

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Vayikra:*** **Leviticus 3:1-17**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 44:6-20**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Hebrews 10:9-10**

***This is to be a perpetual separation protocol
throughout your generations, in all your settlements***
[Leviticus 3:17]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 113:7-9;
This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the *G'vurot, the Prayer of His Powers, Part II*

V'im-zevach shlamim korbano im min-ha-bakar – i.e. when one slaughters the fatted calf from the herd as a shalom-making celebration **Leviticus 3:1a.**

One of the purposes for which the Holy One invites us into His Courts is to train us in the practical skill of maximizing what I call our 'K.I.P'. – i.e. *Kingdom-Influence Potential*. He wants us to know that our lives are strategically designed to inject holiness and goodness into a network of ecosystems. Every single time our lives intersect with another human being, in any way and on any level, you see, the demeanor, attitude, tone, speech, behavior, and reactions we exhibit will either advance the objectives of the Kingdom or sabotage those objectives. The Holy One's Grand Redemptive Plan requires all who identify as 'His' to engage the world as wise, focused, diligent and effectual Kingdom Ambassadors – operatives trained to sow seeds of wholeness and holiness into every gathering, formal or informal they attend; into each one-on-one social interaction, casual or otherwise, in which they participate; into all marketplace encounters and transactions in which they engage; and in all personal relationships to which they are a party. What seeds of wholeness and holiness am I talking about? I am talking about the life-nurturing seeds found in the Fruit of the Spirit: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and strategic self-denial*. He knows that we like to talk more than we like to listen. He knows we like to think highly of ourselves and 'our kind' and to think evil of others. He knows we like to swagger more than bow. He knows we prefer to climbing up on soapboxes and preaching over rolling up our sleeves and serving. He knows we like to criticize more than encourage, and to see others 'get what's coming to them' instead of being forgiven, healed, redeemed and restored. He knows that we prefer to sit in ivory towers pondering abstractions, debating issues of ideology, and arguing over nuances of philosophy and religion more than helping real people deal with real problems. He knows that

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we have holes in our souls. He knows that, without Divine help, fallen humans do not ‘play well’ with others. He knows that our fallen nature is petty, petulant, and pompous; self-absorbed, self-conscious, and self-righteous; easily distracted, easily seduced, easily manipulated, easily offended, and easily discouraged. He knows that in a state of carnality we tend to think, speak, behave, and react out of ‘dark energy’ spectrums: lust/revulsion, envy/rejection, materialism/hyper-spirituality, emotion/pseudo-intellect, apathy/obsession-compulsion, sentimentality/stoicism, ethno-centricity/egalitarianism etc. The Holy One knows the toxic effect these tendencies have on our lives and relationships. He knows their depth, length, and breadth. And He knows the cure for each one.

For the sake of His Grand Redemptive Plan, the Holy One wants to give us every chance to have a beneficial, nurturing impact on the people He allows into our spheres of influence – *i.e.* those we *live with*, those *whom we encounter in the course of community or commerce*, and *those in the outside world to whom we are called to model His Will, Ways, and Words of Wisdom*. He intends, through the power of the Words He is releasing at Sinai, to empower us to work through, deal with, and move on from, all personal, ethnic, social, and cultural offenses. He knows that offense and joy are incompatible, that outrage destroys shalom, that envy produces strife, and that roots of bitterness sabotage our mission of redemption and restoration. He intends to teach us that, for people of the Kingdom, *shalom* must trump outrage, and mercy must triumph over judgment, every time. He wants us to learn to leave not only vengeance, but any concept of justice or ‘just rewards’, up to Him alone. He wants us to know that harboring even the slightest hint of unforgiveness toward another human being – much less a whole culture, race, or ethnicity – is 100% irreconcilable with our covenant calling.

So are you – or do you at least want to be - at peace with all men? Are you ‘over’ your past hurts? Can you be trusted to play well with others? And if not, are you willing to trust the Holy One to help you with that? He has a radical plan – replete with stunning visuals – for human beings who have been hurt, or who have hurt others, to get closure, move on, and actually be better men and/or women for the experience.

***Easy to Be Hard?*²**

The Holy One knows that the moment we lose consciousness of the majesty of His Presence and Persona, and His Plan for our lives and our world, we tend to start exhibiting anti-social attitudes and behaviors. We start to look at – and speak to

