

# *Shiur L'Yom Chamishi<sup>1</sup>*

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS:     ***Torah Tzav:***                     Leviticus 7:22-38  
                  ***Haftarah:***                         Jeremiah 8:1-3  
                  ***B'rit Chadasha:***                 Hebrews 8:10-13

***The Kohen is to burn the fat on the altar.***

[Leviticus 7:31a]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 116:9-15;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the Gevurot, Part III

***Kol-chelev shor v'chesev v'ez*** – All the fat of an ox, sheep, or goat ... ***lo tocheilu*** – you are not to eat. Leviticus 7:24b.

Did the Holy One really just say ***lo tocheilu*** – i.e. *you are not to eat*? Where have we heard those words from Him before? I vaguely remember something similar at Genesis 2:17 and 9:4 – don't you? Can the Holy One really be about to get all up into our 'let's do lunch' business again? Doesn't He remember how it turned out the last time He tried to tell human beings what they should and shouldn't be ingesting into their bodies? Yes, He remembers. But we have come a long way since then. We have seen – and been beneficiaries of – His deliverance. We have heard His Voice declaring the glorious vision He has regarding us and the impact He envisions us having on the world. We have witnessed startling demonstrations of His power – but have also personally experienced His Patience, Kindness, Mercy, and faithfulness to covenant. We have marveled at His Wisdom, gazed awestruck at His Beauty, and trembled at His Majesty. With Moshe we have seen all His Goodness pass by us in review. We have embarked on a great mission – as His diplomatic corps and model nation. Surely now we will joyfully tune to and embrace Heaven's *true tone* of wisdom, understanding, and good counsel. Surely now our relationship has progressed that far. Surely now we have learned to trust Him to have our best interest at heart.

***Can You Trust The One Who Designed and Created You  
To Know and Tell You How To Maximize Your Health,  
Happiness, Energy Level, Longevity, and Societal Impact?***

As always, the Holy One is demonstrating how to be wise, creative, compassionate, patient, gentle, and kind all at the same time. He has a glorious long-range plan to bring redemption to mankind and restoration to Creation. We – the sons and daughters of Avraham – are called to perform an integral role of that

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plan. We are to show the world what an *am segulah*, a *kingdom of kohanim*, and a *holy nation unto our Creator* look like in real life and real time. But alas, we are not yet anywhere near ready to assume the role He has ordained for us to play in an effective way. We are still more shrew-like than bride-like. We need to undergo the Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover. And our Bridegroom-King is *on it*. He is about to introduce the next phase of our Makeover Protocol. We are our Beloveds; He is ours - and He wants the world to know it well. The Holy One knows that for us to have the redemptive and restorative impact on the world that He has planned for us, our lives – and all our intersections with the peoples, nations, and cultures of the world – need to provide telltale signs that *mark us* as his own – *i.e.* as His *garden enclosed*, as His *gated personal spring/well*, and as His *sealed fountain*. **Song of Songs 4:12<sup>2</sup>**. It is not about *control*; it is about *empowerment*. It is not about *superstition*; it is about *ennoblement*. It is not about *legalism*; it is about *kingdom representation*.

What exactly does the Holy One intend the telltale signs of the kind of rich, deep, intimate Covenant relationship that we have with Him – and He with us - to be? What specific signs are supposed to follow those who are here on earth to serve the King instead of promoting themselves or advancing the agenda of their particular tribal affiliation[s]<sup>3</sup>? How is the world to know for sure that we have – and are walking in - a Higher Calling? How are the people of the world to know that we, individually and collectively, have far more to offer them and their households than the standard fare witches' brew – *i.e.* a lifestyle and legacy of narcissism, hedonism, thrill seeking, materialism, sensuality, sentimentality, political and ideological groupthink, intellectual snobbery, weaponized art and science, propagandized education, and occult forms of religion? These are questions the Holy One is determined to address. It begins today, but it will continue for quite some time. Gird up your loins - It is our appointed time to be introduced in earnest to the realm of *bridal kedusha*. Moshe, the Friend of the Bridegroom, is our personal trainer. The Holy One Himself, however, wrote the protocols of our regimen.

### ***The Appointed Time For Bridal Kedusha Has Come***

The theme of the season is *Extreme Bridal Makeover*. Now that the *Mish'kan* is in place, and the Manifest Presence of our Bridegroom dwells in our midst, we are

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<sup>2</sup> Song 4:12: *A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride; a spring gated/shut up, a fountain sealed.*

<sup>3</sup> The affiliations about which the author is speaking are not Hebrew tribal lineages as described in the Torah; they are toxic outside-the-Covenant group attachments and associations formed by human beings around every label emanating from race, to ethnicity, to geography, to politics, to ideology, to philosophy, to religion, to socio/economics, and sports.

finally being given the meatier portions of the *shitre eyrusin*<sup>4</sup> that we are to study and live by in order to ‘make ourselves ready’ to function as the Creator’s Bride and Co-Regent. Up to this point in the narrative the spotlight of *Sefer Vayikra* has been exclusively focused on the *korbanot protocols* of the *Mish’kan*. We have been studying and meditating upon the five beautifully choreographed protocols the Holy One has given us to empower us to first recognize - and then co-labor with Him to overcome - the five most fundamental needs of humanity, to start to transcend our fallen natures, and walk with Him in a meaningful and world changing way. Today the focus of the discussions is going to shift a little. Now that the fundamental truths about the *korbanot* we so desperately need for the ascent He has planned for us have been laid out and explored in depth, the Holy One is ready to shift our attention to the next logical step on the great ascent – our calling to cultivate *bridal kedusha*.

