

Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Tetzaveh:*** **Exodus 28:1-43**
 Haftarah: **Ezekiel 43:12-17**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Hebrews 13:7-8**

... That he may kahan for Me.

[Exodus 28:1b]

Today's Meditation is Psalms 119:105-112;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is *Tzuri v'Goeli* [My Rock and My Redeemer]

V'atah hak'rev eleicha et-Aharon achicha – And bring before you your brother Aharon ... ***v'et-banav*** – and his sons ... ***ito mitoch b'nei Yisra'el*** – from out of B'nei Yisrael ... ***l'kahano-li*** – that he may kahan for Me **Exodus 28:1a.**

One of the stunning promises that the Holy One made to us in our early days at Sinai was that if/when/to the extent we as a people truly *sh'ma* His Voice and faithfully *sh'mar* His Covenant He will deputize us to serve as His *Kingdom of kohanim* [KJV 'priests]. **Exodus 19:5-6.** In other words, as we live out our personal and national '*na'aseh v'nish'ma*' commitment He will appoint, anoint, train, and deploy us to serve as His Kingdom's diplomatic corps. We will serve as His Light Bearers, His Salt Spreaders, and His Everlasting Arms and Loving Hands extended. We will carry His '*mercy-triumphs-over-judgment*' "*Brand*" and His '*How-to-Bring-out-the-Best-in/from-every-species,-specimen,-&-square-cubit-of-Creation*' "*Message*" to the world. We will not speak our own thoughts, opinions, or visions – we will speak the words He gives us to speak, and do only what we have seen Him doing. We will not corrupt His Brand and Message by promoting our own ideas, theories, ideologies, political opinions, philosophies, theological suppositions, traditions, or self-interest. In Him we will live, and move and have our being. We will therefor focus on advancing His Grand Plan of Redemption and Restoration, on modeling His More Excellent Ways of love, joy, shalom, patience, kindness, goodness, trustworthiness, gentleness, and *willingness to self-deny in order to serve Him as our King, the human beings He brings into our various spheres of influence as our brothers and neighbors, and whatever lands and material things He chooses to entrust to our stewardship as our inheritance.* We will bear no man malice. We will take no offense. We will eschew vengeance. We will seek forgiveness and reconciliation rather than retribution. We will not take any law – including the 'natural' law of sowing and reaping - into our own mortal hands, nor will we promote any ethnic, cultural,

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generational, or social concept of ‘justice’ or ‘morality’ over what the Holy One our God and King says is *tov* [KJV ‘good’]. We will both announce and demonstrate His goodwill toward mankind as a species and Creation as an ecosystem.

Whew! That is a *lot to ask of mortal human beings!* How can we – a bunch of recently freed victims of human trafficking, intimidation, violent beatings, psy-ops/mind-control, occult manipulations, persecutions, oppression, and campaigns of genocide - learn how to walk in such a High Calling? How are we to learn to always know what He would have us say and do? How can we overcome our ‘every man for himself’ indoctrination and resist our ‘attraction/revulsion’, and ‘fight or flight’ instincts, and stand up under and carry such gravitas? He will teach us. Ah, that is what Sinai is all about. He intends for our families to provide substance to our dream of His Kingdom coming, His Will being done, on earth as it is in Heaven. This *kahan-ing* function is a critical component of the Holy One’s Grand Plan. But *kahan-ing* is not for novices. *Kahan-ing* is selfless service – with no ‘downtime’ or ‘me’ time. It is going to be the death of us. *Kahan-ing* is the death of our *flesh*, with its lusts and appetites, attractions and revulsions. It is the death of our *pseudo-intellect*, with its self-will, its abstract theories, its tree-of-knowledge fueled opinions about right and wrong, morality and immorality, justice and injustice, etc. *Kahan-ing* is the death of our pride – and our consequent arrogant, divisive approach to everything from race, to ethnicity, to nationality, to political theory, to religious dogma, to economic class, to social order, to gender, to age, to group association (*i.e.* caste, cadre, and clique), to formal education, to ecclesiastical habit and hierarchy, to secular information sources (which, in our day, are all too often more like ‘disinformation’ sources), to ideologies, to false narratives, to doomsday paranoia, and to all the misremembered, distorted, and weaponized versions of so-called history, science, medicine, and ‘truth’ competing for space in our head. *Kahan-ing* is the death of our cynicism, our judgmentalism, and our sense of personal, cultural, or ethnic victimization. It is also the death of all our personal dreams – be they of fame, fortune, power (personal, social, political, or economic), grandeur, popularity with or adulation from fellow men, comfort, leisure, self-determination, romance, sensual/sexual voyeurism, vengeance, or social utopia. If we are to effectively and honorably *kahan* for our King, you see, we must first renounce citizenship in the nations, races, ethnicities, cultures, ideologies, philosophies, ideologies, movements, institutions, and propaganda-machines of this world. We must quit listening to the lies of the serpent – even when they issue forth from the mouths of family members, friends, leaders, teachers, or people ‘like us’. If we are to

kahan on behalf of the Kingdom of Heaven, we must *sh'ma*² only the Holy One's Voice, and we must *sh'mar*³ - i.e. assign value, treasure, trustworthiness, priority, and passion to - the Holy One's Covenant above everything else in the world. The *sh'ma*-ing is to flow from loving *the Holy One our God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength*; the *sh'mar*-ing is to flow from loving *our fellow man as we ourselves have been loved*.

The Threefold Cord of our 'Great Nation' Persona – Sh'ma-ing, Sh'mar-ing, and Kahan-ing

The two-pronged focus of *sh'ma*-ing the Holy One's Voice and *sh'mar*-ing His Covenant stipulations is what makes us the people of the Holy One. It is what we were created – and have been redeemed – to do. It is also an essential prerequisite to our *priesthood calling*. Why is this so? Because, it turns out, what the Holy One's Voice always calls for, and what His Covenant always requires of men, is *servicing others*. That starts with *seeing people – and their hidden reservoirs of Kingdom potential - through Heaven's eyes*. It involves *relating to people with gentleness, kindness, and patience, instead of judgment, disgust, loathing, ridicule, sarcasm, or cynicism*. It includes *interceding for people because of the gaping holes they have in their souls*. It involves *intermediating between them and the Holy One*. And it involves *representing both the King's Heart to them and their hearts to Him*. If, as, when, and to the extent we embrace the essential qualifications of citizens of the Holy One's Kingdom, we become *kohanim* – irrespective of our bloodline. We become *kohanim* of all Creation, not merely *kohanim* of the physical *Mish'kan* like Aharon and his sons.

