

Shiur L'Yom Chamishi¹

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Vayikra:*** Leviticus 4:1-35
 Haftarah: Isaiah 44:21-23
 B'rit Chadasha: Hebrews 10:11-14

And he will be forgiven.

[Leviticus 4:35]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 114:1-8;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the *Gevurot*, the Prayer of His Powers, Part II

Nefesh ki-teicheita v'sh'gagah mikol mitzyot Adonai - Any soul who ignorantly transgresses any life instruction of the Holy One ... *asher lo te'aseinah v'asah me'achat meiheinah* - doing what the instruction instructs not to do Leviticus 4:2.

Do you understand how precious the Torah is, Beloved? Torah is the Creator's olive branch of reconciliation extended. The Holy One gave us the gift of Torah instruction to use as our GPS navigation system because He knew the challenges that the 'thorn and thistle' world in which we all live our mortal lives would present to us. Torah is designed to function like a lifeline thrown to a sailor who has fallen overboard into an ocean teeming with sharks. It is to serve for us like a faithful lamp that shows a spelunker the way forward through the twists, turns, and sheer cliffs of a dark, seemingly endless cavern. Torah is for us an oasis of wisdom and understanding rising up out of a dry and thirsty land ravaged by swirling, howling sandstorms of folly and disinformation. Torah is True North, True Tone, and Pure Light. Its ways lead to healing, comfort, and consolation; its paths to abiding shalom. It is the Creator's all-wise instruction manual as to how any human who will listen can successfully navigate through the conflict and danger zones, around the noisy distraction midways, and past all the crisis, drama, and trauma episodes to which our journey exposes us. If we truly understood and appreciated how precious a gift we have been given in the Torah, we would never depart from it. Alas, the spirit is willing – but the flesh is weak.

The Dangerous Deception of Distraction, Detour, and Diversion

When we let the fear of the Holy One wane we get easily distracted by men, by circumstances, and by situations. When that happens, we tend to default to the 'animal instincts' and 'serpentine pseudo-intellectual assessment' approaches of Chava and Adam after an afternoon of binging on the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We follow the counsel of the ungodly. We stand in

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the way of sinners. We sit in the seat of the scornful. By the time we realize what has happened to us we are swimming with the sharks, choking on blowing sand, and slip-sliding down the cliff walls in the paralyzing darkness. Then, alas, we come to our senses – and long to return to the security of the lifeline, the shelter of the oasis, and the safety of the lamplight. The Holy One knows our frailty. He wants us to know there is a way of redemption and restoration. He is still exactly where and as we left Him. His ways – the Torah ways of life, health, and peace – have not changed and will not change. He – and they - still beckon to us. We just have to shake off the slime, run to Him, return to His Torah pathways, and reacclimate to His Beauty Realm all over again. How marvelous! How wonderful! How divine!

But more is involved than saying, ‘I’m sorry’, shedding a tear or two, and expecting everything to be as if nothing had ever happened. If the Holy One allowed our return to His paths of peace to be that easy, we would never learn to hate – and overcome – our sin. Since He calls us to be doorkeepers in His courts, and priests among the nations, He expects us to first follow – and become joyful models of - His brilliantly-designed approach-and-communion protocols. He wants us to learn that every picture in the *Mish’kan* – and every *teshuvah* episode we experience - tells a story, and that He intends for every act performed in the *Kadosh realm* by the *willing of heart* releases a refreshing pulse of redemptive, restorative potential into the world. He wants us to learn why – and what it requires on a human being’s part – to never, ever appear before Him empty-handed. **Exodus 34:30 and Deuteronomy 16:16.** We must learn that strategic discipline has to be a part of the restoration process, because only discipline empowers us to grow, mature, and maintain mission-focus in the face of distractions, frustrations, temptations, injustices, transgressions, trespasses, and provocations. Finally, we must also learn that the pathways of return are for everyone – even those we consider our enemies, so no anger, offense, unforgiveness, outrage, bitterness, blame, judgmentalism, malice, or hatred toward others can stand in His Presence. Paradise lost can be restored – but the restoration is not for our sakes alone, but for His Kingdom’s advancement; hence, our return to the Torah can never be completed on our terms – only on His.

The Restoration Protocol

Just inside the cherubim-embossed linen ‘veil’ that separates that which is *holy, inspiring, healing, and empowering* from that which is *fleshly, flowing in folly, and filled with frustration* the Holy One has had us set up a beautiful, eye-catching receptacle of fire. This sacred place of continual burning is to serve as *center stage* for the most important acts of the Great Passion Play our King wants us to present. As a testimony to the nations we are called to constantly act out the following

essential aspects of Redemption at this altar:

1. Avraham's response to the Holy One's *Lech Lecha* call [Genesis 12:1-4]. We do this through acting out the drama of *korban olah*;
2. Avraham's 'Blessing of Melki-Tzedek' encounter [Genesis 14:18-20]. We do this through acting out the drama of *korban minchah*;
3. Avraham's 'Oaks of Mamre' experience [Genesis 18]. We do this through acting out the drama of *korban shelem*;
4. Ya'akov's 'Back to Beit-El' journey [Genesis 28:10-22 & Genesis 35:1-7]. We do this through acting out the drama of *korban chata'at*; and
5. Yehudah's life-changing *She is More Righteous than I* acknowledgement [Genesis 38:11-26]. We do this through acting out the drama of *korban asham*.

