

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Terumah:*** **Exodus 25:23-40**
 Haftarah: **I Kings 6:1-6**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Matthew 5:27-30**

Set the Bread of the Face/Presence on the table before Me

[Exodus 25:30]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 119:65-72;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is *Sim Shalom*, the Prayer for Peace

V'asita shulchan atzei shitim – *And you are to make/build /cause to take shape a table made of shitim wood Exodus 25:23a.*

The moment B'nei Yisrael reached Sinai the floodgates of Heaven opened wide - and Creator-Speak began to pour over the earth like spring rain. First came the breath-taking Divine Proposal of National Betrothal [Exodus 19:3-5] - then the stunning *Shitre Eyrusin* [formal outline of Betrothal Protocols] that Torah calls His *Aseret Ha-Dibrot* - Exodus 20:1-17/ On the heels of the *Aseret Ha-Dibrot* came the *Mishpatim Discourse* - Exodus 21:1 - 23:33. That has led us up to the present outpouring of Creator-Speak – the five-chapter long *Mish'kan Discourse* - Exodus 24:15 – 31:18. In this Discourse the Holy One introduces B'nei Yisrael to the Tabernacle as our nation's nerve center and to our first lessons in 'King's Court' protocol and discipline. Through this Discourse the Holy One intends to teach us how to transcend worldly thought patterns and drama, and draw energy and inspiration from what we observe in His Beautiful Courts and Chambers. He wants to awaken in us the Psalmist's cry:

Echad sha'alit me'at Adonai otah avaqesh

One thing I have desired of the Holy One; that I will seek:

Shiv'ti b'beit Adonai kol yamei chayai

that I may dwell in the house of the Holy One all the days of my life

l'chazot b'no'am-Adonai

to behold the beauty of the Holy One

ul'baqer b'heykalo

and to explore/investigate in His spacious palace.

[Psalm 27:4]

The Holy One, Blessed is He, is doing a whole lot more than showing us around; He is training us to see people and situations on earth from Heaven's Perspective.

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He wants to expand our minds and enlarge our hearts - so that we can begin to operate in a level of vision, creativity, artistry, love, joy, peace, patience, and gentleness that only people who have spent quality time and performed selfless service in His Courts can even fathom, much less flow with. He wants us to delight in, to absorb the Divine energy of, and to actually begin to reflect and radiate, His Beauty Realm. He wants us to be transformed by exposure to His *Manifest Presence*.

The Servant's Table – Come and Serve, That Others May Dine!

The upshot of the Mish'kan Discourse is that part of our covenant calling is to build not only a habitation for the Holy One on earth, but an embassy of and for His Heavenly Kingdom. What we are to construct is to be both a temporal home for our King and a gathering place for all who seek His counsel or His company - a house of prayer for all nations. We are to construct a place where Heaven's vast resources of healing, redemption, and restoration can be made available to mortal men - first those of B'nei Yisrael, but ultimately for pilgrims and prodigals from all nations and ethnicities.

Welcome to the essential infrastructure model of the Kingdom of Heaven!
Welcome to the stunning Beauty Realm of our King!

New Vision, New Vocabulary; New World, New Words

Believe it or not, this is *really going to happen*. The Creator of the Universe is indeed going to dwell among and commune with men! But one thing is clear – if and when it happens, we are going to need to significantly expand both our sensory capacities and our vocabularies. After all, none of the words the Holy One has been using to describe to Moshe the otherworldly structure He wants us to build for Him have any precedent in any human language. First He called the tent-like project in which He proposes to dwell a *Mish'kan*. In the next breath He referred to it instead as a *Mik'dash*. What is worse, neither of those terms has ever been heard by human ears before. Not once ... by *anyone* ... at *any time* ... in *any context* ... in *any generation* ... *EVER!* This is unexplored linguistic territory – which means that we have absolutely *no grid* for understanding what we are supposed to build.

We have heard the verbs that underlie the newly coined phrases *Mish'kan* and *Mik'dash* before, of course. Those verbs are *shakan* (*i.e.* dwell, reside) and *kadash* (*i.e.* set apart, consecrate, dedicate to special purpose and use). But we have never – indeed *no one* has ever - heard either of these verbs modified with a *mem* prefix and converted into a noun like the Holy One just did. We have no dictionary, lexicon, or thesaurus to consult to try to determine a working definition for – much less

determine the scope of an appropriate application of – either of the nouns He employed. Mind ... *BLOWN!* I guess we are just going to have to find out what those terms mean one day – and one step - at a time. The context is not all that helpful either. At times the Holy One seems to be speaking of a physical *structure*; at other times, however, it almost sounds like He is talking about inhabiting US, and dwelling in the center of our lives, our households, our neighborhoods, and our communities. Which is it? Or ... could it possibly be BOTH?

Hmmm. What exactly would our lives look like and consist of if they became a *Mish'kan*? What would our households or communities look like and consist of if they became a *Mik'dash*? The new vocabulary the Holy One is throwing at us did not stop there. The Holy One also informed us that this *Mish'kan* – or is it a *Mik'dash* – is to be built *et tavnit*. *Et tavnit*? That's a new one as well. Let's see – *alef*, *tav* [*et*]; then *tav*, *beit*, *nun*, *yod* and *tav* [*tavnit*]. That ... is... *one mind-blowing, paradigm-shifting string of hieroglyphs!* What does it mean? We assume that, as spoken in context, it probably is to be interpreted, on the surface level at least, to mean something like *according to a pattern, exemplar, model, or blueprint* – but what kind of pattern, exemplar, etc. has existed all the way back to *alef*, and will continue to exist all the way to *tav*? What kind of pattern, exemplar, etc. that involves a *beit*, *nun*, and *yod* – *i.e. beni* – *My son - making two appearances as a covenant sign*? No human architect could design a pattern, exemplary, etc. like that. It would defy logic and reason – not to mention orthodox doctrine and theology! So where, pray tell, are we to obtain such a pattern? If such a pattern/exemplar exists, it must exist outside of what humans know as 'time' - in an *altogether other* realm of spirit.

