, or the dynasty of David –

or ever will do so - *Yirmayahu* records the Holy One's end-time promise of restoration of the descendants of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, *Ya'akov* and David.

*Thus says the Holy One: "If my covenant of day and night fails,
if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and eretz;
then will I also cast away the seed of Ya'akov, and of David my servant,
so that I will not take of his seed to be rulers
over the seed of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov:
for I will cause their captivity to return; and will have mercy on them."*
[Jeremiah 33:25-26]

[A] What has the Holy One done that makes it 'impossible' for Him [perhaps better stated as unthinkable to Him, since with Him all things are 'possible'] to terminate His covenant with the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov?

[B] Has the Holy One terminated (or will He ever terminate) the covenant He made with David?

[C] What two things does the Holy One promise to do concerning Israel in verse 26?

6. In today's B'rit Chadasha reading from II Cor. 6:15-17:

*What agreement has Messiah with Beliya'al?
Or what portion has one who sh'ma's with one who lo sh'ma's?
What brit [covenant] has a temple of the Holy One with idols?
For you are a temple of the living the Holy One.
Even as the Holy One said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them;
and I will be their God, and they will be my people."
Therefore, "'Come out from among them, and be separate,'
says the Holy One, 'Touch no unclean thing. I will receive you.'"*

[A] Between what two forces can there be no harmony?

[B] Between what two kinds of people should there be **nothing** in common?

[C] What do you think this [the preceding question and its answer] means?

[D] Between what two things can there never be agreement? Why?

[E] what three things does Shaul say in verse 17 that we must do in order to function as a holy people unto the Holy One? What do you think each of these three things means?

[F] What book, chapter, and verse of the TaNaKh is Shaul quoting in this passage?

7. Also in today's suggested aliyah from the B'rit Chadasha Shaul of Tarsus discusses the effect which separating ourselves unto the Holy One (as called for by II Corinthians 6:16-17) should have upon us.

*I will be to you a Father. You will be to me sons and daughters,'
says the Holy One Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves
from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Holy One.*

[2 Corinthians 6:18 – 7:1]

[A] In what terms does the Holy One [as quoted by Shaul in verse 18 of chapter 6] describe those who separate themselves unto Him?

[B] These terms are actually a virtual quote by Shaul from II Samuel 7:14. **Concerning what person** were the words originally spoken?

[C] **To whom** were the words originally spoken?

[D] According to II Corinthians 7:1 what are we to do since we have these promises?

[E] What do you think Shaul means when he says we are to “*perfect holiness*”?

[F] Of what are we to “cleanse ourselves” before going on to “*perfect holiness*”?

[G] What part does fear of (and awe and reverence toward) the Holy One play in this process? Explain in terms of your own spiritual experience.

May the Holy One call you into His Presence and show you His Glory. Shabbat Shalom!

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 119:33-40

Teach me, Holy One, the way of your statutes.

I will keep them to the end.

*Give me understanding, and I will **sh'mar** Your **torah**.*

*Yes, I will **sh'ma** it with my whole heart.*

*Direct me in the path of your **mitzvot**, for I delight in them.*

*Turn my heart toward your **chukot**, not toward selfish gain.*

Turn my eyes away from looking at worthless things.

Revive me in your ways.

Fulfill your promise to your servant, that you may be feared.

*Take away my disgrace that I dread, for your **mishpatim** are good.*

Behold, I long for your precepts! Revive me in your righteousness.