The Testimonies of Kingdom Redemption that we are called to act out at brazen altar need to become second nature to us. The longer – and the more closely – we walk with the Holy One, the more acutely aware we should become of our own shortcomings, distractions, and transgressions. Our King's incredible extensions of goodwill, kindness, forgiveness, and mercy toward fallen man should become the primary themes of everything we think, say, and do. As individuals and households we should long to receive a fresh infusion of our King's forgiveness at this altar every day. Then, at each pilgrimage festival the altar should become the stage on which we reconnect on a communal/national level with, relive, and collectively act out, *community-focused events* that are also part and parcel of our Covenantal DNA. At Pesach, we relive the night when the head of each household among our people smeared lamb's blood on our doorposts as a sign of both our and the Holy One's commitment to the Covenant. We do this through acting out the drama of *korban Pesach*. Then, at *Shavuot*, we relive the *Matan Torah* experience through the drama of the raising up of the two loaves – like the two tablets the Holy One gave Moshe. And finally, at Sukkot, we reconnect with the Experience of Being Joined in the Covenant Calling and Mission by a Mixed Multitude from all nations. We do this through the seventy approaches at the altar, as well as through building and living in hastily contrived shelters, exposed to the elements, and through taking in hand the four species.

The goal of all these exercises – and all the associated protocols - is for us to connect with, learn to trust, and be disciplined by the '*man with the linen cord and measuring rod in his hand*' that the prophet Ezekiel foresaw providing us both access to the Ultimate Holy Temple and understanding concerning the endgame of the Holy One's Grand Redemptive and Restorative Plan. See **Ezekiel 40-47; especially 40:1-3 and 47:1-12**. The Holy One intends for His people to have mikveh regularly in the flowing *Kedusha Energy River* – i.e. the River of Life – that flows out from under the threshold of His Throne. If we are to do that effectively, in a way that

awakens and activates our *Kingdom Impact Potential*, we need to develop ‘Heavenly pattern eyes’ – *i.e.* eyes that look beyond the physical, temporal things and symbolic images we are being shown in this Discourse into the eternal, Beauty Realm dimension to which that those things allude. Every picture tells a story; and every act plays a critical part in the Grand Plan.

***Act IV – There is a Costume Change,
But the Scene Remains the Same***

It is now our appointed time to focus our attention on the Great Mish’kan Passion Play’s fourth scene – the redemptive drama the Hebrew text of Torah calls the Torah of *korban ha-chatat*. A word of warning, Dear One – during the course of this discussion you will probably feel a little ‘*sting*’. Do not ask for whom the *chata’at* on Heaven’s altar burns – it burns for me ... and it burns for you. Thank Heaven for that! Thank Heaven for the protocol of *chata’at*!

How can you get into character? How can you remember your lines? How can you make effective use of the assigned props? Just remember, you are Ya’akov – the ultimate prodigal son – desperately needing to reconnect with your Father. You have behaved badly, irresponsibly, independently. Your conduct has hurt people - and has made your name – which is really your father’s and family’s name - a stench in the land. You need an intervention. You need to go back to Beit-El – the house of God.

***An Essential Part of the Covenant Calling is to Recognize, and
Respond to, A Deep Longing to Return to and Bask In
our Father’s Presence - to Lean Into Him, to Experience His Love,
and to Learn From Him the Secrets of Life***

As we have discussed, the real name of the book known by most as ‘Leviticus’ is *Vayikra* – meaning “*and He called*” You have been *called*, Dear Reader. The Creator of the Universe has said to you ***Come, follow Me!*** If you respond to the call, what path – or set of connecting pathways - do you think He is likely to lead you down? It will be *His Way* – not *your way*. It will be the ancient path He has approved – not just any old way you want to go. Did He clear the path of *korban olah*, *korban minchah*, and *korban shelem* merely to abandon it in favor of you just whatever suits your fancy, whenever it is convenient, and however you ‘feel led’? The Upper Room Discourse, excerpts of which are quoted above, does not support such a theory. Messiah’s words in that discourse – His final private teaching to His talmidim prior to His death – clearly show that the pathways to intimacy with the Holy One which Yeshua recognizes for His talmidim are the very *mitzvot* and *torot* [plural of *torah*, which means instruction or teaching] He modeled for us. He made it clear that not one *yod* or pen stroke from the Torah would pass away until [a]

heaven and earth pass away, and [b] everything [every plan for which Creation was instituted] is completed. **Matthew 5:18**. Neither of those preconditions has occurred yet. And that brings us to the next step in the process – the step of *korban chatat*.

The “S” Word Finally Raises Its Head in the ‘Beauty Realm’ Narrative

The question on the table now is: *But* what happens if, instead of bringing shalom, joy, and healing to our spheres of influence as the Holy One has called and instructed us how to do, we mess up? What if we lose our focus, our perspective, our passion, or our way? What if we let our appetites get the best of us? What if we let our emotions get out of hand? What if our egos flare up, and we get self-centered instead of caring, self-righteous instead of holy? What happens if we start self-promoting instead of humbly serving? What if we let our pseudo-intellectual tendency to analyze, overthink, reduce to abstraction, label, and judge people – or anything – lead us into folly? What if we forget how important it is to play well with others, and someone gets hurt? What if we get caught up in the trappings of religion and lose our first love? What if we get distracted, frightened, confused, offended, or deceived? What if we start pontificating instead of meditating? What if we stop *sh’ma*-ing and start thinking we know everything? What if we turn loose of our Bridegroom-King’s Hand and go wandering off the beautiful relationship building, intimacy-developing, covenant-partner training path He has laid out for us? What if we STRAY – and get into, or cause, trouble?

