

Shiur L'Yom Chamishi¹

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS: *Torah Sh'mini:* Leviticus 11:1-25
Haftarah: II Samuel 6:17-23
B'rit Chadasha: Acts 5:9-10

Of all the living creatures of the earth, these are the ones you may eat.

[Leviticus 11:2]

Today's Meditation is Daniel 1:1-20;

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

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe v'el-Aharon l'emor aleihem - And the Holy One spoke to Moshe and Aharon, telling them ... *Dabeiru el-B'nei Yisra'el l'emor* - speak to B'nei Yisrael, and say ... *zot ha-chayah asher tochlu mikol-ha-behemah asher al-ha-aretz* – out of all the living creatures of the earth these are the ones you may eat. **Leviticus 11:1-2.**

Our Bridegroom-King has redeemed us with a Mighty Hand and an Outstretched Arm. He has brought us to His Holy Mountain and betrothed us to Himself forever. He has forgiven us so much – choosing to look beyond our many faults and our brokenness to our inner beauty and amazing potential. He has showered us with affection, attention, and blessings, and commissioned us for a great and glorious mission that will change the world. Rightly do the maidens love Him – for He is altogether lovely! He is greatly to be praised. He is worthy to be worshipped, adored, and blessed forever! He has captured our hearts, captivated our imaginations, and awakened a primal longing we never even knew we had for His Kingdom to come, and for His Will to be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. His praise will ever be on our lips! We would follow Him anywhere! We would do anything He asks us to do! We delight to do His Will! Well, until ... until He starts telling us what worldly things we must not lust after, seek, ingest, or let poison our bodies or minds, that is. When that happens, the hair on the back of our neck starts to stand up. Who exactly does He think He is?

The Bridegroom-King's Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover Protocols Get Up Close and Personal

Back In Egypt we were preoccupied with staying one step ahead of the taskmaster's whip. We nursed wounds. We carried offenses. We developed attitudes. As a defense mechanism against the constant bombardment of uncleanness around us, we let an even darker form of uncleanness work its way into our souls. We indulged self-destructive attitudes, appetites, and behavior

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patterns. We took every tidbit of negativity, criticism, and judgment we received personally, internalized it, and started to fantasize about return it in kind. We seethed with anger. We chose to perceive ourselves as – and live as – traumatized victims. Ah, but that was then - and *this is now*. Now, being immersed in the love and nurturing apprenticeship of our Bridegroom-King, we are actually beginning to *appreciate, respond to* and *flow in unity with* His Beautiful, Creative Mind, His Unselfish, Compassionate Heart, His Creative, Transformative Words, and His Graceful, Precise, Strategic Movements. Because we are basking in His Presence constantly, we are actually learning to think like Him, to love humanity and Creation like Him, react/respond like Him, to speak like Him, to dream like Him, and to behave like Him.

From the beginning the Holy One has ordained that humans would be *b'tzelem Elohim – i.e. in His image/shadow*. **Genesis 1:26**. He intends to bring that to pass in us. He intends for us to become the pure, spotless bride without blemish, or wrinkle, that He envisions. He is empowering us. The details of His multi-layered Bridal Makeover Protocol are being revealed one level at a time. Just when we think we've 'got it' in one area, He shines His spotlight on another area where we clearly don't. But oh, the pleasantness of His rebuke! Oh, the exquisite skill of His scalpel! Oh, the healing gentleness of His touch! Oh, the ecstasy of His discipline!

What the Holy One is providing us is a whole lot more than a mail-order '*Bride-in-a-box* do it yourself kit'. What He is walking through with us, like a rabbi walks through a training protocol with His disciples, is an intensive process of awakenings, discoveries, explorations, challenges, applications, and liberating surrenders. He is not *commanding* us to somehow make ourselves holy, clean, and good – He is *inspiring, empowering, and enabling* us to do so. And, as a result, there is now no place we would rather be than with Him, no objective in which we would rather invest time, energy, and resources into than His Plan, and no enterprise in which we would rather be engaged than this process. He is with us 24/7/365. Like a Master Life Coach, He is teaching us how to break our bad habits - especially our habit of seeing, thinking, talking and acting like we did [a] *while in Egyptian bondage* and [b] *during the traumatic season of intellectual disorientation, fleshly discontent, and out of control emotions that followed*.

Our point of connection with the Holy One is not a belief matrix; nor a spur-of-the-moment commitment based on *a sudden chance encounter*. He is cultivating far more than that in us. He is inviting – and enabling - us to *lose ourselves in an increasingly intimate and accountable relationship with someOne from Whom we cannot hide, cannot run away, and Who we cannot fool, even for a moment*. What we are hearing from Him Whom our soul loves – and from our own hearts - is not

a *song*; it is a *symphony*. Phase-by-phase, step-by-step, freeing surrender-by-freeing surrender we are being taught how to cooperate with our Divine Bridegroom's Plan to skillfully make us over completely ... until we start to become *holy as He is holy* – from the inside out, and from the outside in, and, indeed, from every direction conceivable to every direction imaginable. We do not do this independent of Him – He is *right in the middle of every part of it*. The Holy One is the Master; we are just the apprentices. He leads; we just follow. In the process, however, we are learning to trust Him – and the processes He has designed for us. Even more, however, we are actually learning to *enjoy* Him – and to *find great delight* in the processes He has designed for us. We are learning to how thrilling and fulfilling it is to cooperate with and participate meaningfully in the protocols of transformation He has choreographed. This is the indeed the Ultimate Extreme Make-Over. And a new phase of the transformation process is about to be unveiled. I call this phase of the Makeover Protocol *the Special Diet of the Bridegroom and His Bride*.

