

Shiur L'Yom Sheni¹

[Monday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Tzav:*** **Leviticus 6:8-23²**
 Haftarah: **Jeremiah 7:21-26**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Hebrews 8:1-2**

Enjoin Aharon and his sons

[Leviticus 6:8]

Today's *Tzav* Meditation is Psalm 115:9-13;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is *Geverot, Part III*, the Prayer of His Power

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor – And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ... ***Tzav et-Aharon v'et-banav*** – Enjoin/Instruct Aharon and his sons **Leviticus 6:8-9-a.**

Shhhhhh! Down in the front! The next Act in the great passion play the Holy One has written to play on the stage of the stunning *Mish'kan* Theater is about to begin. Lights flicker – then the room goes dark. All attention turns to the stage. The curtain opens – and to our surprise there has been neither scenery adjustment, nor cast rearrangement, nor costume change. Still standing at the entrance to the *Mish'kan*, on 1 Nisan - the day of inauguration – are the same two characters that interacted in Act I. There is Moshe – and there is the Creator of the Universe, seated on a glorious Throne, clothed in resplendent light, emanating beauty. Out of dark shadows we see a human being approaching. The light from the Holy One's Throne is so bright that we cannot discern the person's age, birth-nation, gender, or skin-tone. We have no way to know his or her political affiliation, ideological bent, educational level, or economic class. All we know – all that matters - is that the person has come to draw near and commune with his or her Creator. He or she has not come emptyhanded. That is where the *kohen* comes in. Welcome to the ultimate no-judgment, no-condemnation zone. Welcome to the realm of *selfless service*. Welcome to the all-in world of an Aharonic priest. Those with judgmental attitudes, hard hearts, strong opinions, or weak stomachs are probably not going to like what comes next.

How Does He Do It?

A bright new burst of revelation of Heaven and its Courts is about to be released over us. Another puzzle piece of our destiny – and another element of our reason for being given the breath of life at such a time as this – is about to be downloaded. The One Who created us is about to speak a fresh empowerment of

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² The Hebrew and Western numbering of this passage are different. In Hebrew Bibles, the passage under study today is referred to as Leviticus 6:1-16.

‘wondrous things’ over and into our spirits. He is about to reveal to us what Shaul of Tarsus will later refer to as our ‘reasonable service’³. The words our King is about to speak are - as all of His Words are - words of life, of health, of hope, and of shalom. Prepare your heart to receive these words of our Bridegroom joyfully, thankfully, and reverently. But prepare your mind to be stretched beyond your imagination.

The first syllable our Bridegroom-King’s Beautiful Voice utters over us in this particular Discourse is *Tzav*. Our English Bibles – translated in the days when cruel monarchs like Henry VIII, ‘Bloody Mary’ and James I ruled Europe with an iron fist⁴ – describe what the Holy One says as ‘**Command!**’ We have therefore come to read the opening sentence of this Discourse as a harsh injunctive from the Holy One to Moshe: ‘**Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This the law of the burnt offering ...**’ *Hmmmmn*. Is this King James English translation anything close to what the Holy One is really saying? Does this old English language translation really provide an accurate description of what the Divine Voice is saying to His Bride-People? Does it sound like ‘Chuppah-talk’ to you? Dare we take a step back - and look a little deeper into the text with *Hebraic eyes*, and through an *Avrahamic Covenant mindset*?

What is Really Happening Here?

We can easily imagine King James of England saying ‘**Command Aharon!**’ We can even imagine the condescension in his voice and the frown on his face as he said it. But can we really attribute such things to the Holy One? First of all, we should be comforted by the fact that our Bridegroom-King did not ever – not even once - speak in English. He deliberately – and wisely - chose to speak every word that He ever released over us in the language we know as *Hebrew*. He intentionally chose to begin the current revelation download with a Hebrew verb – *tzav* - a verb formed by adding the Hebrew letter *vav* to the Hebrew consonant *tzade*. The translators of King James’ day translated this Hebrew verb as ‘command’ a whopping 514 times. Other times it was translated with the similarly governmental English verbs ‘charge’, ‘appoint’, ‘bade’ and/or ‘order’. I suppose such a harsh,

³ In Romans 12:1 Shaul says: ***I beseech you therefore, brothers, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.***

