

Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Ki Tisa:*** **Exodus 31:1-18**
 Haftarah: **I Kings 18:7-16**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Corinthians 8:7**

According to all that I have tzavah-ed you they will asah.

[Exodus 31:11b]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 19:4-6;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the *Avot*, the Prayer of the Fathers

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor – *And the Holy One spoke substantive, empowering words to Moshe, saying ...* ***Re'eh qarati v'shem Betzalel ben-Uri ben-Chur*** – *behold, I have called by name/true personal identity 'Betzalel', ben Uri, ben Chur* **Exodus 31:1-2a.**

Our first season of adventures in our 'Bridegroom-King *Beauty Realm*' is drawing to a close. We have seen some truly marvelous things. We have acclimated to Majesty. Oh, what a g blessing! Oh, what a treasure! But welcome to the Fourth Law of Spiritual Science²: '*Of/from him to whom much is given, much is required.*' Thank Heaven there is a corresponding fifth law: "*He who has been forgiven much, loves much.*'

Transitioning from the Beauty Realm Back to the Broken, Profane World of Ra, Shachat, and Chamas- infected Human Beings

Soon it will be time for Moshe to bid farewell to all the *kaved utiferet* – *i.e.* the *glory/majesty/opulence* and *splendor/loveliness* - of the Heavenly courts and chambers and return to the land of the earthy, the ordinary, and the unclean. This will be his first re-entry to the 'real world' – and neither what he will find or what he will do upon his return will be pretty. The dramatic shift in atmospheres Moshe will experience in connection with his imminent descent from the fiery cloud atop Sinai will result some serious 'realm-travel lag'. There will be outrage. There will be ranting. There will be self-righteous blame-casting. A band of crusading vigilantes

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² The first law of spiritual science' the author of these studies has extrapolated from the Sinai Discourses is: "*For every problematic situation that fallen men create, the Holy One provides a pathway that leads to redemption.*" The second such law is: "*Every object the Holy One directs to be built/serviced in the earthly mish'kan, corresponds to both: [1] an eternal reality related to Messiah in the Heavenly Mish'kan, in the spiritual realm, & [2] a relationship-building truth which each of us is to find a way to represent to the world in real time, in real life situations, in the course of our earthly walk with our Bridegroom-King.*" The third such law is: "*Change a Person's Surroundings – or Even What He Looks At, Thinks About, and/or Talks about – and Predictable Changes will Start to Occur in the Person's Worldview, Mood, Demeanor & Behavior.*"

with swords will inflict a reign of terror on the Redeemed Community. At the end of this holocaust-foreshadowing bloodbath pile after pile of unrecognizable human remains will lie scattered across the desert floor. Grieving widows will be wailing. Bereaved parents will be suffering in stunned silence. Newly fatherless waifs will be running to and fro in terror, fearing that they, like their fathers, will be murdered in cold blood by holier-than-thou vigilantes operating under Moshe's insane directive to *let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. Exodus 32:27b.*

Fortunately, none of those incomprehensible things will be happening today. Today the Holy One is still showing Moshe around His Beauty Realm – and Moshe is gaping in awe at everything he is being shown. Today the Most Beautiful Voice in the Universe is speaking, and Moshe is listening. So let's pretend we are flies on the Heavenly Throne Room wall, and listen in as well!

Re'eh! [*Behold!*]

The first word the Holy One speaks in today's aliyah will be ***Re'eh*** – i.e. '*Behold!*'. The Holy One wants to SHOW us something. After what has been revealed about the Heavenly courts and chambers in the past six chapters of Torah, what else could there possibly be? Not to worry – there are yet mysteries galore! With regard to most of the remaining mysteries, we will have to wait for prophets like Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John the Revelator. But there are three precious gifts from the Heavenly realm that the Holy One wants Moshe to envision – and share with us – now: 1. The *great infilling* of His own life-force that He has planned for those with wise and willing hearts; 2. *The nation-preserving mystery of the Seventh-day Sabbath*; and 3. *The tablets of the Testimony*. The Holy One knows that each of these three gifts/empowerments rooted and grounded in the Heavenly realm will prove critically important to bringing the next phase of the Grand Plan of Redemption and Restoration to bear on earth.