What if we never read - or were never correctly taught - the Holy One’s instructions? What if we were just really busy, or preoccupied with other activities, or traumatized by evildoers and/or negative life experiences – to think about it? What if, for whatever reason, we did not understand what the instructions of the Holy One mean, or entail, or how they apply to our time and/or situation? What is to happen if, somewhere along the way, we wake up to find out that, though the BEAUTIFUL, ENERGIZING, AND EMPOWERING WORDS of the Holy One say one thing – we have done another – or have been content to do nothing at all? Call it by its Hebrew names [*i.e. chata, pasha, and/or avon*], or get all Westernized, morality-minded, and seat-of-the-scornful centered and call it ‘sin’ – what needs to happen if, as, and when we think, speak, act, react, or interact with others in way that constitute a dereliction of our duty to the Holy One – and a breach of our covenant with Him?

Ah, there’s the rub! With the Holy One, it is always about *covenant* – *not ‘morality’*. The issues we are talking about here, in this context, are not what Christian preachers like to call ‘Heaven’ or ‘Hell’; the issues we are talking about here are our *identity as sons and daughters of the Covenant*, our *reason for being*

alive at such a time as this, our *calling and destiny* as a kingdom of priests and holy nation; and the type and quality of impact for the Kingdom of Heaven that we will have in this world. The *mitzvot* of Torah are a life path for people in Covenant with the Holy One. They are given as Covenant signs, marking the way of life, health and peace; of blessing and fruitfulness; of shalom, joy, and the purest form of love; of societal influence and impact at the most positive level; and of the purpose of life, for all the world to see. If we stray from the path assigned to us by Torah - well, if we stray even a centimeter from the Covenant path – bad things happen. Not only we ourselves, but the world, begin to suffer. The road signs are obscured. The ‘safe zone’ boundary markers are moved. We need us to make a course correction – and do it fast, before we cause any more damage. We need to go back to our King’s chambers, make things right with Him, receive discipline and/or forgiveness, as He sees fit, and then go back to ‘start’ on the Covenant path again.

‘Wokeness’ and Course Correction – the Creator’s Way!

We have spent three days meditating on *korbanot* that have nothing (directly at least) to do with ‘sin’ – i.e. breaches of the Covenant. Why has the important issue of ‘... *but what if we mess up and stray off course?*’ not been broached yet? Because it is only after we have crossed what I like to call the *commitment, submission, and surrender threshold* that we can we hope to deal maturely and responsibly with the ‘s’ word – i.e. what in the English language has come to be thought of as ‘sin’. The *korban olah*, *korban minchah*, and *korban shelem* protocols all dealt with issues of the soul – i.e. the will, the mind and the emotions. All of the protocols of approach we have discussed thus far have therefore been designed to assist us with motivation, and focus, and priorities. They led us down a path of *voluntary self-examination, self-dedication, submission, and surrendering all things, situations, controversies, and relationships* to the Holy One’s leadership. They were not about sin, repentance, or forgiveness; they were designed to help us AVOID falling into sin in the first place. As the Psalmist said: ***How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your Word!*** Psalm 119:9. The first three protocols of approach were thus about *reaffirmation of love for the Bridegroom and rededication to the Grand Kingdom Mission*. If we do not cross the commitment, submission and surrender threshold before attempting to deal with our breaches of covenant - i.e. our *sin* - we will inevitably do what Adam and Chava did, and *run away from the Holy One* in shame, rather than do as our Divine Bridegroom One instructs us, which is to *run to Him and be cleansed*.

Once we have committed our lives to our Divine Bridegroom, recognizing that independent of Him we have no life at all [*korban olah*]; and once we have in light of the above surrendered our claim of title and right to all our possessions and the

produce of all our labors to Him [*korban minchah*]; and once we have gone the further step of submitted all our relationships to Him, meaning that we have under the guidance and in the power of the Messiah [a] forgiven all offenses committed against us, and [b] made restitution for all wrongs we have inflicted on others [*korban shelem*] - then, and only then, we can comprehend this wonderful truth: *Sin – however ugly, unseemly, and disgusting it may be – does not have to permanently damage the relationship between us and our Betrothed Bridegroom.*

With the transformational wisdom of the freewill *korbanot protocols* described in Vayikra chapters 1-3 at work in us now, we should realize that *the Holy One has far too much invested in us - and us in Him - to let sin stand in the way of the relationship which He has created us to enjoy and model to the nations and peoples of the world.* Remember, when He revealed to Moshe the essence of His Character and Essential, Unchanging Attributes [Exodus 34:6-7] at the top of the list was ‘Merciful’. Also included prominently in the list were ‘*slow to anger*’ and ‘*forgiving [of] iniquity, transgression, and rebellion.*’ How can we draw on, and call forth, those unchanging attributes?

The Bridegroom-King makes a way where there seems to be no way. The Holy One has graciously provided a protocol. Redemption happens. *Hallelu-Yah!* It is now up to us whether we want to make use of the way and the protocol our Bridegroom-King has provided for us – or if we want to continue to think, speak, act and live lawlessly like we were strangers to the covenant.

