

*Shiur L'Yom Shenit*¹

[Monday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Vayikra:*** **Leviticus 1:1-17**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 43:21-25**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Hebrews 10:5-7**

An aroma pleasing to the Holy One

[Leviticus 1: 9, 13, 17]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 106:1-4[a];

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

Vayikra el-Moshe – And he called/cried out for Moshe ... ***vayedaber Adonai elav me'Ohel Mo'ed*** – and then spoke to him from the Tent of Divine Appointment Leviticus 1:1.

Exodus - the 2nd of the 5 coursebooks of Divine Wisdom which make up the Torah - ended with the Creator taking up residence right in the middle of our camp. *Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight* Song of Songs 2:3.

How Sweet it is to Sit in His Shade!

Welcome to the *new normal* – *i.e.* *Imanu-El* – God with us! Can you believe it? His Holiness - the Architect of Creation, and the source and sustainer of all life in the Universe- now sits enthroned a few steps away from the likes of you and me. We sense the presence of angelic hosts – cherubim ... serafim ... living creatures ... eternal elders. But Divinity sharing geography with humanity is only the first part of the Plan. The Holy One doesn't merely want to *cohabit* with us – He wants to *connect, interact, engage, commune, converse, and co-labor* with us. Divine energy supercharges the atmosphere. Genesis 1:3 'Light' flashes through the camp, searching our hearts ... our minds ... our souls. His Voice calls out, inviting us and to take the next step in this great adventure – *i.e.* to step out of our tents, through the linen veil, and into His Courts; to get caught up in His Beauty; to bask in His Majesty; to be changed by His Holiness; to be counseled by His Wisdom, and be healed of all our wounds and scars by His Empowering Love. Dare we even think of responding to that invitation? Once we cross that threshold ... well, who knows what will happen next? Who among us – what man anywhere - knows the proper protocol for courtiers of so Great a King? Who understands the rules of engagement that apply in that kind of environment? Who has even the slightest inkling what is – and is not – acceptable etiquette for sharing space with the Great

¹ All rights with respect to this publication are reserved to the author, William G. Bullock, Sr., also known as '*the Rabbi's son*'. Reproduction of material from any *Rabbi's son* lesson without written permission from the author is prohibited. Copyright © 2024, William G. Bullock, Sr.

Elohim of the Creation Song? Who knows *when we should come* – or even *why we should come*? Who knows *how we should dress*, what demeanor is fitting, what language is to be spoken, what behavior is appropriate - or *what we should bring* with us to let Him Know how humbled, yet grateful, we are for His faithfulness to His Covenant with Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov? Who knows where we should – and should not – go once we step through the veil some of us have started to call '*the Way*'? Who can tell us what we will see or hear on the 'other side' of the threshold – or how we should – and should not – react to whatever that may be? This is going to require us to step WAY out of our comfort zones! Who can teach us how to engage, interact, and commune with the Greatest of all Kings – *i.e. our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be His Name?*

Parlor Dancing With the King of Kings

Drawing near. Getting close. Engaging. Interacting. Visiting. Conversing. Relating. Sharing space. We do these things all the time with other human beings. We have – or should have - learned the protocols, the etiquette, the manners, the disciplines of engaging in such *parlor dances* a long time ago. But this is new territory. How does one 'draw near', or 'get close', or 'engage', or 'interact', or 'visit' or 'converse', or 'relate', or 'share space' with the Holiest, Wisest, and Most Powerful Being in the Universe? How do we enter into – and behave responsibly in – the Bridegroom-King's Parlor? This sounds wonderful – but scary. It is going to require a whole new level of etiquette! We need a download – actually a series of them! We need a thorough briefing – and a training manual! Fortunately, that is exactly what we are about to receive in the third Book of Torah. In this Book the Holy One is going to teach us everything we need to know about interacting with Him appropriately and effectually. The First download will be the *Korbanot Discourse*; then will the *Yom Sh'mini* (8th Day) Discourse, and finally will come the greatest of all downloads – the highwater mark of Torah – the *Kedusha Discourse*. Before we learn where we are being called to go, and what we are to do when we get there, however, we first need to understand where we are right now – and why the journey we are about to undertake is necessary in the first place.

Adam! Chava! EIYEICHA? EIYEICHA?

In the Garden, Adam and Chava heard the *qol* – *i.e. the unique, inimitable, and unmistakable audible vibration* - of the Holy One coming their way. When the dark, narcissistic, serpentine energy of the fruit they had ingested caused them to run *away* from *Qol Adonai* on a fool's errand of *taking cover*, instead of joyfully running *to* Him and delighting in His Company as they always had previously, the Holy One *qara*-ed – *i.e. cried out* with poignant emotion. The heartbreaking Hebrew phrase that the Lover of Mankind spoke forth in that moment -

EIYEICHA - *Where are you?* - not only electrified the atmosphere of the Garden long ago; it has rung out in every human heart ever since. It is, as a matter of fact, ringing out even now. Who will run and hide – and who will *sh'ma*?

V'atah - ben-Adam, ben-Elohim ... Will You Come to the Torah?