Introducing the Ultimate Covenant Partnership Diet

Today's aliyah deals with a very important aspect of the special relationship people in covenant with the Holy One have with Him. We are about to be reminded that the special relationship we are privileged to have with our Creator extends to and dramatically affects *every aspect of our lives*. We are our Beloveds. And that is a truth that has SUBSTANCE to it. If we are really His in any meaningful way then it *changes everything* about us. If we are really His in a meaningful, substantive way – not only in the emotional make-believe religious world of '*just some people talkin*' – we absolutely delight to *sit at His Table*, let Him feed us from His plate and sip from His cup. We are losing all desire whatever to dine on any morsel He has not chosen for us – and will not eat with us.

He is *our God*, and we are *His People*. How stunningly *glorious* is that? He is the *Good Shepherd*, and we are *the sheep of His pasture*. He is our *Father and King*, and we are *His children and royal household*. We eat what He puts on our table. As the shepherd plans the diet of his sheep and as the king decides what food will be consumed in his royal household, so the Holy One has not only the right but also the responsibility to declare what is and is not food for us. *And because we are His* – because we are the sheep of His pasture and the children of His royal household - it is our inestimable *pleasure and honor* not only to eat what He says is 'food' for us but also to *politely decline every delicacy with which the world – the counsel of the ungodly – would try to tempt and seduce us*.

Because we are His – His chosen, beloved, bought, paid for, courted, betrothed, totally enamored Bride-to-be - we *joyfully surrender* to His Bride-diet. He is our

Bridegroom and our King. We eat at His table. We drink from His cup. Our delight is in *Him* and in *the Beauty and Wisdom of His Words and His Ways* – not in what the world considers ‘entertainment’, ‘pleasure’, ‘success’, self-actualization, or ‘food’. Surrendering the decision as to what is and is not food for us is therefore not submitting to some burdensome law; to the contrary, it is embracing one of the most *joyful privileges of covenant relationship*.

The ‘What Is and is Not Food’ Issue Just Keeps Coming Up, Doesn’t It?

We briefly touched on the issue of the Holy One’s Great Bride-Diet Plan for His People when we were studying parsha *Tzav*. In the instructions He gave in that parsha the Holy One was merely introducing us to the concept that He has in His wisdom and great love designed a *special diet of excellence* for His Bride – a diet which will not only *nurture her physically and spiritually the way only He who created her knows how* but will also dramatically *set her apart from all the people of the world as uniquely His*.

It should be noted that the instructions of which we read in that parsha, as well as those we will read about today, concerning the diet the Holy One has created for His Bride are not some ‘*law of Moshe*’, Beloved. Moshe did not make this up. This is REVELATION directly from the Throne of Heaven. The definitions of food found in Torah are the eternal, unchanging, perfect Word of the Holy One Himself. How do we know? Because their message is punctuated by the familiar formula Torah always uses to distinguish between Divinely inspired narrative and the actual ‘red-letter’ Words of the Creator Himself. That formula is ***Vayedaber Adonai ...*** [*And the Holy One spoke ...*]. Please note therefore the words with which today’s aliyah begins:

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe v'el-Aharon l'emor alehem
And the Holy One spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, telling them ...

There it is, Dear Reader. There is *the formula clearly demarking direct Divine utterance*. The Holy One then proceeds over the next few verses to lovingly lay out for us in His Torah a description of what aspects of the animal kingdom He created that we who are *His* are and are not to consider food. He Who knows us best – and has called us to be His Bride, and therefore has a vested interest in nourishing us - has defined for us what is – and what most definitely is not – *to be ingested and incorporated into the bodies and souls He loves*. Let’s look at how the Holy One defines food for His *goy k’dosh* [holy nation], His *mamlekeh kohanim* [kingdom of priests], and His *am segulah* [specially treasured/cherished people].

What Does the Holy One Himself Say Is – and Is Not – Food for Those Called to Partner With Him In Covenant?

From the very beginning point of God-man interaction the Holy One has always seen

it as more than just His prerogative, but His *responsibility as Creator* to define what man is – and is not – to consider food. He made our bodies, and infused them with the Breath of Life. So, on the sixth day of Creation Week – at the inception of mankind’s existence - the Holy One told Adam ***Behold, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food. All plant vegetation shall be food.*** [Genesis 1:29-30]. The very first thing the Holy One addressed verbally with mankind, after assigning him his function in the earth [*be fruitful, multiply/expand/spread out, take dominion, and bring to fullness*], was to declare what mankind’s assigned fuel for this task was to be. In the Garden, in light of a new, higher-level environment He created and introduced to mankind, the Holy One clarified His instructions, saying: ***You may eat from every etz [tree or branch] of the garden, but*** But what? He made the exception crystal clear: ***But from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, you are not to eat*** [Genesis 2:16-17]. All fruits, vegetables, and berries *except for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* have thus always been and will always be FOOD – empowering fuel - for man. That has *never changed*. Indeed, it *can never change*. That is the power – and the permanence - of the Holy One’s words and ways.