² The heading of this paragraph is borrowed from a song written circa 1967 for the secular soft-rock group ‘Three Dog Night’. The opening lines of the song asked: *How can people be so heartless? How can people be so cruel?* The answer was then provided: It is ‘*easy to be hard; easy to be cold.*’

and about – one another critically. We forget that we all share a Creator, a great redemption story, and a glorious calling. We careen off into increasingly toxic adventures of self-pleasing, self-promotion, and self-righteousness. Some detour off into self-worship; others into self-hatred. We tend, all too easily to get off *in the flesh*. We become appetite, urge, pleasure, thrill, sentimentality, and emotion-driven train wrecks. We fall in love with the musings of our own mind and the sound of our own voice. We stop listening to – or paying any respect to - anyone who doesn't think exactly like we think and therefore doesn't echo the same bullet points and clichés we regurgitate. When we are not immersed in His Presence, we start immediately to think far too highly of our own - or some other man's – intellect. We lose the ability to see and deal with real people in our shared challenge of humanity. We start instead to think of our fellow men analytically. We set up shop in ivory towers. We sort and label people according to our perspective of their ethnicity, their philosophy, their ideology, their socio-economic class, their educational background; their nation/region/neighborhood of origin, their size and shape, their talents, their attractiveness, and their religion. We thereby lose the ability to see their uniqueness, or the potential for blessing they carry, or their need, or their God-given purpose on the earth. We nit-pick. We see something we don't like, then obsess about it. We criticize their appearance. We scoff at their words. We judge their behavior – focusing only on the negative, never seeing the positive. We exaggerate – and delight in publicly exposing - their faults. We jump to conclusions without all the evidence – much less the eyewitness testimony, subject to cross-examination, of two or more qualified, disinterested witnesses. We pride ourselves on being well-informed - when what we really are is hopelessly brainwashed. We congratulate ourselves on having well-reasoned opinions, when what we really have are bullet points drilled into our heads by some philosophy, ideology, or ethnicity's toxic propaganda. We salivate over scandals. We take perverse delight in listening to and propounding conspiracy theories and doomsday scenarios. We indulge vain imaginations. We glorify futile thinking. We embrace first uncleanness, then vile passions – and hypocritically condemn all who we consider just not 'woke' enough to embrace those things as well. We major on minor things, and make mountains out of mole hills. We fret over evildoers. We presume the worst about people. We imagine something sinister lurking between the lines of every statement we hear anyone outside our chosen echo chamber makes. We work ourselves into a frenzy of hate over abstract concepts. We become enraged over words. We obsess over the 'end-times'. We get unsocial. We get offended at the drop of a hat. We fly into a rant at the slightest provocation. We thereby wind up toxifying every conversation, poisoning every interaction, and wreaking havoc on every relationship. We hurt people – especially those we think we love. And some of us actually believe - and loudly profess – that we are doing these things because we 'follow Torah'.

Our King wants us to be at peace with all men. As Shaul of Tarsus [i.e. ‘Paul’] wrote: *Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. To the extent possible, as far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves.* **Romans 12:16b -19a.**

But ... what do we do if/when that ‘*to the extent possible ... live peaceably with all men*’ exhortation does not work out for us? The Holy One doesn’t want us to either rant about it or stew over it. He doesn’t want any root of toxic bitterness displacing the shalom He has brought into – invested at great cost in - our lives. He doesn’t want us to internalize insults. He doesn’t want us to nurse hurts. He doesn’t want us to carry grudges. He wants us to overcome, to transcend, and to move on. He wants us to bring all our offenses to Him. He wants us to lay all the toxicity we have internalized where it belongs - on the grates of the brazen altar. He wants all our relationships – indeed all our interactions with humanity in any medium - thoroughly grounded in the *pathway of the cherubim*, that leads to the tree of life. He shows us the way; but it is up to us to walk it out.

Awakening to Our Stunning New Reality

The intensity of the Heavenly spotlight is now shining uncomfortably upon *absolutely everything un-Bridelike within us*. The brilliance of the Divine Light in which we are now called upon live is challenging us at the deepest levels of our heart, mind, and soul. Holy seeds of Divine utterance are now taking root in our inner most being. Our Bridegroom-King is making us over again as ‘good soil’ capable of nurturing the Holy Seed of His Words to maturity and fruitfulness.

The *Ultimate Extreme Makeover* about which we have spoken is now underway. We are at last beginning to understand - to our great embarrassment – just how *desperately* we need just the kind of *drastic makeover* Sefer *Vayikra* calls us to undergo. We now realize that it is the Words of this Book that hold the key to us transforming from the self-centered, childish, whimpering, high-maintenance people that shrunk back from direct contact with our Divine Bridegroom on the day of our Betrothal to a radiant Bride without blemish – a faithful covenant partner-in-redemption for the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak, and of Ya’akov. If we want to co-labor with the Creator of the Universe in the deeper things of the Kingdom – and we do - the revelation stream of this Book holds the key. This Book is the wisdom repository in which the Holy One has deposited for us the essential secrets of progressing in *Bride-likeness*. *Vayikra* constitutes His Brilliantly designed instruction manual for *the Bride who would make herself ready*.

Can A Mortal Man Truly Connect, Converse, Commune, Cohabit, and Co-Labor With the Eternal God?