No problem ... enter Moshe's magical mystery tour, stage right. Moshe is being shown the pattern/exemplar. It is becoming more real to him than Pharaoh's store cities – or even his own tent. It is like a set of multi-dimensional, overlapping, interactive blueprints that is being permanently branded on his heart, soul, and mind.

In Monday's aliyah we read the general instructions regarding the structure itself. In Tuesday's aliyah we were introduced to the centerpiece of the *House* – a rectangular chest where the tablets and scrolls of the Torah will be housed under a beautiful, throne-like *kaporet* [*i.e. cover*]. The vocabulary the Holy One is using is new to us – but beautiful and inspiring nonetheless. His words have helped us visualize the rough grain of the *shittim* wood that we are to use in the construction of the chest. They have helped us gaze in wonder at the shimmering sheets of hammered gold with which the Holy One wanted us to inlay and overlay the receptacle. And they have caused us to tremble at the thought of the stunning

golden *keruvim*, wings spread wide, that He wants to face each other atop the box.

The instructions given concerning the *aron* have again impressed upon us the importance to the Holy One of us *sh'mar*-ing the signs of our covenant with Him. We are realizing that we are not supposed merely to be *recipients or beneficiaries* of His Divine communications – we are also called to be jealous *guardians* of them.

The words our Divine Bridegroom has spoken over us are PRICELESS. His prophetic declarations over us – as memorialized for us on stone tablets inscribed with His Holy *Etzba* [i.e. Finger] - are by far and away the most precious thing in our camp as well as in our individual lives. We are to accord them *center stage*. We are to *treasure* them, and *keep watch* over them diligently, and *guard them with our lives*.

This realization has indeed been stunning. But *the Mish'kan discourse* is far from over. In fact the revelation of the *aron* is merely *the beginning* of the messages the Holy One wants to convey to us in this very special season. After all there are yet two more chambers of the *Mish'kan* - and six more major furnishings - concerning which our Divine Bridegroom has yet to utter one word of instruction to us. So let us move on, armed with the realization that *every picture tells a story*.

***The Grand Redemptive Plan of the Creator,
The Foundational Requirements for Participation by Men,
And the Seven Essential Functions of All Who Participate***

In previous parshot we have begun to get an understanding of our Bridegroom's Grand Redemptive Plan. In its most basic form the Plan is *to redeem mankind and Creation from the effects of the Fall*. We have seen that the strategy chosen by the Bridegroom-King to effectuate this Plan involves *releasing the Kingdom of Heaven into the earth through real men* - first one *man* at a time [Avraham], then one *household* at a time [the House of Ya'akov], and then, ultimately, one *nation/people group* at a time [beginning, of course, with B'nei Yisrael].

We have seen that the *foundational requirements for involvement in this mission* are for men, households, and nations, to:

[1] turn back to our Creator in humility, acknowledging Him as '*our*' *God* and ourselves as *His People*, and cutting covenant with Him;

[2] simultaneously turn away from the pathological obsessions, priorities, and over-indulgences of fleshly appetite endemic to the Fallen human mind and will;

[3] serve the Holy One by choice, out of passionate love and appreciation

instead of either fear of punishment or hope of reward;

[4] embrace the Bridegroom-King's Ways and Instructions for Living; and

[5] co-labor with the Holy One as a Bride, so as to usher in the Kingdom of Heaven to earth in real time, one interaction, one conversation, and one situation at a time.

It is now time to broaden our understanding even further. It is now time to define our mission even more specifically. Through the *Mish'kan Discourse* the Holy One is about to introduce us to the *seven essential functions* of the Bride-People He is calling forth. Each furnishing of the *Mish'kan* represents one of these seven essential functions. We are called to become like the *Mish'kan*, because the functions of its furnishings and the avodah protocols of its priests and worshippers are the essential functions of our assigned part in the Bridegroom-King's great Plan of Redemption.

Essential Kingdom of Priests Function #1:

The 'Sh'ma, Sh'mar and Meditate' on the Torah' Function

The first furnishing mentioned is the ark that serves as the *Mish'kan's* center of gravity. This gold-overlaid box serves as the receptacle and depository of the covenant documents by which have become betrothed to the Holy One. Essential function #1 of the Bride-People of the Great King is *to receive, embrace, store up, carry, and be ready to release the manifold wisdom of our Bridegroom-King as represented in the Torah*. Hence we are told that the words of the Holy One's Torah are to be upon our hearts. We are to teach them diligently to our children, speaking of them as we sit in our homes and as we walk by the way, and as we lie down and as we rise up. We are to inscribe them on the doorposts of our houses and on our gates, and are to bind them upon our hands, and make them as frontlets for our eyes. **Deuteronomy 6:5-9**. To the extent we fill our hearts and minds, mouths, and behaviors with things of human origin instead of Divine Revelation we now know we will fail in this first essential kingdom of priests function - i.e. the ***'sh'ma, sh'mar and meditate' function***.

Essential Kingdom of Priests Function #2:

The 'Divine Presence and Attributes Filter' Function

The second furnishing is the *kaporet*, or 'mercy seat' - that the Holy One wants us to place atop the ark. Made of a seamless vein of pure gold hammered into the shape of two *cherubim*, the Holy One intends for this beautiful furnishing to serve as the Throne upon which He will sit. From this strategic seat He intends to issue decrees of righteousness², justice³, mercy⁴, and truth⁵ that will explain and apply

² In Hebrew, *tzedek* – i.e. specifications as to what is and is not useful for the building the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

³ In Hebrew, *shafat* – i.e. what words and actions the Mind of the Holy One prescribes to overcome obstacles and challenges of life and to resolve conflicts and controversies among men.

the Torah and give real, demonstrable impact to its Words. See **Psalm 89:14**. Essential function #2 of the Bride-People of the Holy One is to apply the Holy One's Torah only *through the filter of His Presence, His Attributes* [foremost of which is mercy], and *His Will*. Hence instead of speaking and doing what we think of as 'right', 'just', 'moral', or 'true', based upon our own flawed intellectual or theological understanding of the Torah, we are to approach every day, every challenge, every person, and every situation we encounter by praying to our Father in Heaven: "***May Your Kingdom come, may Your Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.***" If mercy, compassion, slowness to anger, extravagant forgiveness, and genuine concern for people and their escaping from generational sin is not evident – indeed overflowing – from all things we say and do, we have failed in this second essential function – the '*Divine Presence and Attributes filter*' function.