### ***Looking Beyond the Approaches of Korbanot – to the Lifestyle of Kedusha***

What is *kedusha* you ask? *Kedusha* is a Hebrew noun often translated as ‘holiness’ or ‘consecration’. *Kedusha* is the process of being set apart. Bridal *kedusha* is being set apart to a bridegroom and/or husband. Our calling to *bridal kedusha* is a call is to *become identified with Holy One* – in worldview, in perspective, in thought, in word, in deed, in life-choices, in the usage of time, energy, and passion, as well as in some of life’s most mundane matters. In relation to what kind of mundane but very visible matters is the Bridegroom-King going to call us to *bridal kedusha*? It will be things like *what we choose to eat and choose not to eat*. It will be things like *what we do and with to our bodies and do not do to and with our bodies*. It will be things like *how we relate to and utilize time*. It will be things like *how we do and do not utilize our God-given creativity*, and even *what we do and do not do in the name of worship*.

What the Holy One is about to introduce is going to be a pervasive – and extremely invasive - *makeover*. We are about to embark on a great adventure of self-discovery. We are about to find out *who we really are, whose we really are, why we are given the breath of life and placed on planet earth at such a time as this*, and what it looks like to model the Kingdom of Heaven in real time, in real ways. We are about to unpack and discard the ‘old man’. His attitudes and appetites are about to lose dominion over us. We are about to break free and become a ‘new creation’. We are about to be made over – into the Bride-People of the Holy One

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<sup>4</sup> A *shitre eyrusin* is part of the formal documentation of a Betrothal. The document, which contains the Bridegroom’s vision for the person the Bride will become, and the kind of interactions and relationship the Bride and Bridegroom will have, is given to the Bride to study, meditate upon, and practice in real, practical ways. This process is called ‘the Bride making herself ready’.

we were created to be.

*Who* are we? We are the specially chosen treasure people of the Holy One.

*Whose* are we? We belong to the One Who designed us, created us, gave us life, redeemed us, loved us when we were totally unlovable, and cut covenant with us forever despite our unworthiness to even stand in His Presence.

*Why are we here?* We have been selected out of all men to have the honor of not only getting to know the Holy One intimately, but walking with Him daily, and learning from Him directly. We are given this privilege so that we can overcome our fleshly bondage, and actually represent Him, and model His glorious freedom and His brilliant ways to the world. Because we are His models, and emissaries of His Kingdom, our Bridegroom-King plans to empower us for us to look, talk, eat, act, and live in much higher and blessed ways than the peoples of the world. He wants us to demonstrate, in real time, how He designed human beings to look, talk, eat, act, and live.

Why does the Holy One want this for us? Why does He not just leave us alone to think and talk in society-speak, to lust after and indulge whatever our eyes fixate upon or our flesh craves, the way the unredeemed around us do? It is not because He is a control freak; He is not. It is not because He hates us; He most definitely doesn't. It is because He sees potential in us – and in the world - that we do not see in ourselves. That is why He calls and empowers us to overcome, transcend, and find our true identity, our true value, our true purpose, and our true delight *in Him*. He has a Grand Plan for the redemption of mankind and Creation. And He wants to invite us to participate in that Grand Plan. If we are to accomplish a tenth of what He has designed, created, redeemed, and empowered us to accomplish in Him, however, we have to be *in Him, of Him, for Him, and like Him*. That means we have to be enamored with the Bridegroom-King as a real persona, not an abstract concept or idea. That means we will joyfully assume higher and higher levels of His majesty. That means we will choose to be motivated by and begin to reflect our Bridegroom-King's heart, His passion, His goodness, His words, His wisdom, and His ways. That means we have to wean ourselves away from fleshly appetites and reactions. That means we have to transcend the norms of the cultures around us. That means we are no longer to be seduced by the *sensual distractions, the cheap thrills, the inferior matrix of pleasures, and the philosophical, ideological, political, pseudo-scientific, and religious deceptions* pitched at us by those trapped in bondage to the physical, material world in which we live.

The goal of the Bridegroom-King is to bring out in us, and showcase for the world,

what it looks like to have been given beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness. He intends to make His glory shine in and upon and around us. He intends to make us oaks of righteousness, the planting of ADONAI, that He may be glorified. He intends that we become recognizable as His *kohanim* [i.e. priests, ambassadors, emissaries, diplomatic envoys], and as willing, joyful, servants of the Most High God. So it is time for the *kedusha protocols* to begin. *After all, kedusha – i.e. the visible, tangible, unmistakable, fruit-of-the-Spirit-producing energy that flows from Bridal consecration and holiness – is what Sefer Vayikra is all about.* Our Bridegroom wants His Bride to learn how to **‘be holy as [He is] holy’**. For that reason, the *kedusha He has planned* for us extends to all the elements of our lifestyle. Get ready for Him to make everything new – beginning with our diet and our approach to life. The Bridegroom-King is about to release prophetic, empowering words over us that are designed to cause His own Beauty, Holiness, Joy, Passion, and Energy to arise in and from all who love Him and seek to dwell in His Presence.