We begin with the Holy One's promise to repeat the *reciprocal-breathing* protocol of Genesis 2:7. As He breathed His own Creative-Life-force into Adam before placing him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it, so does He intend to breath that life-force into some of our number before entrusting His Mish'kan to human beings to tend and keep. What the Holy One has in mind this time is a *4-fold infilling of His Ruach/Spirit*. For this infilling, He has not selected a prophet, a priest, or a preacher – but a bunch of nobodies. He has selected *Betzalel*, son of Uri, son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehudah. He has selected *Aholiav*, son of Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And he has selected a bunch of nameless, faceless former slaves among us whose only qualification is that they are ***b'lev kol-chacham-lev*** – i.e. '*wise in/of heart*'. None of the recipients of the

infilling/equipping empowerment that the Holy One has in mind could be considered qualified for the honor by their education, by any training they had received, by any experience they had previously had, by charisma, by any natural talent they possessed, or by any personal level of righteousness. They were, quite frankly, not qualified at all. After all, who can possibly qualify to share/carry/flow in the very Creative Life-Force of the Creator of the Universe? No, they were not qualified. No they had done nothing to deserve this honor. No, they were not capable, in the natural, of doing any of the things the Holy One was going to assign to them well. But they would not need to. They would be given HIS Creative vision, skill, and gifting. For the greater good of Creation – which is always the only reason the Holy One calls, inspires, or empowers anyone - He chose these two very unworthy, unqualified, and previously unheard-from men.

Wow! The Holy One is sharing His very own Creative Life-Energy with mankind again - like He did with Adam before the Fall! See **Genesis 2:7, 16**. If you can't get excited about that ... well, you might want to check your pulse and make sure you are still alive! Just imagine the possibilities!

***Behold – Days of Infilling, Like Unto the Infilling
of Betzalel, Aholiav, and the ‘Wise in/of Heart’, Are Coming!***

Our omniscient Creator is not going to leave His glorious plan of *tikkun olam* – i.e. bringing redemption to mankind and restoration to Creation - to the vagaries of human ingenuity, natural talent, or learned skills. He knows better than to entrust the secrets - much less the authority - of His Kingdom to human institutions, organizations, or ecclesiastical structures. He has a better plan. He intends to bring His Heavenly ways to earth by personally visiting ordinary men, women, and children, household by household - and then *indwelling their bodies with His Breath* – you remember ... the way He did with Adam's body. As it is written: ***And the Holy One God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a nish'mat chayim – i.e. a living being.*** Genesis 2:7.

In the course of the indwelling that He has planned for us the Holy One is going to cleanse us, sanctify us, open a Spirit-to-spirit level dialogue with us. Through this dialogue He will train us in righteousness, choreograph our thoughts, reactions, and behaviors in such a way as to bear fruit evidencing His Presence in our lives, and empower us to do great exploits for His Glory. Welcome to the First Infilling of a man by Divine Breath since the Fall of Adam!

The Betzalel Model: A Picture of 4-Fold Divine Empowering

Va'amale oto ruach Elohim – and I will fill him with the Breath/Life-force of the Creator/Master of the World ... ***b'chochmah uvitvunah*** – in regard to wisdom and understanding ... ***uv'da'at uv'chol-melachah*** – and knowledge and all craftsmanship. Exodus 31:3.

The Holy One kicks off *Ki Tisa*'s second aliyah by explaining the empowerments He intends to bestow upon ordinary people to enable them to build the *mish'kan*. As you read about the gracious infusion of supernatural power the Holy One is planning remember that until just a few months ago the descendants of Israel were slaves in Egypt doing unskilled labor in quarries, brickworks, and store cities. These were not artisans; they were shepherds and herdsmen that had been forced into back-breaking, mind-numbing manual labor. There was no one among the descendants of Ya'akov who was qualified in any way to build the *mish'kan*. There was no carpenter qualified to fashion its furnishings out of *shittim* wood. There were no metal-smiths skilled enough to cast and hammer its intricate gold, silver, and bronze moldings. There were no perfumers capable of apothecating its fine incense and oil. Strong backs these refugees from the slave camps certainly had; skills of the type needed for the making of the *mish'kan* 'according to the pattern' the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain – that was another story.

What Is the Holy One Promising To Do To Empower Betzalel and Aholiav – and US?