Essential Kingdom of Priests Function #3:
The Fresh Bread from Heaven, Sabbath by Sabbath Function

The third furnishing is the 'table of showbread' that the Holy One instructs Moshe to set up in the 'holy place'. The Holy One wants this table to serve as the repository for *the bread of the Covenant* – i.e. the substance and provision our Divine Bridegroom offers to the world to demonstrate His kindness and concern. Fresh bread is to be laid out on this table every Sabbath. Essential function #3 of the Bride-People of the Holy One is to *make sure that we keep the bread of the Kingdom – i.e. revelation from Heaven in the form of the Torah – fresh and available to the world*. Each Sabbath we are to seek out fresh revelation – so we can offer a fresh supply of energy and nourishment from the Torah to our families and to the world. Throughout the six-day period between Sabbaths we are to say and do nothing to detract from, or denigrate, or diminish the nourishing value of, the bread of life we refreshed the preceding Sabbath. The Sabbath is for *sh'ma*-ing the Words of the Holy One – i.e. receiving fresh bread from Heaven. We are learning that if we refuse to *set aside the Sabbath and position ourselves within it to sh'ma* the fresh download of revelation from the Torah the Holy One has in mind for us we are certain to fail this third essential function – the '*Fresh Bread from Heaven, Sabbath by Sabbath*' function.

Essential Kingdom of Priests Function #4:
The Co-Laboring With the Ruach Function

The fourth furnishing to which the Mish'kan Discourse introduces us is the seven-branched *menorah*. The Holy One wants this menorah to serve as a *seven-faceted*

⁴ In Hebrew, *chesed* - i.e. perfectly timed words and actions of passionate kindness, often despite bad attitudes or behavior on the part of the recipient, arising out of [a] the deep affection the actor has for the covenant partner, and [b] the intense zeal the actor maintains for the fulfillment of the purposes and promises of the Covenant.

⁵ In Hebrew, *emet* - i.e. those words and actions that establish, stabilize, affirm, evidence, perpetuates, and advances toward ultimate fulfillment a person's covenant purpose or undertaking.

lamp that produces a unified light. This is the furnishing that demonstrates the seven real-time operations of the *Ruach Ha-Qodesh* [i.e. Holy Spirit]. Essential function #4 of the Bride-People of our Great King is to bring into all of our attitudes, thoughts, speech, and behavior a beautiful Messianic balance. We are to complement *Divine wisdom* with *human compassion and understanding*. We are to complement godly counsel with fervor, might and action. We are to balance intimate knowledge of and communion with the Holy One as our Bridegroom against the reverent awe of the Holy One as our – and all the world’s - King. And we are to make all these things flow in a unified front in such a way as to reveal to the world all the beautiful facets of the Holy One’s majestic personality. **See Isaiah 11:2.** The Bridegroom Himself lists His essential attributes, in order of priority, as *mercy*⁶, *compassion*⁷, *slowness to anger*⁸, *covenant-faithfulness*⁹, *steadfast commitment to both long-term mission and short-term strategy*¹⁰, *extravagant forgiveness*¹¹, and *faithfulness to watch over and care for generations*¹². **See Exodus 34:6-7.** Unless our interactions with the world and our fellow man are well rounded and balanced in these areas, we are missing the mark in regard to the fourth essential function – *the Co-Laboring With the Ruach Function*. If we are focused on one of these aspects of Kingdom reality more than another, we are actually misrepresenting our King to the world.

Essential Kingdom of Priests Function #5:
The Patient, Caring Midwife Function

The fifth furnishing the Holy One wants us to build is *the brazen altar*. This is the furnishing of the eternal flame. It serves as the safe place where people who want a deeper relationship with the Bridegroom are invited to come and meet with Him at the level of their deepest human needs. Essential function #5 of the Holy One’s Bride-People is *to offer to the broken and contrite understanding and compassionate guidance when they seek help dealing with the six most basic human needs*. These six potentially devastating needs are:

1. The conflict between the will of the Holy One and self-will;
2. anxiety over/obsession with material things;
3. emotions, offenses, and/or woundedness arising out of interpersonal conflicts;
4. diversions from the pathway of Torah and the life-consequences thereof;

⁶ In Hebrew, *racham*.

⁷ In Hebrew, *chanan*.

⁸ In Hebrew, *arech afim*.

⁹ In Hebrew, *chesed*.

¹⁰ In Hebrew, *emet*.

¹¹ In Hebrew, *nasa*.

¹² In Hebrew, *paqad*.

5. self-hatred in the form of guilt and/or shame, and
6. how to participate effectively and according to protocol in scheduled appointments/intimate interactions with our Bridegroom-King.

If we are too self-consumed, self-righteous, or aloof to assist others in dealing with these deep but sometimes extremely messy human needs and walk with them to the point of meeting with the Bridegroom we are missing the mark in regard to the fifth essential function – the *Patient, Caring Midwife Function*.

Essential Kingdom of Priests Function #6:
The Regular Cleansing From Negativity Function

The sixth furnishing is the *bronze laver*. This is the place for those who serve others to wash the toxic residue they pick up in serving from their feet and hands with living water. See **Psalm 24:3-6, Exodus 30:19-21, and John 13:8-14**. Essential function #6 of the Holy One's Bride-People is *to stay close to, and regularly wash in, the cleansing stream of living waters that flow from the Threshold of Heaven's Throne*. Residue from others' problems – not to mention our flesh reaction to those problems – tend to build up quickly on those who serve the King in real-time, with real people, in the midst of real problems. We must stay humble. We must surrender our hands and feet to the cleansing stream of our Bridegroom. We should not try to interact with Him or with others with either *unclean hands* [representing uncleanness of motive, a sour disposition, a sense of entitlement, or a selfish motive] or *dusty feet* [representing negative, condemning, self-righteous attitudes]. If we carry the residue, expectations, or approach of one interaction, activity, or encounter into the next one, we are missing the mark in regard to the sixth essential function our Bridegroom has assigned to us as a kingdom of priests – *the Regular Cleansing from Negativity Function*.