⁴ The first full translation of the Bible into the English Language is known as ***the Great Bible***. This translation came about during the infamous reign of Henry VIII, who broke away from the Catholic Church over his desire to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. Henry declared himself pope of the new Anglican Church. The *Geneva Bible* came about during the reign of Mary I, called ‘Bloody Mary’. Henry’s daughter by his Catholic wife, Catherine of Aragon, Bloody Mary attempted to reverse her father’s separation from Rome by forcing the entire nation to convert to Catholicism upon penalty of death. Protestants who refused to convert to the royal command to convert to Catholicism were burned at the stake. Then came the *Authorized Version* [KJV] in c. 1611, which was translated at the request of King James I of England, who reversed the process again, persecuting Catholics.

forceful interpretation of the words of a King was to be expected from people of King James II's era. After all, the only kind of royal pronouncements the English people of those times knew were the cruel, barked orders of angry, war-weary despots like James himself. The Kings of England of the days of the Geneva and King James translations were neither Covenant Partners of the Holy One nor friends of the people. The last English king to reconfirm and follow the Magna Carta had been Henry VI in 1423 – over 200 years before the King James translation was ordered. In the interval much had happened to make the throne of England hard, self-protective, and violent. First had been the bloody War of the Roses. Then had come the ascendancy of the Tudor Dynasty, which led to a long, dark era during which England's kings did whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted, however they wanted. Harsh despots, they had established a pattern, practice, and reputation for brutalizing and murdering in cold blood everyone they even suspected of daring not to assist them in their pursuit of wealth, fame, and power.

Since the original translations of the text of Torah into the English language took place in the time and in the sociological context of these powerful and oppressive monarchies, when it came time to translate the Hebrew verb *tzav*, naturally the first thing that came to the mind of the translators was 'command'. The Tudor kings did not issue instructions or empowerments – they issued *commands*. Those kings were all about 'commands'. If the king or queen said it, you did it – or off came your head. The kind of kings in those days did not instruct their people. The kind of kings they knew did not teach. The kings that the King James version's translators knew did not nurture and develop their people – or even their own families. The Kings in those days simply commanded, decreed, ordered – and inflicted their wrath on anyone who did not – in their opinion – obey to the letter. It was therefore natural for translators living in those bloody days to project onto the King of Kings the same kind of fierce countenance that they had always seen manifested by the kings they were forced by fate to serve.

Let's not be bound by the perspective of people living under despots. The Hebrew verb *tzav* pictures something much more personal, fatherly, and didactic in function than the fierce-countenanced 'commands' of England's Tudor kings. The Hebrew verb *tzav* denotes a stronger covenant partner/sovereign assigning a vassal in the covenant a specific task or set of tasks that actually constitutes an invitation deepen the covenant relationship, engaging them in co-laboring/partnering/joining in the 'greater yoke', in order that the covenant partners can begin to jointly steward/manage an ecosystem and/or operate a much larger plan or enterprise. *Tzav* is not so much oriented toward insuring *compliance* by a subject as it is toward building relationship, nurturing an ecosystem, and shaping

the destiny of a protégé. See Genesis 2:16 – the first usage of the verb *tzav* in Torah - where the Holy One called Adam close and told him *Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat*. This was an instruction of a Mentor to His Beloved Protégé

In parsha Tzav the persons the Holy One wants Moshe to *tzavah* are *Aharon and his sons*. As you will recall Aharon and his sons are the human beings whom the Holy One has designated as his ‘*kohanim*’ – *i.e. the earthly diplomats of the Kingdom of Heaven*. The subject matter with respect to which the Holy One wants Moshe to *tzav* Aharon and his sons is the precise protocol through which they are to going to be called upon to assist members of the covenant community in ‘drawing near’ to the Bridegroom in the *Mish’kan*.

The Holy One wants Aharon and his sons – and us - to know how to function effectively as ‘friends of the Bride’ when the Holy One’s Betrothed comes to visit with Him.

Our Travel Guides For the Five Divinely Illuminated Pathways to Intimacy

Last week in parsha *Vayikra* the Holy One taught us five “pathways to intimacy” with Him. These 5 pathways - the *korban olah*, the *korban minchah*, the *korban shelem*, the *korban chata’t*, and the *korban asham* – were identified for us as *interconnecting highways by which those in covenant with the Holy One are invited by the Holy One to cross over from death to life*.