The third book of Torah is like a *treasure map*. The Holy One has given it to us to study in order that we can get acquainted with milestones we will need to pass on the God-ordained pathways to real, lasting intimacy with our Divine Bridegroom. The idea of intimacy with the Holy One is however inherently problematic, isn't it? After all, the Holy One is *infinite* – while everything about man is *finite*. The Holy One is *omnipotent*, and *omnipresent*, and *omniscient*, and *vast* and *unknowable* – while man is *mortal* and *limited* in every way. From a *rational standpoint*, as viewed through the lens of the human mind, the differences seem so vast that there does not seem to be much hope even for a *meaningful relationship*, much less *intimacy*. But the Holy One refuses to be bound – or to let His Beloved be bound - by rationality. He knows that what men call 'rationality' is really nothing more than the fruit of the knowledge of the tree of good and evil. What He wants to do is *awaken* and *nurture* in us instead the 'tree of life' life force He breathed into Adam so long ago. And so He *programs and Divinely-empowers* us to *do the irrational* – to *hunger for Him*, to *seek after Him*, to *find Him* when we seek Him with all our hearts, to *latch on to the hem of His Garment*, to *have successful interaction with Him*, and to thereby *enjoy intimate communion with Him*. Through the medium of Torah our Divine Bridegroom even lovingly tells us *how to do these things*. He gives us all the *roadmap* we should ever need – as well as *instructions to follow on the way*. The life-changing journey to which this Book of Torah calls us – the Divine pilgrimage designed by the Holy One to take us from our current state of *naiveté*, insecurity and independence to a state of *intimate communion with our Beloved* will consist of *several phases*.

The Point of Departure on the Pathway of Divine Invitation

What we are studying this week – the *avodah of korbanot* - is merely the *first phase or leg of the journey*. This leg of the journey begins at the 'Way', or entry point into the Tent of Meeting complex, and ends only a short distance away at the brazen altar's fire pit. From there we still have to go to and look into the reflective waters of - and wash ourselves in - the *bronze laver*. That will be phase/leg #2 of the journey to Bride-likeness. Once we complete our time at the bronze laver we will have to pass the 'Door' into the Holy Place. That will be leg #3 of the journey. We will then have three separate places to visit inside that Holy Place. Those visits will constitute leg #s 4, 5 and 6 of the journey of purification. And only after we have completed transformative transactions at each of the three stations of the Holy Place can we take the Hand of our Great High Priest and pass through the Veil into the Holy of Holies itself [the seventh and final leg of this journey] and learn to function and minister in His Presence, and as His Hands and Heart extended in our world.

Phase #1 of the Journey

*The journey from the Opening of the Tent of Meeting
to the Brazen Altar – The **Avodah of Korbanot***

The whole idea of the *korbanot* protocols is that we might come to know Him - and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of sharing in His Suffering, as Shaul said so poetically in Philippians 3:10. “But wait” I can hear you saying, “I don’t own any sheep, goats, oxen or grain. And even if I did what would I do with them? There is no Temple or mish’kan standing in Jerusalem to take them to and no functioning Aharonic priest to receive and process them. Plus the whole blood and burning thing weirds me out, anyway!” Relax. I am not suggesting that you start raising and slaughtering animals in your backyard. That would be the *wrong* thing to do. Since 70 CE you see - when Titus’ soldiers burned the Temple and tore down the brazen altar - approaching the Holy One at His Betrothal Parlor through the methodology of surrogacy has been completely out of the question. Torah makes it very, very, very clear that we are not to present either ‘tithes’ or ‘offerings’ *anywhere* but at the *mish’kan* or Temple.

If you do not believe me on this subject please stop right now and turn ahead in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 12, verses 4-7. Then read verses 11-13, 18-19, and 26-28 of the same chapter as well. If I read that passage correctly it teaches pretty clearly that the presentation of either ‘offerings’ or ‘tithes’ anywhere else besides the place being spoken about in Deuteronomy 12 – however well intentioned - constitutes ‘*strange fire*’, would be *totally inconsistent with Torah*, and would be *very, very bad news* for us and for all concerned. Alms and gifts to the poor – which are always permissible and encouraged - are one thing. Physical tithes and offerings however have *important spiritual connotations and ramifications* both in this world and in the spiritual world, and are therefore quite another.

***It’s Really Not About the Blood of Bulls and Goats –
And What is More, It Never Has Been!***

The truth of the matter – as the prophets of the TaNaKh kept trying to make clear in their day – was that our connection with the Holy One through the *korbanot* is not – and was *never intended to be* - *made through the blood of animals*. The animals were never intended as anything more than a *visual aid* or *teaching tool*. Remember that the *Mish’kan* was merely a replica – a scale model, as it were – on earth of an eternal spiritual reality in Heaven that the Holy One showed Moshe on Mount Sinai. Our connection with the Holy One is – always has been - a spiritual connection, which occurred – and still occurs - through our surrendering to Him of the very fabric and essence of our own lives. The physical *korbanot* we presented when the altar was operational were designed as vivid images to point us to and cause us to identify with that which had occurred in the real, Heavenly Courts of

the Holy One before the foundation of the world. The fire, the smoke and the blood on earth was real enough to get our attention – but it was also ethereal enough to remind us to direct our hearts and our trust above, to *the Heavenly realities of which the Mish'kan and its physical activities were only intended to serve as an earthly shadowbox and like an interactive touch-screen monitor.*

Through developing familiarity with the *korbanot protocols* we can confidently say “*We have the technology*” With no Temple in place we cannot ritually slaughter animals, nor shower Aharon’s descendants with parched wheat kernels, first fruits, or tithes. But what we can and need to do is *connect with and introduce in our thoughts, conversations at home and along the way, prayers, and spheres of influence the spiritual principles underlying each of the korbanot protocols described in Leviticus 1-5.* These protocols teach us what is necessary – in every age and generation - for a human being to have intimate communion with the Holy One. Each of these protocols is, you see, a part of our walk with Messiah. He did not come to destroy or abolish the Torah – but to make it come alive and fully operational in real time, in real life, in a real world.