Step #4 to Intimacy With the Holy One: The Pathway Finder - Korban Chattat

In King James’ day the English translators of the Church of England chose to translate this Hebrew phrase as ‘*sin offering*’. This is somewhat unfortunate – especially due to the way the term ‘sin’ is used in modern Western culture. The very practical Hebrew word *chata* is not at all synonymous with the modern theoretical Western concept of ‘sin’. *Chata*² is a verb meaning to *aim at but miss a target*. In the context of covenant it is the term used to describe any act or omission of a covenant partner that causes him to *miss the mark of covenant responsibility assigned to him under the covenant*. Gesenius’ Lexicon describes *chata* as a *miss* or *miss-step* – i.e. *a slip with the foot*. In the context of the covenants in place between the Holy One and men, *chata* is any transgression by the human partner to the covenant that results in the Holy One being accorded less Bridal response and honor by the human in question than He deserves. We might think of it as *thinking, speaking, acting, in an un-Bridelike manner and/or forbearing to think, speak and act as the Bride-like covenant partner to the Holy One that we have undertaken to*

² *Chata* is *chet, tet, alef*. Strong’s Hebrew word # H2398, it is pronounced *khaw-taw*’.

become. This is the kind of ‘sin’ for which the *korban chattat* protocol of Torah was designed to atone.

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

As we have discussed, each of the *korbanot protocols* given to us by the Holy One at Sinai are specifically designed to meet and address one of the basic *humanity issues* common to man. 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 *chattat protocol* is designed to address, meet and atone for is the need to deal with the fact that in our own power or by the sheer force of our own will, strength, or merit, we are incapable of doing anything the Holy One calls upon or instructs us to do in the way, with the consistency, and in the measure He as our Bridegroom-King and Redeemer deserves to have it done.

We can know what the Holy One deserves. We can know how He has told us to live, and what specifically He has told us to do in challenging situations. We can commit, and fully intend, to do His Will, His Way, according to His Word in all things. We can embark joyfully on the prescribed pathway to get us there. But without His Divine Presence counseling us, guiding us, empowering us, we simply cannot do it. We get distracted. We get disoriented. We start talking to serpents – and they start talking back! We start following subliminal serpentine suggestions. We start ingesting pseudo-intellectual disinformation that hardens our hearts and stiffens our necks. We lose our focus. We get disillusioned. We quit testifying of the mercies and kindnesses of our King and start fixating on the folly and misdeeds of our fellow men. The Holy One knows this process well. He knew what He was getting into when He called us. Our immaturity issues and short attention spans do not bother Him one whit. We are the ones who have to be continually reminded of it. He wants our inability to do what He deserves on our own to draw us closer to Him – as we surrender it to Him and let Him counsel us, teach us, guide us, and help us, and make up for our deficiency with His covering protocol. Think of a father who encourages his son to do something he knows the son cannot do without his help. If the son persists in trying to do the impossible thing independent of his father, he will have nothing but frustration. But if he comes to the end of his ability, acknowledges to his father that he is stumped, or has lost focus, or has made a mistake and needs to backtrack, his father gladly steps in and walks him through the steps necessary to complete the task, and gives him all the assistance he needs to do what he could not do alone.

That is where the *chattat protocol* comes in. The *chattat protocol* is designed to

meet this need head on. Our tendency to be independent, prideful, and legalistic, in our approach to the details of our relationship with the Holy One has to be dealt with – and dealt with and revisited regularly. If it is not dealt with and revisited regularly we tend to degenerate quickly into either self-righteous hypocrites with critical spirits and judgmental approaches to life or sad, guilt-ridden tinderboxes depositing drama and despair wherever we go.

Essential to the healing, restorative protocol, however, is man's awakening from the deception that he can be holy and fruitful without the Holy One's help. As Yeshua told His followers: ***I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*** John 15:5. The *korban chattat protocol* is designed to take man back to the embrace of the Holy One, and to the point of re-engaging on the pathway of Torah with His guidance and strength instead of on his own.

To what can the protocol for making *korban chattat* 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: ***Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from 'evil'*** [Hebrew *ra* – i.e. *the distracting, soul-fragmentating detours from the Presence, Will, Words, and Ways of the Holy One that lead human beings off the narrow path of life onto the broad path of confusion, controversy, calamity, catastrophe, and death*]. The *chattat protocols* awaken us to the reality that it is the Holy One – our suzerain - not our own will, wisdom strength, resolve, perseverance, energy or passion, that enables us to become everything the Holy One has prophetically declared us to be and to accomplish every purpose for which the Holy One has put on earth at such a time as this.

Korban chattat presents a Hebraic picture of someone – an individual worshipper or a nation – adopting a posture and attitude of *totally surrendering his self-determination, self-sufficiency fantasies* to the Holy One in exchange for the Holy One's empowering embrace.

Some Specifics of the Korban Chattat Protocol

Today's aliyah opens with these words spoken to Moshe by from the Holy One:

Daber el-benei Yisra'el l'emor nefesh ki-t'cheita v sh'gagah

Tell the descendants of Yisrael - If a soul foolishly strays away from the pathway

mikol mitzvot Adonai

[established by] all the Holy One's life-instructions

asher lo t'aseynah ve'asah me'achat meiheynah

and has done something that should not be done ...

The passage goes on to present and give specific instructions concerning the following situations:

1. The *High Priest* acknowledges breaking a provision of the covenant [v. 3 ff]
2. The *Whole Community* acknowledges breaking a provision of the covenant [v. 13 ff]
3. The *Leader/King of Israel* acknowledges breaking a provision of the covenant [v. 22 ff]
4. An *Ordinary Citizen* acknowledges breaking a provision of the covenant [v. 27 ff]

The instructions relating to each case/scenario mentioned culminate with the following beautiful words:

Ha-kohen al-chatato asher-chata

The priest will thus make chatat for the person's straying/breach of covenant

V'nislach lo

and he will be forgiven.