The five books of the Torah combine to form a great chronological epic of spiritual adventure. Each of the five books is an essential part of the greater whole. Each plays its assigned role. After *B'reshit*, each book first builds upon the foundation laid by its predecessor in the series, then sets to work establishing a launching pad for the next book in the series. Nevertheless, each individual *sefer of Torah* presents something unique in style, theme, and focus. Hence while *Vayikra* is just as much a book of miracles as was *B'reshit* and *Sh'mot* there is a significant difference between the kinds of miracles described in them. In *B'reshit* and *Sh'mot* the primary focus of the signs and wonders performed by the Holy One was *external*. In *Vayikra* the focus of all the Holy One's miracles will shift to the *internal*. In *Vayikra*, you see, it will seldom if ever be what is on the outside, visible to the eyes of the world, upon which the Holy One wants us to focus —it will instead be what is on the inside, visible to no one, where the Holy One wants to – and is going to – unleash waves of awesome redemptive power. Conspicuously absent from this *sefer* will be the stunning *appearances of the Holy One to the ancients and patriarchs*. Gone will be the *long, beautiful, flowing prose narratives* of the Holy One's covenant faithfulness and blessing. Missing will be any *dramatic confrontations with the kings or armies of other nations*. Relegated to our memories are even the awe-inspiring *stories of miraculous deliverance and of the breath-taking mountaintop experiences* of Moshe. This book is not about any of those things. This book is about *the very intimate relationship our God and King wants to have with us, His Beloved Am Segulah*.

The essence of the great prophetic story presented in the Book of Leviticus is this: there is a goal for every person's Covenant relationship with the Holy One, and it is not to win a Mansion-in-Heaven giveaway promotion. The goal of the Covenant is to enable fallen human beings to work through, overcome, and transcend their fallen humanity issues, and carry the Presence, the joy, the shalom, the blessing, and the glory of the Creator to the world. But that doesn't happen automatically - and it is not a matter of 'belief'. Overcoming comes with a cost - and an 'altar protocol'. If we are to overcome our humanity issues in a significant way, we must not just be 'born again' and then be raptured. We must instead live a born again, transcending life, day after day, season after season - in real time, in a real world, in the face of real 'humanity challenges'. To navigate that mine-field successfully, we must surrender everything our flesh, our pseudo-intellect, and our culture tell us we are supposed to desire, to acquire, to become, or to accomplish for our own

self-actualization, in exchange for the opportunity to become the person created in the image of our Creator that we were designed to be, and to accomplish, in intimate fellowship with the Holy One, the glorious things He brought us forth upon the earth at such a time as this to accomplish.

Our Relationship With the Holy One Is Becoming Ever More Intimate and Real

Exodus was a book of *Courtship*. By the time we get to *Vayikra* the Courtship has been successfully consummated and Betrothal vows have been exchanged under the supernal *Chuppah*. *Vayikra* is therefore *a book of how the Betrothal arrangement contracted in the Book of Exodus works out in real lives, in real situations, in real time. Vayikra describes how the Betrothed Bride-to-be and the Bridegroom come to know each other on a practical, relational basis. It is a book outlining - and describing in detail - the Holy One's protocol for Betrothal-period interactions. This book is therefore a foundational 'how-to' book on what it means to live a life of regular communion - as opposed to periodic encounters - with the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak, and of Ya'akov. This Book is about how to thrive during a habitation of the Living God - instead of just marvel at a visitation or two. This Book is the Creator's instruction manual on how to do three very important things every generation of the Holy One's Witness-Throng must learn to do:*

1. ABIDE in the shadow of the Holy One's Presence;
2. CONFORM to the prophetic description He has spoken over us; and
3. BECOME the Bride He has called us to become.

The first five chapters of Leviticus consist of a series of 'brazen altar protocols'. Each of these protocols is specifically designed by our Divine Bridegroom to meet and atone for one of the basic 'humanity issues' man has as a result of the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Holy One is a kind and loving Covenant Partner. He desires to restore each of us - and through us, our entire bloodline - to our unique presentation of man's glorious Edenic estate. But He knows that only He - working in cooperation with the human being - can bring about this restoration. The Holy One knows exactly what man's basic human needs are. And He knows exactly what it will take to address, meet, and atone for every one of those needs. And that is where the brazen altar protocols of Torah come in. Understand from the outset, however, that it all has to start off as a matter of invitation, not command. Our Divine Bridegroom plans to *transform us* - and He plans to accomplish this transformation slowly, methodically, step-by-step, choreographed step. He is going to do some of the work from the *inside out*; and He is going to do some of the work from the *outside in*. Perhaps now it is clear why the Hebrew people like to begin the education of their children with *Sefer*

Vayikra. It is rightly considered the essential primer of *how to approach and relate to the Holy One* and on *how to live a life dedicated to the Holy One*. May our generation return to this foundation, and may it cross this threshold. It is the first thing our Messiah Yeshua learned – probably at about age 3 based upon the ancient Hebrew home educational system.