But ... US priests? Ordinary men filling extraordinary – even Heavenly – roles? How is this going to happen? Why doesn't the Holy One have angels do the *kahan-ing*? It's all part of the grand redemptive plan, Beloved! See **Isaiah 66:18-21**.

So ... if we are indeed destined to be the *kohanim of the kosmos* - why is the Holy One calling Aharon and his sons to serve as *kohanim inside the holy courts of the Mish'kan*? If we are all *kohanim*, why do we need Aharon and his sons to be a 'priesthood within a priesthood'? The answer is simple – if a little humbling. He is doing this because we are novices, and we do not have the slightest idea what kind of self-denial commitment *kahan-ing* involves. He knows that we need seasoned experts to show us the way and teach us the craft. He sees us as immature *kohanim-in-training*, desperately in need of human role models to

² To *sh'ma* means to *tune one's heart, soul, mind, memory, and priority matrix to a particular voice, sound, and/or directive*.

³ To *sh'mar* means to *cherish, treasure, and therefore carefully guard, protect, and passionately promote a person, thing, or idea*.

emulate. He knows we are but apprentices, who need to learn at the feet of masters how to handle the extreme physical, emotional, and social challenges of *kahan-ing*. He knows we need a group of super-dedicated forerunners. He knows we need a band of tireless trailblazers. He knows we need a corps of passionate pioneers. Aharon is not destined to be the ultimate high priest of the Kingdom of Heaven, of course; he is simply the first one we see wearing the garments and engaging in ‘the *Discipline*’. And Aharon’s sons are not the highest and best servants and intermediaries of the Holy One that will ever exist; but they are the firstfruits company the Holy One will use to teach us the essentials of the craft. So watch Aharon and his sons very, very closely, Dear Reader – and learn what kinds of service to *the Holy One*, to your *fellow men*, and to your assigned area of *Creation* that you have been brought forth on earth at such a time as this to perform. Oh, and while you are at it, you might also want to see if you can learn from them some things that you, as kohanim of the Most High, are definitely NOT to think, say, or do. Things like Aharon’s golden calf; like Nadav and Avihu’s introduction of *foreign/man-conceived fire*; like Hofni and Phineas’ attitude of special entitlement and resultant abuses of authority; and like Jason, Annas, and Caiaphas’ collaboration with oppressive foreign governments, just to name a few.

***Wow! The Implications of the Sinai Download
Are So Much Bigger Than the Theologians and Institutions
of Religion Have Taught!***

You see, Beloved, we are no longer in Egypt. We have been borne up on eagles’ wings, and brought to the Holy One’s Sinaitic chuppah. While we are here, in the throes of Divine Romance, He is downloading into us His Grand Plan for the Redemption of Mankind as a species and for the Restoration of Creation to its original intended state of beauty, harmonious operation, fruitfulness, and *shalom*. The world-changing ‘Sinai encounter’ is happening – and it is swallowing us up in its transformative energy. Because of what is happening at this remote mountain, unseen by kings, armies, moguls of industry, or members of the ‘news’ media, neither we nor our world will ever be the same. Selah!

Our Covenant Partner has been planning this glorious series of contact points and downloads since Creation Week. He has been patiently waiting for the arrival of this appointed season since He whispered: ‘***Yehi ohr*** – i.e. ***Light Be!***’ He had this remote mountain encounter in mind when He changed Avram’s life with a ‘***Lech Lecha!***’ empowerment. He had this world-changing Betrothal event in mind when He opened the barren womb of Sarah to make way for Yitzchak, when He appeared to Ya’akov from atop the Great Staircase, when He arranged for Yosef to be strategically positioned as a dream interpreter in Egypt, and when He

moved the heart of Yitro to send Moshe to the backside of the barren desert with his flock. What the Creator intends to do – is in the process of doing - at this special mountain is stunning. Under His *Visible Chuppah of Betrothal* the Creator is declaring *who He created us to be, what He created us to do - and how He intends to use us to bring the hope of redemption to the world*. During the very special eleven-and-a-half cycles of the moon that we encamp at this mountain our Bridegroom-King will release many discourses over us – and our children – and our *children’s children* – and thus *the world*. Each of these discourses provides a separate essential component of His Grand Redemptive Plan for our species and for the *kosmos*. Both the *timing* and the *substance* of these discourses/downloads are strategic. So far the Holy One has: [1] awakened us to our glorious destiny with *the Betrothal Discourse* of Exodus 19:3-6; [2] totally redefined our identity with *the Aseret HaDibrot Discourse* of Exodus 20:1-17; and [3] taught us to think like Him through *the Mish’patim Discourse* of Exodus 20:22 – 23:33. He is presently in the middle of downloading yet another discourse – the lengthiest so far. The purpose of this discourse is to teach the redeemed human beings He has sealed in covenant with Him how to see ourselves and all people and situations we will ever encounter, from His Perspective - through the enlightened lenses of His Love, His Mercy, His Wisdom, His Kingship and His Kingdom. This is a *critical upgrade* to our New Creation *hard drive*. It is our new operating system’s essential *firewall* against the serpent’s *malware*.

Wanted: A Kingdom of ‘Priests’ – and a Holy Nation!

The Holy One has recently re-emphasized His plan to utilize each and every person He redeems to perform functions on His behalf that may be characterized as ‘priestly’. Yesterday, the Holy One kicked off the Mish’kan Passion-Play casting process in style, assigning to every single member of the Redeemed Community the responsibility to provide “*oil for the light*”. This grand identity-reshaping assignment provides an interesting backdrop for Yeshua’s parable of the 10 “virgins” or “bridesmaids”. **Matthew 25:1-13**. Of what did the “wise” bridesmaids - but not the “foolish” bridesmaids - have an ample supply? You guessed it – it was ‘*oil for the light*’. How is your supply?