***The Presence of Fruit-of-the-Spirit Producing Kedusha Energy  
is to be the First Recognizable Mark of the Holy One’s Bride-People***

*Pulsing Kedusha energy is, you see, the mark of the Bride. ‘Pure and spotless’, ‘without spot or wrinkle’ or blemish<sup>5</sup>, ‘made ready’<sup>6</sup>, ‘dressed in fine linen, clean and bright’<sup>7</sup> – these are all phrases which describe the Bride who has surrendered to and walked out the Divinely-ordained process of *kedusha* the Holy One has designed for Her. And in the Holy One’s eyes the process by which human beings are marked with *kedusha* – stamped as ‘set apart’ for and unto Him in a tangible, visible way - starts with what those humans choose to – and not to – ingest.*

The Holy One is speaking *words of a Bridegroom especially targeted for the ears of His betrothed bride* - words which we as His *am segulah*, His *mamlakah kohanim*, and His *goy k’dosh* are well-served – not to mention *committed by our covenant* - to *sh’ma, sh’mar* and *asah*. Many in today’s world do not want to hear this, but one of the subjects the Holy One wants to talk to us about is DIET. The Holy One wants those He has redeemed from the slave-house to know that covenant with Him involves *every aspect of human life* – including *what we are to choose to eat and not eat*. He who has ears to *sh’ma*, let him *sh’ma*.

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<sup>5</sup> See Ephesians 5:27: “... that He might present her to Himself a glorious called-out one, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

<sup>6</sup> See Revelation 19:7: “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

<sup>7</sup> See Revelation 19:8: “And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

## ***Who Is Your Shepherd? Your Father? Your Rabbi? Your King?***

One of the most fundamental things every human being does is eat. If we do not eat, we will die. The question is therefore not IF we will eat, but WHAT we will eat. When we are very young children we must eat whatever others – usually our parents - provide for us to eat. We may not like the taste or the texture or smell or quantity of what they provide for us. We might crave ice cream instead of broccoli or peas. Our parents know that if they will just not cave in to our foolish, childish attitude about food eventually we will eat whatever they provide – or go hungry. At some point however we reach a point at which we actually choose what we will eat and will not consider ‘food’. We get the power to define ‘food’ for ourselves – and can elect to eat whatever, whenever, however much we want. Even if it *kills us*.

We eventually get to choose what we will eat - even if the way we eat is totally undistinguishable from the way the pagans or the atheists or the idolaters of modern society eat. We choose - even if the diet we choose for ourselves marks us as being like those *whose god is their belly, whose end is destruction, whose glory is in their shame-who set their mind on earthly things*. **Philippians 3:19**.

Ah, the heady sensation of freedom. We get to ‘have it our way’. But wait a minute. If the Holy One is our Shepherd<sup>8</sup> and we are the sheep of His pasture - as we are so anxious to proclaim in the context of our religious meetings – well ... if that is true ... *isn't one of the most important things a shepherd does to determine what his sheep should and should not eat?* Could a shepherd who does not wisely and carefully plan and monitor the sources of nourishment his sheep ingest possibly be considered a ‘good’ shepherd?

And if the Holy One is our Father, and we are His children, as we are equally adamant about proclaiming when we gather for what we call ‘worship’ – well ... if that is true ... *isn't one of the most important things a father does to provide what he considers to be good food for his children to eat?* Could a father who does not wisely and carefully plan and monitor the sources of nourishment his children ingest possibly be considered a ‘good’ father?

And if the Holy One is our King, and we are His diplomatic corps<sup>9</sup> ....

And if the Holy One is our Master, and we are His servants ....

And if the Holy One is our Commander-in-chief, and we are His army ....

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<sup>8</sup> See Psalm 23; Psalm 28:9; Psalm 95:7; Psalm 100:3; Isaiah 40:11; John 10:11-16; Hebrews 13:20; and I Peter 5:4.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., I Kings 4:27 and Daniel 1:13.

And if the Holy One is our Bridegroom, and we are His Bride ....

And if we no longer live, but Messiah lives in us<sup>10</sup> ....

Buckle your seat belts, dear ones - we are on the verge of a very exciting revelation. The Holy One knows it even if we do not want to face it and live with it: *whose you are determines what you do and do not eat; and what you do and do not eat reveals to the world whose you are.* Nothing tells people you are different from them more powerfully than politely declining to eat things they think of as food, but which the most important relationship you have says are not food 'for you'. You don't have to preach to them about your calling. The obvious difference in diet does the talking for you. You don't have to – and should not - condemn those who eat things your Shepherd, King, Master, Commander-in-Chief, and Bridegroom says are not to be food for you – indeed you must not do that. Your assignment is merely to confidently know that He Who knows you best, loves you most, and would do anything to see you do well and prosper, has your best interest at heart when He defines food. On His side are things like OMNISCIENCE and ETERNAL WISDOM and the everlasting life that He makes available through the TREE OF LIFE. On the side of the world's way there are simply the corrupted minds, the limited understandings, and the voracious fleshly appetites of Fallen men fading quickly into oblivion under the death sentence of the life force fueled by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I'll go with Omniscience, Eternal Wisdom and the Tree of Life over corrupted reasoning, limited understanding, voracious fleshly appetite, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil *every time*. I for one am *eternally thankful* that the Holy One cares enough about me – and my family - to tell us what we *should eat* and *should not eat*.