Vayikra lays out the processes and protocols by which ordinary men are enabled to *approach* – and *draw close to* – and *become intimate with* – the Creator of the Universe. Who can ascend the hill of the Holy One? You can. I can. We all can. We just have to trust process. We just have to follow protocol. We just have to employ a little *Heavenly Courtroom etiquette*. In the opening aliyah the Holy One gives us instructions concerning how He wants individual worshippers to approach Him in the *Mish'kan* – especially at the brazen altar. The opening instruction is:

... Adam ki-yakriv mikem korban l'Adonai

When a man makes his approach unto the Holy One,

Min ha-behemah min ha-bakar umin ha-tzon

from the herd or flock a surrogate

takrivu et-korbanchem

for approach is to be taken.

What follows – and makes up the substance of parsha *Vayikra* - is a series of specific instructions and protocols as to how to approach the Holy One at the brazen altar of the *Mish'kan*. Pictures are painted. Stunning images are not only set on parchment but etched into the deep places of our souls. Idioms spring to life.

But there is no physical *Mish'kan* on the earth today. There hasn't been one for millennia. We have no brazen altar. We could not present the choicest animal from our herd or flock to the sons of Aharon if we wanted to. So, what does all this 'brazen altar protocol' instruction have to do with us, today, you ask? Stay with me now, okay?

The Brazen Altar – Image, Idiom, and What It All Means to Us Today

The Holy One first introduced the prophetic image/idiom of the brazen altar in Exodus 27:1-8. He showed Moshe the brazen altar in the form of an image/idiom, then told him to build it on earth exactly according to the pattern He had showed him. Let's talk, therefore, about images and idioms. An *image* is a visual representation – i.e. something that you able to see that refers you to, or alerts you to, something you don't see. The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'image' is *tsel* – a shadow. See **Genesis 1:26**. When you look at a shadow, what you actually see is just a special effect. You see the effect of beams of light hitting something else – something unseen, that is much more meaningful and potentially impactful than the ephemeral shape you are actually looking at. An idiom, on the

other hand, is a ‘play on words’ so to speak. It is a way of using words and phrases that say one thing, which are not to be taken literally, but constitute allegory and/or metaphor. A common ‘idiom’ of Biblical Hebrew is the reference to a person’s ‘heart’ - in Hebrew, *lev*. Obviously, the physical human heart is not meant. It is just an idiom, allegorically referring to the inner man, and metaphoric place of prioritizing things and making value judgments, forming opinions, planning strategies, and formulating behaviors. Similarly, when Yeshua said that if your right eye/right hand offends you, you should pluck it out/cut it off, He was employing idiom. He was saying that whatever it is you are looking at that gets you riled up, you should stop looking at it, and that whatever it is that you are doing that stirs up trouble or drama, you should stop doing it.

Now let’s consider how this works with the brazen altar, and the protocols of that altar that the Holy One is speaking over us in parsha Vayikra.

1. The ‘Image’ [Hebrew ‘tzel’] Aspect of the Brazen Altar and its Protocols

At all times that the physical Mish’kan is standing and operating, all the Holy One’s instructions regarding the protocols of the brazen altar are to be taken, and followed, literally. The key factor is not the actions themselves, however; it is what they – things done in the seen realm – represent as having already taken place in the unseen, eternal realm of the Heavens. They represent things done ‘on earth as in Heaven’. They declare a deeper, more meaningful and impactful, reality that lies far beyond what can be seen. For all who can go to the physical Tabernacle, and meet with the Holy One at the physical brazen altar, this provides both a very moving personal experience and a chance to gaze past the *prophetic shadow* to the greater underlying reality – i.e. the eternal, Heavenly reality that the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain, which casts the shadow in the first place.

2. The ‘Idiom’ Aspect of the Brazen Altar Protocols

When, as now, there is no physical Mish’kan structure, either standing or operating, the Holy One’s instructions regarding the protocols of that shadowy structure cannot be taken literally. They are not, however, to be ignored. Heaven forbid. The Holy One’s words are eternal, and brimming with life, with health, with wisdom, and with shalom! So, when there is no functioning Mish’kan, we are to take the brazen altar protocols to heart as an idiom. While the words the Holy One has used seem to be saying one thing, very physical in nature, we must realize they are saying something related, but metaphoric, allegorical, and poetically inspiring, that is spiritual in nature. We cannot physically select a sheep, goat, or ox to take to the brazen altar to tell the Holy One how much we love and honor Him, how grateful we are to Him for what He has done for us, and declare symbolically, before a *kohen* [priest] and our children and kinsmen how dedicated

we are to doing His Will – but we CAN do all these things in other ways. We can start with meditation – bringing the altar into the forefront of our minds, and climbing it with our most precious possession in tow. We can open a dialogue with the Holy One about our stubborn issues of will and self-obsession. We can seek revelation from Him regarding what has been written concerning us and our ‘altar-life’ in Heaven, and what practical steps we can take to bring that Heavenly reality to fruitfulness on earth, in our lives, our houses, our families, and our spheres of influence.