Note, however, that either in the initial week of Creation nor in the era in which man was confined to the Garden the Holy One did not define the flesh of any animal as FOOD/FUEL for man. In the Garden, there was no need for hunting or killing. The diet of all creatures was perfect, and food was abundant. The wolf lay down with the lamb. The lion did not chase the gazelle. All their lives, Adam and Chava ate only the fruit of plants and trees. Even after being sent out from the Garden into the rest of the world the Holy One did not enlarge the realm of human food to include animal flesh. The Holy One said at that time: ***By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread.*** And then the environment of earth shifted again – with the Great Flood of Noach’s day. In the Flood all plant life [i.e. all FOOD] on earth was destroyed. Hence, in the immediate aftermath of the Flood the Holy One told Noach: ***Every moving thing that lives shall be to you as food. As I gave you the produce of plants I have [now] given you everything. But nevertheless, you may not eat flesh whose blood is in its soul.*** Genesis 9:3-4.

This was part of the Holy One’s special provision for Noach and his family, so the earth could be replenished after the Flood. And while what the Holy One said initially sounds broad, as if it included all animals, when considered *in the context* it was spoken, it is nowhere near as encompassing as the words themselves imply. Remember that the Holy One had told Noach to take on the ark 14 [7 pairs] of each species of *tahor* animals, and only 2 [1 pair] of each species of *tamei* animals. Genesis 7:2. From which class of animals – *tahor* or *tamei* - do you then think the Holy One meant for Noach and his sons to eat? If Noach killed and ate the flesh of any of the *tamei* animals, *that species would have ceased to exist* – because then there would

only be one left. Don't forget, two animals - a male and female - are required to reproduce. So while the words the Holy One spoke appear, to the human ear, to say one thing if viewed out of context, when considered in context they mean something much more restrictive.

Ah, and now the landscape of earth is changing again. The 'Sh'ma People' are arising. The Grand Plan of the Holy One to Redeem Mankind as a Species and to Restore Creation to its Original Edenic State of Beauty, Fruitfulness, and Harmony is entering a new and powerful phase. So, another clarification is necessary. Now the Holy One wants to make it very, very clear what animals are – and are not – to be eaten by His chosen and betrothed Bride.

1. Land Creatures

The Holy One has this to say about creatures that move about on the land.

Kol mafreset parsah v'shosa'at shesa prasot

Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed,

ma'alat gera b'behemah otah tocheilu

and chews the cud among the animals, that you may eat.

[Leviticus 11:1-3]

Thus is given to us the Torah 'litmus test' for land creatures – if the animal both has a cloven hoof [*i.e.* not fingers/toes] and chews its cud, it is *tahor* and its flesh may be eaten by the betrothed Bride-to-Be of the Holy One. If an animal does not meet both prongs of this Torah 'litmus test' the animal is *tamei*, and its flesh is not to be eaten by the betrothed Bride-to-Be of the Holy One.

The Holy One wants there to be absolutely no misunderstanding regarding some animals. Take for instance the PIG. The Holy One has a purpose for them – but it is not for them to serve as human food. So, the Holy One specifically addresses the pork chop, spare rib, ham sandwich, and bacon factory of earth, as follows:

V'et ha-chazir ki-mafris parsah hu

The pig [Hebrew chaziyr²], because he has a split hoof,

v'shosa sheisa parsah v'hu gerah lo-yigar

and is cloven-footed, but doesn't chew the cud,

tamei hu lachem

he is tamei to you.

Mibeisaram lo tocheilu

Of their flesh you shall not eat.

[Leviticus 11:7-8]

Bacon? It is not on our Bride-diet? Pork chops? Pepperoni? Ham? Baby back ribs?

² In Hebrew, 'pig' is *chaziyr*, *chet, zayin, yod, resh*, Strong's word #H2386, pronounced *khaz-eer*'.

Our Bridegroom-King does not consider them ‘food’. He would never eat them – and He will never put them on our table. If you ‘are what you eat’, He does not want us to be pigs.

The flesh of the swine is not, of course, the only thing our Bridegroom-King declares ‘NOT FOOD’ for us. Also NOT FOOD are such land creatures as rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, bears, dogs, cats, possums, and snakes.

What animals are given to us for FOOD? Deuteronomy 14 will tell us specifically:

the ox/cow [*i.e.* ‘beef’]
the sheep [*i.e.* mutton],
the goat,
the deer, gazelle, antelope and roebuck;
the wild goat, ibex, and mountain sheep, and
*any other animal that both has true hoofs that are cleft in two and
which chews its cud.*

2. Aquatic Creatures

The Holy One also addresses what creatures from the waters of earth are and are not to be considered FOOD for ambassadors/emissaries of the Kingdom of Heaven. As He did in connection with land animals, the Holy One lays down a Torah ‘litmus test’ for aquatic creatures:

***These you may eat of all that are in the waters:
whatever has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, that you may eat.***
[Leviticus 11:9]

If it lives in the water, it is edible only if it has both fins and scales. Things like shrimp, lobster, oysters, scallops, clams, crawfish, octopus, dolphins, whales, and squid, as well as fish without scales – the catfish, the shark, and the sturgeon, for example - are ‘UNFOOD’. The creative, prophetic Voice of the Creator whose Word cannot change though Heaven and Earth pass away has declared them so. He will not eat them. He does not want His Bride-People smelling of them.

With regard to the bottom-feeders of the rivers, lakes, seas and oceans, however, not only does the Holy One declare such things *tamei* and UNFOOD, they are called something else by the Holy One. Let’s read further.

***All that don't have fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers,
of all that move in the waters,
and of all the living creatures that are in the waters,
they are an abomination to you, and you are to detest them.***
*You are not to eat of their flesh,
and you are to detest their carcasses.
Whatever has no fins nor scales in the waters,*

that is an abomination to you.