*BRING ON THE BRIDE DIET, DEAR SHEPHERD, KING, MASTER, COMMANDER AND BRIDEGROOM! I am 100% IN! How about you?*

### ***The First Elements of Bride Diet***

Early in the verses of Torah we study today we are presented with two significant restrictions on the diet the Holy One wants us to follow as part of our 'ultimate Divine Bridal Make-over protocol'. First of all, our loving and wise Divine Bridegroom wants His Bride-to-be's diet to be very *low on animal fat*. In fact we are told:

***kol-chelev shor v'chesev v'ez lo tocheilu***  
*All fat from ox or sheep or goat you are not to eat*

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<sup>10</sup> In Galatians 2:22 Shaul says: "*I have been crucified with Messiah; it is no longer I who live, but Messiah lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

**v'chelev neveilah**

*And the fat of an animal that dies [i.e. expires naturally]*

**v'chelev treifah**

*and the fat of what is torn by wild beasts ...*

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**v'achol lo tocheiluhu**

*... do not eat it.*

**Ki kol-ochel chelev min-ha-behemah**

*For whoever eats [Hebrew, chelev] the 'hard fat' of the animal?*

**asher yakriv mimeinah isheh l'Adonai**

*through which men offer an approach by fire to the Holy One,*

**v'nichretah ha-nefesh ha-ochelet me'ameyha**

*the person who eats [it] is/will be cut off from his people.*

[Leviticus 7:23-25]

Wow. So what kind of 'fat' we choose to eat – and not to eat - is supposed to be one of the 'marks of distinction' that sets us apart as belonging to the Holy One! Put another way, a little thing like eating something from an ox, sheep, or goat called *chelev* could actually have the effect of cutting us off from the Holy One's people.

***Understanding the Difference Between Types of Adipose Tissue:  
Chelev vs. Shumen***

We are not all called or cut out to be butchers – but we do all need to know enough about the anatomy of a *tahor* animal to enable us to understand what the prohibited substance that Torah calls *chelev* is and is not! There are two Hebrew words that are commonly translated into English as 'fat' - one is *chelev*; the other is *shumen*. Both are found in every mammal. *Chelev* is not for us to eat; *shumen* is permitted.

What is *shumen*? *Shumen* is the ordinary kind of fatty tissue found throughout an animal. It is interwoven in the flesh of the animal; it is thus impossible to completely remove.

What is *chelev*? *Chelev* is a specific kind of fatty tissue that adheres to certain organs - the kidneys, the liver, the stomach, and, in sheep, the 'fat tail'.

*Shumen* we may eat. Hence fatty tissue found interwoven through the flesh of the animal in places other than around the kidneys, liver, and stomach, as well as 'fatty' animal products like butter and milk, are kosher for us. But unlike the rest of the peoples of the world, we are to make a distinction between *shumen* and *chelev*. It is part of our covenant with the Creator. It is one of the marks of our separation.

It does not make us better than anyone else; it just tells the world we live by a Higher Priority. And, of course, since toxins are stored up in a mammal's fatty tissue, avoiding the fatty tissue closest to the body's toxin-filter organs – *i.e.* the kidney, liver, and stomach, is probably significantly healthier for us as well.

Chelev is therefore not to be considered as 'food' for us, any more than the flesh of the swine is to be considered food. What would eating *chelev* on purpose – though the Holy One has told us not to – say to the world? It would say that we have chosen to break away from the Covenant that makes us who we are, because we prefer to satisfy our appetites, and think and behave, like people who do not know the Holy One instead of like the Kingdom People we are. But there is more.

### ***The Next Prohibition – We are Not to Ingest Blood or Blood Products***

Following on the heels of the elimination of the kind of animal fat the Torah calls *chelev* from our diet we are immediately presented with another critical dietary restriction – this one having to do with blood. For Torah tells us

***V'chol-dahm lo tochlu b'chol moshvoteychem***  
*And you are not to eat any blood in any of your dwellings*

***l'of v'labeheimah***  
*[whether] of bird or beast*

***Kol-nefesh asher-tochal kol-dahm***  
*Whoever eats any blood*

***v'nichreitah ha-nefesh hahi mei'ameiha***  
*that person is/will be cut off from his people.*

[Leviticus 7:26-27]

No *chelev* is to enter our bodies. No blood<sup>11</sup> is to be ingested. Huh! What on earth does this have to do with our calling as the Bride-to-be of the Divine Bridegroom in Heaven?

### ***Whose Voice Are We Sh'ma-ing?***

Please note that the passage we read today opens with the classic revelatory formula of Torah ***Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor ...*** [*And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ...*]. Why do I point this out, you ask? Because this is a *very important literary cue*. The presence of the “***Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor ...*** [*And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ...*]” preface is to Torah what the infamous “***Thus saith the Lord***” preface is to the prophetic books.

When a portion of Torah begins with the phrase ***Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe***

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<sup>11</sup> See Acts 15:29, the Jerusalem counsel, writing to all Gentile followers of Yeshua, put it this way: “abstain from things offered to idols [*i.e. animal fat*], from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.”