As you may recall from Exodus 20:18-19, when our ancestors were first called to priestly intimacy they *shied away* in the manner of an immature Bride. She whimpered at the prospect of having that intimate a level of communion with – and accountability to - the Divine Bridegroom so soon after her redemption. She requested that during the period of betrothal she not be expected to commune with the Holy One’s directly at all, but that instead the Holy One would speak to her through a familiar and non-threatening human mediator – Moshe. With one voice the Community of the Redeemed clamored for the man in their midst who knew Him best to be the one to act as “Friend of the Bridegroom”. The frightened

Bride-in-Training wanted Moshe to *sh'ma* the Holy One's words on her behalf, then relate those words to her "second-hand". We had no grid. We had no clue. We were babes in a new world. We needed a *pedagogue*, a teacher – a rabbi!

The Holy One knew this would happen all along, so of course He graciously acceded to the request. Since we were not ready to step into our assigned roles on earth – one of which was 'a kingdom of priests' – that meant someone else, someone who was or could be made ready, had to be chosen, empowered, and commissioned to go before us as 'forerunner priests' and show us the way. Moshe's role as the Friend of the Bridegroom was affirmed – but now someone was going to have to be called forth to counterbalance his role, and function as the 'Friend of the Bride'. Enter Aharon and his sons, stage right.

Through this discourse – which I have come to call the '*Mish'kan Discourse*' - the Holy One is revealing step-by-step and phase-by-phase the plans for the organic nerve center that He wants us to build and maintain for Him. Eventually He wants to make such an organic nerve center out of every single one of us – and send us into assigned spheres of influence to serve Him, the people in those spheres of influence, and the geographical areas encompassed by those spheres. That, however, will have to wait for another day – and another great download from Heaven. That is what the Sermon on the Mount and the Kingdom Parables of Yeshua are all about.

We will get there, of course. But in the Holy One's eyes, there is no rush. We are, after all, '*just betrothed*'. We have just experienced a radical paradigm shift – and have a ton of learning and walking out our new identity, mission, and destiny to do. We suddenly have an overwhelming number of betrothal responsibilities, betrothal priorities, and 'maturation into Bride-likeness' challenges to deal with. We are nowhere close to ready for that level of responsibility and accountability just yet. So He is introducing us to the idea by having us build a physical structure – a structure patterned after the Courts of Heaven that the world will soon come to know as '*the Tabernacle in the Wilderness*.' This earthly 'Tabernacle' is designed to serve as the stage upon which the Holy One will have us act out a great Passion Play He has designed to bring the perspective and worldview of Heaven's Courts to Earth in real ways in real time. Today's aliyah is focused on the "casting" and "scripting" of the *Passion Play*.

Aharon and His Sons as Forerunners - and "Friends of the Bride"

In the first verse of today's aliyah the Holy One gave full effect to His Betrothed's request for a postponement of face-to-face communion by appointing Aharon and his sons to serve as "Friends of the Bride". We are nowhere close to ready to even represent – much less rule with - the Holy One. We are still full of

self-will and fleshly appetites. We are redeemed, but immature. We are going to have to be trained to overcome all that, and begin to mature into a trustworthy co-regent of His Kingdom. The Holy One is therefore about to unveil *a system of “non-threatening” interaction for the Betrothal period* designed to teach us how our Bridegroom thinks and feels about the things of earth and Heaven. He has to defrag our hearts. He has to reprogram our minds. He has to refocus our energies. He has to train us to prioritize what He prioritizes. He has to show us how He applies the perfect blend of Wisdom and Compassion to every person, every circumstance, and every situation.

The system the Holy One designs, in response to His Betrothed’s request, is that *chossan* (Bridegroom) and *kallah* (Bride) would meet and converse:

- [a] only through *duly appointed emissaries*, and
- [b] only through *symbolic protocol*.

The Holy One had chosen His “*best man*”, or ‘*friend of the Bridegroom*’ – Moshe. Now, the Holy One appointed for the Bride-to-be a “*matron of honor*” - Aharon, and *bridesmaids* – Aharon’s sons. The priests would serve as ‘friends of the Bride’. A Biblical parallel is found in the so-called ‘*daughters of Jerusalem*’ in the Song of Solomon. If one understands the function of the ‘daughters of Jerusalem’ in the Song one understands the function of the Aharonic priesthood. Likewise, if one understands the Aharonic priesthood, one understands the function of the ‘daughters of Jerusalem’ in Solomon’s prophetic song.

By our own request those of us who came forth from Egypt would postpone for the time being becoming of the Holy One’s individual and collective “kingdom of priests”. For now at least a special “cult” of priests, descendants of Aharon, is set aside to mediate the rituals of the *mish’kan* as Divinely scripted protocol, or screenplay, for Bride/Bridegroom interaction. The *mish’kan* protocol – with its carefully scripted surrogate presentations, its celebrations, and its daily, weekly, monthly, and annual remembrances – was a Divinely-authored *passion play* – a season-by-season prophetic call of the Bride-to-be to the intimacy which awaits. Aharon and his sons were to be actors with the leading roles in this passion play. But this is just a *temporary* “fix”, necessitated by the Betrothed Bride’s immaturity⁴. We are all *understudies*, *waiting in the wings* to take over the priestly role. **Isaiah 66:19-21.**

⁴ Keep in mind, however, that once a wedding occurs the matron of honor and bridesmaids [i.e. the Friends of the Bride] do not cease to be important to the Bride and Groom – their status just changes from a teacher/chaperone status to a more mature friend/confidante/co-laborer status. So will it be with Aharon and his sons. They will not cease to be important to us or to the Holy One upon the *nissuin* – they will simply function more as *confidantes*, peers, friends and co-laborers, to the Bride than the teachers and chaperones they once were.

Getting to Know the Friends of the Bride

In Exodus 28:1 the Holy One told Moshe to “take” Aharon and his sons “*from among the children of Israel*”, that Aharon and his sons “*may minister to Me in the priest’s office*”. The Holy One specifically names the four sons of Aharon who are to serve - Nadav, Avihu, Elazar, and Itamar. Let’s take a few moments to introduce ourselves to these precious new ‘friends’.