[Leviticus 11:12(b)]

Not only are shrimp, lobster, catfish and such *tamei* and UNFOOD - they are **an ABOMINATION**. We are not just to avoid eating or touching them, we are to **DETEST** them. We are to treat them like the PLAGUE. They are to be totally abhorrent to us.

3. Winged Creatures

The Holy One has made most birds - chickens, ducks, geese, quail, and pheasant – FOOD for us. Birds of prey, however, and those who feed upon carrion, He has said we are not to eat.

The following you are to consider an abomination among the birds—

they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination:

the eagle, the vulture, and the black vulture;

the kite,

falcons of every variety;

all varieties of raven;

the ostrich, the nighthawk, the seagull;

hawks of every variety;

the little owl, the cormorant, and the great owl;

the white owl, the pelican, and the bustard;

the stork; herons of every variety;

the hoopoe, and the bat.

[Leviticus 11:13-19]

There are also some specific instructions regarding *creepy-crawly bugs*, but I will let you search those out for yourselves on your own time. Basically remember that if it is a creepy crawler and does not have jointed legs, it is pretty much a sure bet it is not food.

Talking It Through With Messiah

What we have just read in the Torah is enough to cause a nasty fight between close friends. So let's take a moment and I re-cap. Our Divine Bridegroom has told us that pork is not 'the other white meat' as its producers advertise – it is not even *food*. The One our Souls Love has told us that any form of seafood other than fish having both fins and scales is not only *not food* but is actually the farthest thing from food - an **ABOMINATION** that we are to **DESPISE** and **DETEST**!

Hmmmmn. If you take the Holy One at His Word ... well, so much for the standard 21st Century diet! If you actually believe the Holy One knows what is best for His Creation, and eat only what He says is FOOD – well, what would your neighbors think? What would your friends think? What would your mother or father or children think? Ah, but if you do not take the Holy One's instructions about what is and is not

FOOD seriously - well, what does that say about your relationship with Him? I can see jaws dropping. I hear people saying “What?” You actually expect me to quit eating piles of bacon with breakfast? You want to take away the ham and cheese sandwiches for lunch? You want me to find another kind of pizza besides pepperoni or Canadian bacon? YOU WANT ME TO GIVE UP baby back ribs? I hear the folks standing in line to be seated at Red Lobster saying: “Huh? How am I supposed to live without shrimp, scallops, oysters and clams? How could you suggest that I would be better off not stuffing my face with lobster, crawfish, or catfish?” I hear hunters raising one eyebrow and grunting: “Come on! - No *more rabbit*? No *more squirrel*?”

It’s not me, Dear Reader. I wouldn’t dream of telling you what to eat or not eat. But then again, I do not love you the way your Creator and Bride-groom King does. All I am called to do is tell you what He says - from there you are on your own. So take it up with Him. Talk it through with Your Messiah. Ask Him what He will – and will not – be eating when He returns to earth to rule in the days of the Millennial Kingdom. But first, why don’t you just go back and just *read it for yourselves* one more time. It’s right there in black and white in the Holy One’s Torah – punctuated with the revelatory introductory declaration *Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe v'el-Aharon l'emor* [And the Holy One spoke unto Moshe and Aharon, saying ...]

Did God Really Say ...?

But wait, you say. Our secular society considers all these things *delicacies*. They are about all the celebrity chefs of the Food Network knows how to cook. Fast food places all try to get us to put bacon on our burgers [not to mention in our salads and on our baked potatoes], and chain restaurants load their menus with combinations of shrimp and lobster with steaks.

The Creator of the Universe – the Divine Bridegroom to whom we have pledged our troth and Whose words we have promised to *sh'ma* and *asah til death do us part* - says we are to consider things people we know eat every day *detestable* and as an *abomination*. Who do you think is right, Dear Reader - our mixed-up culture, or the Creator of Heaven and earth, Who designed our bodies and digestive systems? Who do you think knows best what qualifies as fitting “food” for His Bride. Is it the Madison avenue advertisers? Or is it the Holy One? Who do you think knows and cares more about us, our health, and our fulfillment – the latest food channel celebrities? The fast-food moguls? The chain restaurants? Or our Divine Bridegroom?

Oh, Wait A Minute - Are You Talking to ... Me?

Many in our day, now that lawlessness/Torahlessness has become all the rage in the world, believe and teach that the provisions of Torah as to what is and is not to be

eaten just do not apply to anyone who ‘*believes in Jesus*’. Some teach that now all food (including the flesh of rats, cats, cockroaches, week-old roadkill, and Portuguese man-of-war’s, apparently) are “*sanctified by giving thanks*”. Hey, it either is or it isn’t, right? If it is, it doesn’t matter if it’s poisonous, or diseased, or full of maggots – if it is ‘sanctified by giving thanks’, the logical conclusion of their silly theory would say go ahead - *eat hearty!*

Others believe and teach that Shaul of Tarsus (the one they like to call Paul) swept all the ‘*Vayadaber Adonai el-Moshe*’ words spoken by the Holy one in Leviticus 11, Leviticus 20, and Deuteronomy 14 away with the stroke of his quill pen when he wrote the Greek equivalent of the words we read in today’s English as “*all things are permissible*”. Oh, really? All things? What about genocide? Murder? Satan Worship? Blasphemy? Child molestation? Incest? Suicide bombing? ‘*All things are permissible*’ some English translation of a Greek text written by a Hebrew addressing another issue altogether once wrote - so go ahead, this kind of flesh-pampering reasoning would tell us. It’s worse than silly. It is contrived, contemptuous nonsense. Clear, specific declarations by the Creator of the Universe in Leviticus on the precise subject of what creatures are and are not intended as sources of food cannot be ‘trumped’ by vague, ambiguous statements of general theory meant to address a totally different issue.

