

Shiur L'Yom Shishi¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Sh'mini:*** Leviticus 11:26-47
 Haftarah: II Samuel 7:1-17
 B'rit Chadasha: Acts 5:11

Do not make yourselves tamei

[Leviticus 11:44a]

Today's Meditation is Matthew 9:20-22;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the *Kadosh* [Holiness]

L'chol-ha-behemah – Every land creature ... ***asher hi mafreset parsah v'shesa eynenah shosa'at v'gerah eynenah ma'alah*** – that has divided feet, but not cloven hooves, and which does not also chew the cud ... ***bt'me'im hem lachem*** – is unclean for you ... ***kol-ha-nogea bahem yit'ma*** – anyone laying hand on it becomes unclean/takes on its uncleanness. **Leviticus 11:26.**

When about to fly into an area of potentially dangerous turbulence commercial airline pilots are trained to make an announcement something like the following: "May I have your attention, Ladies and gentlemen? Please note that I have turned on the 'Fasten Seat Belts' signs in the cabin and have asked the flight attendants to be seated. The reason I have done this is that we are about to encounter a zone of significant turbulence. Please remain in your seats, and try to stay calm." Ahem! I feel like I should be making a similar announcement at this point to all those who are studying Torah with the Rabbi's son. When we reach the *Kedusha Discourse*, everything that can be shaken tends to start shaking. Caution is necessary – but it is all just part of the great realignment program that I like to call the Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover. Return your seats and tray tables to an upright position. Make sure your seat belts are fastened. Then just try to stay calm – and we'll get through this together.

Ecosystem Awareness: Understanding the Plan of Creation and Its Associated Component Domains and Realms

The Holy One created the universe and all of its components. Every species and genus of creatures He created has both an assigned place and an important role to play in the overall plan. The underlying premise – the *Elohim Signature* – involved brilliant system of strategic tension and counterbalance. The Holy One designed the universe and all its components to function in a *constant state of synergizing tension* and counterbalance – *i.e.* a give and take relationship between force and

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counterforce, set and offset, point and counterpoint, etc. Everything in the *kosmos* offsets and counterbalances, and thereby synergizes by opposing, something else in the *kosmos*. This is a law of spiritual science that I call ‘*the law of two or more witnesses*’. This means that the realm of *ha-shamayim* (KJV ‘the heavens’) is designed to offset the realm of *ha-aretz* (KJV ‘the earth’). Light is designed to be offset and synergized by darkness; that which is *tov* (KJV ‘good’) is designed to be offset and synergized by that which is *ra* (KJV ‘evil’). On the surface of earth, dry land continents were created to be offset and synergized by their surrounding salt-water seas – and vice-versal. Cold is offset/counterbalanced by heat, summer by winter, carbon dioxide by oxygen, and so on *ad infinitum*. It may sometimes, from a mortal human’s self-interested perspective, seem chaotic; but it most definitely is not.

The Holy One continued this radical creative approach – His ‘*Elohim Signature*’ – as He designed species that would inhabit and bring perpetuity the ecosystem. That which He created to produce waste He offsets and synergizes by that which consumes waste. That which He created to be conducive to/nurturing for life, growth, and productivity He designed to be offset and synergized by that which He designed to biodegrade and recycle. He designed avian species to offset and be offset by aquatic species. He designed nocturnal creatures to be offset and counterbalance diurnal ones. He then offset insects with arthropods and fungal microorganisms by viral and bacterial ones. Indeed, all species, subspecies, genera, families, and bloodlines of Creation were brilliantly designed and placed in counterbalance with opposing species, subspecies, genera, families, and bloodlines. That is what makes the ecosystem function as it does. That is the *Elohim Signature*. It is not some horrific Darwinian nightmare of ‘survival of the fittest’; it is a brilliant design, managed by an imminently wise, unflinchingly patient, 100% invested, and eternally committed Creator/Sustainer.

While the Holy One thus created all species, subspecies, genera, families and bloodlines of living creatures with an assigned ecosystem-supporting function, mankind – as the assigned ecosystem manager – must understand that he is no exception. The Holy One designed only a relatively few species as food sources for human beings. By far the vast majority of earth’s species, subspecies, genera, etc. were not even designed to be subjects for close human interaction! They are best left alone – unless they overstep their assigned bounds. Roles have been defined. Territories have been assigned. Boundaries have been established. Separations have been decreed. Lines have been drawn. The job of humans – as earthly ‘shadow-agents’ of the Creator - is to make sure that everything He created stays in its proper, assigned place and role, doing what it was designed to do. He is the ecosystem owner; we are just here to tend and keep what He entrusts to us – according to His specific instructions.

Welcome to the Creator of the Universe’s Boot Camp Training Program for this Assignment – the ‘*Kedusha* Discourse’. This particular discourse – like Yeshua’s *Sermon on the Mount* Discourse – is going to turn out to be a radical game-changing, paradigm-shifting download of wisdom, revelation, and empowerment.

***Time to Choose a Realm of Residence and Primary Association –
Will it Be the Realm of Tahorah or the Realm of Tumah?***

Some of the creatures the Holy One created were designed for man’s close interaction and enjoyment; others are just part of the universe’s intricate bio-degrading waste-disposal/recycling program. The former are described by the Holy One as *tahor* – KJV ‘*clean*’²; the latter are described by the Holy One as *tamei* – KJV ‘*unclean*’³, but meaning *emanating light and life*. *Tahor* describes that which is whole (as opposed to conflicted and fragmented), emits a *steady, unwavering frequency and tone*, and is therefore *in sync* with the rest of Creation and conducive to wholeness, wellness, and life. The realm of Creation that offsets that which is *tahor* is the realm of *tumah* – KJV ‘*uncleanness*’, but meaning *emanating darkness and death*. That which is *tamei* is not whole or wholesome, but is drawn to dark dens, hiding places, stealth, and death; fragmented, conflicted, and/or driven by destructive impulses that render its presence a constant risk to its own wellbeing or to the wellbeing of other elements of Creation

In yesterday’s aliyah we read about how the Holy One’s *tahor/tamei* distinction is supposed to dramatically affect what we consider ‘food’. As part of the Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover protocol our Bridegroom King has designed a delightful – and healthy - menu for all who desire to eat at His Table. He Who created man knows exactly what man’s body and soul need for *wholeness* – and what, if ingested, will result in fragmentation, toxicity, and disease. He who writes and sings songs of deliverance over man knows what will - and will not – enable man to resonate those songs with *true tone*. He knows that for us to resonate in harmony with the Creator’s Voice, we need to ingest only that which is *tahor*. He knows that if we are to accurately represent His Wholeness and Holiness to all ethnic groups and households of the world we need to avoid compromising the purity of our message by hungering and thirsting after *tumah*. We, like the animals whose flesh He assigns as potential ‘food’ for us, are to ‘part the hoof’ – meaning that we are to step delicately and deliberately, never stealthily, through the world. We are also to ‘chew the cud’- meaning that we are to thoroughly digest, and discern the essence of, meditate on, and extract nutrition from, whatever we consume. We are not to be – or behave like - predators. Neither are we to be or behave like scavengers. We are not to take advantage of the weak, the sick, the young, the aged, the confused,

² *Tahor* [tet, hey, resh] is a Hebrew adjective derived from the verb root *tahar*.

³ *Tamei* [tet, mem, alef] is a Hebrew adjective representing the opposite spectrum from *tahar*.

or the distracted. We are not to feed on death. We are to be nourished by, and be carriers and agents of, life.

In today's aliyah the focus turns away from matters of diet to matters of close association. What creatures should we - and should we not – choose to associate closely with and thereby expose our bodies and immune systems to. While we created to take 'dominion' [Hebrew *radaf*] over all the creatures of the sea, all birds of the air, and all creatures that moves, but the Holy One wants us to exercise our 'dominion' over some of those creatures from a good, safe distance. We are not to *poke the bear; kiss the shark, hug the boa*, or make pets, beasts of burden, or game out of creatures He describes as *tamei*. We are to keep our distance from, and keep our hands off, predators, insects, rodents, and scavengers – indeed, any and every creature the Holy One tells us is an active carrier of *tumah*.