Essential Kingdom of Priests Function #7:
The 'Do-You-See-This-Woman' Atmosphere-Shifting Function

The seventh furnishing is the golden altar of incense. This is the furnishing dedicated to maintaining a pleasing, fragrant aroma. At this altar servants of the Bridegroom-King lavish well-deserved love, attention, and affection on Him Whom their soul loves. Essential Function #7 of the Bride-people is to take time twice daily, and as necessary to [a] *refresh themselves/reignite their passion for the Bridegroom-King*; and [b] *sweeten the aroma of their sphere of influence*. See **Song of Songs 1:12, John 12:3, Hosea 14:6, II Corinthians 2:15-17, and Ephesians 5:1-2**. Both of these things result from filling the atmosphere around us with the pleasing, fragrant aroma of *joyful thanksgiving, exuberant praise, humble worship, combined with expectant, focused prayer*.

Our children, our spouses, our neighborhoods, our communities, our marketplaces, our cultures, and our nations desperately need to hear and see passionate lovers

lavishing extravagant love and intimate expressions of praise upon, and offering heartfelt prayers to, our Beloved Bridegroom-King. To the extent we let ourselves get distracted by and absorbed in own life challenges, or our own theologies, philosophies, ideologies, entertainment diversions, work, or halakah instead of providing the world with a clear picture of what loving God and worshipping Him looks like in real time, we will miss the mark with regard to the seventh essential kingdom of priests function assigned to us – the ‘*Do You See This Woman*’ *Atmosphere-Shifting Function*. See **Luke 7:44-47**.

In future studies we will look more closely at each of the furnishings of the *Mish’kan*, as well as each of the essential functions of *sh’ma*-people. Right now, however, let us turn our attention back to our assigned text for the day, and to the design and furnishing of the ‘servant’s quarters’ chamber of the *Mish’kan* that many have come to call ‘the holy place’.

Welcome To The ‘Holy’, But Not Ultimately Holy, Place

In the preceding aliyah the Holy One had Moshe focusing on the chamber known as the *k’dosh k’doshim* – ‘Holy of Holies’. That is where the *holy ark* resides. Today the Holy One directs Moshe’s attention to the adjacent room - the ‘Holy Place’. Today the Holy One will introduce us to another important aspect of the structure that is to become our camp’s and nation’s ‘command and communications center’ He will speak to us first of a very special table in the center’s ‘servant’s quarters’, and He will tell us what is to always be spread out/displayed upon that table. Then He will go on to introduce to us of a very special lamp, and will tell us what is to be done to keep it producing pure light, night after night, day after day, forever.

V’asita Shulchan [*And Make/Build/Cause to Take Shape a Table ...*]
Exodus 25:23-30

As we discussed in the opening lines of this study, the aliyah begins with the Holy One instructing us to ***asah*** the first essential furnishing of the *Mish’kan*’s servant’s quarters: a very small but very special table-like. Our English Bibles call this furnishing the *Table of Showbread*. The Holy One’s instructions concerning this furnishing are:

V’asita shulchan atzei shitim
Make/Build/Cause to take shape a table of shittim wood
amatayim orko v’amah rochbo v’amah vachetzi komato
2 cubits long, one cubit wide, and 1 and a half cubits high.

v’natata al-ha-shulchan lechem panim lefanai tamid
On this table showbread is to be placed before Me at all times.
[Exodus 25:23, 30]

What is a *table*? In a home, it is the gathering place. It is the pulsing heart of the household, where everyone goes to assemble, interact, laugh, converse, and share a drink or a covenant meal. It is the place where *yomim tovim* are celebrated, where the *kiddush* and *ha-motzee* are spoken, where children and spouses are blessed, where family members and friends are reunited, and where guests are entertained, served, and made to feel welcome.

But what about in the Beauty Realm? What about the specific table-like structure the Holy One wants us to build and put in the ‘Holy Place’ – the secret place where only selfless servants of the Holy One ever go? What aspect of the Courts of our King in the Heavenlies is this table designed to bring to earth?

The Holy One designed this table to symbolize the abundant spiritual and physical nourishment that He has obligated Himself by covenant to provide for His people on earth as it is in Heaven.

1. What is a “Shulchan”?

Of course, in the Hebrew language – the language in which the Holy One actually spoke to Moshe – the word used was not ‘table’, but *shulchan*. – i.e. a place of spreading out, preparing, sorting, or displaying something. The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as ‘table’ is *shulchan* [pronounced *shool* - *khawn*]. It is derived from the verb root *shalach*, meaning to *send out or cause to spread forth*. To convert the verb *shalach* into a noun requires the adding of a suffix. In the case of the noun *shulchan* the suffix added is a *nun sofit suffix*. This consists merely of the exaggerated form of the letter *nun* which appears when a word ends with an ‘n’ sound. In Hebrew the adding of a *nun sofit* suffix to a verb root creates what is called an *agential noun*. An *agential noun* literally characterizes a person as being *one who engages in whatever action the verb is describing*. Just as in English we describe one who does a lot of running as a *runner* and one who does a lot of joking as a *joker*, so one who does a lot of what the Hebrew verb *shalach* implies – i.e. sending out or spreading forth, and/or putting on display - would be described in Hebrew as a *shulchan*.

Remember, however, that in the *Mish’kan* Discourse the Holy One is training us to see with Kingdom Eyes – not natural, fleshly eyes. He is teaching us not to ever stop at looking intently at anything at a surface level only. He is training us to see through that thing to the essence that underlies it. We are being trained to look at something we are told specifically is but a shadow, and to not stop there, but to try to *see the object that cast the shadow*. So let us not be content in our attempts to visualize the *shulchan* of the *Mish’kan* with just seeing with natural eyes an ordinary table such as we would encounter on earth. Let us always push deeper into the Hebraic essence of the words our Divine Bridegroom has chosen to use.