It would perhaps be well to consider, before assuming that a God-fearing, Covenant-keeping Hebrew of Hebrews meant to blot out whole chapters of the Torah of the Holy One, quoted directly from the Divine Tongue, with an ambiguous theoretical quip about “permissible” things that “the Apostle Paul” was not a Greek philosopher, a pig-farmer, or an American televangelist but was instead a *Jewish sage* serving a *Jewish Messiah*. From his birth Shaul had learned and considered that the term “food” and the term “meat” had definitions that excluded certain substances. We can appreciate that. Granite and asphalt, for instance, are neither food nor meat – even to the contemporary Western mentality. Neither are poisonous plants or substances properly characterized as “food”. Who, for instance, would suggest that ingestion of fresh rattlesnake venom is “permissible” in any meaningful sense. To Shaul, or to any other student of Torah, such things as pork, shellfish, catfish (or any fish with no scales), ostriches, birds of prey, or bloody meat of any variety were no more “food” or “meat” than asphalt or rattlesnake venom.

Since the terms “food” and “meat” both imply things that may be eaten, and since the things proscribed in today’s aliyah and elsewhere in Torah were not to be eaten, they were never included in the terms “food” or “meat” when Shaul thought, spoke, or wrote his letters. If you today were to mention “food” some people might think you were including soil in your definition, because in their culture they consider soil as

food. But that would be a gross misrepresentation of what you were saying. Likewise for anyone today to read something Shaul, a Jewish sage, wrote in the First Century C.E., about “food” or “meat” and to consider such things to include pork, shellfish, and the like, simply because those things are considered as “food” in the pagan culture in which we live (and in religious systems which have all-too-often embraced that pagan culture’s priorities, fleshly-appetites, and values as their own), is a gross misrepresentation of what Shaul was saying.

Look very carefully for any verse - of any portion of the Bible - which says that pork – or shrimp – or catfish – or snake was eaten by Yeshua. Look long and hard for any verse anywhere that says that lobster or scallops or ham was eaten by Paul, or by Peter, or James, or John, or by any other follower of Yeshua. Search diligently for any verse – in any portion of the Bible – which says that now pork, crustaceans, mollusks and the like should be considered ‘food’. And if you find such a verse, please, please, *please*, drop me an email with the book, chapter, verse and translation you are using!

Waiting ...

Waiting ...

Still waiting ...

Any time now

I know, you see, that I will be waiting forever. There is absolutely nothing of the sort in Scripture. There is not a single verse anywhere in the Bible that says any such thing. Not in the Torah. Not in the Prophets. Not in any Psalm or Proverb or Wisdom Writing. Not in any Historical Book. Not in any of the ‘Gospels’. Nowhere in the ‘Book of Acts’. Nowhere in any of the ‘Epistles’. And nowhere in the Book of Revelation. The Holy One does not change His Mind.

Aha! But What About Peter’s Rooftop Vision!

The narrative of Acts chapter 10 provides a perfect example of what I am talking about. In that chapter there is a discussion by Lukas of a vision the Holy One gave *Kefa* [later called ‘Petros’ by Yeshua, and renamed ‘Peter’ when the Bible was translated into English] before He sent Him to the house of Cornelius, Roman Centurion. Keep in mind that Cornelius was not a pagan who lived by Greco Roman values and customs. He was instead a ‘God-fearer’. Lukas describes him as *‘a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.’* Acts 10:2. That means he was Torah observant in every way except that he had no Jewish father to circumcise him when he was eight days old. *Kefa* was unsure whether he should go to the house of Cornelius – a man who had not been circumcised. While *nothing whatever in the Torah of the Holy One stood in Kefa’s way*, what *Kefa* was struggling with was centuries of *human tradition* – which

had come to view Gentiles – and particularly Gentile soldiers serving pagan kings - who had done *much evil* to the Hebrews over the centuries, as inherently *chol* [common/profane] and *tamei* [unclean]. That tradition had caused an un-Scriptural race barrier that in Kefa's day separated Jew from Gentile and vice versa. As Kefa was about to find out, however, this was a barrier that the Holy One had not established, *did not countenance* and was wanting *to use Kefa to tear down*.

Hence to let Kefa know that he should not consider Cornelius or his house *tamei* the Holy One gave Kefa a 'vision'. The New King James Version translates it like this:

*... he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened
and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners,
descending to him and let down to the earth.
In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth,
wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air³.
And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."*

*But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."
And a voice spoke to him again the second time,
What God has cleansed you must not call common.*

This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

[Acts 10:10(b)-16]

Some, without reading the passage carefully, have interpreted this vision to mean that the Holy One was doing away with all the 'food/unfood' instructions of Torah – as if the Holy One's words could ever pass away. But this is an obvious misinterpretation. Look at the subject that is being addressed. The *issue* the Holy One says this vision is about was *not food* – it was instead *the false barrier which centuries of misguided traditions of men had erected creating a wall between the Jew and the Gentile*.

Food was merely *the imagery* the Holy One used to convey the message. Why? Look at the text. The vision happened to occur when Kefa, in the course of the journey, '*became hungry and wanted to eat*' and while the men traveling with him [all Jews] '*made ready*' what was certainly a very kosher Jewish meal. Since food was on Kefa's mind, the Holy One used *the imagery of food* to make His point about Cornelius' house. And please note how Kefa responded to this vision. After the vision was over, did Kefa go out and kill a pig or a squirrel and eat it? Did he run down to the Roman market at Joffa's seaport and buy a couple of pounds of shrimp for the barbee? No, that is not what he did at all. What did he do to respond to the Divine Encounter? Let's let the text tell us, shall we?