***Effective Representatives of the Kingdom Realm
Must Learn to Connect with, Absorb, Exude, and Model Three
Beauty-Realm Elements: Holiness, Goodness, and Cleanness***

We are in the process of being for a lofty and world-changing mission. We are being set apart to serve the Creator of all life as flesh-and-blood models of what a 'well-lived life' on earth is to consist of. Part of that great mission involves knowing, and modeling for the rest of the people groups in the world, what healthy, harmonious inter-specie interaction and ecosystem management as He designed them are supposed to look like. As the Emissaries and Ambassadors of the Holy One, it is our assignment to continually seek, pursue, and press into connection with that which is holy (Hebrew, *kadosh*), that which is 'clean' (Hebrew, *tahor*), and that which is good (Hebrew, *tov*). We are to live in such a way that we actually absorb and store *kedusha, tahorah, and tov* in every fiber of our being. We are to set the standard for the world in this regard, but that is just the beginning. The ultimate mission is not just to absorb and store *kedusha, tahorah, and tov* within ourselves, our homes, and our closed communities; it is to then carry, exude, and release these things everywhere we go, into every sphere of influence the Holy One entrusts us with, and to every person we meet - and we are to always do these things to in wise but humble, peaceful yet passionate, gentle yet impactful, loving yet transformative, and effective yet discreet ways.

Let's get a little more specific. Our assignment each day is twofold. First, we are to *appropriate for ourselves and our families the healing and purifying energy of our King's Beauty Realm*. Then, we are to sally forth, as directed by the Holy One, in accordance with His announced 'Rules of Engagement', to release *kedusha, tahorah, and tov* into each of our assigned spheres of influence. That means that we are called to be carriers of and traffickers in Kingdom Currency, serving our King in multiple realms. He wants us to be Realm-Travelers of the highest order,

capable of effortlessly and seamlessly navigating between vastly different environments. That requires that we be frequent ascenders to, and well-known courtiers in, our King's Beauty Realm; but we are also to be masters of the mundane, carrying the positive, healing, refreshing, and restorative energy of the Beauty Realm into ordinary homes, marriages, parent-child and sibling relationships, workplace interactions, marketplace transactions, and into all encounters with either friends or strangers, the rich and the poor, the sick and the well, the blessed and the bereaved, the wise and the foolish, the kind and the cruel, and the like-minded and the vehemently adversarial. Whew! Are you up for it?

Divine Order Involves Lines, Boundaries, Barriers, and Clearly Defined Realms

The first step in the Holy One's great Kingdom emissary training program involves teaching us how to recognize and discern the boundary lines the Holy One has established in the earth's ecosystem. He wants us to acquaint ourselves with, identify with, meditate on, gravitate toward, talk about, and delight ourselves in everything that is 'holy' (*kadosh*), 'clean' (*tahor*), and 'good' (*tov*). As we mature in these protocols, He plans on making us gushing fountains of holiness, wholesomeness, and wholeness at which the world can marvel, and from which the peoples of the earth can draw inspiration and strength. So, what are the three elements in which He wants us to learn to traffic? The first is Holiness (in Hebrew, *kedusha*). The second is 'goodness' (in Hebrew, *tov*). And the third is spiritually-uplifting 'cleanness' (in Hebrew, *tahorah*). All of these emanate from the Holy One, and are impossible to generate – much less communicate – by human effort. But He has made provision for that. He has hidden physical things that contain elements and/or deposits of all of these Heavenly currencies on earth, in real time, in plain view.

What is the big deal, you ask? Well, *kedusha*, *tov*, and *tahorah* (which combine to form a status called *tamim*) carry our King's creative, healing, renewing, refreshing, restorative energy. We need to know where those things -and that energy is found. So let's look briefly at each denomination of Kingdom Currency.

1. What carries and can impart the Empowering Energy of Kedusha (Holiness) as Opposed to the Destabilizing Energy of Chol (Common-ness/Profanity)

What, if we interact closely with, touch, immerse ourselves in, and get in sync with, will elevate us, heal us, empower us, and connect us with our Kingdom identity, purpose, mission, and destiny? Well, what has the Holy One called 'holy', according to Torah? Here they are:

1. The Holy One Himself is, has always been, and will always be holy – *i.e.* always pulses with, exudes, radiates, and communicates *kedusha*;

2. Each of the ‘names’/descriptions by which the Holy One reveals Himself will always be holy/always pulse with, exude, radiate and communicate *kedusha*⁴;
3. The *Seventh Day* – i.e. the Sabbath - is always holy/always pulses with, exudes, radiates, and communicates *kedusha*;
3. The Holy One’s Habitation – where He ‘rests’/rules - is holy/always exudes/radiates *kedusha*;
4. The Torah (including a. its direct quotations of Divine speech – consisting of both promises and the *mitzvot*, *mishpatim*, and *chukot* sections that theologians often label as ‘law’), and b. its inspired narratives/testimonies) is holy/always pulses with and exudes *kedusha*;
5. the geographical space a person occupies when He is experiencing in a Divine visitation/conversation with the Holy One is holy/pulses with, exudes, radiates, and communicates *kedusha*;
6. if, as, when and to the extent we *sh’ma* His Voice and *sh’mar* His Covenant and *mitzvot*, we His people/nation become holy/pulse with, exude, radiate, and communicate *kedusha*;
7. the Tabernacle, its furnishings, and its special blends of *fragrant oil* and *ketoret* are holy; the *special garments of beauty and honor* worn by Aharon and his sons while they serve the Holy One and His courtiers in the Tabernacle are holy/pulse with, exude, radiate, and communicate *kedusha*;
8. all the *korbanot* surrogates, firstborns, firstfruits, and tithes brought to/presented at the Tabernacle according to Torah protocols are holy/pulse with, exude, radiate, and communicate *kedusha*;
9. the fourth year’s crop of fruit from a young fruit tree in the land of Israel is holy;
10. the Divine Appointments – sometimes called ‘festivals’, but also including the *Sh’mittah* (Sabbatical year) and the Yovel (Jubilee) – that the Holy One established to sanctify the realm of time;
11. A home, field, animal, or other material item that a man dedicates/consecrates solely for the use and glory of the Holy One;
12. The holy water of cleansing, purified by the ashes of the red heifer;
13. The Nazirite, during his days of consecration; and
14. The camp of the Redeemed Community, when it is ordered and run according to Torah.

⁴ What is holy is not any specific pronunciation or sequence of vowel/consonant sounds; instead, all human pronunciations are very much *chol*/common. So please don’t get caught up in ‘name worship’, or ‘pronunciation judging.’ The aspect of the Names that are holy are two: 1. the arrangement in the text of Torah of the Hebrew characters, as the combination of Hebrew letters creates a harmony of frequencies that creates, redeems, restores, instructs, inspires, etc.; 2. the Hebraic meaning/implication of [a] the Hebrew root verbs from which the Names are derived, and [b] the Hebraic word picture mural created by the sequencing of the Hebrew letters.

2. What carries the Empowering Energy of Tov ('Goodness'⁵) as Opposed to the Destructive, Destabilizing Energy of Ra ('Evil' – i.e. Self-Absorption Toxicity)?

The first thing the Holy One declared 'good' in Torah was Divine Light – in Hebrew, *ohr*. Then came the *coastal/shoreline divisions* – which separate dry land and its various levels of terrain from the gathered waters of earth's great oceans and seas. Then came the established reproductive patterns of the earth's plant life - every herb containing its seed, and every tree bearing fruit in which is its seed. Next came the arrangement of the celestial bodies – the sun, moon, and stars, to divide day from night, and for times and seasons. Then came the Divine announcements of good/'tov' over the placement of aquatic creatures in the waters, of species with wings in the air, and the establishment of walking and crawling forms of life on dry land, and how all these things interacted with one another harmoniously, both in the greater earth and in the Garden of Eden - before, of course, the occurrence of the event theologians like to call the 'Fall'. These things all emanate *tov meod* – i.e. pulsing, flowing, life-giving fountains of goodness and goodwill – and are able to empower all who embrace, partner with, and meditate upon them, with the *kedusha* energy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. What Carries the Empowering Energy of Tahorah (Wholesomeness) as opposed to the Destructive Energy of Tumah (Deconstruction)?