Into this vacuum the Holy One breathes a full measure His unfathomable creativity. Out of darkness He calls forth light. He supernaturally interacts with, enters, indwells, fills two men. He thereby empowers with wisdom, understanding, and skill – the kind of skill only His Spirit possesses – the kind of skill necessary to recreate the Throne Room of Heaven on earth, out of earthly materials. Here is exactly how Torah what the Holy One told Moshe about this:

Re'eh qarati v'shem B'tzalel

Behold, I have called by name Betzal'el

ben-Uri ven-Chur l'mateh Y'hudah

the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Y'hudah:

V'amale oto ruach Elohim

and I have filled him with the Breath/Spirit of God

b'chochmah uv't'vunah

in wisdom and in understanding,

uv'da'at uv'chol-melachah

and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,

Va'ani hineh natati ito et Oholi'av

I, behold, I have appointed with him Oholi'av,
ben-Achisamach l'mateh-Dan
the son of Achisamakh, of the tribe of Dan;
uvlev kol-chacham-lev natati chochmah
and in the heart of all who are wise-hearted I have put wisdom,
v'asu et kol-asher tziviticha
that they may make all that I have instructed you”
[Exodus 31:1-6]

Even as the camp of the Redeemed is about to be plunged into idolatry with Aharon's 'golden calf', two supernaturally empowered persons are being prepared by the Holy One to oversee the production of the *Mish'kan*. One of the men the Holy One will empower is Betzalel, the grandson of *Chur* [Hur], from the tribe of Yehudah. The other is Aholiav, from the tribe of Dan.

Be Filled With the Breath/Spirit!

What is the Holy One planning on doing to/for/in/through Betzalel, Aholiav – and a bunch of faceless, nameless ordinary folk like us? First of all, the Holy One says: ***va'amale oto ruach Elohim*** - *and I will fill him with breath/spirit/creative-life-force of the Ultimate Creator/Sovereign!* Did you catch that? Long before the 'Day of Pentecost' the Holy One was already pouring out His Spirit on people as it suited Him. And He had a reason for doing this that was much more important to the world than giving the people in question an ecstatic experience to talk about.

Note the fascinating verb that the Holy One used to describe how His Spirit was going to interact with Betzalel and Aholiav. The verb chose employed by the Holy One was *male*³. This verb pictures a process of *taking something or someone who is empty and injecting something else to fill that thing person up, make it or him full, and cause it/him to teem with abundance*. See, for example, the first usages of this verb *male* in Torah. In Genesis 1:22 the Holy One blessed the creatures of the waters to be able to 'fill' [*male*] the seas. In Genesis 1:28 the Holy One similarly blessed mankind so he would be able to *fill* [*male*] the earth.

In the course of the great indwelling that the Holy One has planned for us - using *Betzalel*, son of *Uri*, and *Aholiav*, son of *Achisamach*, as patterns - He is going to cleanse us of the residue of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. He is going to sanctify us from all uncleanness. He is going to free us from the tyranny of the common. He is going to open and maintain an on-going Spirit-to-spirit level dialogue with us, He is going to take us on long journeys through life, walking with us, talking with us, and training us in righteousness all along the way. He is

³ Male' is *mem, lamed, alef*. Strong's Hebrew word #4390, it is pronounced *mah-leh*'.

going to teach us to overcome the downward pull of our fleshly attitudes, moods, emotions, and appetites. He is going to awaken us to the folly of our opinions, our philosophies, our ideologies, and political theories, and our pseudo-intellectual illusions of self-importance. He is going to fill us with His joy, His peace, His love for mankind and Creation, His patience, His gentleness, His goodness, His kindness, His faithfulness, and His self-control. He is going to constantly renew our minds, Sabbath after Sabbath. He is going to awaken us to a new level of freedom every Passover. He is going to rekindle our love for His Voice and His Words of life every Feast of Weeks. He is going to fill us anew with energy and delight every Feast of Tabernacles. He is going to restore our souls every Yom Kippur. He is going to rewire our brains in the watches of the night. He is going to purify our thoughts in the brilliance of His light. He is going to touch our lips with a coal from His altar, and make our speech glorious. He is going to make His Face shine upon us, beautifying our countenance. He is going to fine-tune our behaviors, and lead us into season after season of 'good works' that will cause those who see them to glorify our Father who is in Heaven. He is going to be so present in our lives so powerfully and tangibly that we begin to bear fruit in season, and offer brilliant, simple solutions to situations that merely cause the people around us to fret, stew, and complain.

What does it look like for a man to be 'filled' with the Spirit of the Holy One? We are not talking here about just having the Holy Spirit inspire a person or rest on them for a season. We are talking about a mortal man being 'filled' – made full, abundant, overflowing - with the Breath of the Creator, like Adam was in the Garden, before the Fall. I am talking about something much more significant than what 'signs' or 'evidences' may or may not have appeared in connection with follow *the infilling*. 'Evidences' of infilling are a petty subject. What the Holy One does want us to talk and start to meditate about at this stage of our Divinely choreographed Torah journey are the *essence*, the *purpose*, and the *transforming effect* of the infilling of *Ruach HaQodesh*. What we do need to begin to hunger for at this point in our journey is *the depth, and breadth, and width, height of the body of privileges and responsibilities- not to mention the consequences for our flesh - that comes with the infilling of the Holy One's Breath of Life*. What we do need to understand is that the Holy One makes it clear, from the very beginning, that ordinary human beings – even redeemed ones - cannot begin to create a dwelling place for Him on earth, even a *shadow* of Heavenly reality, without more than Divine Empowerment. Bringing Heaven to earth - reconciling the Creator of All Things with His Creation - can only come about one way. It can only come through the *infilling* of ordinary, flawed, and undeserving men with His Powerful, Invigorating, Inspiring, Life-giving Breath.