[Leviticus 4:20, 26,31,35]

Oh Beloved, what a wonderful covenant partner we have! He has *no illusions* regarding us. He *knows us for what we are*. He knows full well – and wants us to know He knows full well - that we *will inevitably sin against Him*. From the least to the greatest, He knows, every high priest, every king, every man, woman and child among us will fail, at times, to measure up to this or that provision of the Covenant. He acknowledges it. He has prepared for it. And He wants us to acknowledge it, and prepare for it, and know what to do when it happens, as well. So, He proclaims right up front that breaches of the covenant – if acknowledged and handled in accordance with the covenant terms and protocols, *is simply not a deal-breaker for Him*. He builds right into His Torah the methodology for both ‘fixing’ sin and restoring relationship. Self-cleaning ovens, self-leveling shock absorbers, and self-defrosting freezers should not amaze us – for the Holy One, long, long ago, created something far more wonderful than any of these – a *self-cleansing community*.

It is true that part of the ‘sin-fixing’ methodology the Holy One has built into the Covenant consists of things we only see through a glass darkly. But we can have complete faith in this: He wants the sin problem to be resolved even more than we do. And we need not worry that we only see His sin-cleansing methodology through a glass darkly. After all, His vision is far, far better than ours. And He does not see ever see things through a glass darkly – He always sees everything pertaining to the people who have Covenanted to be His Bride *though the oil brightly*.

Yes, It Is All About Messiah – And It Always Has Been!

Some may read the preceding paragraphs of this shiur, stop up their ears, and shout from behind their desks or through their computer screens “Blasphemy! You are

leaving Messiah out of the picture! It is only through Messiah that we can be forgiven of sins! It is only through Messiah that we can approach or have relationship with the Holy One!”

Don't worry - I am not in any way leaving Messiah out of the equation. Nor am I suggesting that anyone can complete the journey to intimacy with the Holy One without Messiah. I would however remind you that it was Messiah Who *wrote the Torah*. Messiah gave us the instructions. Messiah modeled *the olah, minchah, and shelem protocols* for us when He walked the dusty roads of the Galil and Judea. Messiah is our guide on this journey. He leads us the entire way, and we “draft” off of Him like a race car drafts off of the car in front of it.

In no way am I saying that we can “get there” without Messiah. I am merely saying that the route on which He leads us has not changed from what is set forth in the ancient book we call Leviticus.

Remember that the place the *korban chata't* was to be brought was the *Mish'kan*. Remember, from our studies in *Sefer Sh'mot* [the Book of Exodus], that the *Mish'kan* belongs to two worlds, the *seen* and the *unseen*. Remember that every aspect of the earthly *Mish'kan* - every furnishing, every curtain, every board, every silver socket, every utensil – is a finite representation of an infinite spiritual reality. Remember that those 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.

Remember that Aharon and his sons are mere ‘stand-ins’ for Messiah. Remember therefore that each time Aharon lights the lamps of the *Menorah*, he is only picturing in finite terms the way in which Messiah illumines Creation and provides the *Light of the World*. Remember that when Aharon places bread or a goblet of wine upon the *Shulchan*, he is 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. When Aharon burns incense upon the *golden altar* in the Holy Place, he is 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. Every time Aharon spreads forth his hands and speaks 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 is merely reminding us of the Heavenly reality that, in Messiah, the Holy One is at that very moment doing those very things. Remember also that every time one of Aharon's sons lays 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 are merely re-enacting in the field of human vision 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.

Remember that the earthly *Mish'kan* was designed by the Holy One as the "stage" on which the great "passion play" of Messiah - a season-by-season prophetic call of the Bride-to-be to the intimacy to which the Holy One calls her - was to be acted out by the Holy One's covenant people for the world to see.

But What Is the Nature of This Thing Called 'Sin', and How Are We Supposed to Deal With It?

What has the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil done to humankind – *i.e.* to YOU and ME? Like a vicious form of modern malware, the knowledge of evil had embedded itself in our soul's 'hard drive'. Operating like a flesh-eating virus, it is aggressively eating away at everything it can find in us that reveals the genius of the Creator Who fashioned us. It has taken aim at our God-given *shalom*. It is ever on the attack against our Divinely inspired joy. It eats away at our patience. It dilutes our compassion. It corrupts our gentleness. It defuses our kindness. It derails our faithfulness. It short-circuits our self-control. Like a cancer, this virus has eaten five holes – five oozing lesions - in our souls. We have, this week, spoken frankly about three of those holes. Today we will discuss yet another. We will turn our attention to the toxic effect of the knowledge of good and evil on our God-given capacity for cognitive thought, on our God-given capacity for intelligent speech, on our interactions with our fellow man, and on everything we do – and do not do – in relation to our Bridegroom-King's wise, empowering words of direction. In other words, today we will talk about what the modern world likes to refer to 'sin'.