Now to the third element. What did the Holy One say exude the healing, renewing, restorative energy of 'cleanness' – Hebrew, *tahorah*? The first things so described in Torah are land creatures that *both part the hoof and chew the cud* and aquatic creatures that have both fins and scales. Otherwise, the reverent fear of the Holy One and His words of the Holy One are the only things described as *tahor/clean*. See Psalm 12:6 and 19:9.

Just remember, if the Holy One has not called something that you encounter 'holy', 'clean', or 'good', well ... it isn't those things, and nothing we say or wish can ever change that⁶. See Job 14:4. And since that is the case, for us, any interaction with anything the Holy One defines as other than 'holy', 'clean', or 'good' comes with a high level of Kingdom responsibility. And alas, if we do not follow the Holy One's Rules of Engagement as we interact with such things – the interactions may

⁵ *Tov* is measured in terms of ecosystem-nurturing functionality. *Tov*, like light (the first thing the Holy One identified as 'tov' in Torah), is that which is synergistic to *beauty, fruitfulness, harmony, shalom, and cross-generational sustainability*.

⁶ Of course, the Holy One has set forth, in the Torah, a series of protocols which, if followed, can empower some human beings which are temporarily in an 'unclean' state to return to a *tahor* status. But none of these relate to either animals or attitudes, emotions, reactions, or behaviors like anger, offense, outrage, arrogance, argumentativeness, lust, envy, jealousy, greed, selfishness, self-will, self-promotion, or self-righteousness.

come with a hefty price tag, for us, for our families and bloodlines, and for the world.

The Great Mission to Which We are Called: Basic Elements

Immediately after the deaths of Nadav and Avihu the Holy One introduced us to the basic, fundamental elements of the glorious mission to which the Bridegroom of Heaven calls everyone who *kahans* [*i.e.* who *mediates*, or *acts as an ambassador or emissary*] for the Kingdom of Heaven. We learned that the first essential element of the *kohen's* mission is to *personally confess and receive forgiveness for and cleansed from sin*, and to *surrender all*. The Holy One wants us to understand, and uses Aharon and his sons to teach us, that no one should presume to **kahan** on behalf of the Bridegroom of Heaven if he has not first done three things:

1. humbly recognize and regularly acknowledge the magnitude of his own tendency to indulge thoughts and opinion, speak words, and engage in conduct that do not reflect the wisdom, compassion, counsel, will, and understanding, much less further the Grand Redemptive Plan, of the One on Whose behalf he is called to be an emissary.

2. gratefully experience the depths of the Holy One's capacity to forgive and cleanse from the guilt of, and redeem every stray thought, every negative word, every off-target act and every negligent omission; and

3. joyfully lay down his own hopes, plans, dreams, and personal goals, die to self, and accept the Will and the Word of the Holy One as the essence and purpose of life.

1. The Humility/Reverent Fear of the Holy One Factor

If a human is going to serve as an ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven to all his earthly spheres of influence – which is exactly what we are called to do as the Holy One's Covenant Partners - the first thing the human must do is *recognize and regularly acknowledge* the magnitude of his own *tendency to indulge thoughts and opinion, speak words, and engage in conduct that do not reflect the wisdom, compassion, counsel, will, and understanding* – *much less further the Grand Redemptive Plan - of the One on Whose behalf he is called to be an emissary*. We all have a tendency, without even noticing it, to get *full of ourselves*. We all have a tendency to let our thoughts turn to and our talk be about ourselves, our accomplishments, our ministries, our supposedly superior belief systems, spiritual knowledge base, worship modalities, educational programs, prayer models, *halakah*, etc. We all have a tendency to think, speak, and act in ways that draw attention to us, our likes and dislikes, our preferred topics of conversation, etc. instead of lifting up our Glorious Bridegroom.

As emissaries of a Great, Wise, Compassionate, Unselfish, Forgiving and

Benevolent King we cannot allow ourselves to become the opposite of the characteristics that make up His Grand Personality. We cannot allow ourselves to think banal thoughts, indulge trivial emotions, speak clichéd words, or engage in ordinary actions when our King is Great⁷. We cannot allow ourselves to look at the world or at any person we meet with either fear or naiveté when the One we are trying to introduce the world to is Discerning and Wise. We cannot let ourselves come off as unfeeling, aloof, or untouchable when the Sovereign we serve is Unfailingly Compassionate. We cannot cave into our tendencies to behave like self-centered, manipulative, high maintenance shrews when the Monarch we are supposed to be representing is Unselfish and Others-Focused. We cannot allow opinions full of offense, attitudes smacking of self-righteous judgment, speech rife with criticism, and behaviors demonstrating unforgiveness to dilute the message of Forgiveness and Reconciliation our Merciful Monarch has given us to carry to the world. And we cannot let attitudes of entitlement, privilege, and deserved favor make us behave toward the world or any person with arrogance, an air of superiority, or stinginess. Without leaning on His Breast constantly, seeking after and hearing His Heart daily, and following His counsel faithfully we cannot possibly do our mission effectively. Without His Empowering Breath and Transformative Words we are just humans. If we are going to be effective ambassadors of His Kingdom we have to learn to *walk a fine line*. We are not to have – much less express – our own opinions. We are not to indulge – much less act out – our own attitudes. We are not to blow our own horn. And we absolutely must not allow ourselves to ever forget that we are but flesh – and no better than any other man.

2. The Agent-of-Forgiveness Factor

If we are to be effective representatives of the Holy One in our spheres of influence on earth we must also have experienced the depths of the Holy One's capacity and willingness to forgive and cleanse us from the guilt of, and redeem every stray thought, every negative word, every off-target act and every negligent omission. And if we truly have experienced the marvel of the forgiveness of the Holy One for our breaches of covenant, the natural result will be that we will become agents of magnanimous forgiveness ourselves. We will not be *quick to criticize or accuse* – we will be *quick to forgive*. We will not rush to judge or condemn – we will rush to forgive. We will not be quick to either defend ourselves or to take up offense, whether for wrongs done directly to us, to people we love, or to nameless, faceless statistics. We will instead endure insult, false accusation, and attack graciously, our first instinct being to say, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they

⁷ The Holy One Himself has listed His Characteristics, in in descending order of priority: *Merciful, Gracious, Longsuffering [slow to anger], Abounding in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, By no means clearing the guilty, Visiting the offspring for multiple generations to inspect for the iniquity of the fathers in the children and the children's children.*

do!’

3. The Not-My-Will-But-Yours-Be-Done Factor

Moreover, if we are to fulfill our calling as ambassadors of our Glorious King on earth we will also gradually start laying down our own personal, fleshly hopes, plans, dreams, and goals, die to self, and accept the Will and the Word of the Holy One as the essence and purpose of life. We will not demand our ‘rights’. We will not insist on our ‘way’. We will not covet men’s ‘respect’ or women’s admiration. We will not expend passion or energy seek after reputation or attention, after money or ministry, or after pleasure or company. We will seek Him. And we will seek His Ways. And we will seek His Will. Communing and co-laboring with Him will become our delight. Learning His Ways - and joyfully, responsibly walking in them - will become our highest goal. And the privilege of walking with Him and doing His Will, and seeing His Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven in all our spheres of influence ... ah, Beloved, that will become our chief and unquenchable joy. But there are a few things about the Holy One – and the way His Kingdom works - that we need to grasp first.