The people of the Most High are not supposed to be obsessive-compulsive. Nor are we to be *ministry driven*, numbers driven, or power/gifts driven. The people of the Most High are created, called forth, and redeemed to be *Holy Breath/Spirit filled, Holy Breath/Spirit led, and Holy Breath/Spirit driven*.

Is the Breath/Spirit of the Creator of the Universe alive, active, and operating in you? Are you walking in, being led by, this Divine Breath/Spirit yet - or are you still walking in the flesh, being enslaved by its urges, drives, appetites, desires, and emotions? Are you still letting yourself be lied to and led off course by the opinions, attitudes, hypocrisy, fake news, and flawed logic of your and other men's pseudo-intellect/depraved mind? Are you still letting yourself be distracted from your assigned kingdom mission by every wind of doctrine from the serpent's propaganda apparatus? Are you still allowing your *shalom*, your joy, your hope, your energy, and your passion for life be drained by siphoned off into the pursuit of this or that illusion cast by the hallucinogenic juices of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Day-in and day-out do you find yourself being energized and directed by the Breath/Spirit of the Holy One? Do you find yourselves subconsciously manifesting His attributes of patience, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and faithfulness to covenant? – or are you still led around and driven about by the desires, urges, reactions, and perceived needs of your flesh?

The Creator's way is for us to *be filled with His Empowering Breath* - in which is His *will*, His *Wisdom*, His *Understanding*, His *Compassion*, His *Creative Genius* and His *Strength*. Our Divine Bridegroom's plan is that everything we do we do through *His empowering*. He *breathes upon us with His breath*, and His breath *quicken our mortal bodies*. His breath *drives us*. *But as it drives us, it directs us, leads us, teaches us, and enables us*.

That which He calls us to do, therefore, we do not do – cannot do – are not *expected to do* out of our own *strength*, out of our own *will*, out of our own *determination*, out of our own *skill*, out of our own perseverance or perspiration or purpose. His Empowering Breath within us is the only power source sufficient to accomplish that for which we are called. Betzal'el and Aholiav are our example. They were not chosen to direct the building of the *Mish'kan* because they were naturally skilled. They were set apart for this task because they were willing to be *in-filled, directed, and taught* by the Empowering Breath of the Master Creator.

The Right Driver Makes All the Difference!

You may be wondering at this point, “Okay – so how can I tell a *person* indwelt by and driven by the Empowering Breath/Creative-Life-Force of the Holy One from someone who is flowing in some other source of strength and motivation? The

Divine Author of Torah has made it pretty simple to distinguish between the two kinds of people. He has made it where we can directly compare the actions of Holy Spirit in-filled people like *Betzal'el* and *Aholi'av* with – well, with men with big ideas and a lot of charisma like *Aharon*.

Aharon is about to demonstrate vividly to the world, in tomorrow's aliyah, the kinds of works that people who are not *Spirit empowered and driven* do. All we have to do to make this contrast is *look ahead to tomorrow's aliyah*. Remember, however, as we do so, that before engaging in any of the actions about which we will read in tomorrow's aliyah, Aharon has already been proclaimed by the Holy One as the *Kohen Gadol* [High Priest] of the redeemed community. That happened in parsha *Tetzaveh*. That means that, from the point of his designation by the Holy One on, we are not to focus on Aharon HIMSELF – but we are to look *past him* – and past his actions – and see *the spiritual truths that he is called to act out for us*.

Aharon is not going to look good at all in the narrative we read tomorrow. But the point of the narrative is NOT AHARON. He is just going to be the one who is used by the Divine Writer of Torah to *illustrate a spiritual truth* for us. From *Tetzaveh* on absolutely nothing is going to be as it seems with regard to Aharon and his sons. All their actions after *Tetzaveh* should be viewed through the prism of their *priestly function*. That said, we are not to *condemn* or *judge* Aharon for what Torah is about to tell us he does. He is our *High Priest*. He is acting PROPHETICALLY to teach us a critical prophetic lesson.