3. What Do You See? And What Lies Beyond?

The brazen altar – our metaphoric place of ultimate surrender – was once an actual station of service built by inspired craftsmen exactly according to the pattern the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain. It was located in the Mish’kan’s outer court. It was, is, and will always be very, very significant. It is, after all, for the common man, the center of all attention in the outer court. Once we cross the threshold of the ‘Way’ – *i.e.* the veil of entry – and enter the *Mish’kan*, this large, awe-inspiring altar is the first object we see. It stands before us in the shape of a square, five cubits – *i.e.* about 7.5 feet - wide and an equal distance long. It stands three cubits – *i.e.* about 4 ½ feet – tall. There are steps leading up on one side, which we immediately realize must be climbed to access the fire or to place anything on the grate. It challenges us to leave the level where we are, step out of our comfort zone, cross a threshold, and begin a season of ascent. And then there is the fire – the same fire that fell from Heaven when the Mish’kan was inaugurated, and which the servants of the King have worked tirelessly to keep burning continuously ever since. We can almost hear the fire whispering our name, calling us to draw near and be both enthralled and made warm. We are drawn to each cloven tongue of fire much like slivers of cold metal are drawn to a magnet. Though the Holy One only meets with the High Priest, on behalf of the nation, only once a year [*i.e.* on Yom Kippur], in the Holy of Holies, He has agreed to meet with us as individuals and families here, at this altar/station of *avodah* any day, any time. For the Holy declared concerning this altar in Exodus 29:43: ***‘there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the Tabernacle will be sanctified by My Glory.’*** This altar is thus the average man’s primary point of contact with the Bridegroom-King. This is our open door of connectivity. This is our parlor of communion. This is the portal through which we travel to the deeper chambers of the Beauty Realm. This is our appointed threshold of resurrection, ascension, and our assigned seat in the Heavenlies in Messiah. Please don’t try to worship the Holy One or presume to serve either Him or your fellow man without having a vivid, meaningful, paradigm-shifting, regularly recurring devotional life that includes idiomatic *brazen altar avodah*.

1. Who Is Man, Anyway?

The Holy One begins His instructions regarding brazen altar protocol by speaking of ‘a man’ who desires to *approach Him*. He instructs us that each such man should make any approach through a “surrogate” – i.e. through something we have unfortunately come to refer to, through inartful translation of languages, as an “offering” or “sacrifice”. The Hebrew word that the Holy One used to describe the one making the approach (in response to the call) is *adam*. We correctly translate this word as “man”. However in doing so we miss a good deal of the point. We are not just *man* – we are *Adam*. Since the Fall we are under the “expulsion decree”. A *Cherub* [fierce warrior angel] stands at the entrance of the Garden to guard the way to the tree of life. A *flaming sword* flashes back and forth to consume whoever/whatever attempts to come unbidden. **Genesis 3:24.**

When we come before the *Cherub* we must not “storm the gates”. We must come *according to protocol*. That means, among other things, that we are to approach the Holy One *with a surrogate – something precious and unique to us, that we have carefully selected as the best we have to offer from our own herd or flock*. This surrogate will receive the blow of the flaming sword in our stead. This surrogate is not an “offering” or a “sacrifice”, certainly not as men of organized religion think of and use those terms. This surrogate is something else - something unknown in Greek or Anglo-Saxon thought. Something in *tzel* form – and possibly idiomatic – as well as substantive. We must think Hebraically to understand what this surrogate represents. Let’s dig a little deeper, shall we? ***Open our eyes, O Holy One, that we may see wondrous things from your Torah.*** Psalm 119:18.

In Search of the Hebraic Meaning of What English-speakers Have Come to Know as “Burnt Offering”

Vayikra is a picture book, absolutely brimming with prophetic images and idioms. Every picture, every image, and every idiom is integrally connected. Together they tell an amazing eternal story - a grand passion play of redemption. Some, who don’t want to take the time or expend the energy to explore and tap into the spiritual energy inherent in them, just write off these prophetic images as *mere 'types' and 'shadows'*. In so doing, they miss the beauty, the poetry, and the artistry of the Author it all. In the types and the shadows of the Holy One, you see, lie the visible presentation of 'all the goodness' of the Holy One - i.e. what the Holy One caused to pass by Moshe while he was in the Cleft of the Rock.

Today’s aliyah begins the Book of Leviticus’ ‘every picture tells a story’ download in grand style. The redeemed life begins with *korban olah*. This Hebraic phrase has, unfortunately, been translated into English as “*burnt offering*”. That is the perfect example of what the pseudo-intellectual approach of Western thought does to Hebrew imagery. In Western language, everything sounds sterile, cerebral,

literal, and analytical. The Hebrew – the language in which the Holy One chose to convey the protocol - reveals something else altogether. The Hebrew word *olah* means “ascending”. The Hebrew word *korban* is from a covenant-based verb meaning “to make an intimate approach to a covenant partner”. So the making of *korban olah* is not presenting a ‘burnt offering’; it is, instead, the *making of an intimate approach to the Holy One in order to ascend – i.e. to be resurrected to new life of greater meaning, more communication, and more effectual service.*