***Don’t Give That Which is Holy to the Dogs!
Don’t Cast Your Pearls Before Swine!***

The Holy One is a Brilliant System and Ecosystem Designer. His Creative Pattern is to set up realms that *co-exist in tension* – i.e. that serve to offset, counterbalance, and synergize each other. *For every force there is an equal and opposite reaction force*, Sir Isaac Newton said. It all started, of course, with darkness and light. **Genesis 1:4**. Then it was the Heavens above and the earth below. **Genesis 1:7**. Next came the strategic offsetting of the realms of dry land vs. those of the lakes, oceans, and seas. **Genesis 1:9-10**. Then it was the placement of celestial masses and energies with perfectly offsetting gravitational pulls in order to form constellations and establish orbits that would mark time - not to mention keeping the entire Universe from either exploding or imploding. **Genesis 1: 14-18**. Then it was the birds of the air and the creatures that live in the water. **Genesis 1:20-22**. Then it was the living creatures that move on the earth – and mankind. **Genesis 1:24-31**. Then it was the Sabbath and the six days. **Genesis 2:1-3**. Then it was the masculine aspect of mankind vs. the feminine expression of the species. **Genesis 2:20-21**. Then it was the lineages of Cham, Shem, and Yafet. **Genesis 10:1 ff**. Then it was Avraham vs. Lot, Pharaoh and Avimelech, then Yitzchak vs. Yishma’el; then Ya’akov vs. Esav; then, ultimately, *B’nei Yisrael* vs. the nations. It should not surprise us in the least that the Holy One has designed us to serve as a counter-culture – and that His Plan involves us abiding within assigned realms that offset and counterbalance, and thereby provide synergistic resistance to, the realms He has assigned to the earth’s other ethnic groups, cultures, and nations.

We are called to abide and thrive in – and model the beauty and life-giving power of - the realms of the holy [Hebrew *kadosh*] and the clean [Hebrew *tahor*] – while the other ethnic groups, cultures, and nations choose to wander aimlessly in and suffer the slings, arrows, and maladies of the realms of the common/profane/vain [Hebrew *chol*] and the unclean [Hebrew *tamei*]. He doesn't want us to leave His Plan, jump into their vanity, wallow in their uncleanness, and think, talk, emote, react, or behave like them; He wants us to inspire them to gradually start thinking, talking, emoting, reacting, and behaving like He has instructed us to think, talk, emote, react, and behave. It is all part of His Grand Plan for the redemption of mankind as a species and for the Restoration of Creation to its original, intended state of beauty, fruitfulness, harmony, and *shalom*.

Have You Begun to Identify With the Tahor and Kadosh Realms As Your 'Home Base' Ecosystem Yet?

Do you understand the positive, spirit, mind, and body nurturing, wholeness-promoting effect that everything the Holy One has identified in Scripture as *kadosh* and/or *tahor* has on the human being? On the other hand, do you understand the negative, corruptive, destructive, soul-numbing effect everything the Holy One has identified in Scripture as *chol* and/or *tamei*?

I'll let those two questions 'just sit' there and work on you for a minute or two. This is not a game. This is one of the Holy One's most amazing secrets of abundant life, of mission, of purpose, and of destiny. But to embrace it, and walk in it, one must unlearn most of what the world has taught – or modern religion believes – about the 'holy vs. profane' and 'clean vs. unclean' distinctions described in Torah. Are you up for it?

As we have discussed, the Hebrew adjective *tahor* has long and often been translated into the English as 'clean'. That is unfortunate – because *tahor* means so much more than 'clean'. It means *whole, healthy to be around, and engaged in bringing life, health, and peace to both mankind and Creation at large*. The opposing adjective, *tamei*, has long and often translated into English as 'unclean', but that is also unfortunate. *Tamei* means *fragmented, conflicted, and unhealthy to be around*. That which is *tamei* is, for the time being at least, *functioning according to a purpose and in a manner that is not what the Holy One Divinely ordained for it*.

In which realms – the realms of the *kadosh* and *tahor* or the realms of the *chol* and *tamei* - do you find yourself spending most of your time? Which do you think about most? Which do you talk about most? Which do your actions, reactions, responses, and behavior patterns mirror? Which adjective – *tahor* or *tamei* – most

accurately describes your life? Which best describes your thought life? Your self-talk? Your priorities in life? Your value matrix? Your worldview? Your news and entertainment choices? Your assumptions regarding ‘pain’ and pleasure? Your emotional status? Your dealings with the material things of the world? Your impact/influence/effect on the places you go and environments you frequent? Your interactions and conversations with your fellow man? Your role?

It is often stated that a person inevitably becomes like whatever creatures he or she chooses to eat - and that, of course, is very, very true. But, for better or worse, a person also inevitably becomes like whatever – and whoever – he or she chooses to closely associate with, touch, cuddle, pet, kiss, or caress.

When the Realms of Wholeness and Fragmentation Collide

We are called to live and thrive in the realm of the *tahor* and *kadosh*. The things, people and places of those realms are ‘home base’ to us – our safe places, and the Kingdom’s command centers, in this world. But what happens when the lines blur? What happens when the distinctions break down. What happens when people or, creatures from the *tamei* and/or *chol* realms – and the fragmenting, profane ideas, philosophies, ideologies, religions, pseudo-intellectual approaches, reaction patterns, attitudes, negative emotion matrices, rhetoric, and toxic behaviors they bring with them –invade our space. Our task *de jour* is to recognize, internalize, and employ the wisdom of these verses in ways that will maximize the effect of the radical makeover we are undergoing in this season of bridal transformation. The words the Holy One speaks to us in today’s aliyah all deal with *what happens when the realms of tahor and tamei collide*.

There was nothing *tamei* in Creation before the event known to most people as the Fall. Back then every creature the Holy One had made was still whole, still safe and healthy to be around. Each still functioned according to its original Divinely ordained purpose. But things changed. The Serpent’s insurrection started a ball of uncleanness rolling. The Fall of first Chava and then Adam added momentum and turned the ball of uncleanness into a wrecking ball. The Flood slowed the wrecking ball down for a while – and gave the earth and its inhabitants another chance at wholeness. But after the Flood mankind stubbornly refused to follow the *go-forth, fan-out, take-dominion, and replenish the earth* instructions of the Holy One. They chose instead to isolate from Creation, to congregate in cities, to hide in fortresses, and to build towers. This allowed the realm of the *tamei* to expand exponentially once again. The *tumah* epidemic spread like wildfire. It has been communicated by close association, contact, and conversation through the human race - and throughout the earth. As Shaul of Tarsus described it, *the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it*, such that the whole

creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. **Romans 8: 20, 22.** Hence, a few generations removed we look around and see that a large number of the earth's creatures – though by no means all - have succumbed to the Serpent's influence and begun to live according to his lies. He says 'kill or be killed' – and they obey. He says: 'skin for skin'; they *sh'ma*, and grow fangs and claws. Anything destructive, destabilizing thing the Serpent says, they mindlessly rush to do. Pigs trample pearls. Dogs turn on holy things, and tear them and the people entrusted to carry them into the world - to pieces. And the dogs just keep returning to their own vomit, and the pigs, though they are washed, keep going back to wallow in the mire. **Matthew 7:6, Proverbs 26:11 and II Peter 2:22.**

Now all the creatures - and all men - who have succumbed to the seductive serpent's song are oozing with, and live under the cruel bondage of, his *tumah*. They have lost sight of their true identity, their true purpose on the earth, and their ultimate destiny. They have become separated from the Divine Plan. They have become fragmented, conflicted, and unhealthy to be around. They function far below the Plan of the Holy One for their species. They eat *tumah*. They wallow in *tumah*. And they communicate *tumah* to everything they touch. They therefore now constitute a danger - to themselves as well as to others. But the Holy One will never be left without a throng of faithful witness. He will never surrender the earth, its creatures, or the human race to the ravages of *tumah*. That is where Avram came in. That is why the Messianic Promise was given. And that is where you and I come in now as well. In Messiah we are called to refresh and re-establish the realm of the *tahor*. As one new man, renewed in mind, and empowered by the *Ruach ha-Kodesh*, we are to follow Him in the pathway of Torah, and co-labor with Messiah in bringing *wholeness* – i.e. the realm of the *tahor* – back into a high level of prominence, impact, and influence in the earth.