The lesson is about *charismatic purpose-driven people that we will encounter in the course of life*. Aharon will *play the part of one*, to show us – and help us recognize - their characteristic behavior patterns. *What kinds of behavior* will Aharon's drama teach us to be on the lookout for? He will teach us that charismatic purpose-driven people surround themselves with *fawning sycophants*. See **Exodus 32:1**. He will teach us that such people will pressure us to *give them our gold*. See **Exodus 32:2**. He will teach us that such people not only *openly violate the Torah of the Holy One*, but enthusiastically lead others to follow them in doing so. See **Exodus 32:3**. He will teach us that such people erect *false altars*, call for *sacrifices/offerings from the people that are not directed by Torah*, and institute *golden calf worship systems*. See **Exodus 32:4-5**. He will teach us that such people *plan meetings and schedule celebrations/festivals/events* that the Holy One has not called for or ordained. See **Exodus 32:5[a]**.

Aharon's drama will teach us that people from time to time in their fallen-ness actually *attach the Name of the Holy One to the plans and programs they have conceived in their own minds*. See **Exodus 32:5[b]**. And his sad little drama will teach

us that such people will, in the interest of making a name for themselves people will promote *sensuality* and the *doing – in the Name of the Holy One – of whatever draws and holds the attention of a crowd*. See **Exodus 32:7**. All this will teach us that in the critical moment when things go horribly wrong and everything people who do such things have built comes crashing down around them — as it always eventually will – they will often attempt to cover up their behavior by *shifting the blame to the very people they have led astray* [see **Exodus 32:19-24**].

This aliyah of Torah will teach us that after blaming their own followers, such men will then stand by silently while their associates *take judgment into their own hands and carve up the people that followed them into error with swords*. See **Exodus 32:28-29**⁴.

Spirit-Driven People Are Wired Differently

What about *Holy Spirit-in-dwelt and driven people*? How are their approaches to life and ministry *different*? First of all, Spirit-driven people cling tenaciously to, consistently walk in, and model for others the ways of the Holy One as set forth in Torah. The Spirit, after all, WROTE the Torah. The Spirit will therefore *never stray from* either the letter or the spirit of the Torah. And that means that Spirit-driven people – to the extent they actually let the Spirit drive them - will therefore never stray from either the spirit or the letter of the Torah either. Is that not exactly what Yeshua taught us in Matthew 5:17 –20?

Secondly, Spirit indwelt and driven people seek no reward and claim no glory or honor for themselves. While purpose-driven people and organizations publicize their activities in every media format they can and bask in the glory and honor of self-proclaimed accomplishments, Spirit indwelt and driven people draw no attention to themselves, but reflect all praise and honor to the Holy One. Spirit indwelt and driven people always recognize, privately and publicly, that it is never them that does anything of value – the good works [*mitzvot*] they do are merely the outworking of *the Breath of the Holy One within them, driving them on*. It is never *them* that does the *mitzvot, you see*; it is *the work of Holy Spirit*. And they *know it*. And they are *just fine with everyone else knowing it too*.

Truly Spirit-driven people therefore need, deserve, and will accept, neither *credit* nor *adulation*, and *will not demand respect, a title, a salary, or a benefits package*. Nor is what Spirit driven people *do*, or *who they are*, affected in the least by what others may think or say about them – for good or for evil. Is that not the point of

⁴At least Aharon will wake up at some point in the catastrophe that flowed from his actions, will have a dramatic change of heart and approach, and will actually lay the foundation for healing in the community. That is *to his credit*. Do not count on the purpose-driven types to do an about-face like Aharon did very often; but it can and sometimes does happen - *praise be to the Holy One!*

Yeshua's teaching in Matthew 5:16⁵? Is not that what Shaul was advocating in I Corinthians 10:31⁶ and Colossians 3:17⁷? Is not this what Kefa taught us in I Peter 4:11⁸?

Thirdly, Holy Spirit indwelt and driven people do not do the *mitzvot* of Torah to impress others, or in an attempt to 'earn' salvation – they do mitzvot simply because *that is the direction in which they are driven by the Spirit/breath of the Divine Bridegroom that indwells them*. Is not that what Yeshua was teaching in Matthew 6:1-18⁹?

Fourthly, Holy Spirit indwelt and driven people *do not judge by the sight of their eyes or the hearing of their ears*. Is not that what Yeshua was teaching in Matthew 5:21-48?

Choose Your Driver Carefully!