1. The Enigma of Aharon

The Hebrew name Aharon is *alef, hey, resh, vav, nun sofit*⁵. The name means ‘*light-bringer*’. The first Hebrew letter in Aharon’s name is *alef* - the first letter of the Hebrew *alef-beit*. This letter symbolizes the Holy One as the pre-existent Creator, and author of history. The second letter, *hey* [h sound], is a Hebrew pictograph of the window, or opening in the wall, of a tent. Since a window, or opening, of a tent both lets in light and allows circulation of breezes, the pictograph of the *hey* is a symbolic representation of *revelation* and *inspiration*. The third letter of the name Aharon is *resh* [r sound]. This letter is a Hebrew pictograph of the head of a household, or sheik/patriarch. The fourth letter is *vav* [in this case, making a long ‘o’ sound], which is a Hebrew symbol of *connection* between two things. Some say it is a picture of a tent peg, which binds the guy ropes of the tent to the earth, and thereby holds it in place, even in the wind. The final letter of the name Aharon is the *nun sofit* [n sound], which is a Hebrew pictograph representing the ultimate Son or Heir – Messiah. Now, let’s put all that together. The Holy One [*alef*] gives revelation and inspiration [*hey*] to the head of household or sheik [*resh*] that securely grounds and preserves the household intact [*vav*] in order that the Messiah [*nun sofit*] may come forth.

Early in our study of Exodus we found out that the Holy One had designed and created Aharon – even in the midst of slavery in Egypt - as one who could “speak well”. **Exodus 4:14**. The Holy One had, it seems, saved him from Pharaoh’s death decree concerning all male Hebrew babies, trained him as a mediator by making him Moshe’s ‘mouthpiece’ or spokesman, before Pharaoh.

Up to this point however he had virtually no revelation or message of his own. And he was alas less than consistent in interpreting and walking out the revelation received by Moshe. He and Hur were the ones Moshe left “in charge” when Moshe ascended Har Sineh alone to receive the *luchot ha-edut* [tablets of the testimony]. We will soon read what disastrous consequences that will have. At the time of the sin of the golden calf, his ability to “speak well” will be his undoing. It will after all be Aharon who calls for the people to bring gold (which had been dedicated to the Holy One for the tabernacle) for use in making the golden calf; it will

⁵ Aharon is Strong’s Hebrew word # 175. It is pronounced *aw-haw-rone*’.

be Aharon who receives the gold, fashions it into a calf, and declares to the people “*These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt!*” **Exodus 32:2-4**. It will also be Aharon who builds an altar to the calf and who calls for a feast to be given in the calf’s honor. **Exodus 32:5-6**. Moshe will correctly declare for us in Torah that it was Aharon who brought the sin of the golden calf upon Israel. **Exodus 32:21**.

The golden calf debacle was not to be the last of Aharon’s failures. Aharon will subsequently join with Miryam in speaking against Moshe concerning Moshe’s wife, and will only repent when the Holy One rebukes the two and strikes Miryam with leprosy. **Numbers 12:1-12**. Aharon’s selection for the position of High Priest therefore cannot be said, and should never be considered, to have been made based upon *merit*. He was certainly no “holier” than anyone else in the Redeemed Community. Indeed he did not in personal merit compare favorably with anyone. His appointment was made not based on merit⁶ but despite the lack thereof. Such is the basis of all selections of the Holy One - for there is none righteous, no not one.

2. The Firstborn - Nadav

Aharon’s firstborn son was named Nadav, *nun, dalet, veit*⁷. A good translation of Nadav’s name might be ‘willing’.

Nadav will, of course, never ‘make it’ to the land of the Patriarchs. He will – for motivations that Torah does not make clear – step outside the Divine Protocol and make unauthorized and ‘out of bounds’ approach to the holiness of the Holy One. He will die trying to enter the *k’dosh k’doshim* [holy of holies] with an insufficient covering – incense burnt on “strange fire” – i.e. fire *not taken from the fire which the Holy One supernaturally sent from Heaven*. **Leviticus 10:1-2**.

3. The Impulsive Avihu

Aharon’s second son was named Avihu, *alef, veit, yod, hey, vav, alef*⁸. The name ‘Avihu’ literally means “*He [God] is my father*”. Avihu is not going to make to Eretz Yisrael either. He is going to perish in the same incident that will claim his elder brother. He will, as Nadav will, stray far outside the bounds of the Divine Protocol and try to enter the Holy One’s Presence without a proper incense-smoke covering.⁹

⁶ There is of course a Talmudic line of thought that holds otherwise. Hillel [1st Century BCE] said “*Be disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and drawing them near the Torah*.”.

⁷ Nadav is Strong’s Hebrew word #5070, pronounced *naw-dawv*’.

⁸ Avihu is Strong’s Hebrew word #30, pronounced *aw-vee-hoo*’.

⁹ Some teach that Nadav and Avihu sinned by dishonoring Aharon as a ‘spiritual authority’. This is not the implication of the text. To the contrary, the problem of Nadav and Avihu was that they went into the

4. *The Helpful Elazar*

The third son of Aharon was named Elazar, *alef, lamed, ayin, zayin, resh*¹⁰. The most common interpretation of this name is “*help of God*”.

Elazar eventually was ordained as High Priest in Aharon’s stead, as Aharon neared death. Numbers 20:28. Elazar’s descendants kept the office of High Priest until replaced by Eli, who was a descendant of Aharon’s youngest son, Itamar. After Eli’s ascension, no descendant of Elazar regained the position until the time of Shlomo, when Tzadok, a priest of Elazar’s line, was given the position after Itamar’s descendant Abiatar was removed. **I Kings 1:7; 2:26-27, 35.**

5. *The Diligent Itamar*

Aharon’s fourth son was *Itamar, alef, yod, tav, mem, resh*¹¹. According to Strong’s this name means “*coastal land of palms*”. A coastal land of palms sounds pretty good to me right now, how about you?