Let us dig into the Hebraic imagery underlying the word the Holy One chose to use.

Think of Solomon's Table, of which it is written: *when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the Holy One, there was no more spirit in her. I Kings 10:4-5.*

So, what is to be on display in the *secret place of selfless service* – just on the other side of the veil from the Throne of the Creator of the Universe? The Hebrew phrase our English Bibles translate as showbread is *lechem paneh* [pronounced *leh-khehm paw - neh*]. Our text calls that which is to be set forth on this furnishing as '*lechem paneh*'. *Lechem* means 'bread'. But the bread our Divine Bridegroom wants us to send out or set forth on this piece of furniture is not just any old kind of *lechem*. It is a very special kind of bread called *paneh*.

2. What Meaneth "Paneh"?

The Hebrew word *paneh* is made up of the letters *peh*¹³, *nun*¹⁴, and *hey*¹⁵, *Paneh* literally means *face* - more particularly in most cases *the expressions of a face as that face reveals the prevailing emotions the person in question is experiencing* – for instance, *wrath, delight, fear, joy, burden, etc.*

The roots of the *paneh* thread go all the way back to the Creation account. In Genesis 1:2, we were told that the *ruach Elohim* [Spirit of God] brooded *al-panei¹⁶ ha-mayim* - upon the face of the waters. The *panei* concept was expounded upon in the narrative of Ya'akov's encounter with the Angel of the Holy One by the River Yabbok when Ya'akov was anticipating with great dread the arrival of his brother Esau and his army of 400 armed men. After the struggle with the Angel and the blessing and change of name, Ya'akov - now Yisrael - called the name of the place *Penei-el* [literally, the *face of God*], saying "*for I have seen God face to face [al-panei], and my life is spared and not snatched away*". **Genesis 32:30.**

Conceptually then the furnishing we are talking about was to be the place where the *kohanim* [priests; appointed ambassadors sent forth to speak and act on behalf of a king] who came seeking audience with the Holy One on behalf of the Redeemed Community were to *see the Holy One's "Face"* as He spread forth a banqueting table of the Bread of Life for them. As stated previously, with the Holy One, this

¹³ The Hebrew letter *peh* is the seventeenth of the 22 letters of the Hebrew *alef-beit*.

¹⁴ The Hebrew letter *nun* is the fourteenth of the 22 letters of the Hebrew *alef-beit*.

¹⁵ The Hebrew letter *hey* is the fifth of the 22 letters of the Hebrew *alef-beit*.

¹⁶ *Panei* [*peh, nun, yod*] is the construct form of the noun *paneh* [*peh, nun, hey*].

includes such things as *the Light of His Countenance*; His Majesty and *Enthralling Beauty*; His *real-time facial expressions*; His *spectrum of Fatherly emotions*; His *reactions of favor, disfavor, concern, pleasure, and delight*, His *unchanging attributes and characteristics* - especially mercy, forgiveness, favor, dedication, faithfulness to covenant, etc.; His *priorities*; and His *will*

What the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain and which He wanted to replicate in the earthly *Mish'kan* in the form of the 'table' was a *shadowy image of one who sends out* [apostles, disciples, ambassadors] and *sets forth the paneh* – i.e. the *face of the Divine Bridegroom*. For those who come to the earthly *Mish'kan* *humbly, sincerely, and with an effectual covering of the blood of the Lamb* slain before the foundation of the world, the Face they see is a Face full of joy, full of favor and full of light – i.e. *the Face of a Father welcoming a prodigal*. As the writer of Revelation described it: *His servants will serve Him. They will see His Face, and His Name will be on their foreheads.* Revelation 22:4.

Here are the specific instructions the Holy One gave Moshe regarding the *shulchan* that was to be constructed for tabernacle to demonstrate the provision, presence, and countenance of our God usward:

Its Dimensions

Two cubits [c. 36 inches] are to be its length, and a cubit [c. eighteen inches] its breadth; and one and a half cubits [c. twenty-seven inches] is to be its height.

Its Exterior and Interior Lining

Overlay it with zahav tahor [pure gold]

Its Crown Molding and Rim

... and make zer zahav [a gold molding] around it.

Make misgeret [a rim] of a handbreadth around it.

And make zer zahav [a golden molding] on its rim around it.

Its Rings

Make four tabe'ot zahav [rings of gold] for it, and put the rings in the four corners that are on its four feet.

the rings are to be close to the rim, for places for the poles to carry the table.

Its Poles

Make the badim [poles] of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them.

Its Vessels

Make its dishes, its spoons, its ladles, and its bowls to pour out offerings with.

of pure gold shall are you to craft them.

Its Stated Purpose and Avodah

*Set lechem panim [bread of the presence (lit. faces)]
on the table before me tamid [always].*

[Exodus 25:23-30]

Later our Covenant Partner will give more specific instructions regarding the use to which this Table is to be put. The *lechem paneh*, we will discover, will continually be covered with twelve cakes/loaves of bread made from *fine flour*. The bread will remain before the Holy One continually *on behalf of B'nei Yisrael, an everlasting covenant*. It will be the task of Aharon and his sons to replace these cakes/loaves with a fresh supply *every Shabbat*. A bowl of frankincense will be placed alongside these cakes/ loaves and burnt there by the priests as *a memorial portion, an offering made by fire to the Holy One*.

Aharon and his sons [the friends of the bride in the Divine betrothal paradigm] are going to be instructed eat of this same kind of bread *in a sacred place*, as it will be specifically said to be *for them*. Leviticus 24:5-9.

Who Will Eat of This Man's Bread? And Who Will Serve It?

The provision of bread is an essential element of covenant. Luke 11:3, 11; Luke 24:35. Melki-Tzedek, therefore, brought forth a banquet of bread and wine for Avram. Genesis 14:18. Yosef, for this reason, served bread to his brothers. Genesis 43:31 and 47:12. For this reason the Holy One recently told His Redeemed Nation at Sinai: *serve the Holy One your God, and He will bless your bread and your water*. Exodus 23:25. It was also for this reason that our Rabbi Yeshua declared *the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*. He followed this statement with: *I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst*.