Now that the differences between the *purpose-driven* person and the *Spirit-driven* person have been exposed I have a question for you: Which “driver” will you choose? Will you choose to live a *purpose-driven* lifestyle? Or will you instead surrender to the Holy One's call to live a *Spirit-driven* lifestyle? Which of the two ways do you think is the Holy One's will for you? Is it to purpose in your heart and mind to do the *mitzvot* of Torah - or is it to receive from Him Divine Empowerment, Enabling, and Direction so as to let the Breath of Heaven do the *mitzvot* of Torah using your body parts and your material possessions the way a Master Carpenter uses hammers, nails, chisels, lathes and planes, and drills?

All of which leads us, appropriately enough, to the final subject of today's aliyah of Torah – the Divine Calling of the Holy One to *rest in His completed work*. Resting in the Holy One's completed work is, you see, something that purpose-driven people can never do. Only *Spirit driven* people can experience what it means to *rest in the completed work of the Divine Bridegroom*. As important as it

⁵ As translated from Greek to English in the Hebrew Names Version this verse states: “***Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.***”

⁶ In the Hebrew Names translation this verse reads: “***Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.***”

⁷ In the Hebrew Names translation this verse reads: “***Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Yeshua, giving thanks to God the Father, through him.***”

⁸ In the Hebrew Names translation this verse reads: “***If any man speaks let it be as it were oracles of God. If any man serves let it be as of the strength which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Yeshua the Messiah, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***”

⁹ This passage, as translated in the Hebrew Names Edition, begins with the admonition: “***Be careful that you don't do your charitable giving before men, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.***” It goes on to address prayers for public consumption [6:5-15] and fasting to appear religious [6:16-18].

is, you see, that the Throne Room of Heaven be recreated on earth by His Redeemed Community, through His Divine Empowerment, the Holy One interrupts His instructions for the building of the *Mish'kan* to tell us that there is *one thing even MORE important*.

The Shabbat: The Mark of Covenantal Consecration

What is that one thing, you ask? It is *sh'mar*-ing [i.e. *valuing, treasuring, cherishing and carefully guarding*] *the Shabbat*. If you do not believe me, believe the Holy One. For Torah tells us:

The Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying, "Speak also to the children of Yisra'el, saying, 'Most assuredly you are to keep [Hebrew, sh'mar] my Shabbatot: for it is a sign [Hebrew, ot] between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the Holy One who sanctifies you. Therefore, keep [Hebrew, sh'mar] the Shabbat; for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes/dishonors it –death, it is surely death! For whoever does any work [Hebrew, m'lakah] therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days is work to be done, but the seventh day is a Shabbat of solemn rest [Hebrew, shabbaton], holy to the Holy One. Whoever does any work [Hebrew, melacah] on the day of Shabbat shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Yisra'el are to keep [Hebrew, sh'mar] the Shabbat, to observe [Hebrew, asah] the Shabbat throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. [Exodus 31:12-16]

Building the *mish'kan* would, you see, be totally meaningless – a chasing of the wind – if in our flurry of activity and our release of God-given creativity we compromised the sign of our covenant with the Holy One.

The *Mish'kan* was never intended to be the essential sign of our covenant with the Divine Bridegroom. It was only a parlor for betrothal period interactions and a stage for the Divine Passion Play. The essential sign of our covenant with the Holy One is *the Shabbat*. As the Holy One Himself puts it:

It [i.e. the Shabbat] is a sign between me and the children of Yisra'el forever; for in six days the Holy One made heaven and eretz, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed."

We are to *honor, and treasure, and clothe ourselves in the Shabbat* like a newly married bride would treasure and wear *her 'wedding ring'*. Our honoring of the Shabbat – not our worship services or activities or our good deeds - is what testifies to the world that we are new creations in Messiah. Hmmmnn. Out of curiosity, on what day of the week do you think it might have been that Aharon

and his purpose-driven crew kindled a fire and built the golden calf? I wonder if it just might have been *the Shabbat*?

Note also that by assigning the Sabbath first priority as he called us out of our season of *ish patach oholo* [i.e. each man at the entrance to his own tent] back into meaningful levels of community life and cooperative activities, the Holy One was reinforcing the remembrance of the Sabbath as the primary thing we are all to do as a nation. Recognition and reverencing of the Holy One's Sabbath is the essential thing all Covenant Partners of the Holy One are to do. Everything else in our collective mission is to stem and flow from that shared aspect of identity and destiny.