We learned last week to look at the *korbanot* as we look through a window – seeing the glass and the panes, of course, but also looking *through the glass and the panes to see what lies beyond the glass*. We learned to look at what happens on earth, in the courts of the earthly *Mish’kan*, at the time of the presentation of a *korban olah*, *korban minchah*, etc., as merely a staged re-enactment of a transaction that took place in the Heavenly realms before the foundation of the world, outside the realms of time and space. Aharon and his sons were always mere ‘stand-ins’ – understudies as it were. Every time Aharon, one of his sons, or one of his descendants, lit the lamps of the *Menorah*, he was only providing a picture in finite terms of the way in which Messiah illumines Creation, and provides the *Light of the World*. Every time Aharon, one of his sons, or one of his descendants, placed bread or a goblet of wine upon the *Shulchan* he was only portraying in finite actions the way in which Messiah continually sets forth for us *the Bread of Life*, and pours forth for us *New Wine*.

Every time Aharon, one of his sons, or one of his descendants. burned incense

upon the *golden altar* in the Holy Place he was only playing charades for us – demonstrating for us in earthly terms and through earthly substances the intercession of Messiah in the Heavenly realms on behalf of humankind in general, and for every single human being who ever lived in particular. Every time Aharon, one of his sons, or one of his descendants, spread forth his hands and spoke the *b'racha* [blessing] described in Numbers 6 over the people, saying ‘*May the Holy One bless you and keep you, and Make His Face shine upon you, and be gracious to you, and may the Holy One lift up His Countenance upon you, and may He give you peace*’, he was only reminding us of the Heavenly reality that, in Messiah, the Holy One is at that very moment doing those very things. Every time, therefore, that Torah pictures Aharon, or one of his descendants, laying hands upon a lamb, a goat, a ram, a dove or a handful of grain brought by pauper or prince to serve as a surrogate through which to make approach to the Holy One, he is merely staging a re-enactment of a drama of substitutionary blood-shedding that Messiah accomplished in the Heavenly realms before the foundation of the world. Aharon, his sons, and his descendants are simply modeling for us what it looks like to join in chorus, day after day, Sabbath after Sabbath, year after year, and generation after generation, to say:

*Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling,
fix your thoughts on Yeshua, the Apostle and High Priest whom we confess."*

[Hebrews 3:1]

Time to See the Brazen Altar Protocols From a Completely Different Perspective

Each time the flames of the brazen altar consumed someone's approach surrogate, three things happened: (1) a pleasing, fragrant aroma filled the atmosphere, (2) after breaking through one or another 'fallen humanity barrier', a human being experienced what wholeness feels like, and joyfully conversed with his/her Creator, and (3) unseen by anyone but the priest who ministered the experience, underneath the grate where the embers burned, an ugly, smelly mess accumulated. The opening message of parsha *Tzav* is addressed to those who were to be responsible for the ‘clean-up’—i.e. Aharon and his sons. Just remember, every picture tells a story. There is more to this little drama than meets the eye. We are to focus not on that which is seen, but on that which is unseen. And *emunah* - i.e. the deep Hebrew lifestyle/worldview of partnering with the Holy One to overcome, transcend, and bring Divine wisdom, *shalom*, joy, and love to bear on every situation - is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

Do you want to understand the 'priesthood of the believer'? Picture three things: 1. the actions of Shem and Yafet after Cham told them their mutual father, Noach, was lying inebriated, naked and exposed in his tent; 2. the actions of Melki-Tzedek

when he made bread, brought out the best wine, put them on a servant's tray, and carried them out to greet, serve, refresh, and bless war-weary Avram; and 3. the actions of the priests of the Tabernacle, in dealing with and never either judging or exposing other people's messes.

The consecrated servants/priests who served the Holy One in the Tabernacle had many mundane assignments - things done 'after hours', when no one but the Holy One saw. First among these mundane assignments was doing whatever was necessary to *keep the brazen altar clean, and the fire on the brazen altar burning brightly*, at all times. The Divine flame that the Holy One sent from Heaven onto the brazen altar the day the Tabernacle was constructed was never to be extinguished. Again, every picture tells a story, right? But for the 'fire on the altar' picture to be clear, pure, and fresh, someone had to perform tireless, humble, dirty labor, getting his hands and robe filthy in the process.

Welcome to the true picture of the priesthood of the believer. Did you think your 'priesthood' was a status that earned you a title, an office, a salary, and a name plate on a door or desk? Did you think you were to be in the limelight, finally getting respected for your brilliance and recognized for your superior spirituality? Were you expecting accolades, attention, admiration, applause, and appreciation from the masses? Maybe someday - maybe for a season. But if any of that matters to you, or has any level of importance to you at all, you are probably on the wrong end of the *korbanot* (the approach surrogates that our English Bibles call 'offerings'). You don't need to be guiding others through the process of healing the deep wounds of the human soul - you need to be getting those deep wounds healed yourself.