***l'emor ...** [And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ...]”, therefore, the text is veritably demanding we stop whatever we are doing and *sh'ma*, because *what we are about to read is not some dusty set of ordinances out of the ‘law of Moshe’, but is instead the eternal, effectual, enduring, unchanging, prophetic and always creative words of our covenant partner.* Any time we read the phrase **Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor ...** [And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ...]” in Torah it is our cue that the words which immediately follow are going to be *full of life and power*, and are going to be *sharper than any two-edged sword* – eternal truth spoken in the Divine tongue that is *designed to pierce us, to separate our soulish nature from our spiritual essence, to divide our joints from our marrow, and to reveal the thoughts and intents of our hearts*<sup>12</sup>. **Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor ...** [And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ...]” is a declaration that the Divine Utterance which the text of Torah is about to quote will not return to the Holy One void, but will accomplish that which He intends, and will *nourish and enrich our lives as the rain and the snow that come down from heaven water the earth and make it sprout and bear fruit*<sup>13</sup>.*

Today’s aliyah begins with **Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor ...** [And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ...]. So the question is - *what creative, prophetic message does the Creator want to speak into your life today?* “But wait!” I hear some angry voices out there saying. Didn’t Yeshua ‘cancel the written code with its regulations that was against us and stood opposed to us’<sup>14</sup>, and thereby set us ‘free from the law’. After all, they insist, Kefa [i.e. Simon Peter] had a vision of all kinds of animals, reptiles and birds of earth descending on a sheet from heaven and heard a voice say “Kill and eat” and “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”<sup>15</sup>. Some will add “And didn’t Mark tell us parenthetically that Yeshua ‘declared all foods clean’<sup>16</sup>? A few will chime in: “And didn’t Shaul of Tarsus [i.e. Paul] teach us that ‘now that faith has come, we are no longer under the tutelage of the law’<sup>17</sup>? And didn’t ‘Paul’ state that he was convinced that ‘no food is unclean in itself’<sup>18</sup>, and tell Timothy that “nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer<sup>19</sup>.”

Perhaps we need to consider a few spiritual matters of Torah and its essence before we willingly jump to the wrong conclusion about what Yeshua, Kefa, and Shaul

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<sup>12</sup> Hebrews 4:12.

<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 55:10-11.

<sup>14</sup> Colossians 2:13-14.

<sup>15</sup> Please read Acts 10:9-19 to put this in context.

<sup>16</sup> Mark 7:19 NIV [compare to KJV and NKJV].

<sup>17</sup> Galatians 3:5.

<sup>18</sup> Romans 14:14.

<sup>19</sup> I Timothy 4:4-5.

were trying to say to us. Each of those statements, properly understood in context, is perfectly consistent with the Holy One's instructions about what is and is not 'food' for His Beloved. The answer is not what most people seem to think. Let's dig deeper, shall we?

### ***The Holy One Has Always Separated His People Unto Himself By Defining Their Diet***

The truth is that *from the very beginning* – from the Garden of Eden forward - the Holy One has always reserved the right to define what is and what is not 'food' for those in relationship with Him. The Holy One told Adam:

***Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat:  
but of the tree of the knowledge of good [tov] and evil [ra], do not eat:  
for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die."***

[Genesis 2:17-18]

The Holy One, of course, *created* man, and *knows very well what aspects of the Creation are – and are not – good for man*. He loves man; His desire for all men is health, wholeness, strength, fulfillment of potential, and achievement of assigned purpose.

All things He created are 'good'; but not all things He created are 'food'. Some things the Holy One created were made for purposes other than human consumption. The Holy One therefore gave the wisest and best dietary instructions possible to the man and woman He placed in the garden. Animal flesh was not to be part of their diet. Nor, of course, was the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Of course the subject of what is and is not food for man eventually became the subject of the first sin. The serpent always likes to ask ***'Did the Holy One really say ...'*** in regard to the Holy One's instructions regarding what is and is not to be considered food. And he likes to put on his most pious and religious-looking face and use the most spiritual sounding language possible when he does so. From the beginning a burning question exploited by the Serpent has been: *Will human beings trust the Holy One enough to heed His instructions concerning what is and is not food for us – or will we be slaves to our own tastes, our own appetites and/or our own cultural definitions of what is 'food'?*

A lot has happened in Torah, of course, between Genesis 2 and Leviticus 7. What is and is not to be food for us has not been an issue addressed by Torah since the Flood narrative. Why not? Probably because men were, quite frankly, during that period, with the exception of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, not exactly living lives of intimate relationship with the Holy One. But we are at a new juncture. We

have now reached a place in Torah where the process of *restoration to intimate fellowship with the Holy One* has begun.