Korban olah presents a Hebraic picture of someone – an individual worshipper or a nation – adopting a posture and attitude of *totally submission* to the Holy One. It pictures surrendering to His Will. It pictures surrendering to His Ways. It pictures simultaneously surrendering to the Holy One’s will, and volunteering for any duty to which one may be assigned. By coming forward voluntarily to make this particular type of approach to the Holy One the man (or the community) was expressing his willingness to walk into the flames – be it burning bush, fiery furnace, Nazi incinerator, or whatever; and to do so not out of legalistic sense of duty, but out of *pure love for the Holy One*. The making of *korban olah* was – is – thus designed as the protocol for a person to cross the threshold of commitment and dedication to the Covenant Partner and the Covenant. Think of Yeshua’s declaration: ***If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. Matthew 16:23.***

The best animal from one’s own herd or flock – something very personal, precious, and representative - was brought as a love gift, and as evidence of one’s serious commitment to a new, surrendered life.

Remember, in Leviticus – and in all things pertaining to the *Mish’kan* – every picture tells a beautiful eternal story – a chapter in the great scheme of redemption. The essence of the *korban olah* part of the story is this: we do not have to be enslaved by our animal appetites, urges, and desires; nor do we have to walk around brainwashed by a pseudo-intellect poisoned by the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. We can overcome. We can transcend. We can shake off the cruel shackles of self-will, abstract concept confusion, and cultural deception and actually become who we were created to be and live as we were designed to live. This is really, really good news!

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

Each of the *brazen altar protocols* given to us by the Holy One at Sinai specifically designed by our Divine Bridegroom to meet and atone for one of the basic human needs man has as a result of the Fall. The Holy One is a kind and loving Covenant Partner. He was so for Avraham, and He is the same for us. He desires to restore

each of us to our unique presentation of man's glorious estate. Indeed this individual restoration project is the presently the primary focus of His grand redemptive plan. But He knows that only He – working in cooperation with the human being – can bring about this restoration. And He knows that before this restoration process can be fully effectual each man's participation in the process must be *voluntary*, and *motivated not by hope of reward nor by fear of retribution, but by sheer and unquenchable love.*

The Holy One knows exactly what man's basic human needs are. And He knows exactly what it will take to address, meet, and atone for every one of those needs. And that is where the *korban* protocols of Torah come in. Understand from the outset, however, that it all has to start off as a matter of invitation, not command.

The Great Chasm of Separation Between the Human vs. Divine Will

Korban olah is designed to address, meet and atone for this most critical of all basic human needs – the need to *completely and voluntarily surrender our human will to His Divine Will*. Since ingesting the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of *tov* [the good ways of the Holy One] *v'ra* [the cynical, short-sighted ways of self-determination], the human mind has a serious '*ratzon*' – *i.e.* '*will*' – problem. What does one's *ratzon*/'*will*' consist of? It consists of his 'network of self-centered, hormone-driven, fleshly instincts, pleasure-generators, urges, appetites, drives, and desires, on the one hand, and his culture-imposed, ethno-centric, peer-group reinforced, institution-dictated, experience-driven and therefore woefully short-sighted if not totally illusory matrix of biases, values, opinions, philosophies, ideologies, political theories, science, medicine, and religion, on the other hand. The *ratzah* is what drives a person to think what he thinks, say what he says (verbally and non-verbally) prioritize what he prioritizes, pursue what he pursues, value who and what he values, disdain who and what he disdains, react as he reacts, and behave the way he behaves. Man was created for his *ratzon* to tune into, visualize, and synchronize with the Holy One's *ratzon*; when it doesn't ... well, '*Houston, we have a problem*'. That is when a *ratzon*-realignment protocol – an act of self-denial called '*korban olah*' – is essential for us. Such a step is essential to our mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. It is equally essential to our relationship with our Creator, on the one hand, and to our relationships with all aspects, elements, creatures, and geographical spaces of His Creation-Ecosystem on the other hand; and essential to the fulfillment of our assigned mission of *tikkun olam* – *i.e.* healing/fixing the world.

The Korban Olah/'Syncing of Wills' Protocol

Creation exists solely by and for the Will of the Holy One. Our stubborn, self-centered wills are the primary obstacle the Holy One has to overcome. Not to

worry - that is what *korban olah* is all about. The Holy One wants every human being who ever allows his heart to be moved to come before His Manifest Presence, to express his choice to serve the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, to pour out his heart, to surrender his will, and to consecrate his life to Him, to know [a] that he can safely do so, and [b] that his love gift – and his offer of service – will be accepted graciously. The ‘*olah from the herd*’ the *korban olah* protocol calls for was only a surrogate - a 'stand-in'. When a man making approach to the Holy One in the Court of the Tabernacle put his hands on the head of the ‘*olah from the herd*’, he was saying "as I present this creature to receive judgment in my place, I commit to live the life you allow me to keep according to YOUR WILL, for no one else but YOU". The *korban olah* protocols of Leviticus 1 are designed to meet the first and most critical human need head on. The picture the Holy One draws for us of *korban olah* is not about seeking forgiveness for any particular breach of covenant or indeed for any actual trespass, transgression, uncleanness, iniquity, rebellion, witchcraft, or abomination that one has committed; it is about avoiding/eschewing those that one inevitably WILL commit if our *ratzon* remains un-surrendered to the *ratzon* of the Holy One. *Korban olah* involves a human being voluntarily stepping across a threshold of submission and loyalty. It is a declaration like that of David who said: “***I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your Torah is upon*** (i.e. inspires, motivates, impels, and directs) ***my heart.***” [Psalm 40:8;], and that of Yeshua in Gethsemane: “***Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours, be done***” [see Luke 22:42 and Hebrews 10:7-9]. Without a voluntarily and heart-felt surrender of our human will to our King’s Divine Will, there can be no restoration to our intended fruitful estate.