The Holy One's goal is what I call 'the great exchange' - *i.e.* when He gives everyone things of Heavenly Beauty in exchange for their earthly ashes. But for this great exchange to take place, day after day, year after year, there must be faithful servants in the place of exchange - persons willing to approach every person and situation with a redeemer's eyes, with a father's heart, and with a mercy-triumphs-over-judgment mindset. And, without anyone seeing, these faithful servants must humbly and discreetly sweep up, bundle up, dispose of the ugly and smelly ashes those folks who are now adorned in Heavenly beauty left behind in the course of the great exchange.

A Preview of the Subject Matter The Holy One Intends to Address In This Week's Briefing

To kick off the parsha, the Holy One will teach us *the responsibility of the kohen* [priest] (as opposed to the individual worshipper, or the worshipping community) in connection with every man's *korban olah* approach. Tomorrow we will read the

charge of the Holy One to the *kohanim* concerning the *korban minchah*. Before the week is over we will understand the duties and responsibilities of the *kohanim* concerning each *korban shelem*, each *chata't*, and each *korban asham*, as well.

Who Is Going To Teach/Train Us These Things?

Note that what we are reading is not a series of 'laws' thought up and jotted down by Moshe or by some scribe as the product of *human intelligence* – i.e. the life force of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The things we are reading are instead nothing short of '*red-letter*' *words of the Holy One Himself*. Right after the *Radiant Cloud* of His Presence dramatically filled the *Mish'kan* the Holy One actually took the time to speak these words in Moshe's hearing, so as to script for Aharon and his sons in detail the ways in which they were to assist the Holy One's people in approaching and bonding with Him.

Of all the words the Holy One could have chosen to speak in the immediate aftermath of His dramatic infilling of the *Mish'kan* what He chose to focus on was the intricate details of how He wanted His people to approach and commune with Him. Why? Because to the Holy One the focus is always on *how to deepen the relationship*. The Holy One knows that if we are intimate with Him, bonded to Him, and one with Him, *His wisdom* and *His power* will flow through us into the world. And He also knows that conversely, if we are not intimate with Him, are not bonded to Him, and are not one with Him, the 'wisdom' that will flow from us into the world will be nothing more than *Serpent-speak* and the 'power' that will flow from us into the world will be nothing more than *Serpent-venom*. If that happens, what we will do on earth will just be to strengthen in ourselves and others the very corrupted life force He is trying to eradicate.

Keep in mind, therefore, that the voice that will be speaking throughout parsha *Tzav* will not be a human voice. It will instead be the intensely creative, prophetic Voice of the Creator of the Universe. The Divine Voice – the source of all wisdom and eternal truth – begins this episode of revelation by telling Moshe exactly what the *avodah* of the *kohanim* in the courts of the *Mish'kan* is to consist of.

It All Starts With Making Olah

Olah means *upward movement* – i.e. transitioning from a lower state and/or realm to another, higher one. The one-sided conversation that is about to begin is identified by the Holy One as the *torah* – or as I like to call it, the *Divine Choreography* – of upward movement. What is going to follow is the kind of practical, functional teaching a Master Craftsman does to launch prized apprentices into the actual practice of the craft they are learning to practice. And while it was lineal descendants of Amram and Yocheved who received these instructions firsthand, we are the ones the Holy One has ultimately called to serve Him as a

joyful, kind, selfless kingdom of *kohanim* in our world. See I Peter 2:9-10.

Ultimately we need to understand that a part of our calling as a kingdom of *kohanim* is to become masters of upward movement even to a greater extent than did Aharon and his sons. The Holy One wants Aharon and sons to be models of, and to train us to become, masters of upward movement. He wants all His People equipped and empowered to rise up to new heights and levels.

The Earthly Service of a Kohen

“Job One” of the friend of the Bride will be to *keep the fire burning* at all times. The Divine flame that the Holy One sent from Heaven onto the *Mish'kan*'s brazen altar the day the *Mish'kan* was constructed is never to be extinguished. Here is how the Holy One introduces this particular aspect of the Sinaitic revelation:

Zot torat ha-olah

'This is the teaching regarding the olah [ascending].

hi ha-olah al mokedah al ha-mizbe'ach

The olah shall remain on the altar's hearth

Kol ha-laylah ad ha-boker

all night until morning,

v'aish ha-mizbe'ach tukad bo

so that the altar's fires can be ignited with it.”