Those who follow the Messiah should know these pathways to intimacy very well. For they are the pathways on which He loves to lead His Talmidim.

Step III On the Pathway to Intimacy With the Creator: The Korban Shelem Protocol

Today we will study a third “pathway to intimacy” that the Holy One paved for us, and into which He calls us. This *korban protocol* goes by two names – **zevach** and *shelem* [plural, *sh'lamim*]. Here is how Torah introduces the concept:

V'im-zevach shlamim korbano im min ha-bakar³

When one approaches in well-being with a surrogate from among the cattle,

hu makriv im-zachar im-nekevah tamim

he may bring either an unblemished male or an unblemished female

yak'riveinu lifnei Adonai

as his surrogate before the Holy One.

V'samach yado al-rosh korbano

He is to press his hands on the head of the korban

Ush'chato petach Ohel Mo'ed

and slaughter it at the entrance of the Communion Tent.

³ The one making the *korban shelem* must personally select an animal from either his *bakar*- cattle, his *kvasim* - sheep, or his *izim* – goats.

V'zarku b'nei Aharon ha-kohanim et ha-dam

The priests, sons of Aharon, are to dash its blood

al ha-mizbe'ach saviv

on all sides of the altar.

[Leviticus 3:1-2]

Korban shelem was not a commanded ritual anyone had to perform. It was a *natural, joyous response* to the blessedness of living in covenant with the Holy One. It, like the protocol of *korban olah* and that of *korban minchah*, about which we have been reading this week, was a protocol for *willing lovers*, not fearful slaves. It was engaged in by Divine invitation, not commanded.

The instructions concerning the *korban shelem* assume, of course, that the previous *korbanot* we have studied – the *korban olah* and the *korban minchah* – have been presented previously by the offeror – that his life and his goods are totally surrendered to the Holy One, and that Torah has already become the foundation of the offeror's 'new creation' lifestyle.

Why would the *korban shelem* be something the Holy One would instruct us how to do in the book designed to tell us how to approach and have intimate fellowship with Him? The word *shelem* [pronounced *sheh'-lem*] is derived from the verb root *shalam*⁴. This verb root means to *make peace*, or to *make at ease*. It implies everything that goes with peace – *comfort, harmonious relationships, safety, protection, abundant provision, good health and a sense of overall wellbeing*. *Shalom* is, of course, the root of the Hebrew word/greeting “*Shalom*”. We who are in covenant with the Holy One should know *shalom* better than anyone – and should, as a natural outgrowth of who we are in Messiah, spread *shalom* around. Indeed, every opportunity we are afforded for human interaction, much less relationship, is for the purpose that we would seed that interaction or relationship with *shalom*. We are called to be sowers – and gardeners and reapers – of *shalom*.

The idea behind *korban shelem*, and the only justifiable motivation for approaching the Divine Bridegroom in this way, is an *attitude of thanksgiving*, and of *genuine appreciation to the Holy One* for the “fat” – the abundance, especially spiritual and relational – that we have received from our King's Hand. Because we have Him as our King, we can be at *shalom* no matter what the situation. We find ourselves “at peace” – with *Him*, with *ourselves*, and with our *life circumstances*, and with our *fellow man*. It is for this reason, and in connection with this *korban*, that Yeshua taught:

***If you are presenting your korban shelem at the altar
and there remember that your brother has something against you,***

⁴ *Shalam* is *shin, lamed, mem sofit*. Strong's Hebrew word #7999, it is pronounced *shaw-lawm*'.

leave your korban there in front of the altar.
First, go and be reconciled [make shelem] with your brother;
Then come and present your korban shelem.”
[Matthew 5:23-24]

In other words, the Holy One is concerned with *the status of your heart*, and with *the wholeness of your relationships* - not in smelling the sweet aroma released by the burning of the fat of an animal.

The sweet savor of a *korban shelem* should represent an inner reality of *shalom* [peace, wholeness, well-being, health, contentment, confidence, completeness, and a sense of security] in your life. That is what you and I were created to have – after we have made approach to the Holy One through the *korban olah* [total surrender and dedication of our lives] and the *korban minchah* [acknowledgement that all we possess, and all our labor produces, are the Holy One’s to do with as He pleases].