The Holy One has spoken His prophetic words of empowerment over us on the mountain. The *mish'kan* is in place. The *Radiant Cloud of the Holy One's manifest Presence* hovers over the camp. We meet with the Holy One daily at the *mizbe'ach* [altar], under the *chuppah* of the cloud covering created when the designated *korbanot* are placed on the altar. We are returning to 'garden' levels of intimacy with our Creator. Our potential to fulfill the destiny the Holy One created for us is expanding each day. And so the Holy One returns to the subject of what He created man to eat. He does this not because He wants to restrict or limit us, but because He wants us to be able to reach our potential. He knows, you see, what *fuel* both our bodies and our souls need to propel us to our destinies. He knows what is good for us, on the one hand – and what will slow us down, hold us back, and cause us to implode, like a dying star, on the other hand. It is all part of the Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover. In the next parsha therefore we will study the Holy One will speak much, much more about the subject of 'what is food'. At that time He will tell us that things *pork, shrimp, lobster, shark, and catfish, rabbit, squirrel, and raccoon*, to name a few, are not 'food' – indeed that He considers the idea that men would choose to eat those things to be an *abomination*. For right now, however, the Holy One knows our attention is focused on the *korbanot*, not the general subject of food. In *Tzav* therefore He merely tells the Redeemed Community that two specific things which are an integral part of making *korbanot* – the specific form of *animal fat* called *chelev*, and any creature's blood - are not under any circumstances to be considered 'food'.

### ***Back to the 'Gateway' Issues of Eschewing, Instead of Chewing, Chelev and Blood***

The most logical explanation of what *chelev*<sup>20</sup> is – *i.e.* what kind of animal fat is *not* to be ingested by representatives of the Bridegroom-King's Household – is the fat that is to be burned on the *mizbeach* [altar] as part of the presentation of a *korban shelem*. The rabbinic interpretation of the term *chelev*<sup>21</sup> is that it applies only to the layers of fat attached to the stomachs [*tahor* animals have at least two] and kidneys (some include the intestines) of *tahor* animals<sup>22</sup>. Those parts of an animal's body that

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<sup>20</sup> Chelev is *chet, lamed, veit*. It is Strong's Hebrew word #2459.

<sup>21</sup> Each person must decide if the rabbinic interpretation – in this and every other instance - is the Will of the Holy One or just the tradition of men. Nothing should not automatically be either accepted or rejected simply because it is a rabbinic interpretation. We are to *sh'ma* the Voice of the Holy One on all issues – but if we have not heard the Holy One's Voice personally on the specific issue, we should at least consider what the rabbi's have to say and pray about it.

<sup>22</sup> When a person approached with a live animal for a *korban* surrogate, first the blood of the slaughtered animal would be sprinkled on the altar. This was deemed by the sages as the surrendering of the person's

could be burned on the altar in connection with a *korban shelem* to make a ‘pleasing aroma’ go up to the Holy One are simply not to be eaten by man. That which is to present a ‘pleasing aroma to the Holy One is not to be consumed by - is not “food” for – man. The voice of the Holy One says specifically ***you shall in no way eat of it.***

This means that we are to consider *chelev* as the equivalent, for us, of what the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was supposed to be considered by Adam and Chava. It is a *test of relationship*. It is an unmistakable mark of *kedusha*. Though *chelev* may appear to our physical senses – or our corrupted human minds and voracious physical appetite - to be ‘good for food, and pleasant to the eyes’ [see Genesis 3:6], to the extent that we may be tempted to appropriate it selfishly, for our own purposes, we are not to do so - *because* we are in covenant with the Holy One. And we are to realize that the voice that tells us that it is silly not to eat *chelev* [or ingest foods containing blood, as we read about in the next *pasuk*] is not the voice of the Holy One; it is, instead, *the same voice that told Chava it was silly not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Learn to recognize *serpent-speak* when you hear it, Dear Reader.

The second feature of the dietary plan of the Holy One for our Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover is that for us, *no blood* or blood products are to be considered ‘food’. The Holy One says plainly:

***V'chol-dahm lo tochlu***

*And no blood is to be ingested,*

***b'chol mosh'voteichem l'of v'l'behemah***

*whether it is of bird or of animal, in any place where you will dwell.*

The Holy One goes on to emphasize the significance of this to the Bridal Makeover protocol, saying:

***Kol-nefesh asher-tochal kol-dahm***

*Whoever eats any blood,*

***V'nikretah ha-nefesh ha-hi me'ameyha***

*that soul will be cut off from his people."*

**[Leviticus 7:26]**

The Holy One has made it clear all along that the life force of the creature is in the blood. If we choose, nevertheless, to eat the blood or its products, we choose to ingest, and merge our soul and body with, the creature in question’s life force. Think of the ramifications of the popular saying: *You are what you eat*. If we choose to eat, and therefore take on the attributes and essence, of an animalistic life

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*will* to the Holy One. When the kohen laid the choice *fats* on the top of the altar to burn, the sages deemed this as representative of the person's desires being surrendered to the Holy One.

force ... well, let's just say there are certain to be some very unpleasant consequences.

### ***The Consequence: Being 'Cut Off' from One's People***

Both of the proscriptions mentioned in today's aliyah – the prohibition of eating *chelev*-type fat and the prohibition of ingesting *dahm* [blood] – carry with them a strong warning. Regarding any person in the community of the redeemed who either eats *chelev*-fat or ingests *dahm*, our English Bibles tell us, **he is cut off from his people**. What does this mean?