Let us come to the table Yeshua has set each day of our lives. And each time we partake of the bread of His Table may we give thanks to our Heavenly Bread-Maker, and re-affirm our dependence upon, our debt of loyalty to, and our covenant relationship with Him. And then as we have freely received, let us freely give. See Ecclesiastes 3:13, Matthew 10:8; John 4:14, I Corinthians 2:12-13, and I Peter 4:10-11.

The Timelessness of This Very Special Bread

The Holy One is eternal. He exists *outside of* and *is not bound or limited by time*. The True Bread of Life in Heaven – the Heavenly reality after which the showbread is patterned – is eternal as well. But what about the physical bread which the Holy One directs us to set forth on the *shulchan*? The *lechem paniym* –

i.e. Bread of the Face or Presence – is fascinating. The Presence [Hebrew, *paneh*] of the Holy One is actually like bread to the human body and soul. His Presence *nourishes* us, *nurtures* us, *strengthens* us. In His Presence we have no need of physical food – or indeed any other physical stimulation. As it was in the Garden, so it is with us when we are in His Presence. But Adam and Chava hid from that Presence. **Genesis 3:8**. They put on fig leaf coverings to try to insulate themselves from that Presence. And human beings have been hiding from the Presence - and putting on fig leaf coverings like religion and science and philosophy and self-improvement and mankind-obsessed ideas of social justice to insulate themselves from that Presence - ever since.

With the building of this special table in the holy place a Divine invitation is being issued to the Bride-to-be. The Divine Bridegroom is saying: “*Come to the table, My Love! Eat the bread of the Presence, and be healed, restored, and made whole!*” The pattern for this was set in the encounter between Melchizedek with Avram. See **Genesis 14**. It was memorialized in Torah’s liturgy of the observance of Passover. See **Exodus 13:3-8**. It was re-enacted gloriously as part of the Upper Room Discourse on the night Yeshua of Natzret was arrested. See **Luke 21:19**.

The bread the Presence that the Holy One instructed us to set forth on the *shulchan* provides a beautiful prophetic picture of Messiah. After all, Messiah was born in *Beit Lechem* [literally, the *house of bread*] and as one of the signs of His identity provided a multiplicity of bread to feed multitudes. Of course, He also aided us in making this connection by specifically identifying Himself as the ‘Bread of Life’.

The eternal testimony of the *Shulchan* is that in the Holy One’s Presence there is absolutely no lack of provision or sustenance. Indeed the Bread of the Presence that sits on the *shulchan* is a continual reminder that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the Mouth of the Holy One. *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam. HaMotzee Lechem, mein ha-arets. [Blessed are You, O Holy One our God, King of the Universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.]*.

A Few Additional Details Concerning the King’s Table

The Holy One made it clear that the Table-like furnishing we were to build was, like the Ark, to be *built with shittim wood overlaid with pure gold*. Also like the Ark the table-like furnishing was to have specially fitted *gold rings* and *gold-covered wood staves* for transportation. **Exodus 25:23-28**. Unlike the Ark however the table-like furnishing was to have its own set of re-usable implements. **Exodus 25:29**. There are to be *trays* to display and serve the bread of the Kingdom. There are to be *cups* that hold the healing frankincense with which the Kingdom’s bread is always to be sprinkled. There are to be *spoons* with which the sprinkling is to be

done. There are to be *bowls* and *pitchers* to hold the wine that is served alongside the bread to complete the covenant sealing ceremony. All these vessels are to be shaped by human hands, with skill and with love, from pure gold. All are to be vessels of honor, befitting the glory of the Royal Household of the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Every vessel is to be always at the ready to perform each and every service for which it was designed.

The Holy One knows how to set a table. We know how to eat at one. The relevant question, however, is “*do we know how to serve honorably and selflessly at the table of the King?*”

V'asita menorat zahav tahor [And Make/Build a Menorah of Pure Gold]
Exodus 25:31-39

The third item of Heavenly furniture the Holy One showed to Moshe and instructed Moshe to replicate on earth was like unto a *golden lampstand*. The Hebrew word used is *menorah*, meaning a *metal frame containing a burning and a shining light that glistens*.

What exactly did the Holy One show Moshe in Heaven? Yochanan [John] the Revelator would describe the light source he saw in the Heavenly Throne Room as ***seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Revelation 4:5 (b)***. The finite replica of this Heavenly Light source that the Holy One instructed Moshe to build for the earthly Mish'kan also consisted of seven lamps. These lamps were all built onto a base. A vertical shaft or stem was to be caused to arise out of the base. Three curved shafts were to be caused to branch off of the stem on each of its sides. At the top of each branch and at the top of the shaft was to be a *bowl*. Each bowl was to hold oil and a wick. Each branch was to have three decorative “cups” in the shape of almond flowers; the shaft was to have four such cups [making a total of 22, which, interestingly enough, is the exact number of letters that make up the Hebrew *Alef-beit*].

The gold from which the menorah was to be crafted was to be [a] pure, and [b] ‘beaten and turned work’. Since our lives are supposed to serve the menorah function you can draw your own conclusions as to what is necessary to fit the pattern and accomplish the associated function the Holy One ordained for us – i.e. the *Co-Laboring With the Ruach Function*. As discussed previously, this involves collaborating with the Holy One’s empowering breath to bring into our attitudes, thoughts, speech, and behaviors into a beautiful Messianic balance – i.e. to complement *Divine wisdom* with *human compassion and understanding*, to complement godly counsel with fervor, to complement godly counsel with effectual action, to balance intimate knowledge of and communion with the Bridegroom against the reverent awe of the Holy One, and to make all these things

flow in a unified front in such a way as to reveal to the world all the beautiful facets of our Bridegroom-King's majestic personality.