Why, you may wonder, is such an all-out surrender of the human will necessary – or even desirable? Is it really essential for our redemption, our mission, and our destiny? Why can’t we just repeat a short prayer out loud and/or sign a decision card agreeing to ‘believe’ some church’s doctrinal statement, and expect everything to just suddenly be all better – you know, like saying *abracadabra*, *open sesame*, and *presto change-O*? It just does not work that way. It cannot. Our stubborn will – and stronghold of self-absorption – absolutely must be acknowledged and dealt with. The Holy One knows we need much more than a new belief system and a membership card to put in our wallet. He knows exactly how far we have fallen from our former glorious estate - and He knows how far we have to go to get back to where we belong and who we are capable of becoming. He knows that a short prayer, a signature on a decision card, and our name on a church or synagogue membership roll will never get us anywhere close to where we need to go – because the residual effects of the Fall are too deeply ingrained in both our DNA and our acquired sense of identity.

The Holy One remembers something we have forgotten, you see. He remembers that before the Fall the human being's will and His Will flowed in perfect unity at all times. He knows that was a major part of what man's being created *in the image* [i.e. *to function as the earthly shadow*] of the Holy One meant. Back then everything the Holy One purposed in His Brilliant Mind His Friend and Close Companion Adam joyfully rushed to bring into reality in real time. Back then the doing of the Will of the Holy One, in close cooperation and intimate fellowship with the Holy One all the while, was Adam's delight and greatest pleasure. Back then co-laboring with the Creator to accomplish the Creator's Purposes and Plans Will, was to Adam a boundless fountain of joy.

The Holy One knows that going to Heaven when we die is nowhere close to the ultimate goal of mankind – and that the idea of doing so will never produce the kind of *joyful responsiveness, singleness of purpose, and pleasurable co-laboring* with our Creator that we were created to enjoy. He knows *the only status and circumstance in which man can experience true joy, true peace, or true functionality* is to walk through life not just believing in Him, but following His instructions, moving when He moves, doing only what He does, saying only what He says, and praying only what He prays. The Holy One knows that in any *other state* – i.e. in any circumstance or situation where man's will diverges even in the slightest from the Holy One's Will – a toxic process of amputation, separation, and death takes hold of man and drains the life out of him. Even going to Heaven when one dies will never fix that.

Chava allowed the Serpent to convince her to consider the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as a *food source* [introducing into human experience the root of all uncleanness], as a source of *pleasure* [introducing into human experience the root of all self-absorption and hedonism], and as a source of *wisdom* [introducing into human experience the root of all occult practices]. In direct opposition to the Holy One's will she let the urges of her flesh and the law of her deceived mind introduce a slow, steady flow of *toxic self-interest* began to the human race. Human will began to diverge from Divine will right there at the fulcrum of self-interest.

To add insult to injury, on the heels of this separation of man's will from His Creator's Will came *the actual instrumentality* of death - in the form of the toxic substance of the fruit. A diverging of wills was bad enough. But this noxious fruit insured that there would, as long as the focus of man was upon the nebulous differences between 'good' and 'evil' [and the related dichotomies of 'right' and 'wrong', 'fair' and 'unfair', 'just' and 'unjust', and 'moral' and 'immoral'], be no hope of restoration of the unity of man's will and the Creator's. The acidic juices of the knowledge of

good and evil began to eat holes in mankind's soul. And the first point of attack for the venom was the human will – where we decide what our *priorities* and *focuses* will be. No short prayer repeated on cue, and no church or synagogue membership card, can fix that kind of invasive damage to the soul.

At the root of all the carnage wrought by the ingestion of this fruit is *the knowledge – imperfect as it is, of course - of our mortality*. Eternal, immortal beings do not think about things like survival and self-preservation. But when our mortality came into question by reason of the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of [imperfect, Serpent twisted imitations of] knowledge, mankind suddenly found himself absolutely consumed with worry about survival and self-preservation.

What effect did this false 'knowledge' of our mortality have upon the operation and direction of the human will? Suddenly the priorities of the Eternal, Immortal Creator took a distant back seat to our own Serpent-suggested instinct for *self-preservation*. Obsessed with our mortality, humankind found even being in the Eternal One's Presence - much less surrendering to the Eternal One's Will – distasteful if not impossible. Hence man ran and hid from the Holy One – amidst the trees of the Garden initially, and later amidst the institutions and philosophies and economies and causes and flesh-centered follies of mankind. Hence man sewed fig leaves – and later 3-piece suits and fashion statements - together to attempt to cover their nakedness. Hence human beings began to absolutely obsess on all things temporal instead of anything even generational, much less eternal. The Holy One's eternal priorities - and glorious long-term plan for Creation - got completely pushed aside. Man developed his own set of priorities, his own agendas, and his own methodologies, and well as his own will.