The Holy One wants us to know that in the world in which we live contact between the two realms – i.e. the *tahor* and the *tamei* - is inevitable. Indeed, if the restoration process the Holy One has planned for Creation is to occur – and it will – there must be hundreds of thousands of engagements. The realm of *tahor* must expand – and the realm of *tamei* must contract. Contact between the two realms therefore happens a lot. In fact, it happens somewhere every day – indeed every moment. It is not by any stretch of the imagination the end of the world. But when the epicenter of the collision of the two realms is *our own lives*, if we are to continue the prescribed process of being made holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy the collision of the realms of wholeness and fragmentation will require us to *sh'ma* the Voice of our Divine Bridegroom very closely and follow the Kingdom protocols He has lovingly laid out for His Bride-People very carefully. The *tamei* realm, you see brings with it spots and wrinkles, conflict and drama, folly and sensual

indulgence – and, alas, it attracts unclean spirits that seek after, hover around, and love to inhabit such cesspools of dysfunction. Before we get to the specifics of today’s prescribed revelation download from Heaven, however, let us step back a little and get some perspective on why the Holy One might think these things are so important. He thinks these things are important, you know – that is why He wrote so much about it in the manual of life instructions He wrote for His Beloved.

***Relating to the Other Created Beings of the Earthly Realm
As the Creator Intended for Man to Interact With Them***

Man was not by any means the only living creature the Holy One made to roam the earth. The earth was created as a vast ecosystem populated by a stunning variety of species of beasts of the field, forest, sea and the stream, by winged creatures of the air, by organisms of the soil, the water, and the air. And part of becoming the Creator’s ambassadors on earth is to learn to relate properly, as He would, to all creatures He has made. We are not to be cruel to animals. Their blood is precious to the Holy One. We are therefore not to kill them or subjugate them just because we can. We are not to exploit them just because we covet their pelts, their horns, or to put their heads on our walls. We will take from them what we truly need, and no more. We will not value them more than human life, but we will not value them less than they deserve by virtue of being gloriously designed, uniquely created, and given life by our Beloved Bridegroom-King. We will not put them into captivity just because it makes us feel powerful. We will not compromise their created purpose and function. Nor are we to worship or allow ourselves to feel inordinate affection toward any living creature. We are not to let them be distractions from our mission. We are not to coddle or cuddle them as children, display them as objects of pride, or relate to them as anything other than exactly what He designed them to be. If we are His Agents, you see, we will seek to learn what each creature within our sphere of influence is designed for – and will not try to force them into or use them for any other purpose. We will not make pets of creatures who are functioning as part of this world’s waste disposal system. We will not be distracted from our mission by the beauty, the novelty, the apparently friendliness, or the seeming cuteness of these creatures. We will not eat anything our Bridegroom-King has said is not to be eaten, nor will we touch anything He has said not to touch.

Communication of Tumah By Close Contact

The instructions of the Holy One about touching creatures that are tamei read as follows:

Ul'eleh titama'u

And these living creatures will make you tamei;

kol ha-nogea B'nivlatam yitma ad ha-arev

All who touching their nebalah⁸ will be tamei until the evening.

So not only are we not to eat the flesh of creatures like pigs and shrimp and lobster, lions, tigers, and bears, and the like, we are also called to be very careful to, to the extent humanly possible, seek to avoid contact with them altogether. If we merely touch⁹ their flesh – much less eat of it – the Holy One says, we will thereby be wrenched from the realm of the *tahor* and deposited – temporarily – in the realm of *tamei*.

Does this concept of not touching things one is Divinely instructed not to eat ring a familiar note with anyone out there? It should. Think back with me to the Garden of Eden. Chava is having a conversation with the Serpent. He has asked her “*Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?*” Do you remember her reply to this question? Here it is:

mipri etz-ha-gan nochel

We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden

Umiperi ha-etz asher betoch-ha-gan

but of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden

amar Elohim lo tocheilu mimeinu

God has said, 'You are not to eat it,

v'lo tigei'u bo pen temutun

nor are you to touch it, lest you die.'

Chava has gotten a ‘bad rap’ from theologians over the centuries for ‘adding’ to the Torah - *i.e.* for supposedly adding the prohibition of *touching* the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to the prohibition voiced by the Holy One against eating that fruit. Is it possible Chava was more in tune with the Holy One’s Word than theologians have given her credit? Think about it. Human beings do not graze innocently through green pastures like cattle or sheep. To eat a thing, a human being must first look upon it, consider whether it is or is not desirable as food, and then reach forth a hand and yes, that is exactly right ... and touch it.

⁸ The Hebrew word *nebalah*, *nun, beit, lamed, hey*, Strong’s Hebrew word #5038, pronounced *neb-ay-law* is translated by our English Bibles as ‘carcass’. The Hebrew word is derived from the Hebrew verb root *nabal*, *nun, beit, lamed*, Strong’s Hebrew word #5034, pronounced *naw-bawl*. This verb root is first used in Exodus 18:18, to describe a process of *weakening, overwhelm, wearing down, or wearing out*. See similar usages at Psalm 1:3 and Isaiah 1:30, 28:4, and 34:4 [*to wither, as a leaf*] and at II Samuel 22:46 and Psalm 18:45 [*to flee, as a refugee*].

⁹ The Hebrew verb used in the text is *naga*, *nun gimel, ayin*, Strong’s Hebrew word #5060, pronounced *naw-gaw*. It pictures a reaching out of the hand to grasp. It carries the suggestion of an improperly invasive kind of touch – either in a *sensual* sense, in a *controlling, manipulative* sense, or in a *violent, malevolent* sense. The first usage of this verb in Torah is found in Genesis 3:3, when Chava tells the Serpent that Elohim has said they are not to eat OR TOUCH [Hebrew *nega*] the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Is it possible that Chava knew that the Words of the Holy One are deeper than their surface meaning? Is it possible that Chava, before the Fall, knew what generation after generation of men after the Fall simply refuse to acknowledge? Is it possible that before the Fall men actually knew that when the Holy One prohibits a thing, His prohibition goes beyond the final form of the act in question all the way to the initial seed from which the prohibited conduct is born? Could it be possible that to the eternal perspective of the Holy One, for Him to tell us not to eat something necessarily includes not to look upon it as food, not to reach out our hand to grasp it as food every bit as much as it tells us not to eat it? Are not the initial, preparatory steps that constitute the first fruits of the rebellious attitude that leads to the final act of rebellion against the Holy One within the scope of the Divine prohibition as well? If this is not the case, why do you think Yeshua taught that the Torah's prohibition of murder goes far beyond the actual act of killing, all the way back to the harboring of anger and the expression of disdain? See **Matthew 5:21-22**. And why do you think Yeshua taught that the Torah's prohibition of adultery goes far beyond the actual act of intercourse, all the way back to the first glance that was mixed with lust? See **Matthew 5:27-28**. If something is not within the Holy One's Will for us, touching it is just as potentially damaging to us and to the delicate balance between things *tahor* and *tamei* as ingesting it. Hence the Holy One this time leaves no question about what He is counseling us against. We are not only instructed not to eat the flesh of *tamei* animals – we are also instructed not supposed to touch them.