The Hebrew phrase our English Bibles translate as 'and he is to be cut off from his people' is **v'nikreitah ha-nefesh ha-ochelet me'ameiha**. The operative verb in this phrase is *karat*<sup>23</sup>. This verb has been translated to mean *cut off*. But that is not very definitive. Does it mean that *the community is to expel* – or at least excommunicate – the person? Does it mean the people of the community are to stone him/her to death? Usually if that is what the Holy One intends for us to do Torah tells us so in no uncertain terms; that is NOT the case here. Does it mean that the members of the community are to do what Shaul of Tarsus told the Corinthians to do – namely, to *deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of Yeshua the Lord* [See I Corinthians 5:5]? Or does it simply mean that eating the things that pagans eat causes us to be recognizable as aligned with the kingdoms of this world instead of with the Kingdom of Heaven?

### ***Questions For Today's Study***

1. Torah tells us specifically that the *chelev* and blood of animals is not “food” for the Holy One's people. The rest of the world, however, eats such things all the time – and they don't fall dead on the spot (usually).

[A] Why do you think the Holy One does not want His “kingdom of priests”, who are to be a light to the nations reflecting the Holy One's glory to them, eating animal fat?

[B] Why do you think the Holy One does not want His “kingdom of priests”, who are to be a light to the nations reflecting the Holy One's glory to them, eating blood?

[C] What redemptive purpose can you see in the instructions of Torah that we not eat animal fat and blood?

[D] The Holy One advises us that whoever eats either animal fat or blood “**shall be cut off from his people**” [Leviticus 7:25, 26]. In Gesenius' Lexicon, look up the Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as “cut off” [Strong's Hebrew word #3722 (*kaf, resh, tav*), first used in Genesis 9:11 and used again in Genesis 15:18, Genesis 17:14, Exodus 4:5, and Exodus 8:9]. Write the Hebrew word, in Hebrew letters, with vowel

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<sup>23</sup> Karat is *kaf, resh, tav*. Strong's Hebrew word #3722, it is pronounced *kaw-rawt*'.

markings. Then describe the Hebraic word picture this verb presents. With all this in mind, what do you think it means that whoever eats animal fat or blood “shall be cut off from his people”?

[E] Do some research regarding how the sages of Israel have interpreted and applied the instructions of Torah to eat no *chelev*, and to eat no blood. Write a one-page essay on the orthodox *halachah* on these issues. [One paragraph should be on the subject of *chelev* (what the rabbi’s permit and do not permit), and one paragraph should be on the subject of blood (and should reference Acts 15:20, and its implications for even gentile believers in Messiah)].

2. Today’s reading from the haftarah is a stunning prophecy of judgment on the nation of *Y’hudah* [Judah, the so-called *Southern Kingdom*], its holy city Jerusalem, its kings, princes, priests, and its citizens. The prophecy of judgment is addressed to all those who had, rather than approaching their Creator, Bridegroom, and covenant partner in love and humility as the Holy One had created them to do. willingly exchanged their covenant with the Holy One, and His blessings, for idols of stone, for the sinful pleasures of other cultures, and for the fatalistic pagan mindset of making “offerings” and “sacrifices” to a hated “deity”.

Jeremiah 8:1-3 is a passage that is hard to read, but which needs to be read regularly. It is a passage in which the voice of the Holy One speaks plainly and with righteous indignation about a judgment He is about to bring upon those who refused to hear His prophets, and return to covenant, and thus were bringing dishonor to themselves, to their children, and to the Holy One’s Name.

*At that time, says the Holy One,  
they will bring out the bones of the kings of Y’hudah,  
and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the Kohanim,  
and the bones of the prophets,  
and the bones of the inhabitants of Y’rushalayim, out of their graves;  
and they will spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of the sky,  
which they have loved, and which they have served,  
and after which they have walked, and which they have sought,  
and which they have worshiped: they will not be gathered, nor be buried,  
they shall be for dung on the surface of the eretz.*

*Death shall be chosen rather than life  
by all the residue that remain of this evil family,  
that remain in all the places where I have driven them, says the Holy One of Hosts.*

[Jeremiah 8:1-3]

[A] At what stage in Hebrew history was the above prophetic word spoken?

[B] Go back and look at the haftarah readings from the last two days. What transgressions by Israel of the Holy One’s covenant made a judgment such as is mentioned in today’s aliyah appropriate?

[C] What event(s) in Hebrew history have fulfilled this prophecy?

[D] The Holy One's judgments on earth, in this world, always have a redemptive purpose – meaning, that, in some way, while they discipline Israel (and deepen her relationship with the Holy One) they also further the Holy One's plans for the salvation and redemption of all the nations of the world. Write a one-page essay on the *redemptive purpose* of the Holy One in connection with the judgments upon Israel of Babylonian Captivity, subjugation to Persia, Greece, and Rome, and the various persecutions that have occurred in the Diaspora (including expulsions, pogroms, inquisitions, the holocaust, and, presently, the jihad of Muslims and anti-Semites all over the world).

3. Today's reading from the apostolic scriptures is Hebrews 8:10-13. The writer is not writing to novices recently converted from paganism but to "Hebrews" - people much more familiar than are we with the details of the *Torah*, the *Prophets*, the *Wisdom Writings*, and the *Megillot*, the Temple, the priesthood of Aharon, and the *korbanot*. In conversing with these people the writer does not speak of "doctrines" or abstract principles [the way people of a Greco-Roman mindset think and speak], but in *Hebraic understanding*. The author concerns himself exclusively with topics of interest to *Hebrew people*. Hence, it is not surprising that when the writer comes to the place where he desires to discuss Messiah he does not speak of his suffering and dying on a Roman execution stake but of His ascension into heaven - and His continuing ministry there as a Priest in the true Tabernacle of which the earthly Temple was merely a scale model.