³ Notice that, in the vision, the creatures in the sheet were not on the earth, but were *descending from Heaven*. These were not typical pigs, dogs, scorpions, and vermin such as one would find on earth. If Kefa had, in his trance, killed and ate one, it would not have been like killing and eating an ordinary, earthly creature at all.

*Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision that he had seen meant,
 behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius
 had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.
 And they called and asked whether Simon,
 whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.
 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him,
 "Behold, three men are seeking you.
 Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."*
 [Acts 10:17-20]

Note that what Kefa did after emerging from his trance was not ‘*arise, kill and eat*’ a pig, a dog, a lobster, or a roach. That is not by any means what he took away as the meaning of this Divine Visitation. And it is not what we should take away from it either. Kefa understood that the vision he had received – and the prophetic language used in it - was *symbolic* – something like Pharaoh’s dream of the seven fat cows and seven lean cows. The cows weren’t the issue in Pharaoh’s dream – they were just prophetic symbols of years of plenty and of famine; likewise, the creatures in the sheet weren’t the issue in Kefa’s vision – they were just prophetic symbols of *the gentiles in Cornelius’ household* whom Kefa had, because of centuries of man-made tradition, un-Scripturally come to consider ‘common/profane’ and ‘unclean’ when they were neither.

Now let’s think about what we have read. What exactly was it that the Holy One had called ‘clean’ [Hebrew, *tahor*]? Kefa understood perfectly. It wasn’t pigs wallowing in their own filth on earth, dogs killing their own young and eating their own vomit in the street, buzzards eating the rotten flesh of roadkill, or rats, roaches, and other vermin that the Holy One had called ‘clean’ – it was *the God-fearers of Cornelius’ household*, who just happened to be gentiles employed, or perhaps even conscripted, in the service of a Roman emperor.

The Holy One has never once pronounced the real pigs, shrimp, roaches and lobsters of the earth ‘clean’. He has, however, declared ‘clean’ men like Cornelius who have chosen to *sh’ma* His Voice and *sh’mar* His Covenant – even if they are not of the physical lineage of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov and therefore were not circumcised on the eighth day after their birth.

When Kefa pondered the matter he knew exactly what the vision meant – and that *it had nothing to do with animals and everything to do with people*. Hence he was able to say to Cornelius and his household when he arrived there:

*You know how unlawful [i.e. violative of custom, not of any specific provision of Torah]
 it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation.
 But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.
 Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for.*
 [Acts 10:28-29]

So if you want a Biblical interpretation of Kefa's vision, you have it – it is recorded for us *in Kefa's own words*. *He had the vision – and he interpreted it as not being about eating pigs and dogs and scorpions and buzzards and rats and roaches, but about breaking down our false ideas about and characterizations of PEOPLE*. If someone is going to quote Kefa's vision, it is only fair that they also truthfully and accurately include his interpretation and application of that vision.

The Holy One has never reversed Himself and declared the flesh of pigs, or dogs, or scorpions, or rats, or roaches, living on earth 'clean'. The point was that Kefa had because of centuries of misguided tradition come to see association with gentiles as the equivalent of eating the flesh of pigs, dogs, scorpions, buzzards, and vermin. And the Holy One wanted to *cure Kefa* – and all who read his story - *of that gross misunderstanding*. The flesh of earthly pigs, dogs, scorpions, buzzards, rats, roaches and the like *is still* – and *will always remain* because the Holy One's word cannot pass away – *tamei*, and unfit as food for His Bride. Unless therefore you are in a trance, and while you are in the midst of that trance-state the Holy One lowers a sheet containing dogs, buzzards, scorpions, roaches or other vermin down to you from Heaven in a Heavenly sheet, declares them 'clean' in your hearing, and says to you audibly *'Arise, kill and eat!'* – well, you might want to at least think twice about wolfing down the pepperoni. And when the folks at McDonald's drive through window ask you if you want bacon on that burger, you might consider just smiling and saying sweetly *"No, thanks, its not on my Bride-diet"*.

A Matter of Trust

If the concept that the Holy One would place limits on what you eat bothers you – and sounds like "legalism" – consider that the Holy One has always placed limits on what people in relationship with Him eat. In the Garden of Eden, before the "Fall", before "legalism", the Holy One said to Adam: ***You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you may not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die.*** Genesis 2:16

Of course, what was eaten then became the subject matter of the first sin and the external cause of the Fall and the banishment of man from the Garden. It seems that following the Holy One's instructions about food – which requires trusting Him to know what is best for us – has always been a problem for man. And it seems that the Serpent has long been successful in getting man to come up with rationalizations and excuses for ignoring the Holy One's instructions regarding food under the guise of "enlightenment".

After Noach and his family had been preserved from the Great Flood, which had destroyed (temporarily) all plant life (which had previously been man's only "food"), the Holy One instructed Noach: ***Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as***

I gave you the green plants, now I give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood in it! Genesis 9:3-4.