The Ultimate Gift – Tablets of Stone Containing ‘The Testimony’

In the concluding verse of today's aliyah – Genesis 31:18 – the Holy One offers one more critically-important gift to mankind to kick off the era of the Mish'kan. That precious gift is ***‘two tablets containing the Testimony, inscribed in stone with the Finger of God.’*** What a blessing! What a treasure! What a gift!

Of course, we know this particular gift is not exactly going to work out the way it was intended. Moshe will receive it from the Holy One's Hand, but then he will fumble the delivery assignment. The most precious gift that humankind has ever received will be thrown down in a fit of rage – and broken into a million pieces. *Selah!*

Back when the Holy One first called Moshe up to the top of Mount Sinai to receive the *Beauty Realm Download*, the exact invitation He extended to His closest ‘face-to-Face friend’ was:

***Come up to Me on the mountain and spend some time there;
and I will give you tablets of stone,
and the Torah, and the Mitzvah that I have written that you may teach them.***

[Exodus 24:12b]

The giving of the tablets was thus THE REASON for which Moshe was called up above the ‘Throne Room’ realm into the King's chambers. The Holy One wanted His People – and the world – to actually have a set of His Instructions *in His Handwriting*. He wanted this Heavenly gift to be deposited in the aron ha-edut [ark of the Testimony]. He wanted the tablets He had inscribed in stone for us with His own Hand to constitute both the epicenter of our camp and the ‘true north’ compass-point of all human life. He wanted the words He had inscribed thereon to be the ‘true tone’ to which all men tune their hearts, minds, wills, and aspirations. He never told Moshe to throw them down. He never told Moshe to break them. That, alas, was all on Moshe.

Considered together, Exodus 24:12 and 31:18 tell us that there were three separate but inter-related things inscribed on the first set of tablets: 1. *Ha-edut* (the ‘Testimonies’); 2. *Ha-Torah* (the ‘Torah’; KJV, the ‘Law’), and 3. *Ha-Mitzvah* (the instructions; KJV the ‘Commandment’).

What was/is *ha-Edut* – *i.e.* the ‘Testimonies’? The verb at the root of this phrase is *ud* - *ayin, vav, dalet*. The first recorded uses of this verb paint it as meaning *to issue a cautionary notification/warning*. See **Genesis 43:3 & Exodus 19:21, 23**. Think of a road sign, warning travelers of curves, intersections, and potential dangers – as well as landmarks and destinations - that lie ahead, beyond the travelers’ line of sight. Consider the narratives of the Fall, of the Flood, of the Tower, and of the cycles and patterns of Created Order revealed through the experiences of the patriarchs. Consider the story of the Enslavement and the detailed chronicles of the Great ‘Plagues’, wilderness wanderings, and prototypical wars of the Holy One’s ‘Great Nation’.

What was/is *ha-Torah* – *i.e.* the ‘Torah’ (KJV ‘law’)? Torah is a term drawn from the context of a craftsman apprenticeship. It refers to the whole body of *instructions, assignments, and directions* the Master Craftsman gives His apprentices to teach them excellence in the trade/craft in question.

What was/is *ha-Mitzvah* – *i.e.* the ‘coursework assignment’; KJV the ‘Commandment’)? Also drawn from the context of the craftsman apprenticeship relationship, *ha-Mitzvah* refers to the specific training exercises and projects that the Master assigns His apprentices to perform to train them in practical application of His ‘Torah’.

Similarly, in the context of ancient betrothal protocols, at the conclusion of the betrothal ceremony the Bridegroom-to-be would give His bride-to-be a document which he had written for her. This precious gift, called a *shitre eyrusin*, contained a description of the bride in the fulness of potential that the man envisioned for her. Throughout the betrothal period the bride was supposed to read, cherish, consult, study, meditate upon, and learn by practicing all the things that her Bridegroom had written about her in the *shitre eyrusin*, in order that she could be ready to step seamlessly into the Bridal Role when the time came. As the Bridegroom was occupied with ‘preparing a place’ for He and His Bride to dwell together, the Bride was to occupy herself with ‘making herself ready’ for excellence at all the responsibilities of her bridal state.

Do you know the potential the Bridegroom-King sees in you? Do you know the plans He has for you? Do understand what He wants for you? Do you have the briefing? Are you humbly and enthusiastically embracing *ha-Edut*, *Ha-Torah*, and *Ha-Mitzvah*?

Questions For Today's Study

1. Today's aliyah is divisible into three connected sections. The first section, consisting of verses 1-11, deals with the calling of the Holy One on the lives of the men (and probably women) who were to implement the instructions the Holy One gave for the construction of His Dwelling Place on earth/House of Prayer for all nations.

[A] What were the names of the two men who were to be in charge of the construction?