The *korban shelem* protocol was designed by the Holy One to be an exuberant, joyful celebration. Alfred Edersheim describes this type of korban as “*the most joyous of all sacrifices*” and “*a season of happy fellowship with the Covenant God, in which He condescended to become Israel’s Guest at the sacrificial meal*” [Edersheim, “*The Temple, It’s Ministry and Services*”]. This *korban* protocol started off like the protocol for *korban olah*, in that the one seeking to approach the Holy One brought an animal to the *mish’kan* to serve as a surrogate for him, then laid his hands upon the head of the animal⁵, and presented the animal to Aharon or one of his sons. The protocol for *korban shelem* differed significantly from the *korban olah* protocol, however, in regard to the disposition of the slaughtered animal’s carcass. With the *korban olah*, the carcass was placed on the altar and burned completely. With the *korban shelem*, however, the fat alone was burnt⁶. Of the remainder a small part was then allotted to the priests. And the bulk of the edible flesh of the animal presented as a *korban shelem* was then returned to the one who brought the *korban shelem* to form the main ingredient of a joyful feast to be eaten “before the Holy One”, by the offeror, his family and friends, the priests, and all other people who had come to worship on the day in question. *Behold how good and how pleasant it is*

Understanding the Essence of Shelem

⁵ The act of laying one’s hand upon the head of, and resting his weight upon, the surrogate one brings before presenting it for a *korban olah* or a *korban shelem* (see Leviticus 1:4, and Leviticus 3:2,8, and 13) is called *s’micha*. By resting all his weight on the animal, the owner symbolically transfers his identity to the animal. The animal ‘bears’ the weight of the owner, since the owner is presenting the animal as a surrogate, or representative of, and on behalf of, himself. This practice is reflective of Avraham’s act on Mount Moriyah, at the *Akeida*, of, as the Holy One instructed, substituting the ram provided by the Holy One for Yitzchak. See **Genesis 22:13**.

⁶ Only the relatively small amount of fat adhering to the animal’s inner organs was presented on the altar.

Shelem is a Hebrew term closely related to a much more familiar word, *shalom*. *Shalom* is a state of overall Covenant blessing, characterized by high levels of peace, quiet enjoyment of aspects of one's life and relationships, safety, security, wellness, ample provision, wholeness, and contentment. At the heart of the *shalom* experience is a sense of being in harmonious and productive relationship with the Holy One, with all one's closest family members and friends, and with mankind and Creation at large. *Shalom* is what we wish for ourselves, for our children, and for all men. Hence we love to greet each other – coming and going - with a blessing of *shalom*. In reality, however, we know that true *shalom* is possible only through the experience of a vibrant, maturing covenant relationship between a man and the Holy One. Man cannot bring about *shalom* – only the Holy One can. Fortunately, we who have entered into covenant with the Holy One have Him as the stronger partner in our covenant. As, when, and to the extent we align ourselves with His will [following the korban olah protocol], and choose to view and relate to physical things and material possessions as mere instruments for employment in His redemptive plan, instead of something to be desired for their own beauty or value [following the korban minchah protocol], He loves to bring *shalom* into our lives and relationships. He does not do this all at once – but gradually, sequentially, as we gradually surrender one area of life, urge, appetite, or fear, at a time His Will and His Ways.

So, how does *shalom* relate to *shelem*? *Shelem* is an expression of thanks to the Holy One for bringing a new level or experience of *shalom* into our lives. In the context of the *avodah* of the earthly *Mish'kan*, *shelem* refers to a worshipper's voluntary approach to the Holy One to give thanks for his most recent experience of the blessings of *shalom* – especially in the realm of interpersonal relationships – that he is enjoying by reason of the Holy One's activities on his behalf in the context of the Covenant. This is a recognition that without the much more important participation of the stronger covenant partner, no level of *shalom* would be possible. To approach with a *shelem* is to acknowledge and declare our total dependence upon the Holy One's performance of His part of the Covenant undertakings.

2. The Specific Essential Human Need Which the Holy One Empowers Us to Address and Remediate Through the Korban Shelem Protocol

As we have previously discussed in these studies each of the *korbanot* protocols given to us by the Holy One at Sinai is specifically designed to meet and atone for one of the basic human needs that man has as a result of the Fall. The Holy One desires to restore each of us to our unique presentation of man's previous glorious estate. But He knows that only He – working in cooperation with the human being – can bring about this restoration.

The basic human need that the *shalem protocol* is designed to address, meet and atone for is the need to break off the lies of the Serpent about what attitude toward and relationship with other people – from *the closest of intimate companions and family members* to *strangers* and even to *our enemies*. After all, Proverbs 16:7 says that *when a man's ways please the Holy One, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him*.

When did the tendency to misunderstand, negatively interact with, and deal selfishly with other people come into play? Yet again, it was in the Garden of Eden. At first Adam was at total shalom with Chava. He saw her, and treated her, as *‘bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh’*. He took her as his *ezer kenegdo* [*i.e.* his perfectly offsetting and wonderfully complementing helpmate/helper]. But after ingesting the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil Adam suddenly started worrying about being transparent and vulnerable in her presence, and when he next spoke to the Holy One about her he called her no longer bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, or viewed her as his *ezer kenegdo*, but insultingly and unhappily as *‘the woman You assigned to me’*. Genesis 3:12. From that day forward mankind has been unable, without Divine enlightenment, to see other human beings – whether the most intimate of companions and family members or strangers and enemies – through the pure eyes of the Holy One their Creator. Instead we live in a ‘haze’ of Serpent lies about both ourselves and every person we encounter or with whom we interact. We have lost the ability to see the people in our lives for what they are – and for what they are not. We see them only through eyes of self-preservation and how they fit into our personal agendas. The virus we have downloaded through the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has programmed us to focus on what we can get from people on the one hand, and what physical, financial, relational, or emotional harm we fear they can cause on the other hand. Love our neighbor? Without Divine Empowerment by His Ruach, and an ultimate extreme Bridal Makeover through His Words, we are completely incapable of anything close.

The Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and the ‘Not-Love’ Virus

Man has now downloaded a virus of sorts – a virus designed by the Serpent to cause us to misread affectionate feelings and fleshly attractions as *‘love’*. But they are nothing of the kind. It is all just part of the toxic effect of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The ‘not-love’ virus makes our idea of ‘love’ all about how a person does – or does not – please us with their appearance, whet our fleshly appetites, and make us feel important. Thus we go looking for love in all the wrong places and faces. We tend to wind up treating people we think we ‘love’ as our personal slaves, playthings, scapegoats, demigods, and/or punching bags as and when it suits our fancy. We demand that they make us ‘feel’ the way we think

we are supposed to feel. We rely upon them to make us happy. We get hurt, offended, frustrated, and critical when they do not. And we let them do the same to us. If it is all about the feeling, all is fair in love and war. And, of course, eventually what we mistakenly thought of as love tends to wind up a looking a whole lot alike more like war than it does love.

When the serpent virus of ‘not-love’ infects us, you see, we start to lump people into classifications and categories. We start putting labels on them instead of recognizing, calling forth, and nurturing their individuality and unique potential for greatness. As a result of the ‘not-love’ virus, we have become so poisoned in our minds, emotions, appetites, urges, and vision that without Divine help and guidance we are helpless to resist the pull of the soul-ties we have entered into with people as we have used them, and consented to be used by them, for selfish, immature, unholy purposes. We swallow up the people in our lives into drama scenarios. We ensnare them in intricate webs of self-interested deception. Un-love presents itself in an easily recognizable symptom complex of impatience, irritability, un-kindness, un-gentleness, un-forgiveness, and un-faithfulness.

But Thank Heaven, There is an Antidote for This Virus!

Not to worry - that is what *korban shalem* is all about. The *shalem* protocols are designed to meet this defect in the human mind, heart, and soul head on. Our self-centered, fearful approach to the people of this world has to be dealt with. Essential to the healing, restorative protocol, however, is man’s awakening from the post-hypnotic suggestion of out-of-control appetites, urges, and fleshly desires, and the re-alignment of his vision and perspective on other human beings in our lives with that of our Maker.

To make *korban shalem* a man must recognize, acknowledge, and embrace the reality that no interpersonal relationship in his life is his to *keep* or *delight in a fleshly or self-centered way*. Every person that passes into our sphere of influence is only ‘on loan’ from the Creator and subject to our selfless stewardship for the purposes of the Covenant.

To what can the protocol for *shelem* be likened? It can be likened unto that part of the prayer the Master taught His talmidim to pray to the Holy One which said: ‘*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*’ The *shelem* protocols awaken us to the reality that it is the Holy One – our suzerain - not our own wit, talent, charisma, good deeds, or personal ideology, race, creed, beliefs, political opinions, gender, birth order, skin color, preferences, likes, or dislikes that enables us to have peaceful, mutually-beneficial interactions and build meaningful relationship with other human beings.

Korban shelem presents a Hebraic picture of someone – an individual worshipper or a nation – adopting a posture and attitude of *totally surrendering all relationships and interpersonal interactions* to the use ordained for them by the Holy One.

The Korban Shelem and Yeshua's Teachings

Unto what in Yeshua's teachings can the protocol of *korban shelem* be likened? Do you remember the parable of the prodigal son and the joyful feast thrown as a result of “*killing the fatted calf*” upon the prodigal's return? The Master was not referring to the throwing of just any party – He was instead referring specifically to the joyous presentation of a *zevach*, or *korban shelem*.

This *korbanot protocol* was never “required”, or even “suggested”. It is not about “law”, and never has been. It is about *drawing near to the Holy One—expressing thanks to Him and rejoicing in His goodness and His blessing*. Something wonderful happens – a prodigal comes home, for example – and a man's heart wishes to respond to the blessing with thanksgiving, in a way that will honor the Holy One – the source of every blessing. The *korban shelem* protocol is the appropriate outlet in such a case.