It thus seems that *food has always been a defining test of the depth of our relationship with the Holy One*. From the beginning, the question has been: *Will human beings trust the Holy One enough to heed His instructions concerning what is and is not food for us – or will we be slaves to our own tastes, our own appetites and/or our own cultural definitions of what is ‘food’?* The Holy One created us, and He has reserved the right to define what is and what is not food for us. Trust of Him means we believe He knows best. Love for Him means we *joyfully do what He says and walk with Him in the midst of doing it*. His *Torah* [which of course means “teaching”, or “instruction”] makes it clear, and Messiah quoted as life-giving truth, the principle that ***man does not*** (was not created to) ***live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God***. Deuteronomy 8:3, Luke 4:4. As a reminder of this principle the Holy One has given us restrictions on how our appetites are to be satiated. He – Who created us – knows much better than we do what we should and should not put into our bodies.

It should come as no surprise to us that any suggestion of limitation on our appetites and culinary indulgences is unwelcome, *something our flesh simply does not want to hear*. So, what do we generally do? We tend to *sh’ma* our flesh and our appetites, and look for any reason we can find to disregard our Divine Bridegroom’s instructions, assign them to some other generation or covenant - and do whatever our stomachs want. The serpent still says: ***“Did God really say ...”*** [Genesis 3:1]. The right answer is still *“Yes, He did. His Word abides forever, and in Him there is no shadow of turning.”* If we choose to eat whatever tastes good to our confused palettes, or looks pleasing to the eye, no matter what the Holy One has said (as Chava did, and caused Adam to do), we deny the Holy One as the source of our life and nourishment and make whatever tickles our taste buds our god in His stead. That is not the way to glorify the Holy One. It is not the way to walk in intimacy with Messiah - Who never ate or even *considered* eating anything other than what the Holy One instructed. What it is instead is *a declaration of independence from God*.

The ‘Bride’s Diet’ as a Natural Outgrowth of Our New Creation Identities

Torah makes a stunning and profound statement regarding the whole issue of what is and is not FOOD for us. After the enumeration of permitted and prohibited animals, the text concludes:

***For I am the Holy One your God;
sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.
Do not make yourselves tamei by any creature that moves about on the ground.***
[Leviticus 11:44]

Even beyond being a matter of trust, eating what the Holy One defines as ‘FOOD’ and abstaining from and considering an abomination everything the Holy One declares ‘UNFOOD’ is a matter of *being who we were created to be*. He is holy. We, in our New-Creation essence, are like Him. Therefore we are holy – by nature. It is simply not in our nature any longer to ingest anything *tamei*.

It should be the most natural thing in the world for any new creation in the Holy One to eat only what the Holy One calls FOOD and to avoid eating anything the Holy One calls UNFOOD. It is not *legalism*. In fact, it has nothing whatever to do with ‘works’ or *earning God’s favor*. Horses don’t eat butterflies, and no one snickers at them for ‘going back under the law’. They simply weren’t created to consider butterflies ‘FOOD’. Chickens don’t eat rats – and no one accuses them of legalism. They simply weren’t created to consider rats ‘FOOD’. Lions don’t eat watermelons, and no one wags the finger at them as following a system of ‘works-based righteousness’. They simply weren’t created to consider watermelons ‘FOOD’. Likewise, New-Creations in the Holy One joyfully choose to follow our Creator’s instructions not to eat pork, rabbit, squirrel, shellfish, catfish, or snakes or pepperoni pizza. We simply weren’t created to consider such things FOOD. In passing those things by we are merely acting in a manner consistent with our New-Creation natures. New-Creation appetites are holy appetites, and therefore do not desire to ingest that which is *tamei*.

But What Happens If We Still Just Have to Have It ‘Our Way’, Like Adam and Chava?

The instructions in today’s aliyah supplement some instructions the Holy One spoke parsha *Tzav* where we were told not to eat either blood or specific types of animal fat [Hebrew, *chelev*]. There is, however, at least one difference between the dietary instructions of parsha *Tzav* and those we encounter today in parsha *Sh’mini*. Both of the dietary instructions we encountered in parsha *Tzav* were accompanied by warning of serious consequences – if we ingest either blood or *chelev*, we were told, we would be *karat* - over us last week in ‘cut off’ from His people.

The dietary instructions we encounter in Leviticus 11 however are accompanied by no such warning. We are not told that if we eat pork or shellfish or rabbit or squirrel, for instance, that we will be *karat*. There is certainly no reason to believe that people who eat such things are, for that reason, going to go ‘to Hell’. The consequence of eating the ‘non-food’ items discussed in Leviticus 11 is something else entirely. Let’s see just what happens if a New-Creation ingests something that the Holy One says is UNFOOD.

Could It Be True That You Are What You Eat?

Torah tells us the most immediate consequence of eating living things that the Holy

One says He did not intend to be ‘food’ for us: ... *anyone touching [them] will become tamei*. Leviticus 11:24. That doesn’t sound very good, of course – but what exactly does it *mean*? It does not mean that someone who eats something that the Holy One did not intend to be food for him/her will die on the spot, like Nadav, Avihu, or Uzzah, or Ananias and Safira. It probably does not mean that someone who eats such a thing will ‘go to Hell’, ‘fall from grace’, or ‘lose his/her salvation’ – to use some of the more well traveled *church-ese* clichés. Keep in mind, of course, for what it’s worth, that I can’t guarantee these things one way or another What it *does mean however* is that someone who ingests the flesh of a creature that is *tamei* will assume that creature’s *tamei* status. It means *you are what you eat*. If you are *tahor*, and *eat tahor*, you *remain tahor*. If, on the other hand you are *tahor*, but choose to eat *tamei*, you forfeit your *tahor* essence for the sake of your stomach, seek satisfaction from that which is not FOOD, and thereby voluntarily choose to exit the *tahor* realm, and become *tamei*.