In Hebrew, the word is *chata*. It refers to the fact that in designing us and giving us life, the Holy One *has a target in mind* for our lives and has given us the precise flight plan that we need to follow if we are to hit that target, but that the knowledge of good and evil is constantly weighing us down, pulling us off-course, causing us to fall short of the target. As you might have heard, however, the Holy One is not worried. He has an antidote. He has a course-correcting protocol. He has a plan for

getting us to overcome the toxic effect of the knowledge of good and evil and empower us to get us to the target He has in mind despite all the *chata* in the world.

As mentioned above, the Hebrew word *chata* means to *miss, or fall short of, a target, or to wander off a path or trajectory*³ established by a divine directive. This concept existed long before the Torah was given to Israel at Sinai. What Adam and Chava did in the Garden was the prototypical “sin” [*chata*] – and preceded the acceptance of Torah by anyone. What was the sin [*chata*] of Adam and Chava? It was *lo sh'ma-ing* [not paying attention to, listening for and to, hearing, internalizing, and submitting one’s will, thoughts, attitudes, words, deeds, and relationships to] the Words of the Holy One.

Lo-sh'ma-ing the Voice, devaluing the love, and rebelling against the instructions for living that have been kindly offered to mankind by the Holy One – that is the essence of sin. He Who created us and knows what is best for us speaks, and we do not respond with bridal passion; that is *chata*. The Hebraic concept is thus *relational*, not moral. To a Hebrew to sin is to *break covenant*. It is to abandon the Bridegroom-King’s company and veer off-course and off mission to act inconsistent with one’s calling. It is to belie one’s true identity as a son/daughter of the Most High. It is to voluntarily lessen one’s intended positive impact on the world. It is to knowingly choose a lesser destiny than our Covenant Partner has created us to enjoy.

Long before Avraham’s call, much less the giving of Torah to Israel, men in Sodom were “*sinning greatly against the Holy One*”. **Genesis 13:13**. Centuries before Israel received the tablets of testimony, there was ‘very grievous sin’ [*chata*] in the cities of the plain. **Genesis 18:20**. Moreover, before Ya’akov ever went to Egypt, Reuven recognized that what his brothers contemplated doing to *Yosef* [Joseph] was “sin”. Genesis 39:9. Moreover, *chata* is what crouched at Kayin’s door as he contemplated what life would be like on earth without having to compete with his brother Hevel. Genesis 4:7. And what was the *chata* Kayin ultimately committed? He *lo sh'ma-ed* the Holy One’s instruction, and rejected the Holy One’s prophetic empowerment, to *rule over chata*.

Different – Though Sometimes Overlapping – Definitions of ‘Sin’

Are you ready to get a new and deeper understanding of the thing our English Bibles call 'sin'? Are you ready to examine 'sin' at its root and essence - and start to

³ The first Biblical usage of this verb is found in Genesis 20:6. See also Genesis 39:9, and Genesis 42:2 for illustrative usages.

co-labor with the Holy One to pluck the noxious weed of sin up from the garden of your life by the roots? The first step on this new adventure of revelation is to see and grasp the important difference between what the world of fallen man thinks of and calls 'sin' and what the Holy One considers and calls '*chet*'/'*chata*', and/or *pesha*, and/or *avon*. Unlike fallen man, the Holy One does not define 'sin' in terms of either immorality or antisocial behavior.

Whoa! Did I really just say that? Yes I did. With regard to morality, the Holy One will never consent to define 'sin' by standards of 'morality' or 'immorality'. Why? Because morality and immorality – like 'fairness' - are completely subjective and fluid concepts dreamt up by the Fallen mind of man. They are the fruit of the diseased pseudo-intellect. They therefore mean vastly different things to different people. From moment to moment and situation to situation they can even mean different things to the same person! Even more importantly, the concept of 'morality' is, plainly and simply, a part of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is from the serpent's mindset. It is part of his vocabulary. Using 'morality' as a standard for determining what is and is not *chata* has never been, and will never be, the Creator's way.

As far as using the concept of 'anti-sociality' to define 'sin', that puts the emphasis on the wrong relationship altogether. Thought, speech, or behavior is not *chata*, *pesha*, or *avon* in the Holy Ones eyes because it is anti-social. Sociality and anti-sociality, like morality and immorality, are just abstract ideas - products of the humanistic mindset. They represent the 'Tower of Babel' mindset, starting from the premise that what is important in life is what man working together can build and/or accomplish for his own glory. The highest goal of socialization is always for man to reach some mystical pinnacle where he does not need the Holy One. After all, if antisocial behavior is what is defined as 'sin', 'sin' would be as simple as refusing to participate in building whatever tower of Babel the culture in which one lives happens to be building at the moment. To fallen man, 'sin' would just equate to any failure of political or religious correctness – *i.e.* the latest 'newspeak' and/or 'groupthink' propaganda.

Many things that are both 'moral' and pro-social – for instance, entering into covenants with pagan peoples and nations, flattery, and/or eating things the Holy One has called unclean – are clearly *dangerous breaches of Covenant* - *i.e.* *chata*, *pesha*, and/or *avon* – in the Holy One's eyes. The important issue to the Holy One is not whether a thought, attitude, word, or deed is either considered by men to be immoral. Nor is it whether the matter is *antisocial*. Some things the Holy One classifies as *chet/chata* can be considered immoral and/or antisocial, but many more are neither. And some things that are actually very '*moral*' and very *pro-*

social – like *entering into covenants with pagan peoples and nations*, flattery, and/or eating things the Holy One has called unclean – are and will always remain *chata/pesha/avon* in the Holy One’s eyes.