[Leviticus 6:1(b)-2 (Hebrew numbering)]

It is the first obligation of a kohen to *keep the holy fire burning* – and to make sure it consumes every last morsel of the life-force driven by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you have ever had to keep a fire burning overnight, you know how messy and demanding a job this can be. You have to keep the fire supplied with wood. You have to regularly check and stoke and re-arrange the fire. You have to make sure the growing ash pile does not cut off the supply of oxygen to the fire. That means you have to continually move ashes away from the hottest portion of the fire to a place where they can cool enough to remove.

As big a challenge as keeping the fire burning is, however, it is just the beginning of the function of a kohen. In addition to keeping the fire on the altar burning, night and day, *kohanim* are also responsible for seeing that whatever surrogate anyone brings to the altar meets the Holy One's basic requirements. The kohen is also responsible for properly securing any creature brought as a surrogate of approach so that it does not break away, cause injury to the worshipper or anyone else in the courtyard, or inflict damage upon the *Mish'kan* itself. He must also see that the animal is slaughtered as painlessly as possible.

In essence, once the *kohen* received the worshipper's surrogate he was responsible to see that *two basic things* occur. First of all, the *kohen* was to lead the worshipper through a visual and emotionally charged experience that demonstrated beyond all question that his *approach* to the Holy One is approved and accepted. Secondly, once this was accomplished the *kohanim* was to *ready the altar for the next worshipper*.

Once a worshipper made his identification with whatever surrogate he brought – acknowledging by laying his hands on the animal or the grain product that the animal or grain was serving as a substitute for him – the worshipper was pretty much through, and could get caught up in meeting with the Holy One and basking in His Presence, His companionship, His Atonement, and His Love. For Aharon and his sons, however, the presentation part of the event meant they were just kicking into gear. The *kohanim* were responsible for catching the surrogate animal's blood in a basin and dashing it upon the altar. Then the *kohanim* were to make sure, depending upon the specific *korbanot protocol* being employed, that the carcass of the animal was cut up, and either burned on the brazen altar or distributed in accordance with the applicable protocol.

As we examine the charge the Holy One told Moshe to give to the *kohanim* this week we will be struck by the realization that *the process of approaching/drawing near to the Holy One is not neat and tidy*. Nor, of course, should we expect it to be. After all, approaching/drawing near to the Holy One means *exposing every aspect of one's life to His judgment*. *All our opinions* – of our self, others, and the world - must be exposed and surrendered to judgment. All our ideas of what is 'right' and 'wrong' and 'fair' and 'unfair', 'moral' and 'immoral', 'important' and 'trivial', 'essential' vs. 'expedient' vs. 'inconvenient', 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable', and 'provable' and what is 'incapable of proof' must be exposed for the corrupt lies they are and submitted to judgment.

Thus exposed, a few - but very few - aspects of our lives ascend to Him as a sweet savor; most however *turns to ash and clutters our Beloved's altar*. Alas, just as the process of separating wheat from chaff is messy, so is man's process of approaching the Holy One. To approach the Holy One always means to *make a holy mess of His altar*. What is to be done with the holy mess? Here are the initial instructions Moshe is told to pass on to Aharon and his sons on that subject:

V'lavash ha-kohen mido vad umichnesei-vad

The priest is to then put on his linen vestments, including his linen pants.

yilbash al-besaro v'herim et ha-deshen asher

He is to remove the ashes of the burnt offerings consumed

tochal ha-esh et ha-olah al ha-mizbe'ach

by the fire that are on the altar,

vesamo etzel ha-mizbe'ach

and place them near the altar.

Ufashat et-begadav v'lavash begadim acherim

He is then to take off his vestments, and put on other garments.

V'hotzi et ha-deshen el-michutz l'machaneh el-makom tahor

And he is then to take the ashes to a ritually clean place outside the camp.