The Holy One did not want us to design our own *menorah*, shaped and presented according to our tastes and concepts. He gave the following precise specifications:

The Branches of the Menorah

*There are to be six **kanim** [branches] going out of its sides:
three branches of the menorah out of its one side,
and three branches of the menorah out of its other side;*

The Cups of the Menorah

*[make it with] ... three **gevi'im** [cups] made like almond blossoms in one branch,
a **chaftor** [bud] and **frach** [a flower];
and three cups made like almond blossoms in the other branch, a bud and a flower.*

The Lamps of the Menorah

*Make seven **nerot** [lamps] for it, and to light its lamps to give light to the space in front of it.
Its snuffers and its snuff dishes shall be of pure gold.
It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these accessories.*

The Essential, Unchanging Pattern for the Menorah

*See that you make them after **tavnitam** [the pattern for them],
that has been shown to you on the mountain.*

[Exodus 25:31-40]

The *Mish'kan's menorah* was to be set up on the south side of the Holy Place, opposite the Table of Showbread. The seven olive-oil lamps were to be lit each day at twilight and filled each morning. Exodus 30:7-8. It was by the light of the *menorah* that Aharon was to arrange the bread of the presence on the Table and to offer incense on the golden altar of incense. This furnishing was, therefore, truly a prophetic picture of the *light of Messiah – and His devoted sh'ma-people - shining in the darkness*. As Yeshua said to those who followed Him and walked in His Torah teaching, ***You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*** Matthew 5:14-16; see also Philippians 2:12-16.

Relating the Shulchan and Menorah to the Ark

Note that both the Table and the Menorah of the *Mish'kan* also each represent and constitute reminders of a different item contained within the ark. The *Table of Showbread* was representative of the *jar of manna* the Holy One directed to be preserved in the Ark to serve as a testimony of the faithful and miraculous provision of the Holy One for His people. The *menorah* on the other hand was

representative of the *Light of the Torah*, the inscribed stone tablets of which were the Ark's most treasured contents.

The theme and essential teaching of the *inner courts of the Mish'kan* should be becoming very clear. It is this: ***Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the Mouth of the Holy One.*** Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4. After all if we merely eat the physical bread that He provides for us on the earth [i.e. if we merely seek Him for material things] we will die in the desert as did our fathers. If however we *sh'ma* His words of life¹⁷ and *sh'mar* His instructions for living¹⁸ and *asah* the *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* He designs for us¹⁹, well ... do you see *what awaits us*? The testimony of the three witnesses of the inner chamber – i.e. the *shulchan*, the *menorah*, and the *ark* is that we will *dwell in the Holy One's presence*, will *eat at His table*, and will *walk in His Light*.

Speaking of the Bread of Life, and of the Light By Which We Walk ...

In the reading I have suggested today from the *B'rit Chadasha* Messiah teaches us the deeper meaning behind and reveals the heart of the Holy One in the words of the Torah. In the passage assigned for today, Yeshua actually addresses the multiple layers of meaning and application the Creator designed into the *Aseret HaDibrot* [Ten Words spoken by the Holy One at Sinai in the hearing of all the people] instruction relative to *na'af* [i.e. adulteration leading to impurity and dilution (especially in the context of improper relationships)]. Here is how the apostolic writers record the Master's teaching:

*You have heard that it was said,
"Lo tinaf"* [i.e. "You are not to mix your flesh with persons who will
adulterate or dilute your purity, strength, and calling]
but I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman with ta'avah [lust]
has committed na'af [improper mixture of souls/ infidelity/impropriety] *with her
already in his heart.*

If your right eye causes you to chet
[i.e. miss the mark of Torah's design for righteousness living], *pluck it out
and throw it away from you. For it is profitable for you
that one of your members should perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehinnom.
If your right hand causes you to chet, cut it off, and throw it away from you:
for it is profitable for you that one of your evarim* [members] *should perish,
and not your whole basar* [body] *be thrown into Gehinnom.*

[Matthew 5:27-30]

¹⁷ To *sh'ma* means to listen with open minds to, and hear, and pay attention to, and heed, and receive with gratitude, and internalize.

¹⁸ To *sh'mar* means to cherish, to treasure, to highly value, to carefully watch over to preserve, to guard, and to protect.

¹⁹ To *asah* means to interact creatively with and build something tangible from raw materials, as a potter interacts creatively with and builds something tangible with clay.

To fully understand this teaching one needs to compare it to the teaching the Master just gave regarding the Torah instruction *lo tirtzach* [you are not to in any way, physically, emotionally, intellectually, or verbally *tear another human being asunder or rip him to pieces*].

Yeshua's formula of teaching Torah was set forth in connection with that discussion. First, He *stated the specific words Torah employed*. Then He proceeded to dissect various *layers of meaning* the specific words used in Torah have beyond their obvious literal interpretation. Finally, He discussed what *punishment* was appropriate, in the Holy One's eyes, for an intentional violation of that provision of Torah.

In Yeshua's teaching on adultery we can see the exact same pattern. First, Yeshua discusses the specific Torah provision in question [in this case, *lo tinaf*]. Then Yeshua proceeded to discuss layers of meaning beyond the physical act [*following a person not one's spouse with one's eyes, while contemplating engaging in acts of infidelity that person*]. Then, Yeshua ended His discourse about adultery with a discussion of appropriate punishment [cutting off and casting away eye or hand]. Yeshua wanted everyone to know that the Hebrew word *na'af* [*nun, alef, feh sofit*], which is the operative verb root in the Sinaitic phrase we translate into English as '*You will not commit adultery*', as used by the Holy One at Sinai was intended to encompass far, far more than a physical act of inappropriate intimacy.

All Hebrew verbs can be understood according to and interpreted in light of the principle '*what you sow you shall also reap*'. The Hebrew verb *na'af*, which the Holy One chose to employ, therefore, covers of *the whole realm of infidelity*, from the seed form/phase of *voyeurism* [looking at any girl or woman not one's wife or any boy or man not one's husband as something other than as a precious child of the Holy One, designed as someone else's *help-mate*], through the cultivation form/phase of *flirtatious talk* [including body language], through the nurturing form/phase of *emotional seduction*, through the various maturing phases involving physical contact leading up to the physical act of inappropriate intimacy itself.