The Hebrew verb used in the text of Torah to describe the kind of 'touching' of *tamei* animals that the Holy One instructs us not to do is *naga*. This ancient verb root does not picture casual, accidental contact. It pictures a specific, volitional, premeditated reaching out of one's hand to grasp something. It carries the suggestion of an improperly invasive kind of touch – either in a *sensual* sense, in a *controlling, manipulative* sense, or in a *violent, malevolent* sense – or even in an intimate, caressing sense. As you might suspect from the discussion in the preceding section of this study the first usage of this verb in Torah is found in Genesis 3:3, when Chava tells the Serpent that Elohim has said man is not to either eat OR TOUCH [Hebrew *nega*] the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Our Responsibility to Avoid Engaging With the Realm of the Tamei

For reasons we do not completely understand the Holy One has set up the world so that whenever there is contact between something or someone *tamei* and something or someone *tahor*, it is the *tamei* that influences that which is *tahor* – *not the other way around*. When the contact occurs, the *tamei* does not become *tahor* – the *tahor* becomes *tamei*. That which is whole and in the process of reaching fulfillment meets that which is fragmented – and the latter's fragmentation infects the one that

is whole. Let me give you an example. Movies set in “Bible” times often contain footage of the main characters coming in contact with colonies of ‘lepers’¹⁰. What happens? The ‘lepers’ cover their faces and cry out “*Unclean! Unclean!*” to warn the approaching person¹¹. Of course, what they would really say would not be in English, but in Hebrew, and therefore would not be “*Unclean! Unclean!*”, but would be “*Tamei! Tamei!*” They were required by Torah to declare, lest there be any physical contact between them and anyone who is *tahor*, that they live in a drastically different realm – a realm transmittable through casual contact.

We will later learn that what is transmittable by contact is not the physical condition [in Hebrew, *tza'arat*] – but is instead the *spiritual status of tamei*. The issue is not, as some have supposed, *contagious disease* or medical quarantine. The issue is *spiritual*, not *physical*. The message is: *Do not touch me, or you, too, will become tamei!*” Not sinful. Not deathly ill. Not in danger of Hell fire. Just temporarily unable - pending a desperately needed reset protocol - to enter the *mish'kan* or participate in normal community interactions in the camp of the Redeemed. Just temporarily unable to do what you were created and placed on earth to do.

With these thoughts in mind let’s take a look into an area that may be a little uncomfortable – our Divine Bridegroom’s instructions regarding contact with the *tamei* state as it is presented in the animal kingdom. Let’s see what specifically He Who knows us best - and Who loves us most - has to say on the subject.

V'chol ha-nose m'nivlatam yechabes begadav

Anyone lifting a tamei animal's nebalah is to immerse [even] his clothing,

v'tamei ad-ha-arev

And then will remain tamei until evening.

¹⁰ English translations have rendered the Hebrew term *tza'arat* as ‘leprosy’ and have therefore translated the Hebrew term *m'tzora* as ‘leper’. This is unfortunate, since there is a very contagious skin disease originally known as ‘Hanson’s Disease’ that has been dubbed ‘leprosy’ which bears little resemblance to the *tza'arat* condition mentioned in the Book of Leviticus. Now when English speakers read the Book of Leviticus and read of leprosy and lepers, they think of persons with the contagious skin disease properly called ‘Hanson’s Disease’. True Biblical *tza'arat* was not contagious by contact – it was a physical manifestation of a spiritual problem. A person who continually spoke negatively about his fellow man would, in the days of the *mish'kan*, when the Manifest Presence of the Holy One dwelt in the camp of the Redeemed, be struck by the Holy One with the *tza'arat* condition. *Miryam* is an example. This was a redemptive judgment of the Holy One, designed to call the evil-speaking person to change his/her ways, and submit his/her mouth and speech to the Holy One, to be cleansed.

¹¹ This is pursuant to Leviticus 13:45-46, which says: “***And the ‘leper’*** [Hebrew, *metzora*] ***who has the disease on him is to go about with signs of grief, with his hair loose and his mouth covered, crying, “Tamei, tamei!” While the disease is on him, he will be tamei. He is tamei: let him keep by himself, living outside the town.***”

L'chol ha-behemah asher hi mafreset parsah

Every animal that parts the hoof,

V'shesa eynenah shosa'at v'gerah eynenah

but is not cloven-footed, or does not chew the cud,

ma'alah tme'im hem lachem

makes tamei everything [it touches].

Kol ha-nogea bahem yitma

Everyone who touches them becomes tamei.

[Leviticus 11:24-26]

Did you ever notice that none of the patriarchs - or the apostles for that matter - were *pig farmers*¹² or *shrimpers*? None of the servants of the Holy One is ever presented as eating or serving their guests pork or shrimp, or lobster, or hare. They would not have. These men were all close enough to the Holy One to understand the difference between animals that were *tahor* and those that were *tamei*. Did you ever wonder why? The Holy One has so configured Creation that contact between and interactions between humans and the different categories of animal life He created at or near the time of the death of the animals have different spiritual consequences.

The Holy One has designed Creation in such a way that if a *tahor* animal, such as a lamb, a kid, or a heifer, dies, and one touches its carcass, there is no adverse spiritual or physical consequence. Why? One obvious reason is because how else would one be able to prepare the animal for food? The carcass must be touched to be '*dressed out*' [prepared for cooking]. Similarly, as anyone who has ever raised animals domestically knows, from time-to-time animals ... well, sometimes they *just up and die*. Those blessed by the Holy One with 'herds and flocks' have to be able to dispose of the carcasses of the animals who 'just up and die' without a serious interruption of their lives. But there is another, even more important reason. If touching the carcass of a *tahor* animal made one *tamei* – and thus unable to enter the *Mish'kan* - how could a person bring an animal to the *Mish'kan* as a surrogate for himself? The very act he was instructed to do – to lay his hands upon the head of the surrogate animal as the knife was drawn across the surrogate's neck - would make both he and the *kohen tamei*. How then could the *kohen* do what he has been instructed to do thereafter - to cut the carcass into pieces, burn pieces of it on the altar, and eat some of it as a covenant meal?

The Tumah 'Litmus Tests'

We learned in yesterday's aliyah the 'litmus test' by which we are to gauge whether an animal is *tahor* or *tamei* – *tahor* animals both '*part the hoof and chew*

¹² It should be noted that in two places the prophet *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah] called the pig an abomination. See **Isaiah 65:4 and 66:17.**

the cud, while *tamei* animals have at most one of those characteristics. Lest there be any confusion, the Holy One now restates the test in slightly different and more explicit words, conveying the same meaning:

V'chol holech al-kapav

Whatever goes on its paws,

b'chol ha-chayah ha-holechet al-arba

among all animals that go on four [legs]

tme'im hem lachem

they are tamei to you.

kol-ha-nogea b'nivlatam yitma ad ha-arev

Whoever touches their nebalah will be tamei until the evening.

V'ha-nose et-nivlatam yechabes begadav

He who carries their nebalah shall wash his clothes,

V'tame ad ha-arev tme'im hemah lachem

and be tamei until the evening. they are to be tamei ones to you.

[Leviticus 11:24-28]

The Holy One's intentions in telling us these things are not to put us under a "burden" of "law". He wants for us what is *best* – that which will most effectively advance us toward our potential and our purpose individually and collectively. He explains His instructions as follows:

***For I am the Holy One your Lord, and since I am holy,
you are also to make yourselves holy and remain sanctified.***

Therefore, do not defile your souls

I am the Holy One, and I brought you out of Egypt to be your God.

Therefore, since I am holy, you are also to keep yourself holy.

Make yourself the dividing boundary between the [realm of] the tahor

And the [realm of] the tamei [unclean]

[Leviticus 11:44-47]

The Holy One's instructions for living [in this context, His Torah instructions] are a blessing - a prophetic and creative empowering – over us. It is up to all of us who love Him and trust Him to ask Him what these things mean for us, in our lives. That is what the *sh'ma* lifestyle is all about. We have been given the amazing privilege of hearing the Master tell us what is best - for us and for all mankind. We have been given both the *capacity* and *empowerment* to do that very thing – not in our own strength, but powered by sheer force of the creative, prophetic Voice of our Divine Bridegroom – the Voice that called Light into being, and created the Heavens and the earth and all that is within them. We have only to adjust the dials of our spirits to *His wavelength* and begin to respond to the extent we are able at the moment, with the amount of illumination we have received to that point. We do not have to do it all at one time. We do not even have to do it all in one generation.

We just have to *move when He moves*, and *do what we see Him doing*¹³. Let us not respond to this wonderful opportunity by merely hitting the remote control and changing spiritual channels just because what we hear on the Holy One's wavelength does not fit into our convenient theologies or pander to our societally defined fleshly appetites.