Similarly, when describing what Yeshua's continuing Priesthood in the true Tabernacle in Heaven means for the nation of Israel and for individuals in that nation [like the Hebrews to whom he was writing] the writer points back to the TaNaKh, to the prophecies given concerning what that Priesthood would consist of. In today's aliyah the writer quotes extensively from the prophet Yirmayahu. This quotation is the longest quotation of the TaNaKh found anywhere in the B'rit Chadasha. Here is the quotation:

***For this is the b'rit [covenant] that I will make with the house of Yisra'el.***

***"After those days," says the Holy One;***

***"I will put my torah into their mind, I will also write it on their heart.***

***I will be to them a God, and they will be to me a people."***

***"They will not teach every man his fellow citizen,***

***Every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'***

***For all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.***

***For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness.***

***I will remember their sins and lawless deeds no more."***

**[Hebrews 8:10-12, quoting Jeremiah 31:33-34]**

To put this passage into context I encourage you to turn to *Yirmayahu* and read all of chapters 30 and 31. The timing of the prophecy was about 597 B.C.E. By the

time this prophecy was spoken, Israel [the Northern Kingdom] and its “ten tribes” under Efrayim and Menashe had already dispersed (lost) for over 100 years. Y’hudah [Judah, the “Southern Kingdom”, consisting of the tribes of Yehudah and Benyamin] was about to be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Jerusalem was about to be sacked, the Temple destroyed, and the people carried off to exile. By the time the Holy One spoke these words to Yirmayahu already large numbers of Jews from Jerusalem (including Daniel and Ezekiel, among many other leaders) were in refugee camps across Mesopotamia [like the camp at *Chebar* where Ezekiel was taken].

[A] Exclusively regarding people of what two nationalities was this promise spoken? [See **Jeremiah 30:2-4, 18, 31:1-4, 9-11, 18-20, 27-28, 31, 33**].

[B] The prophecy speaks of a future day, using the descriptive phrase “at that time”/“in those days”. What clues do chapters 30 and 31 of Jeremiah give as to when “that time”/ “those days” will be?

[C] With what people does the Holy One say He will make this “new” *b’rit* [covenant]?

[D] List the provisions of this “new” *b’rit* [covenant], as they are set out in the passage quoted by the writer of Hebrews.

[E] What exactly is it that the Holy One promises will be “set” in the minds, and “written on” the hearts of “*the house of Israel*”?

[F] What exactly is “new” about this *b’rit*? How does it differ from the B’rit made by the Holy One with Avraham? How does it differ from the B’rit made by the Holy One with the Redeemed Community at Mount Sinai?

[G] Whose responsibility was it, under the covenant made with the Redeemed Community at *Har Sineh*, to teach Torah to the people? How does the “new” *b’rit* modify this provision of the covenant made at Mt. Sinai?

4. After closing the quotation the writer of Hebrews proceeds to make a *d’rash* on it. Here is how this *d’rash* is usually translated into English:

*In that he says "A 'new' [note: diatheke, the Greek word for 'covenant' is not present in the Greek text of this verse]" he has made the first old  
But that which is becoming old and grows aged is near to vanishing away.  
[Hebrews 8:13]*

This *d’rash* was written in approximately 69 C.E. – approximately a year before the most dramatic event in Jerusalem since the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E. By the time the writer wrote this, the city was already under siege by the Roman general Titus. The ‘handwriting was on the wall’ – Jerusalem was going to be sacked again, the Herodian Temple was going to be destroyed, and the priesthood of Aharon – and the Sadducean traditions of Temple Halakah - would be rendered irrelevant. B’nei would again be deported from the Holy Land and dispersed among the nations – sown like seeds throughout the earth.

[A] What is the writer of Torah calling ‘new’ and what is he referring to as ‘old’?

[B] What, if any, aspect(s) of the covenant made at *Sinai* do you think the writer believed were about to “*vanish away*”?

[C] Judging from the quotation he writer of Hebrews chose as the text for his d’rash - *i.e.* Jeremiah 31:31-34] - what aspects of the covenant made at Mount Sinai do you think he expected to continue in force?

*May we be content to let the Holy One be just as much Lord  
over our appetites and over our diets,  
every bit as much as we proclaim Him to be Lord of our eternal salvation.*

### ***The Rabbi’s son***

## ***Meditation for Today’s Study***

Psalm 116:9-15

*I will walk before the Holy One in the land of the living.  
I believed, therefore I said, "I was greatly afflicted."  
I said in my haste, "All men are liars."*

*What will I give to the Holy One for all his benefits toward me?*

*I will take the **kos** [cup] of **Yeshuah** [salvation],  
and call on the name of the Holy One.*

*I will pay my **nedarim** [vows] to the Holy One,  
Yes, in the presence of all his people.*

***Yaqar** [precious] in the sight of the Holy One  
is the **mavet** [dying] of his **chassid’in** [holy ones].*