[Leviticus 6:3-4 (Hebrew numbering)]

The Slow-Burn Principle

Because of this reality one of the first things which the Holy One wanted Aharon to know – and wanted all of the people in His Community of the Redeemed to understand – was that every *olah*, whether brought by an individual as an act of passionate love for and dedication to the Holy One, or on behalf of the community as an act of commitment to continue to serve as the Holy One's *am segulah*, *mamlakah kohanim*, and *goy k'dosh*, was not to be allowed to go up in a wisp of smoke and a blaze of glory. Instead the Holy One wanted every *olah* to *simmer slowly* on the fire, releasing a pleasant aroma into the Holy One's creation that would linger.

Remember that the *olah* represented total surrender of oneself to the will of the Holy One. Such a surrender is not just something that lasts a few moments, or covers one issue a person is dealing with. Such a surrender is instead a submission to follow the Holy One's Torah for all time, and to apply its perfect blend of Divine wisdom and compassion to every aspect of one's life, each and every day - no matter what the consequences. Such a surrender *takes a lot of time*. If it is done properly, the fragrance released into the air is absolutely wonderful. So the Holy One wanted Aharon and His sons to let the *esh ha-mizbeach* [i.e. the fire of the altar] singe, simmer, and slow cook every *olah*, rather than engulf it in one short fiery blast.

Meditate on that for a few moments. How long – and how thoroughly – did your last *olah* burn? What kind of fragrance did its burning release into the world? Did its burning inspire *olah*-levels of surrender to the will of the Holy One from others? Is it perhaps time to approach the Holy One's *mizbeach* [altar] again, and make an *olah* the Holy One's way for a change? The Heavenly *mizbeach* is still burning, and calls to us all.

Other Roles/Duties To Which Kohanim Are Called

As aforesaid one of the things for which the Holy One decreed that *kohanim*

should be responsible was ‘keeping the fire burning’. *Kohanim* do not create or kindle the fire – *that* falls from Heaven. ***Kohanim*** are merely custodians – *keepers of the holy flame*. Here are some more specific instructions in this regard:

V’ha-eish al ha-mizbe’ach tukad-bo lo tichbeh

The fire of the altar is to be ignited, and never extinguished⁵.

uvi'er aleiha ha-kohen etzim b'boker b'boker

Each morning, the kohen is to kindle wood on it.

v'arach aleiha ha olah v'hiktir aleiha chelvei ha-sh'lamim

And then he is to arrange an olah and burn the shalem on it.

Esh tamid tukad al ha-mizbe'ach lo tichbeh

Thus, there is to be a constant fire kept burning on the altar, never to go out.

[Leviticus 6:5-6 (Hebrew numbering), or Leviticus 6:12-13 (Western numbering)]

First of all, *kohanim* have a powerful *lo tichbeh* calling. They – we – are called to do what is necessary, within the realm of their assigned authority, to assure that *the fire that calls the covenant people to intimacy with the Holy One never goes out*.

Secondly, as an incident of the *lo tichbeh* calling, *kohanim* also have a ‘*ruhm v' yatza*’ – i.e. take up and carry forth’ calling. *Kohanim* are responsible for removing and properly *disposing of all the ashes/spent residue* that is left behind by worshippers after their acts of worship. After ‘midwifing’ a Divine encounter for a worshipper, the kohen has a follow-up assignment – to humbly and quietly remove every remaining trace of that which was burnt up in the encounter and personally dispose of it outside the camp. In the process of doing these things, *kohanim* must change their garments at appropriate times, in order to *keep* the garments they wear when helping others with their messy moments of surrender *spotless*.

Do not forget as you read such things that there is an *eternal reality* behind these physical things of the *Mish'kan* that lies *just out of view of our natural eyes*. Keep in mind throughout your readings this week that Aharon and his sons are merely the *earthly counterparts of our slain, ascended and glorified Messiah*. And never forget that the functions that Torah prescribes for the *kohanim* to perform in the *Mish'kan* are but reflections on earth of the reality of *the eternal ministries of Messiah on our behalf in the Heavenly Throne Room*.