The *real issue* from the Holy One’s perspective is whether a thought, attitude, word, or deed is – or is not – *consistent with one’s Divine calling, purpose and destiny*. The *essence* of sin as the Holy One sees it and wants us to see it is any *failure to be who we are created to be*. We are, after all, created *b’tzelem Elohim* - in/of *the image of the Holy One*. We are placed here for a purpose - to reflect His Glory and His Goodness. For us, therefore, sin is *accepting thoughts that are not His, giving place to attitudes that are not His, and subscribing to opinions and priorities that are not His*.

From the Holy One’s perspective sin is allowing our tongues and lips to utter any word or speak any concept that does not both *honor Him* and *bring blessing to His creation*. ‘Sin’, in the eyes of Heaven, is any deed done out of self-will rather than as a *sh’ma* response to the Holy One’s Words. As Yeshua taught, ‘sin’ – in Hebrew *chata, pesha, and/or avon* - is by no means confined to external conduct. Sometimes it is buried within one's heart and very cleverly concealed from everyone – including ones’ self. Other times it leaks out in one’s facial expressions and speech.

The Relationship Between ‘Sin’, the Torah, the Mizbeach, and the Messiah

Torah is therefore strategically designed by the Holy One to be *sharper than any two-edged sword*. Each of Torah’s pattern-establishing, lesson-teaching stories are presented in such a way as to provide us direction and help us understand our general purpose and mission during our sojourn on earth. And each of Torah’s situation specific instructions for sons and daughters of the King is brilliantly drafted in a way that makes the narrow pathway that leads to life, health and peace; to blessing and fruitfulness; and to fulfillment of essential purpose; and to leaving the world a better place than we found it for the generations who follow us clear and navigable.

If, when, and to the extent we allow the narratives and life instructions of Torah full access to, influence upon, and operation in our lives, the promise of the Holy One is that they will do what they are designed to do. They will beautify our lives, interactions and relationships, and they will bring clarity and harmony to all our assigned spheres of influence in the world. That is why Creation longs for sons and daughters of the King to arise - so they can translate the *mitzvot* from the *Terumah* realm of plan and blueprint to the *Pekudei* realm of a raising up a visible, tangible Tabernacle ‘exactly according to the instruction the Holy One gave to Moshe’.

And once it becomes real and active, Torah does not even stop at the surface level of external appearance and action. It penetrates deep into our innermost beings, reaching into every facet of life, convicting us concerning the places and ways in which we fail to fulfill our *Divinely Planned and Empowered Purpose and Destiny* – and the ugly waves of negative consequences that flow therefrom into the people and world around us. One of the most significant passages in the apostolic Scriptures concerning the nature and definition of ‘sin’ as the Holy One sees it and deals with it Covenantally is I John 3:4, ff:

Everyone who sins also commits lawlessness

[Note: in the Hebrew mindset, lawlessness = rejection of Torah]

Sin is lawlessness [remember, lawlessness = rejection of Torah]

*You know that He [Messiah] was revealed to take away our ‘sins’,
and in Him is no ‘sin’ [i.e. no lawlessness – no rejection of Torah].*

Whoever remains in Him doesn't ‘sin’. Whoever ‘sins’ hasn't seen him, neither knows him.

He who ‘sins’ is of the adversary, for the adversary has been ‘sinning from the beginning.

To this end the Son of God was revealed,

that He might destroy the works [edifices, strongholds] of the adversary.

Whoever is born of God doesn't commit ‘sin’, because His Seed remains in him;

and he can't ‘sin’, because he is born of God.

In this the children of God are revealed, and the children of the adversary.

Indeed, the greatest threat to a man or woman or community’s relationship with the Creator has always been the kind of straying from the assigned Covenant pathway that the King James authors translated with the word “sin”. David recognized this fact in Psalm 51:

Surely I was ‘sinful’ at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Do not cast me away from Your Face, or take Your Breath of holiness from me.

[Psalm 51:5, 11]

But David also knew Leviticus. He also knew he had a covenant with the Holy One that was *stronger than ‘sin’*. He also knew he had passed through the threshold of *korban olah*, and had walked along the path of *korban minchah*, and had experienced communion with the Holy One through *korban shelem*. So, when he “sinned” with Bat-Sheva [among many other sins] he did not run and hide from the Holy One as Adam and Chava had done, nor did he cover his sin up as Yosef’s brothers had tried to do. David did not consider the relationship to be over just because he had *missed the mark* and *fallen short of the goal*. What did David do therefore? He followed the pathway set forth in Leviticus 4 – today’s aliyah. He said: *my chata’t (sin approach protocol) is always before me.* Psalm 51:3.

Note the Hebraic structure of the word our English Bibles translate as “sin offering”. A “sin offering” – *chata’t* – is merely a sin [*chata*] with the mark of the Holy One [a *tav*, which means “mark”, or “sign”, specifically the mark of Messiah hanging on

a Roman execution stake] on it. It is *sin paid for*. It is sin that is *no longer a barrier to intimacy with the Holy One*. It is that mark of which David had confidence and spiritual insight, long before the atonement accomplished before the foundation of the world was physically revealed to the natural eyes of man. It was, I believe, and I believe Psalm 51 testifies, just as real spiritually to David as it is to us.