[B] What do those names mean in Hebrew?

2. The Holy One says in verses 3-5 that He has prepared and set apart these two men for the work they are to do.

[A] Describe how the Holy One has prepared and set them apart?

[B] What restraint did the Holy One put on the creativity of these men?

3. The second section of today's *psukim* [verses] Torah deals with the Shabbat.

[A] For what reasons did the Holy One say B'nei Yisrael was to 'keep' the Shabbat?

[B] Look up the word "keep", as used in verse 13, in Strong's and Gesenius, and write the Hebrew word and its definition.

[C] With the Hebrew word and its definition in mind, what do you think it means to "keep" the Shabbat?

[D] In Exodus 20:8 what did the Holy One specifically say we are all to do with and with regard to the Seventh Day? Look up the Hebrew word Shabbat [Sabbath]. Write it out in Hebrew. Then explain the word picture the *shin*, *beit*, *tav* shoresh reveals to you.

[E] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the word translated as "sign" in verse 13. What is the Hebrew word and what does it mean here?

[F] Why do you think the Holy One repeated His instructions about the Shabbat at this point in the narrative of Exodus?

4. What GIFT did the Holy One give *B'nei Yisrael* [in the person of Moshe] after He concluded His speaking on Mount Sinai?

5. In today's haftarah reading *Eliyahu* [Elijah] meets with Ovadyah [Obadiah] and gives him an instruction that he does not want to hear.

*As `Ovadyah was in the way, behold, Eliyahu met him:
and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Is it you, my lord Eliyahu?*

*He answered him, **It is I: go, tell your lord, Behold, Eliyahu [is here].**
He said, **Wherein have I sinned,**
that you would deliver your servant into the hand of Ach'av, to kill me?
As the Holy One your God lives,
there is no nation or kingdom, where my lord has not sent to seek you:
and when they said, "He is not here",
he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they didn't find you.*

*Now you say, "Go, tell your lord, Behold, Eliyahu [is here]".
It will happen, as soon as I am gone from you,
that the Spirit of the Holy One will carry you I don't know where;
and so when I come and tell Ach'av, and he can't find you, he will kill me:
but I your servant fear the Holy One from my youth.*

*Wasn't it told my lord what I did
when Izevel killed the prophets of the Holy One,
how I hid one hundred men of the Holy One's prophets by fifty in a cave,
and fed them with bread and water?
Now you say, Go, tell your lord, "Behold, Eliyahu [is here]"; and he will kill me.*

*Eliyahu said, "As the Holy One of Hosts lives, before whom I stand,
I will surely show myself to him today.
So `Ovadyah went to meet Ach'av, and told him; and Ach'av went to meet Eliyahu.
[I Kings 18:7-16]*

- [A] What is Obadiah's concern about doing what Elijah commanded?
- [B] What did *Eliyahu* [Elijah] say (and do) to ease that concern?
- [C] How did Eliyahu's promised action help ease Obadiah's concern?

6. Our reading from the apostolic scriptures is I Cor. 8:7. I will put this verse in its context:

*...to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him;
and one Lord, Yeshua the Messiah,
through whom are all things, and we live through him.
However, that knowledge isn't in all men.
But some, with consciousness of the idol until now, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol,
and their conscience [Greek, *suneidesis*]¹⁰, being weak, is defiled.
[I Corinthians 8:6-7]*

- [A] What knowledge does Shaul say some people lack?
- [B] What effect does Shaul say this lack of knowledge has on these *people*?
- [C] What does Shaul say happens to the 'conscience' of a person who does

¹⁰ *Suneidesis* is Strong's Greek word #4893, pronounced *soon-i'-day-sis*, and meaning, according to Strong's, 'the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending one, condemning the other'.

not have this knowledge?

[D] Does this lack of knowledge Shaul is talking about apply to Jews, who know Torah, and have understood the one-ness of the Holy One all their lives – or to gentile converts, who are just coming out of the pagan religions prevalent in the Roman empire, or to Gentile pagans who might be interested in, but not committed to, the Messianic pathway Shaul taught?

[E] Does this teaching/instruction of Shaul have anything whatever to do with the Torah's instructions concerning what we are and are not to eat? Or is it simply discussing vegetables and grain sold in the markets located outside pagan temples [the center of commerce of every Greek city]? Explain your answer.

*May you never look upon the ministries in which you engage as “yours”;
And may ‘ministry’ never be more important to you than the Holy One or His Shabbat.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 19:4-6

Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

*In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,
Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
and rejoices like a strong man to run its race.*

*Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.*