Secondly, it would perhaps help to understand the 'appropriate punishment' part of the passage if one first reads I Corinthians 12:12-27, which demonstrates another use of "the body" and its "members" - as a *Hebraic metaphor, or idiom*, referring to the Redeemed Community. Yeshua is using the same metaphor. He is not advocating self-mutilation. He is saying, metaphorically, that since Torah requires that persons who commit adultery are (if the act is established by two or more competent, qualified witnesses) to be stoned, or "cut off", from the Redeemed Community, Yeshua is explaining why the Torah-prescribed solution to the *na'af*

[adulterating mixture/infidelity] problem is appropriate and still viable.

Questions For Today's Study

1. After giving the details concerning the Ark of the Covenant and its mercy seat the Holy One reveals to Moshe the plans for two pieces of “furniture” to be placed in the “holy place” just outside the “holy of holies”.

[A] What two pieces of “furniture” are discussed in today’s *T’rumah* aliyah, in the order they are given?

[B] What are the purposes of these two pieces of “furniture”?

2. Read Leviticus 24:5-9. According to those verses:

[A] What was to be placed on the table?

[B] When was it placed there?

[C] Who was to eat what was placed there?

3. We have seen that the purpose of the Ark is to provide a picture reminding the Descendants of Israel that a way has been provided for their sins to be forgiven. What do you think the purpose of the *table* is? [i.e. what eternal spiritual truth does it provide a picture and reminder of?]

4. Read John 6:48-58. In those verses what did Yeshua indicate was on the Table that is in Heaven – the One after which the table in the *Mish’kan* [Tabernacle] was modeled?

5. With regard to the second piece of “furniture” mentioned in today’s aliyah – the golden menorah - very specific instructions are given:

[A] How many branches is the menorah to have?

[B] How many “cups” are to be on each branch?

[C] How many “cups” are there in all?

[D] What were the “cups” to look like?

[E] How many lamps are there to be?

[F] What accessories are to be used?

[G] What do you think this piece of “furniture” provide a picture of?

6. In today’s haftarah aliyah *Sh’lomo* [Solomon], son of David, begins the construction of a Temple to the Holy One in *Y’rushalayim* [Jerusalem].

*It happened in the four hundred and eightieth year
after the children of Yisra'el were come out of the land of Mitzrayim,
in the fourth year of Shlomo's reign over Yisra'el,
in the month Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Holy One.
The house that king Shlomo built for the Holy One, the length of it was sixty cubits,*

*and the breadth of it twenty [cubits], and the height of it thirty cubits.
 The porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length of it,
 according to the breadth of the house; [and] ten cubits was the breadth of it before the house.
 For the house he made windows of fixed latticework.
 Against the wall of the house he built stories round about,
 against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle;
 and he made side-chambers round about.
 The nethermost story was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad,
 and the third was seven cubits broad;
 for on the outside he made offsets [in the wall] of the house round about,
 that [the beams] should not have hold in the walls of the house.*

[1Kings 6:1-6]

[A] In what year, according to the calendar we use in America today, did Shlomo begin the construction of the *Beit Mik'dash* [Temple] in Jerusalem?

[B] How many years was this after the exodus of the redeemed remnant from Egypt?

[C] In what month of the Hebrew year was the construction of the *Beit Mik'dash* commenced?

[D] What were the dimensions of the *Beit Mik'dash* built by Shlomo?

[E] What was the purpose of the “chambers” Shlomo built along the walls of the Holy Place?

[F] In Strong’s and Gesenius look up the word translated as “chambers” in verses 5 and 6 [it is Strong’s Hebrew word #3326, made up of the consonants *yod, tzade, vav, ayin*, pronounced *yaw-tzoo'-ah*]. See if you can determine the verb root of this word. Considering the hieroglyphic picture presented by this word (and its verb root if you can find it), and other usages of this word or its verb root in Torah, describe the Hebraic meaning of the word our English Bibles translate as “chambers”.

[G] What was the purpose of the “chambers” Shlomo built along the walls of the Holy of Holies?

7. In today’s reading from the B’rit Chadasha Messiah Yeshua continues teaching the meaning behind the Torah and revealing the heart of the Holy One to us. This time Yeshua addresses the different layers of meaning involved in the general *Aseret HaDibrot* [Ten Words] instruction regarding *na'af* [adulterating mixture/infidelity].

[A] What does Messiah say is in the eyes of the Holy One every bit as adulterous as the physical act of sexual relations outside of marriage?

[B] The most famous incident of *na'af* in Scripture is that of David and Bat-sheva, as described in II Samuel 11. Read II Samuel 11:1-3. What two levels of infidelity did David engage in long before he even met *Bat-sheva* in person?

[C] What do you think Messiah is talking about in verses 29 and 30 – is He really suggesting self-mutilation (that we should *gouge out our own eyes*, and *cut off our own hands*, mutilating our physical bodies)?

[D] What does today's passage teach you about what the Holy One considers important and valuable?

[E] What does today's passage teach you about what the Holy One considers destructive and dangerous to human beings – and communities called to be a light to the nations, a holy people, and a kingdom of priests?

[F] Does today's passage make you think of the Holy One as *mean and old-fashioned* or as *loving and wise*? Explain.

[G] Does anything that Yeshua taught in this passage contradict or differ from Torah as revealed at Sineh?

[H] How do you reconcile the teaching of Yeshua in this passage with the actions of Yeshua described in John 7:53-8:11 (the story of the woman "caught in niuf").

May we each today feast on His Bread of life; may our eyes be flooded with His marvelous Light; and may we find rest in the shelter of the chambers of His heart.

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 119:65-72 [TET]

*Do good to your servant, according to your word, Oh Holy One.
Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your mitzvot.
Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I observe your word.*

You are good, and do good. Teach me your statutes.

The proud have smeared a lie upon me.

With my whole heart, I will keep your precepts.

Their heart is as callous as the fat, but I delight in your Torah.

*It is good for me that I have been afflicted,
that I may learn your statutes.*

*The Torah of your mouth is better to me
than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.*