David understood the message behind Leviticus 4. He understood that it was not about the blood of bulls and goats. He understood that those things were only a *picture* of something eternal, something omnipresent, something that transcended time and space. As David said:

You do not delight in zebah [ritual sacrifice for its own sake], *or I would draw near to you in that way. You do not take pleasure in olahot* [a *korban* totally consumed by fire].
The medium of approaching the Holy One is a broken spirit.
From a broken and contrite heart, O Holy One, You will not turn away.”
[Psalm 51:17]

A broken and contrite heart is a heart that has been led by Messiah through the essence of Leviticus 1-4. May such a heart characterize each of us, Dear Reader! And may our *chata't* – the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world – always be before us!

Questions For Today's Study

1. So far we have examined how the people of Covenant were told to make approach to the Holy One through making *korban olah*, *korban minchah*, and *korban shelem*. Today we cover a third protocol of approach:

'If anyone 'sins' unintentionally, in any of the things that the Holy One has instructed us not to do, and does any one of them ...
[Leviticus 4:2]

[A] What type of *korban* is the subject of today's aliyah?

[B] In Gesenius, look up the word “*sin*” as used in today's aliyah [*chata'*, Strong's Hebrew word # 2398 (*chet, tet, alef*)]. Write the Hebrew word in Hebrew letters, with vowel markings. Look up and meditate on this verb's first few usages in Torah [the very first is Genesis 20:6], as well as Gesenius' exposition. Then, describe the Hebraic word picture of what it means to “*sin*”.

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

[D] The passage we read today deals only with “*unintentional sins*”. What does it mean to “*sin unintentionally*”?

[E] What is the proper action of one who sins *intentionally* – that is, who knowingly does something the Holy One has instructed him not to do – like oppress a poor man or foreigner, or eat the flesh of a pig, for instance?

2. In chapter 4 of *Vayikra* there are four different situations mentioned as to when a *korban chata't* is to be brought by the person(s) responsible.

[A] List the four situations.

[B] With regard to *korbanot chata'at*, list the responsibilities or required actions of the one bringing the offering.

[C] List the responsibilities or required actions of the priests to whom the *korban chata't* is brought

[D] What is the difference in the Biblical way of disposing of:

(i) a *korban chata'at*,

(ii) a *korban olah*?

3. In today's suggested reading from the Haftarah the Holy One speaks to Ya'akov and Yisrael regarding her redemption, and the forgiveness of her sins. He then speaks to His Creation, to rejoice over the return of Ya'akov and Yisrael to a state of righteousness.

*Remember these things, Ya'akov, and Yisra'el; for you are my servant:
I have formed you; you are my servant: Yisra'el, you will never be forgotten by me.
I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins:
return to me; for I have redeemed you.*

*Sing, you heavens, for the Holy One has done it; shout, you lower parts of the eretz;
break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree therein:
for the Holy One has redeemed Ya'akov, and will glorify himself in Yisra'el.*

[Isaiah 44:21-23]

[A] List the things the Holy One says prophetically that He “has done” [that is, has already set in motion] for B'nei Yisrael.

[B] In verse 21, the Holy One twice calls B'nei Yisrael His “servant”. Look up the word “servant” in Strong's and in Gesenius. Write, in Hebrew consonants, with appropriate vowel markings, both the Hebrew word so translated [*ebed*, Strong's Hebrew word # 5650] and the root word from which the word so translated is taken [*abad, ayin, beit, dalet*, Strong's Hebrew word # 5647]. Look up the first few usages of the verb root *abad* in Torah [the first is Genesis 2:5]. Find and meditate on Gesenius' exposition of that word. Then, describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing concerning that word.

[C] Considering the depth of sinfulness of B'nei Yisrael at the point in time Isaiah was prophesying, what do you think the Holy One meant by calling B'nei Yisrael His “servant”?

[D] In 44:23, what five things does the Holy One speak to and instruct to sing or shout? Look up each of these in Gesenius, then write the words in Hebrew lettering. Finally, describe the Hebraic word picture you see with regard to each Hebrew word.

[E] Why are these five things directed to sing or shout? Read Jeremiah 12:4

and Romans 8:19-22 before you answer.

4. In the B'rit Chadasha reading suggested for today the writer compares the priests who ministered with the *korbanot chata't* at the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle] and at the *Mik'dash* [Temple], with our Rabbi, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, who presented Himself as a *korban chata't olam* for all the world, before its foundation, and then for all the world to see on the hill called Golgotha – the place of the skull.

*Every Kohen indeed stands day-by-day ministering
and often presenting the same korbanot, which can never take away sins;
but he, when he had presented one korban chata't olam,
sat down on the right hand of the Holy One;
from that time waiting until his enemies are made the footstool of his feet.*

[Hebrews 10:11-13]

[A] List the differences you see between an Aharonic priest and our great high priest after the order of *Melchizedek*.

[B] What does the writer say Yeshua is doing now?

[C] What is He “waiting” for?

*May you know with confidence that your sins can truly be forgiven -
because Yeshua, the Kohen Gadol after the order of Melchi-tzedek,
has made everlasting korban chata't for us all!*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 114:1-8

*When Yisra'el went forth out of Mitzrayim [Egypt],
The house of Ya`akov [Jacob] from a people of foreign language;
Y'hudah [Judah] became his sanctuary, Yisra'el his dominion.*

*The sea saw it and fled. The Yarden [Jordan] was driven back.
The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs.*

*What was it, you sea, that you fled? You Yarden, that you turned back?
You mountains, that you skipped like rams; You little hills, like lambs?
Tremble, you eretz [earth], at the presence of the Holy One,*

*At the presence of the God of Ya`akov,
Who turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of waters.*