Facing his mortality, the human being soon strayed even further from the Divine Will. The Serpent enticed him into '*bucket-list*' mode. He started to obsess about what pleasures, excitements, and stimulating experiences he might miss out on if he aligned his will with that of the Holy One. Sporting a suddenly insatiable appetite for knowledge drawn from the Serpent's playbook, the inferior pleasures, excitements and stimulations of the world quickly became man's over-riding priority. The superior pleasures of intimate communion and co-laboring with the Creator were completely forgotten – just as the Serpent hoped.

The will of man had fallen under a hallucinogenic drug, as it were – i.e. the poisonous fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. hypnotic power of suggestion projected upon him by a wily enemy - one who wished only to frustrate him, cause him to run around in circles, and to prevent him from achieving his ultimate purpose an reaching his ultimate destiny.

Man and the Holy One began to work at cross-purposes. The chasm of separation continued to grow, generation after generation, until it seemed an insurmountable void. But the Holy One was not deterred. He designed the *korban olah* protocol to reverse the process. Essential to this protocol, however, was for man awaken from the post-hypnotic suggestion of out-of-control appetites, urges, and fleshly desires, voluntarily reject the Serpent's lies about what would bring him joy and what would bore and waste his life, and re-align his will and his heart with that of His Maker. Hence the Holy One said of one making *korban olah*:

***... he is to approach with it of – and/or for - his free will
at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Holy One.***

To what can the protocol for making *korban olah* 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: *Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.*

The Holy Fire Factor

The unique thing about a *korban olah* is that the surrogate presented was *totally consumed by fire*. Why fire? Because to those who think Hebraically fire is associated with the *Cherub* which the Holy One stationed at the entrance to the way to the tree of life.

Hevel and Noach had no confusion as to why they did what they did in the name of *korban olah*. Neither did Avraham or Moshe or the Redeemed Community which we see gathered at Mount Sinai in today's aliyah. They each wanted to approach – not “appease” - the Holy One. They each wanted to be restored to intimate fellowship with Him. They each wanted to reverse the destructive process that had started with the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They wanted to go back and eat from the tree of life instead. But they knew that because of the events of the Fall *they would have to pass through the flaming sword of the Cherub to get there*. Their infected wills were thinking self-preservation and survival, however, and hence they could not, on their own, draw near the fire. They needed the empowerment of Divine Speech, and the enablement and guidance of Divine Protocol, to be able to overcome the disease of the will. And He provided just that. He declared that He would accept, in their place, a surrogate that would bear the judgment of the flaming sword on their behalf. We have the very same need, Dear Reader.

The Essential First Step On the Pathway to Covenant Communion – The Korban Olah

The *korban olah* is totally consumed by fire, and the smoke of it ascends from the altar to provide a ‘covering – *kafar* (translated as “atonement”) for the one who brings

it. This was the same type of substitutionary approach made long ago by Hevel [Abel] in Genesis 4:4, and by Noach in Genesis 8:20, and by Avraham in Genesis 22. Before one can enter the realm of holiness where interaction with the Holy One takes place, you see, one simply *must* go through this step of threshold commitment. One must not only *see* the flames ... one must *surrender* to them.

We need to approach with One taken “from the flock” as well – a surrogate of *korban* whose name we call *Yeshua* – One Who has passed through the fire for us.

Embrace your *korban olah*. Lay your hand upon Him. Submit yourself totally to the Holy One, and to *His Will for your life*. And then, through that *korban olah*, *approach* the fire of the Holy One – and begin to *ascend*. Gaze into the flames. Let your face be singed by the fire. If you will look closely, you will see someone *walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed* – looking like a son of God [cf. Daniel 3:25]. And if you listen carefully, you will hear Him calling you to come to Him, to sit at His Feet and commune with Him, to learn from Him, and to be healed by Him.

Each year as the Biblical New Year approaches and the Grand Play of Mankind’s Redemption begins to play itself out again in Creation, the Holy One offers us this invitation. This is a season of intimate co-laboring with our King. This is a time for intense, strategic, and radical bridal preparation. It thus begins with making ourselves ready for *Passover*. It includes setting ourselves apart to our Bridegroom throughout the *Days of Unleavened Bread*. It guides us through the season of humility and accountability that we have come to call *Sefirat Ha-Omer*. Its goal is to prepare us for the ultimate prophetic bridal encounter, the one we call *Shavuot* – *i.e.* the *Feast of Weeks*.