If we have eyes to see it, Dear Reader, the *kohanim* present us a beautiful picture of the eternal reality of Messiah – the lamb slain before the foundation of the

⁵ The Hebrew phrase ‘*lo tichbeh*’ is an injunction to carefully monitor and tend – i.e. steward - the flame He has placed on the altar. *Lo tichbeh* is a specific injunction against [a] intentionally extinguishing the fire on the altar by covering the embers with ash or water, and [b] negligently allowing the embers to go out by any means, such as not providing fresh wood for kindling when and as necessary, allowing the fire to be choked out by inartful placement of wood, *korban*, or other substance.

world. We know that Yeshua is “ever interceding” for us at the Throne of the Holy One. **Hebrews 7:25**. We know that the priesthood Messiah Yeshua performs is perfect, and effectual, unlike the priesthood of Aharon and his sons, which was imperfect, a mere visual aid or metaphor employed by the Holy One – at our request - as a teaching tool for an immature Bride-to-be. Likewise we can rest assured that however horrible a “mess” we make when we come to worship will be completely cleaned up by Yeshua, so as not to defile the altar or cause the fire of the Holy One to dim in the slightest. We can know that the ashes of our *korban olah* - i.e. what the fire burns but does not consume - will be completely disposed of in a proper place, as outside the camp as the east is from the west. We can be confident that the ashes of our wood, hay, and stubble - however ugly, however messy - that get revealed when we enter the Holy One’s Presence will not sully Messiah’s priestly garments. And we can know that if we, in submission to the Holy One and His Torah *seek after and connect ourselves with Him*, we will find the ultimate two-way window of revelation. His *perspective* will transform our pre-conceived notions and attitudes about life, and, as a natural and proximate result, His *actions* will become manifest and visible in our lives.

Questions For Today’s Study

1. The 25th parsha of Torah begins with instructions for Aharon and his sons regarding the handling of the *olah*.

[A] What is to happen during the night?

[B] How long into the night are the priests to let the fire burn?

[C] What is the first task the priests are to perform in the morning?

[D] What are the priests instructed to do with the ashes of the previous day’s olah?

[E] Why is the priest to change his clothes before disposing of the ashes?

[F] After the ashes are removed from the altar, what other tasks are to be performed every morning?

2. In today’s suggested reading from the *Haftarah*, the prophet *Yirmayahu* [Jeremiah] is explaining some of the reasons a judgment of the Holy One is about to come forth upon Jerusalem.

Thus says the Holy One of hosts, the God of Yisra'el:

You add your olahot to your korbanot, and eat the flesh of it;

For I didn't speak to your fathers,

nor instruct them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Mitzrayim, concerning olahot or korbanot; but this thing I tzavah-ed them, saying,

“Sh'ma my voice, and I will be your God, and you will be my people; and walk you in all the way that I instruct you, that it may be well with you.”

But they didn't sh'ma nor turn their ear, but walked in [their own] counsels [and] in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

*Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Mitzrayim to this day,
I have sent to you all my servants the prophets,
daily rising up early and sending them:
yet they didn't **sh'ma** me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff:
they did worse than their fathers.*

[Jeremiah 7:21-26]

[A] The first thing the Holy One says has to do with the disposition of the **korban olah** by the priesthood at Yirmayahu's time. What were the priests of that day doing with the **korban olah** that constituted a violation of Torah?

[B] What commands besides *korbanot* does the Holy One say He gave Israel?

[C] How does the Holy One describe Israel's responses (there are at least three mentioned in verse 24) to these other commands?

[D] When Israel made these responses to the Holy One's instructions what did the Holy One do to get Israel's attention?

[E] How did Israel respond to this extension of grace and mercy to them?

3. In this week's suggested reading from the apostolic Scriptures we again find the writer of the book of Hebrews extolling the priesthood of Yeshua. The primary focus of today's verses from the B'rit Chadasha have to do with the **location** and **superiority** of the sanctuary in which Yeshua serves as High Priest - in comparison to the sanctuary in which Aharon and his descendants served as High Priest.

*Now in the things that we are saying, the main point is this: We have such a Kohen Gadol,
who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Holy One pitched, not man.*

[Hebrews 8:1-2]

[A] Where is the sanctuary in which Yeshua serves?

[B] The Aharonic High Priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year. How often does Yeshua enter into the dwelling place of the *Sh'kinah* of the Holy One?

[C] In verse 2, two differences (aside from location) are mentioned between the sanctuary in which Aharon served as High Priest and the sanctuary in which Yeshua serves as High Priest. Explain those two differences.

*May the fire of the altar in your heart burn morning and evening,
in this world and in the world to come.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 115:9-13

*Yisra'el, trust in the Holy One! He is their help and their shield.
House of Aharon, trust in the Holy One! He is their help and their shield.
You who fear the Holy One, trust in the Holy One!
He is their help and their shield.*

*The Holy One remembers us; He will bless us.
He will bless the house of Yisra'el. He will bless the house of Aharon.
He will bless those who fear the Holy One, small and great.*