The Korban Shelem as the Reaffirmation of Commitment to the Covenant

The first instance in the Bible of the making of *korban shelem* is described in Exodus 24:4-8. The context of this first instance of *korban shelem* was a special covenantal ceremony that took place at Mount Sinai. The ceremony in question was the second phase of the ‘betrothal’ ceremony where B'nei Yisrael finally proclaimed *na'aseh v'nish'ma*, thus officially accepting the Holy One's offer of covenant in order to become the Holy One's *goy k'dosh* [holy nation]. Here is how Torah records this event:

*And Moshe wrote all the words of the Holy One, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which presented korbanot olohot and **korbanot sh'lamim** of oxen unto the Holy One.*

*And Moshe took half of the blood, and put [it] in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people: and they said, “All that the Holy One has said – **na'aseh v'nish'ma** - we will we **asah** [build, do, make into concrete reality] and we will **sh'ma** [pay attention to, hear, align our thoughts, words, and actions to, and be changed by].”*

And Moshe took the blood, and sprinkled [it] on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Holy One has made with you in connection with all these words. [Exodus 24:4-8]

The blood from these *korbanot*, sprinkled both on the *mizbeach* and on the people, symbolized B'nei Yisrael's entry into the covenant (**Exodus 24:6-8**). The flesh of the *korbanot sh'lamim* was eaten at the conclusion of the ceremony (**Exodus 24:11**) as a special covenant-sealing meal.

Thus was *korban shelem* made to forever be a symbol of B'nei Yisrael's acceptance of MATAN TORAH [the giving of the Torah]. A joint feast shared by covenantal partners, each *korban shelem* signifies a joyous return of someone in the community to the *na'aseh v'nish'ma* commitment and the Torah lifestyle.

This connection between the *na'aseh v'nish'ma* commitment and the *korban shelem* is further emphasized by the two additional instances in Chumash when B'nei Yisrael offer a special collective *korban shelem*. Both instances relate to the commitment of the betrothal covenant. The first instance is the Yom ha-Sh'mini [eighth day] ceremony of dedication of the *kohanim* [priests]. See Leviticus 9:1-5. The second instance is a full generation later, when the generation that will enter the land under Y'hoshua is instructed to re-enact *Ma'amad Har Sinai* on *Har Eival* [Mount Ebal], and thereby accept the Torah anew. See **Deuteronomy 27:1-8**.

Isn't it time for a *korban shelem*, Beloved? Isn't it time to leave our patterns of religiosity and leaven [artificial matters designed for appearance] and return to the commitment of *na'aseh v'nish'ma* – a commitment to do things the Holy One's way, as a responsive Bride, rather than do things our way, and ask Him to come along for the ride and bless us?

The author is not suggesting that it is time you physically went out and *killed a fatted calf*. I am however suggesting *throwing out our fathers' golden calf*, and returning to the point where Torah – the actual prophetic declaration of the Holy One over us – is once again the center of our lives.

A Destructive Misreading of the Book of Hebrews

Today's reading from the B'rit Chadasha comes from the tenth chapter of the letter called "Hebrews", a letter we read in English, but which was written by a Hebrew-speaking Jew to other Hebrew-speaking Jews. The letter encourages those Jews who accept Yeshua of Natzret as Messiah, and describes in detail how Yeshua served in His execution as their *korban chata't* [sin-carrying surrogate] and, serves in His resurrected and ascended state, as their *Kohen Gadol* [High Priest].

Here is today's reading in the Hebrew Names Version:

... then he [Messiah Yeshua] has said, **Behold, I have come to do your will.**
He takes away [Greek, *anairei*] the first [Greek, *proton*],
that he may establish [Greek, *stesi*] the second [Greek, *deuteron*],

*by which will we have been sanctified
through the offering of the body of Yeshua the Messiah once for all.*
[Hebrews 10:9-10]

The sentence translated into English as *He takes away the first, that He may establish the second* has been quoted by some people in support of the doctrine of some Christians that the *korban* concept [drawing near to the Holy One through a surrogate, after the pattern set forth in Leviticus 1-5] has been done away with by Yeshua, and that now drawing near to the Holy One is merely through “the second” – which is the nebulous phrase “*to do your* [the Holy One’s] *will*”.

But is this really what is being said? The Greek phrase which our English Bibles translate as “*He takes (or taketh) away the first*” is *anairei to proton*. The primary, most common meaning of the word *anairei* [from *anaireio*, a combination of *ana*, meaning *in the midst of*, or *between*, and *haireomai*, meaning *to take for oneself*, to *prefer*] is not “throw away”, or “do away with”, as the English translations seem to imply. The most ordinary meaning of *anairei* would be to *take for oneself*, as a *preferred item* – to *adopt*, or *choose*. So the most ordinary meaning of the phrase *anairei to proton* would not be “he takes away the first”, but “*he adopts, or takes unto Himself, or chooses as His way, the first* [i.e. *korban*]”.

The remainder of the Greek sentence is *ina to deutron stese* – popularly translated “*that He may establish the second*”, is also very interesting. There are two things about the verb *stese* [the aorist, active subjunctive form of Strong’s Greek word # 2476, the verb *histemi*] that are of particular interest. First of all, it is in the subjunctive mood, meaning it is dealing with possibility, not certainty; hence the phrase “may establish” is used in translation. It *might or might not happen, depending upon the circumstances*.