While Itamar did not ascend to the High Priesthood during his lifetime, as aforesaid, his descendant Eli eventually did become High Priest. Because of Eli’s sins the Holy One declared that the priesthood would be taken away from Eli’s [and thus Itamar’s] descendants. **I Samuel 2:27-36.** This was fulfilled when Eli’s descendant Abiatar was deposed by Shlomo, and a descendant of Elazar named *Tzadok* was put in his place. It is the line of Elazar’s descendant Tzadok that Ezekiel sees serving in priestly role in the Millennial Temple, when Messiah reigns from Jerusalem and the Torah goes forth from Zion.

A Window Display

This is all very nice – this talk of priests and priestly lines and such. It really is. But what is it all about? Since the beginning of parsha *T’rumah* we have been discussing the fact that the *Mish’kan* [Tabernacle] is merely a replica of something much more grand, something in the Heavenly Courts of the Holy One.

We have discussed that the *Mish’kan* that the Holy One has been showing us

Presence of the Holy One with an insufficient – man-made – *cloud covering*, and without the proper God-made garments, from which the Holy One promised to impute righteousness. The lesson of Sinai – perpetuated in the *mish’kan* protocol – is that we need a cloud-covering provided by the Holy One, and garments provided by Him, not a cloud-cover and fig-leaf type garments we conjure up ourselves through religious activity. The proper cloud covering – which the Holy One provides – is the *Sh’kinah* – the visible manifestation of Messiah’s ascension. The proper garments He provides, and on the basis of which He imputes righteousness to the wearer, are the garments of the great High Priest after the order of Melki-tzedek, Yeshua of Natzret—whose garments were pictured symbolically in the garments the Holy One inspired Israel to make for Aharon.

¹⁰ Eleazar is Strong’s Hebrew word #499. It is pronounced *el-aw-zawr’*.

¹¹ Itamar is Strong’s Hebrew word #385, pronounced *ee-tawm-awr’*.

actually belongs to two worlds, the seen and the unseen. We have discussed that every aspect of the *Mish'kan* we are to build on earth - every furnishing, every curtain, every board, every silver socket, every utensil – is a finite representation of an infinite spiritual reality. If that is true, it stands to reason that those who are appointed to serve as ‘priests’ in the earthly replica of the Heavenly reality are likewise only finite representatives of something – or someOne - else, something or someOne much more real, much more holy, much more righteous, and much more enduring than Aharon or his sons could ever hope to be.

Of what Heavenly something or someOne have Aharon and his sons been set aside by the Holy One to represent as symbolic representatives? If we were able to through Aharon as we look through a window, to the One Who He represents, Who would we see? Oh Beloved, this is *Holy Ground*. We stand squarely on the threshold of a marvelous and breath-taking discovery. The eternal spiritual reality reflected by the priesthood of Aharon and his sons is perhaps the most wonderful spiritual reality of all.

Are You The One – Or Should We Look For Another?

The truth we are about to encounter this week in the shadowy realm of the *Mish'kan* is the ultimate truth of the Heavenly ministry of none other than the Messiah of the Holy One. Aharon and his sons are indeed mere ‘stand-ins’. When Aharon lights the lamps of the *Menorah* he will only be picturing in finite terms the way in which Messiah illumines Creation and provides the *Light of the World* – and the way in which He commissions us to do the same.

When Aharon places bread or a goblet of wine upon the *Shulchan* he will only be portraying in finite actions the way in which Messiah continually sets forth for us *the Bread of Life* and pours forth for us *New Wine*, as Melki-Tzedek set forth bread and poured forth new wine for Avram in Genesis 14. And he will be modeling for us the way in which the Holy One commissions each of us to set the bread and new wine of the Kingdom of Heaven before everyone He allows to come within our sphere of influence.

When Aharon burns incense upon the *golden altar* in the Holy Place he will only be playing charades for us – demonstrating for us in earthly terms and through earthly substances the intercession of Messiah in the Heavenly realms on behalf of humankind in general and for every single human being who ever lived in particular, and the intercession we have been commissioned to make on earth for every person and situation we are given to face.

Every time Aharon spread forth his hands and spoke the *b'racha* [blessing]

described in Numbers 6 over the people saying ‘*May the Holy One bless you and keep you, and Make His Face shine upon you, and be gracious to you, and may the Holy One lift up His Countenance upon you, and may He give you peace*’, he will merely be reminding us of the Heavenly reality that in Messiah the Holy One is at that very moment doing those very things, and reminding us that we also have been commissioned to release blessings – indeed the very oracles of God – upon the earth throughout our ‘such a time as this’. **I Peter 4:11[a]**.

Every time one of Aharon’s sons will lay hands upon a lamb, a goat, a ram, a dove or a handful of grain brought by pauper or prince to serve as a surrogate through which to make approach to the Holy One, they will merely be re-enacting in our sight a drama of Divine submission and substitutionary blood-shedding which Messiah accomplished in the Heavenly realms before the foundation of the world. It will be as if Aharon were saying to us all:

*Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling,
fix your thoughts on Yeshua, the Apostle and High Priest whom we confess."*
[Hebrews 3:1]

The More Excellent, Eternal, *avodah* of Messiah, of which Aharon is only a symbol or sign, is spoken of plainly in Psalm 110 - a Psalm that Yeshua of Natzret applied to Himself. See **Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36 & Luke 20:42**. The underlying theme of Psalm 110 is that there is a priesthood beyond and more enduring and effectual – and indeed in a totally and much higher realm of reality – than any *avodah* of Aharon or his sons.

The writer of Hebrews explains that the priesthood of Messiah is better than the priesthood of Aharon because it's spiritual, not worldly [see **Hebrews 8**]; that the Heavenly sanctuary in which Messiah ministers is better than the *Mish'kan* built of finite materials on earth in which Aharon ministered because it is heavenly, not earthly [see **Hebrews 9**]; and that the *korbanot* presented by Messiah are better than the *korbanot* presented by Aharon and his sons because those presented by Messiah in the Heavenly *Mish'kan* are real, while those presented by Aharon and his sons were merely symbolical [see **Hebrews 10**].