... But Hasn't All This Stuff 'Passed Away'?

I know at this point that some of you are saying: “*But what about what Shaul [Paul] said in Colossians 2:20–23? Didn't Shaul say all that tamei/tahor stuff had passed away?*” You probably know the passage. It reads like this:

*If you died with Messiah from the elements of the world,
why, as though living in the world,
do you subject yourselves to ordinances,
"Don't handle, nor taste, nor touch" (all of which perish with use),
according to the precepts and doctrines of men?
Which things indeed appear like wisdom
in self-imposed worship, and [false] humility, and severity to the body;
but aren't of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.*
[Colossians 2:20-23, Emphasis added]

If you dare to take a moment and look carefully at this passage you will be able to see why, whatever Shaul may have been talking about, he absolutely could not have been referring to the instructions we have been reading about in Torah this week not to eat *tamei* animals and to avoid contact with the realm of the *tamei*. The ‘don't handle, nor taste, nor touch’ teachings referenced by Shaul are clearly stated to be ‘*according to the precepts and doctrines of men*’. That could not be referring to Torah, Dear Reader. *Torah is not by any means a ‘precept’ or ‘doctrine’ of men*. Torah is the eternal, unchanging, perfect Word of the Holy One. Moreover, please note that Shaul indicates that the teachings he is talking about ‘*appear like wisdom*’. Torah does not merely *appear like wisdom* – it **IS** wisdom. It comes *straight from the mouth of the Holy One* Who makes no mistakes and Whose Words will never pass away.

¹³ The life Messiah lived, and which we are called to live, is a life which requires making distinctions – drawing boundary lines between things that are *spiritually different*, even if *physically similar*. As the Holy One drew lines of distinction, and established boundaries of demarcation, between Light and Darkness, between the Heavens and the Earth, between the Firmament above and the Firmament Below, etc., so we are to make distinctions and draw lines of demarcation between things *kadosh* and things *chol*, and between things *tahor* and things *tamei*. This kind of discernment and differentiation and demarcation also lies at the heart of what we call morality. If theft or adultery are wrong, it is only because there is a *real spiritual difference* between mine and yours and between the wedded and the unwedded state. If ceasing work on Shabbat or eating *matzah* on Passover are meaningful deeds, this is only because, in the spiritual realm, the 7th Day is truly different from Friday and Sunday, and because, in the spiritual realm, unleavened bread [*matzah*] is truly different from leavened bread. The kind of differentiations we are called upon to make require the ability to look at similar things and appreciate that, despite their elementary similarity, they are essentially different, and should be treated so.

Additionally, Shaul indicates that the teachings he is referencing as irrelevant to one in Messiah are related to “*self-imposed worship, and [false] humility, and severity to the body.*” Torah’s teachings about *diet* and about *avoidance of contact with the tamei* are not about anything ‘self-imposed’, nor are they about false humility, nor do they have anything to do with ‘severity to the body’. To the contrary, they are *the absolute the best thing for the body*. And finally, note that Shaul concludes his remarks by saying that whatever teachings he is talking about “*aren’t of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.*” Shaul is the one who said, however, that “**All Scripture** [and, at the time, that included only Torah, the prophets, and the writings] **is given by inspiration of the Holy One, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.**” II Timothy 3:16. That which Shaul declared God-breathed and profitable to the Corinthians could simply not be said to be ‘of no value’ to the Colossians – or to us.

What exactly was Shaul talking about in Colossians 2:20-23? He was probably talking about pagan practices prevalent in Colossae that were well known to the people who lived there. He could have been speaking about *rabbinic traditions of some practitioners of one or more offshoots of 1st Century Judaisms* that some people were insisting had to be added to Torah to ‘*build a fence around the Torah*’. But he definitely was NOT talking about the instructions for living of the Creator of the Universe which we have been studying this week in Leviticus 11! For remember, it was also Shaul who in the 2nd letter to the Corinthian believers said:

You are a temple of the living God.
Even as the Holy One said, "I will dwell in them,
and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people."
Therefore, "Come out from among them,
and be separate,' says the Holy One 'Touch no tamei thing.
[2 Corinthians 6:16-17]

So do not throw out the loving instructions Abba has given us regarding what of His creation is and is not healthy [physically or spiritually] for us as outdated or superseded or the provisions of an “old” covenant. Wrestle with the Holy One over His words. Ask him how they apply to you today and how He wants you to implement them in your 21st Century life. Grab hold of the corner of His garment and simply do not let go - until He *blesses you*. For you see, if there is anything that can ‘reverse the flow’ and cause that which is *tamei* to become *tahor* [instead of the other way around], it is the corner of the garment of our Great High Priest. If you don’t believe me, just ask the woman with the issue of blood, about whom we read in today’s Meditation.

Questions For Today's Study

1. The Torah verses assigned for the last two days have dealt with animals that our English Bibles classify as *tamei*. *Yesterday* the subject was what animals can be properly defined as “food” for the people of the Holy One. Today the subject is a little different – it is what animals’ dead bodies/hides/body parts are the people of the Holy One instructed not to have contact with.

[A] Write the Hebrew word translated as “unclean” in verse 26, in Hebrew letters with vowel markings. Then look up the word in Gesenius and write a Hebraic description of the concept.

[B]. What verse of today’s Torah applies to snakes? To Turtles? To Bears? To Cats? To Dogs? To Frogs?

[C] Are any of those animals/creatures to be eaten?

[D] What is your position on the petting of dogs and cats?

[E] Do you think the Holy One is giving *you* instructions about the wearing of snakeskin or alligator boots, or shark tooth necklaces?

[F] What do you think of wearing furs of mink or fox or rabbit or ermine (not by *others* – *do not judge!* - but by *you*)?

2. In verse 44 the Holy One gives the reason why we are to consider some animals *tamei* [*tav, mem, alef*, Strong’s Hebrew word #2931, pronounced *taw-may'*, and usually inaccurately translated as “unclean”], and why we are neither to eat their flesh or touch their carcasses [the word translated “carcass” is *nebelah* meaning *something diseased, injured, dying, decomposing, or decaying*].

[A] What is the reason the Holy One gives?

[B] Memorize verse 44 and recite it tonight at the Shabbat table.

[C] Read the following verses regarding the concept of *tamei*’ and write an essay on the importance of the concept as envisioned by the prophets of Israel for the present day.

Ezekiel 22:26;

Ezekiel 44:23;

Ezekiel 4:13;

Isaiah 6:5;

Isaiah 52:1;

Isaiah 52:11

[D] The concept of “uncleanness” did not end at the advent, death, resurrection, or ascension of Yeshua, or at the outpouring of the Ruach on *Chag Shavuot* c. 29 C.E. Look up the following references to “uncleanness” in the apostolic writings, and then write a 1-page essay on what it means, even in a world without a Temple, a *Mish'kan*, or a Levitical priesthood, for us to allow ourselves to contact “unclean” [Hebrew, *tamei*] animals/things:

- Matthew 23:27
- Romans 1:24
- Romans 6:19
- II Corinthians 6:17
- II Corinthians 12:21
- Galatians 5:19
- Ephesians 4:19
- Ephesians 5:3, 5
- Colossians 3:5
- I Thessalonians 2:3
- I Thessalonians 4:7
- II Peter 2:10
- Revelation 16:13
- Revelation 18:2

3. In the Haftarah aliyah for today [II Samuel 7] David starts out talking with the prophet *Natan* about his desire to build God a temple.

*It then came to pass, when the king lived in his house,
and the Holy One had given him rest from all his enemies round about,
that the king said to Natan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar,
but the ark of the Holy One dwells within curtains.”*

[A] Was David’s idea of building a permanent structure for a temple of the Holy One a “God” idea or a *man* idea?

[B] On what do you base your answer?

4. The first response of the prophet *Natan* to David’s inquiry [verse 3] was – as he himself later acknowledged - not an appropriate response.

Natan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Holy One is with you.”

[A] What was the prophet’s 1st response?