The Voice of the Bridegroom-King is calling to His Beloved at this time of year, saying: ***Arise, My Love, and come away with Me!*** *Vayikra* is our roadmap for the great journey to which we are being called. It is *the manual of Bridal Love* that the Holy One has written for His Bride-People. After all, before we *rise up* and *go away with our Bridegroom* on this journey we are going to need some radical intervention. We have deep wounds of the soul as a result of our exile amidst people infected by the wasting disease called the *knowledge of good and evil*. We need multiple levels of treatment for these soul-wounds. *We need to simplify the lifestyle we are living*. We need to adjust the *priorities we are following*. We also need to take inventory of *the things we are ingesting, the atmosphere of the houses in which we live, and the fabric of the garments we are wearing*. *And we need to maximize the substance and quality of the conversations and interactions we are having* – with the Holy One and with one another. Are our garments, lifestyle,

priorities, diets, and interactions consistent with our calling to be the pure, spotless Bride the Holy One is calling us to be? Are they appropriate for the journey upon which our Beloved is calling us to accompany Him? Or are we in desperate need of the ultimate extreme bridal “make-over”?

Come, let us go to the courts of the Holy One. Let us not go empty-handed. Let us take the best and most beloved aspects of what we have produced with our efforts thus far, and make *korban olah*. Let us surrender our will and ways to the fire – until only our King’s will, His ways, and His words remain.

Questions For Today’s Study

1. In today’s verses, the instructions are given regarding *korbanot* [plural of *korban*] to be made by individuals like you and me (as opposed to priests, or for the community as a whole).

*When anyone of you approaches the Holy One,
he is to take with him a korban from among the cattle, the herd, or the flock.*

*If his korban is a korban olah from the herd,
he is to approach with a male without blemish.*

*He is to approach with it at the door of the Tent of Meeting,
that he may be accepted before the Holy One.*

[A] What type of *korban* do today’s verses discuss?

[B] What three sources are permitted for this type of *korban*?

2. With respect to the mechanics of the *korban olah* itself, we are told the following:

*He is to lay his hand on the head of the **korban olah**,
and it will be accepted for him to make atonement for him.
He is to kill the bull before the Holy One.*

*Aharon's sons, the Kohanim, are to present the blood
and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the door of the Tent of Meeting.
He is to flay the **korban olah**, and cut it into pieces.*

*The sons of Aharon the Kohen are to put fire on the altar, and lay wood in order on the fire;
and Aharon's sons, the Kohanim, are to lay the pieces,
the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire which is on the altar;
but its innards and its legs he is to wash with water.*

*The Kohen is to burn the whole on the altar for a **korban olah**, a **korban** of fire,
a sweet savor to the Holy One.*

[Leviticus 1:4-9]

[A] What is the responsibility of the individual who brings the *korban*?

[B] What is the responsibility of the priest?

[C] How did the process differ when the *korban* was a turtledove or pigeon?

3. How were these *korbanot* to be “received” by the Holy One?

4. This week’s haftarah comes from the Scroll of *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah]. In chapter 43 we read:

*... the people that I formed for myself – they should broadcast My praise.
But you have not called on Me, Ya`akov;
and you have been weary of Me, Yisra'el.*

*You have not brought me of your flock for korbanot olahot;
neither have you honored me with your korbanot.*

*I have not burdened you with offerings,
nor wearied you with frankincense.
You were not told to bring Me sweet cane with money,
nor to feed/satiate Me with the fat of your sacrifices;
but you have burdened Me with your sins,
you have wearied Me with your iniquities.*

*I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake;
and I will not remember your sins.*

[Isaiah 43:21-25]

[A] According to these Haftarah verses why did the Holy One ‘form’ Israel? Before answering, read I Peter 2:9-17, Ephesians 1:4-6, John 17:6-26 and Isaiah 43:1-13.

[B] Why does the Holy One say He chooses to blot out His Peoples’ transgressions, and not remember our sins?

[C] When Yeshayahu [Isaiah] spoke the Holy One’s heart cry to His people, they were *in captivity in Babylon* and their altar had been polluted and “closed down”. They were, therefore, physically incapable of presenting *korbanot* as described in Leviticus 1-5. What *could* they have done, however, that they did not do?

5. This week’s B’rit Chadasha reading is from the Book of Hebrews – a letter written to Jewish people who acknowledged Yeshua of Natzret as the Messiah promised in Torah. In the reading assigned for study today the writer of Hebrews quotes a verse from the TaNaKh, which his readers should know very well:

*Therefore when he comes into the world, he says,
"Sacrifice and offering you didn't desire, but a body did you prepare for me;
In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure."*

*Then I said, 'Behold, I have come
(In the scroll of the book it is written of me) to do your will, O Holy One.'"*

[Hebrews 10:5-7]

[A] What psalm does the writer of Hebrews quote in today’s B’rit Chadasha passage?

[B] What do this Psalm and Hebrews 10:5-7 mean? [Hint: Read John 4:34 before answering]

*May the fire burn within your hearts,
And may the resulting glow tell the world You have bridged the great abyss,
and humbly approached and intimately communed with the Holy One.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 106:1-4[a]

*Praise the Holy One! Give thanks to the Holy One, for he is good,
For his lovingkindness endures forever.*

*Who can utter the mighty acts of the Holy One,
or fully declare all his praise?*

Blessed are those who keep justice.

Blessed is one who does what is right at all times.

Remember me, O Holy One, with the favor that you show to your people.