The purpose of Messiah’s priesthood is different from – higher than – the purpose of Aharon’s priesthood. It is through Messiah’s priesthood, not through the priesthood of Aharon, that we as the Holy One’s people can come into spiritual maturity, fruitfulness, and fulfillment of our Divine purpose and destiny. Hence the writer of Hebrews exhorts us with six (6) ‘*let us ...*’ exhortations which Messiah’s priesthood, and it alone, makes possible, as follows:

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest

who has passed through the heavens, Yeshua the Son of God, **let us hold fast our confession.**
[Hebrews 4:14]

... **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,**
that we may obtain **chesed** [i.e. mercy]
and find **chanan** [i.e. grace] to help in time of need.
[Hebrews 4:16]

... having a great priest over the household of the Holy One,
let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,
having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,
and our bodies washed with pure water. "
[Hebrews 10:19-22]

... And **let us consider one another in order to stir up ahavah**
(i.e. deeds done in passionate pursuit
of strengthening and deepening a relationship) **and mitzvot** ...
[Hebrews 10:24]

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken,
let us have chanan [i.e. grace] **by which we may engage in avodat Adonai**
[i.e. service of the Holy One] **acceptably with reverence and godly fear.**
[Hebrews 12:28]

Therefore **let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.**
Having here no continuing city, but seeking the one to come.
[Hebrews 13:13-14]

Therefore by Him **let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to the Holy One,**
that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.
[Hebrews 13:15]

The priesthood of Messiah not only enables us to experience and draw strength from the very intimate relationship with the Holy One from which our ancestors shrank back in fear - Messiah's priesthood *also makes acceptable all our prayers, however weak they are.* Messiah's priesthood also makes all our offerings and sacrifices a sweet savor to the Holy One - however impure and imperfect they may appear to human eyes. Messiah's priesthood is what *bestows on us heavenly light that enables us to see what our Father is doing - and to actually join Him in doing it.* It is what bestows on us heavenly power to *become all we are prophetically empowered by the Torah to be and to complete all we are commissioned by the Torah to do.*

The reason Aharon's priesthood did not accomplish these things is very simple - *it was never intended to.* The purpose of the priesthood of Aharon was merely *to point us to and create a hunger in us for the much higher priesthood of Messiah* – the priesthood that would accomplish *all these things and much, much more.* There was therefore nothing 'wrong' with the Aharonic priesthood. It served its purpose *perfectly* – for all with ears to *sh'ma*. That does not mean that the man named Aharon - as a *person* or as a *priest* - was perfect. He most certainly was

not. Neither was Elazar or Itamar or any of their descendants. But the imperfection of those persons did not mean their priesthood, which was established by the Holy One for purposes that their failures could not affect any more than their virtues could effectuate, was a mistake.

Aharon and his sons were merely *actors*. They frequently *flubbed their lines* and occasionally *missed their cues*. They oft-times ad-libbed in inappropriate ways. But the good news is that the wonderful story that was being told by the supernatural script they followed was *strong enough to shine brilliantly through all their failures*. The passion play, after all, is not about the actors. It is about *the passion*. He who has ears, let him *sh'ma*.

Getting Us Accustomed to the Feel of Fine Linen on our Skin

We have previously discussed that the *Mish'kan* served a dual purpose on earth. First it provided a beautiful picture of the Heavenly Courts of the Holy One - a foretaste of sorts of what the Holy One has in store for us. Secondly it served as a *parlor* for chaperoned betrothal-period interactions between the Holy One and His betrothed Bride-to-be.

Similarly Aharon and his descendants were commissioned by the Holy One to serve a dual function. First as we have been discussing they were to serve as *the finite representation on earth of the infinite priesthood of Messiah in heaven*. Secondly they were to serve as *the prototypical 'friends of the Bride' - the ones responsible for both training her to be the Bride she was called to be and keeping her focused on Her Bridegroom*. Today in the context of a marriage we might analogize this latter function of Aharon and his descendants to the function of a 'maid of honor' and 'bridesmaids'.

Special Garments - for Honor and for Beauty

Okay. Every bridesmaid and maid of honor needs a special dress, right? Aharon and his sons are to be no exception. In the longest section of today's aliyah the Holy One gives Moshe directions as to the type, appearance, construction, and use of the bridesmaid outfits – the so-called “priestly garments” - to be worn by Aharon and his descendants as they mediated between the Holy One and Israel in the Tabernacle [and ultimately the Temple]. Here is how Torah introduces the subject of the special clothing of the priests:

V'asita begedei-k'desh l'Aharon achicha l'chavod uletif'aret
Make holy garments for your brother Aharon, for glory and for beauty.

V'atah t'daber el-kol-chachmei-lev
Speak to everyone who is wise of heart,

asher miletiv ruach chochmah

to whom I have granted a spirit of wisdom,

v'asu et-bigdei Aharon l'kadesho l'chahano-li

and let them make Aharon's vestments that he may be consecrated to Me.

V'eleh ha-b'gadim asher ya'asu choshen v'efod

These are the vestments that they shall make: a breastplate, an efod,

ume'il uchtonet tash'betz mitznefet v'avnet v'asu begedei-k'desh

a robe, a knitted tunic, a turban, and a sash. Make them as garments of separation

l'Aharon achicha ul'b'nav l'chahano-li

for Aharon your brother and for his sons, to consecrate/separate them for/unto Me.

[Exodus 28:2-3]

There are six specific items the Holy One tells Moshe that Aharon is to wear when he acts out on earth, for men to see, the Divine Drama of the Eternal Priesthood of Messiah in Heaven, and stands with the Bride-to-be:

1. A *breastplate*;
2. An *efod*;
3. a *robe*;
4. a *tunic*;
5. a *turban* [head covering]; and
6. a *sash*.

The garments the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain during the 40 days of revelation were not made of earthly materials. Nor were they worn by an earthly priest. They were, instead, eternal garments, made outside the realm of time, before the foundation of the world, for an eternal priest. But not to worry. The Holy One instructed Moshe on how to reproduce, on earth, to the extent possible considering the earthly limitations of time and space and materials, the garments the Great High Priest of Heaven wears. The earthly materials/colors to be used in reproducing these garments on earth, for the earthly *kohanim* that were to function as 'shadows' of the Heavenly Kohen, are identified in Exodus 28:6, as *zahav* [gold], *t'chelet* [sky blue (thread)], *argaman* [dark red (thread)] *tola'at shani* [crimson (thread)], and *shesh*¹² [linen].