[B] What was the fallacy (mistake) in *Natan*’s reasoning/logic with regard to this 1st response?

[C] What internal factors/pressures do you think might lead even a man undeniably empowered by the Holy One to be a *navi* [prophet] to make such a mistake?

5. The Holy One kept the prophet *Natan* on what I call a “short leash”. The same night *Natan* spoke this word to David the Holy One pulled him close and said, “*Natan, my son, you blew it!*” [Rabbi’s son paraphrase]. Then the Holy One shared with *Natan* His perspective.

*... The word of the Holy One came to Natan, saying, Go and tell my servant David,
“Thus says the Holy One, Will you build me a house for me to dwell in?
For I have not lived in a house since the day
that I brought up the children of Yisra'el out of Mitzrayim,
even to this day, but have walked in a tent and lived in a tent.*

*In all places in which I have walked with all the children of Yisra'el,
I spoke a word with any of the tribes of Yisra'el,
whom I commanded to be shepherd of my people Yisra'el, saying,
'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'*

*Now therefore thus shall you tell my servant David,
"Thus says the Holy One of Hosts, 'I took you from the sheep pen, from following the sheep,
that you should be prince over my people, over Yisra'el;
and I have been with you wherever you went,
and have cut off all your enemies from before you;
and I will make you a great name, like the name of the great ones who are in the eretz.*

*I will appoint a place for my people Yisra'el,
and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more;
neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as at the first,
and [as] from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Yisra'el;
and I will cause you to rest from all your enemies.*

*Moreover the Holy One tells you that the Holy One will make you a house.
When your days are fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers,
I will set up your seed after you, who shall proceed out of your bowels,
and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for my name,
and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

*I will be his father, and he shall be my son:
if he commits iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men,
and with the stripes of the children of men;
but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him,
as I took it from Sha'ul, whom I put away before you.
Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before you:
your throne shall be established forever.*

According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Natan speak to David.

- [A] List each promise the Holy One made to David in verses 4-16.
[B] Why does the Holy One say he *"took [David] from the pasture"*?
[C] Did that have anything to do with a Temple building program?
[D] What "offspring" and what "house" do you think the Holy One was talking about that He was going to raise up?
[E] Do you believe that the *"fallen tent of David"*, later referred to in the writings of the post-exilic prophets, is [1] the tent David set up on Mount Zion to house the ark, in which Levites played music continually, [2] the Davidic dynasty (a descendant of his reigning as king over Israel), or [3] something else. Explain *why* you believe whatever you believe about this.

6. In this week's reading from the B'rit Chadasha we have been reading and studying the account of the judgment of the Holy One on *Hananyah* and *Shefira*. We have learned that at a time when those Jews of Jerusalem who had acknowledged Yeshua as Messiah were sharing possessions it came to be regarded as "the pious thing to do" to sell a piece of land or a possession and bring the

proceeds of the sale to the *sh'lach'im* [apostles]. The process had apparently been instituted by persons with pure hearts and good motives. But in this week's aliyah we see that not all who made such gifts did so with good motives. Alas, in every "religious" setting there are always those who, seeking the attention and admiration of men over the favor of the Holy One, put on a hypocritical show of piety.

Yeshua addressed this kind of approach to spirituality in His teachings more than once. What is stunning about this story in the apostolic account is that in this one instance swift and deadly judgment attached to the act. When Hananyah and Shefira tried to put on *a show of piety* – just like thousands of people in churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples do every week – their lights went right out. It is important therefore to give some serious consideration to the message that the apostolic writer, *Lukas*, and the *Ruach* of the Holy One who inspired him to write the account, are trying to convey to us. What, we may ask, can we today learn from this story? First of all, we should know that "selling land" in c. 29 C.E. in Israel bore little resemblance to "selling land" in America today. According to Torah a Hebrew like Hananyah could not sell his land outright the way we do in America. Land in Israel was a Hebrew family's *inalienable* inheritance. All a person could sell was the land's *produce* and the right to its use for a number of years not to exceed the number of years remaining before the next *Yovel* [Jubilee] after the transaction. The nature of the transaction was more like an agricultural lease, or lease of commercial property than a sale. So try to get out of your head the image of Jim Jones' people selling their land and all moving off to Guyana to form a commune. That's not what was happening. Secondly we should note that nowhere in the text (contrary to popular opinion and common teaching) does it say that the Holy One struck/killed either Hananyah or Shefira. These deaths are not like the deaths of Uzzah in II Kings 6 or of Nadav and Avihu in Leviticus 10 (part of our Torah portion for the week). Those men were struck down by the Holy One. But what does Lukas tell us?

*Kefa said, "Hananyah, why has HaSatan filled your heart
to lie to the Ruach HaKodesh, and to keep back part of the price of the land?
While you kept it, didn't it remain your own?
After it was sold, wasn't it in your power?
How is it that you have conceived this thing in your heart?
You haven't lied to men, but to the Holy One."
Hananyah, hearing these words, fell down and died.*

[Acts 5:4-5]

Note that the text does NOT say that the Holy One struck Hananyah down. Nor, of course, does it say that Kefa struck him down (some have taught that he did so by some spiritual empowerment or 'anointing' which was on him at that time). Hananyah was not struck down at all – he 'fell' down, and died. Something happened inside his body,

upon being exposed as a liar and a fraud, in front of those he was trying to impress. Perhaps it was a heart attack. Perhaps the stress set off an aneurysm. We don't know exactly what happened inside him to cause this. But we DO know the Holy One did not kill him. He died. That's all. The same is true for Shefira. Lukas tells us:

*... his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in.
Kefa answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much."
She said, "Yes, for so much." But Kefa asked her, "How is it that
you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Holy One?
Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door,
and they will carry you out." She fell down immediately at his feet, and died.*
[Acts 5:7-10]

Note again that the Holy One did NOT strike Shefira. *No one* did. We are just told that she “fell” down, like her husband had, and died. Why or how she fell down, or why or how she died, we are not told. Perhaps the stress of being publicly exposed was more than she could bear. We do not know. Perhaps we are not told what exactly happened to Hananyah and Shefira because we simply do not need to know. Perhaps we are not even supposed to speculate – *or judge*. Perhaps the issue is not what Hananyah and Shefira did wrong (is that any worse than any of us have done?) but on what *the effect of the events, and the timing of their deaths, had upon the people who survived them*. Perhaps the issue the Holy One is addressing in these stories is not the “sin” of hypocrisy but the consequences of not living in the FEAR OF HEAVEN. Perhaps the story is not about the dead, but about the living – about you, and about me. Perhaps that is why Lukas closes his account of these events with these words: *Great fear came on the whole assembly, and on all who heard these things.* Acts 5:11.

The fear of the Holy One is a good thing. It is a concept firmly rooted and established in Torah. May that – and not some strange new doctrine of ‘spiritual authority’ or ‘spiritual gifts’ - be what you take away from the story of Hananyah and Shefira. They *died*. It was their appointed time. We, the living, must live our lives in the FEAR OF HEAVEN.

[A] Write and define the Greek word our English Bibles translate as “fear”.

[B] What is the Hebrew word translated as “fear” in the context of fearing the Holy One?

[C] How do you think the “fear” of the Holy One discussed in verse 11 affected the lives of the people who heard about what had happened to *Hananyah* (Ananias) and *Shefira* (Sapphira)?

[D] What effect do you think the “fear” of the Holy One has upon you?

[E] Do you think “fear” of the Holy One is more important or less important than “love” of the Holy One (or are the two of equal importance)? Explain your answer.

*May the people of the Holy One, and their families, reflect His holiness,
and may the effects, in their lives, of a holy fear and love of Him and His ways
be a light unto the nations.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Matthew 9:20-22

*Behold, a woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years
came behind him, and touched the tzitziyot of his garment;
for she said within herself, "If I just touch his garment, I will be made whole."
Yeshua, turning around and seeing her, said,
"Daughter, cheer up! Your faith has made you whole."
And the woman was made whole from that hour.*