What might or might not happen? *Stese* might or might not happen. What is *stese*? This Greek verb, which normally means to *cause to stand*, to *place*, to *put in place*, to *set up*, to *establish*, and/or to *make firm*, has a peculiar usage when used in discussions or documents pertaining to Hebrews/Jews - namely, to cause to appear before or present something to the *Sanhedrin* (the ruling Jewish counsel of authorities). The literal meaning of the sentence in question, then, in context, is something like this:

*“He took upon Himself the form of a **korban**, adopting the role of a surrogate,
in order that He might be brought before the Sanhedrin”.*

The point is not that Yeshua “did away with” the *korban* system [which, properly understood, will never pass away, as it is part of the eternal protocol established for drawing near to the Holy One], but that *He took upon Himself the role of – and became for us - the korban surrogate. In so doing, He did the Holy One’s will before the Sanhedrin*,

which was to stand silently like a sheep led to slaughter, as prophesied in the TaNaKh. Blessed be His holy Name forever!

Questions For Today's Study

1. Now let's search out for ourselves the beauty of the Holy One's instructions regarding the *korban shelem* – another *pathway to intimacy* with God.

[A] In Gesenius, look up the word “fellowship” [KJV ‘peace’] as used in today's assigned verses. Write the Hebrew word so translated and its definitions.

[B] If you have any reference material on the various types of offerings, review what those sources say about “peace” or “fellowship” offerings, and make notes about anything you consider informative.

[C] How do you think presentation of a *korban shelem* fosters intimacy with the Holy One?

2. The Holy One specifically described the types of animals that could serve as surrogates in connection with an approach of *shelem* [peace, fellowship, security, comfort, wholeness, wellness, and completion].

[A] What three types of animals may be used to make “*korban shelem*”?

[B] List the responsibilities of the individual who desired to make “*korban shelem*”;

[C] List the responsibilities of the priest(s) with respect to making *korban shelem*.

[D] What is to be done with the “fat” of a *korban shelem*? Look up and write the Hebrew word translated as “fat” and write its definition.

[E] What was to be done with the remainder of a *korban shelem*?

3. In your life is there anything you do (i.e. any protocol of prayer, service, or worship) which you feel is comparable to the making of “*korban shelem*”? Explain.

4. In today's assigned verses from the Haftarah we read:

Thus says the Holy One, the King of Yisra'el, and his Redeemer, the Holy One of Hosts:

I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God.

Who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it,

and set it in order for me, since I established the ancient people?

and the things that are coming, and that shall happen, let them declare.

Don't fear, neither be afraid: haven't I declared to you of old, and shown it?

You are my witnesses. Is there a God besides me?

Indeed, there is not. I don't know any Rock.

Those who fashion an engraved image are all of them vanity;

and the things that they delight in shall not profit;

and their own witnesses don't see, nor know: that they may be disappointed.

Who has fashioned a god, or molten an image that is profitable for nothing?

*Behold, all his fellows shall be disappointed;
and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up;
they shall fear, they shall be put to shame together.*

* * *

*They don't know, neither do they consider:
for he has shut their eyes, that they can't see;
and their hearts, that they can't understand.*

*None calls to mind, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say,
I have burned part of it in the fire; yes, also I have baked bread on the coals of it;
I have roasted flesh and eaten it:
and shall I make the residue of it an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?*

*He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside;
and he can't deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?*

[Isaiah 44:6-20]

[A] List the descriptions the Holy One gives of Himself in this passage.

[B] Beside each descriptive word written by the Holy One of Himself, write the Hebrew word that is so translated, and give its definition.

[C] In verse 8, the Holy One designates someone as His “witnesses”. What is the Hebrew word so translated, and what does it mean?

[D] Of what are those who are designated His “witnesses” in verse 8 called to testify?

[E] Read Acts 1:4-8 and then re-read Isaiah 44:2-5. How are Yeshua’s words related to this Haftarah?

5. In the Torah and Haftarah verses for today, fire plays an important part. Look up the word translated as “fire” and write the Hebrew word and its definition.

[A] Read some sources that talk about the symbolic meaning of “fire”.

[B] Pause and pray for revelation for what fire means to the Holy One. With eyes closed, wait for Him to show you His fire.

[C] Now, write for yourself a *b'racha* (a prayer of praise to the Holy One beginning with the words “*Blessed are You, O Lord our God ...*”) which you feel would be appropriate to pray whenever you kindle a fire for light, warmth or cooking. You may wish to recite this personal *b'racha* this coming Shabbat, as the candles are being lit.

6. How does Yeshua’s life on earth and death on the execution stake at the place of the skull relate to the “*korban shelem*” we studied about today in Torah? Before you answer consider I Corinthians 1:9, Philippians 3:10-11, Revelation 3:19-21, and I John 1:3.

7. According to Hebrews 10:7 and 9 what was Yeshua’s passion and purpose?

May that which was and ever remains the passion and purpose of Yeshua HaMaschiach become your passion and purpose, Dear Reader - this day and every day!

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 113:7-9

*He raises up the poor out of the dust,
and lifts up the needy from the ash heap;
That he may set him with princes,
even with the princes of his people.*

*He settles the barren woman in her home,
as a joyful mother of children.
Praise the Holy One!*