The Holy One goes on to describe the pattern after which He wants each of these special garments to be made in detail. I will let you read the specifications for yourselves, however, as we have two more pressing subjects to cover before we can conclude this *shiur*.

¹² ***Shesh*** is Strong's Hebrew word #3836. It is written in Hebrew as *shin, shin*. It is a noun derived from the verb *sh'yish*, meaning 'to bleach'. Hence, the reference is to a material that has been *bleached so as to be perfectly white*.

The Official Uniform of the Courts of the Great King

Every passion play needs a good wardrobe department. But garments, in Torah, are more than just costumes. Every mention of *garments* in Torah must be considered in relation to the *origin* of and reason for garments – namely, what happened in the Garden. As you will recall after Adam and Chava *lo sh'ma*-ed the Holy One and partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they ‘realized they were naked’. What did they do? They sewed together fig leaves and made themselves the first garments the world has ever known. **Genesis 2:7.**

The fig-leaf coverings Adam and Chava made for themselves were, however, man-made, superficial, and temporary. When the Holy One came walking in the garden, calling to Adam, Adam had to hide because, as Adam put it, despite having cloaked himself in fig-leaf coverings, he was still, before the eyes of God, “naked”. Fortunately however another, better type of garments is available to us. This type of garments is introduced in Genesis 3:21, where we are told: *The Holy One Elohim made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.*

Here is the question raised by our aliyah: Are the six garments of Aharon *man-made*, and, like the fig-leaf coverings Adam and Chava made, superficial, and temporary? Or is the priestly *regalia* Aharon is to wear *God-made*, and therefore sufficient not just to *cover*, but to *clothe*? Considering that the garments in question were to be made by people the Holy One gifted for that purpose, and were the garments Aharon was to wear when he entered the *k'dosh k'doshim* [holy of holies], and sprinkled blood on the *kaporet* [often called the ‘mercy seat’], the answer appears obvious. The priest was not accepted into the Holy One’s presence on the basis of his own righteousness – only *because of the perfection of the garments he wore* – *i.e.* garments designed by the Holy One long, long ago - perhaps from the foundation of the world. All the High Priest had to do, you see, was to *dress for success*. No matter how sinful he might be, if he put on the garments selected by the Holy One, righteousness was imputed to him because of the garments. Whose righteousness? The righteousness of the great high priest of Heaven, of course – the righteousness of Messiah Yeshua, the great high priest after the order of *Melki-tzedek*.

Prophetic Remembrances of the Covenant

The garments that the Holy One made for Adam and Chava, and the garments the Holy One directed Israel to make for Aharon, were, you see, merely prophetic remembrances – things that the Holy One agreed, as He looked upon them, to remind Him of Messiah’s perfect priesthood, His perfect ‘ministry’, and His perfect ‘offering’. Like the bow in the cloud mentioned in Genesis 9:11-17,

and like the blood on the doorposts mentioned in Exodus 12:21-23, these garments were *signs of a covenant*. The Holy One promised that when He saw such things – when His appointed representatives of His people clothed themselves in them in accordance with His instructions – He would impute righteousness to them, and forgive their sin, and not visit them with judgment. And the Holy One is always faithful to His covenant. Just *dress for success*. \Dress yourself in the *covenant garments*, set out for you in Torah, which point always to no one but Yeshua. Dressed in such garments, despite how poorly they fit, you always emit to the Holy One *the fragrance of a field that the Holy One has blessed*. See Genesis 27:27.

The Urim and Tummim

Perhaps the most mysterious instructions given by The Holy One regarding Aharon's garments have to do with something Torah calls 'urim' and 'tummim'. The *Urim* and *Tummim* were, it appears, some kind of material objects small enough to be inserted in a "pouch" in the efod of the *kohen g'dol* [High Priest]. They appear to have been an acceptable, indeed prescribed, means of the Divine communication with the nation of Israel – at least during the period before kings and prophets were given. Here is how these items are introduced to us in Torah:

V'nasa Aharon et shemot b'nei-Yisra'el b'choshen ha-mish'pat

Aharon will thus carry the names of Israel's sons on the decision breastplate

al-libo bevo'o el ha-k'desh

On his heart when entering the holy

l'zikaron p'nei-Adonai tamid

for remembrance before the Holy One forever

V'natata el-choshen ha-mish'pat et ha-urim v'et ha-tummim

Place the Urim and Tumim in the decision breastplate,

V'hayu al-lev Aharon bevo'o lifnei Adonai

and they shall be over Aharon's heart when he comes before the Holy One.

v'nasa Aharon et-mishpat b'nei-Yisra'el

Aharon will then carry the decision-making device for the sons of Israel.

al-libo lifnei Adonai tamid

before the Face of the Holy One at all times.

[Exodus 28:29]

From passages such as Deuteronomy 33:8, I Samuel 14:36, and I Samuel 23:6-12, we can infer that the *Urim* and *Tummim* together formed sacred *lots* of sorts to be used by the *kohen g'dol* [high priest] in consulting the Divine will, or perhaps as a kind of Divine ordeal to discover the guilt or innocence of suspected persons. The lots being two in number, only one question was put at a time, and that in a way admitting of only two alternative answers [I Samuel 14:41-

42; 23:6-12].

It is possible that in at least some of the passages where the expression "*consult the Holy One*" or its equivalent is used, recourse to the *Urim* and *Tummim* is implied [see e.g. Joshua 9:14; Judges 20:27-28; I Kings, 10:19-22; II Kings, 2:1]. The only direct mention of actual consultation of the Holy One by means of the *Urim* and *Tummim* is found in Numbers 27:21, where we are told that *Y'hoshua* [Joshua] and his successors could speak to the Lord only through the mediation of the high priest and by means of the *Urim* and *Tummim*.

There are many theories about what the *urim* and *tummim* were/are and how they functioned/function. Torah does not specifically tell us. Let's try to ascertain as much as we can by looking more closely at the Hebrew words themselves.

Gazing in Wonder at the Hebrew Murals

The word our English Bibles translate as *urim* [*alef, vav, resh, yod, mem sofit*], is a derivative form of the Hebrew word *ohr, alef, vav, resh*, meaning "light", or "light emitting". Light is, of course, a common metaphoric term for wisdom – e.g. *enlightenment*.

The word our English Bibles translate as *tummim* [*tav, mem, yod, mem sofit*] is a derivative form of the Hebrew word *tamim*, meaning "make complete", "make perfect", or "preserve innocent". The essence of the function of the *urim* and the *tummim* is stated only to be *ha-mish'pat* – the moral guidance - of the nation of Israel. The essential factor for their use is stated only to be that before the guidance is revealed '*for b'nei Yisrael*', it is brought before the Holy One on *the heart of the priest*.

Two weeks ago when we were studying the Sinaitic *mish'patim* [3 chapters of discussing '*what Messiah would do*' in the context of real-life situations], we stated that the *mish'patim* of the Holy One represent the perfect mix of two primary aspects of Divine Will to human situations. On the one hand, the *mish'patim* represent the Holy One's perfect WISDOM – *i.e.* His unique insight, long-term perspective, and Creator's skill/understanding in dealing with human beings and human situations. On the other hand, the *mish'patim* of the Holy One perfectly balance against such wisdom, and factor into every situation, the Holy One's COMPASSION – *i.e.* His abundant mercy, tenderness, and covenant-driven love.

Could it be that the *urim* and *tummim* merely the earthly symbols of these two aspects of Divine decision-making? Could it be that the *urim* is the earthly representation of the Holy One's wisdom, and the *tummim* is the earthly representation of the Holy One's compassion? Could it be that the Holy One is

training us to make no decisions on earth solely on the basis of wisdom, nor solely on the basis of compassion, but on *a mixture of both ingredients*?

What Became of the Urim and Tummim Anyway?

After the death of David there is no further mention in TaNaKh of anyone consulting the Holy One by means of the *Urim* and *Tummim*. It appears that the Holy One communicated quite nicely throughout the post-Davidic period through his prophets. Of course, this may have been because, with David, the high priesthood [which maintained control of the *urim* and *tummim*] declined drastically in importance vis-à-vis the kings and prophets – and after the fall of Jerusalem, the *urim* and *tummim* appear to have been captured or destroyed by the Babylonians. There is, however, one instance in the Apostolic Writings of the use of the sacred lot as a means to discover the Divine will. See Acts 1:24-26, where lots were employed [though not by a high priest] in connection with the election of the apostolic successor to *Y'hudah K'riot* [Judas Iscariot].

The main point I draw from Torah's reference to the *urim* and *tummim* is that the Holy One always offers to communicate, by one means or another, with His people. He is 'in touch'. He is always calling to us, always speaking. He will find a way to communicate. It is our task in life – and our privilege and irrepressible joy – to *sh'ma*.

Questions for Today's Study

1. Today's aliyah involves the instructions for the special garments, or "vestments", which are to set apart the priests, and somehow *reflect and radiate the Holy One's Divine characteristics and qualities*. According to Exodus 28:2 what two characteristics or qualities are the vestments of the priests to reflect and radiate?
2. List the six different High Priestly vestments called for in Exodus 28.
3. Describe each of the six vestments, listing the features that the Holy One told Moshe each vestment was to have, and describing the color and materials where those things are stated.
4. According to Exodus 28:40-42 what vestments were to be made for Aharon's sons? List the features and descriptions of these vestments you see.
5. What were the priests to wear on their feet?
6. In today's Haftarah the Holy One states "*the law of the house*" for the millennial Temple. What is that "*law*"?

7. After giving the “*law of the house*” the Holy One gives Ezekiel the instructions for building something. What does he instruct the Redeemed Community of the millennium to build?

8. In today’s suggested reading from the B’rit Chadasha the writer of the letter to the Hebrews who have accepted Yeshua as Messiah discusses the appropriate attitude and actions of believers toward those serving them.

[A] In Strong’s concordance look up the word that the NIV text of verse 7 translates as “leaders”. [The KJV translates “*them which have the rule over you*”]. Write the Greek word(s) and an appropriate definition.

[B] In your life who are the persons who truly meet that definition? What have these people done which qualifies them as “leaders” in your life? [Note: these people may or may not be the persons who presently speak into your life or exercise spiritual “control” over you].

[C] What is to be the believer’s *attitude* toward the people who fit the definition of the word translated as “leaders”?

[D] How should a believer’s actions be changed in response to a “leader”?

[E] What, specifically, are you to follow or emulate about one who is a true “leader”?

[F] Also in Strong’s look up the Greek words translated as *faith*, *follow*, *end* and *conversation* in the KJV. Write each of the Greek words and its definition. Then try to find the corresponding Hebrew words by looking at Strong’s, Richard’s *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, or some other source.

[G] Now, rewrite the verse substituting an appropriate description of the intended Hebraic concept for the three English words you looked up.

[H] What do you see as the connection between verse 8 and verse 7?

*May we all receive and treasure the garments of righteousness?
bestowed upon us by our great High Priest.*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Tuesday’s Shiur

Psalm 119:105-111 [Nun]

*Your word [Heb. **dabar**] is a lamp [nir] to my feet
and a light [ohr] to my path.*

I have sworn and now confirm that I will keep [sh’mar – cherish, treasure, guard]

Your righteous judgments [mishpatim].

I am afflicted very much;

*Bring me **chayah**, O Holy One, according to Your word [dabar].*

*Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Holy One,
and teach me Your judgments [mishpatim].
My soul [nefesh] is continually in my hand,
Yet I do not forget Your law [Torah].
The wicked [rasha'im] have laid a snare for me,
Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts [pikkudim].
Your testimonies [edut] I have taken as an eternal heritage [nachal].
For they are the rejoicing of my heart.
I have inclined my heart to perform [asah] Your statutes [chokim] forever,
to the very end.*