Being *tamei* has physical as well as spiritual consequences. Physically a *tamei* person is unable to enter the *mish’kan*, *present korbanot*, or to participate in any of the *Divine Passion Plays* that the Community of the Redeemed has been instructed to put on there at Passover, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot* [Tabernacles]. At the very least therefore to rebelliously choose to eat that which the Holy One has declared as ‘not food’ will rob a person – at least temporarily - of some aspects of the fullness of who the person was created to be and to do. All for the sake of something the pagans who know not the Holy One and have no fear of Him crave in ignorance.

It is not *primarily* the flesh of the animal the person ingests that causes this untoward result – it is *primarily* the rebellious, self-centered attitude that caused the person to reject the wise and loving instructions of the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven as far as what is and is not food and to, like Chava in the Garden, elect to embrace the *lust of the flesh*, the *lust of the eye*, and the *pride of life*

Now don’t get me wrong - I certainly do not want anything to either make me rebel against the Holy One or rob me of one ounce of what the Holy One has planned for me. But choosing to become *tamei* for the sake of *NOT FOOD* seems to be to be especially insidious. Let me explain.

The Realms of Tamei and Tahor – Revisited

As we discussed in yesterday’s aliyah the Holy One created the physical world to have a continuous tension and delicate balance between opposing realms. Light and darkness, for instance, vie for control, yet the Holy One establishes boundaries each may not cross. Night and day, heavens and earth, land and seas – all of these are by the Holy One’s wonderful design in *constant tension yet delicate balance*.

Each is a check and a balance against the other in the physical world. Similarly, the spiritual world contains similarly counter-opposed, delicately balanced realms. Two of the competing aspects of Creation that the Holy One's re-creative deeds have placed in delicate balance are the realm of the *tamei* and its counter the realm of the *tahor*.

You get to choose *which of these two competing realms you wish to live in*. The Holy One makes it clear in today's aliyah that the food you eat is one of the most important areas where every human being must make that choice. Where will *you* weigh in on the scale? Are you part of – a soldier for - the *tamei* realm? Or are you a part of – a soldier for – the *tahor* realm.

Are you confused? Then let's go deeper. Let's review what the Hebrew words *tamei* and *tahor* mean. *Tamei* is *tet, mem, alef*⁴. The word describes what Shechem effectively did to Ya'akov's daughter Dinah by raping her. We usually translate it as 'defile'. Shechem, by forcing himself upon and into Dinah, made her *tamei*. Hebraically, this means what we might consider in English *fragmented*, or *incapable of perfect completion*. She was not sinful, or dirty – but she could never [absent Divine intervention, of course] reach her full potential or purpose in life because of what Shechem did. He violated her, and made himself one with her spiritually – when she was designed and destined to be one with someone else. He injected himself into the relationship between Dinah and her intended spouse. She was *shanghaied* from the realm of the *tahor*, and put into servitude to the realm of *tamei*. Shechem ripped her *nefesh* [soul] apart as well as her body. Her soul was *fragmented*. She was forced to live in a world in which she did not – and would never – belong. *Tamei* does not therefore mean 'unclean' as our English Bibles usually translate it. *Tamei* refers instead to a state of *fragmentation, incompleteness, and inability to reflect the Holy One's echad* [*i.e.* His unity, completeness, and wholeness]. *Tamei* is analogous to the state Humpty Dumpty was in after he had the great fall. The opposite of *tamei* is *tahor*⁵. This word means whole – not fragmented - or 'made whole' by the Holy One by having one's fragmentations fixed. Picture Humpty Dumpty if the Holy One touched and restored him. That is what it means to be *tahor*. Which side do you think the Holy One is calling you to be on? Think about it. Make your choice. Grab one end or the other of the rope of our Divine Bridegroom's great tug-of-war between the *tamei* realm and the *tahor* realm, and start pulling!

To Sh'ma the Voice of the Holy One - or to Sh'ma the Voice of Another

The study of Torah entails a serious challenge. When one comes across a set of

⁴ Tamei is Strong's Hebrew word #2930. It is pronounced *taw-may*'.

⁵ Tahor is *tet, hey, vav, resh*, Strong's Hebrew word #2889, pronounced *tuh-hore*'.

specific instructions addressed to *B'nei Yisrael* [literally, the 'sons' of Yisrael/Ya'akov, but usually translated '*the children of Israel*'] such as the instructions regarding what is – and is not – to be considered 'food' one must decide if he/she will identify with 'the children of Israel' [either by birth or by the engrafting Shaul talks about in Romans 11 and Ephesians 2].

Here are the options potentially available:

[1] Identify with the 'children of Israel', and accept and implement the instructions as the Bible presents them;

[2] Identify with the 'children of Israel', and study the instructions regarding food for purposes of understanding history and/or spiritual typology, but consider them irrelevant and/or inapplicable to you today;

[3] Identify yourself as a foreigner to the covenants the Holy One made with Israel and conclude the instructions the Holy One gave regarding food are for 'them', but not for you.

Is it possible that those who choose options 2 and 3 *have been sold a bill of goods by theologians over the centuries?* Is it possible that He Who created all things - and Who loves us and knows what is best for us - could actually be RIGHT about what food will maximize our potential, and what is intended to function not as food, but as creation's garbage disposal system? Could it be that the Holy One knows something about what creatures will become more and more toxic as the planet becomes more and more polluted? What would happen, I wonder, if we decided to ignore the restaurant and supermarket advertisements and the theologians and just, in *childlike faith, actually take the Holy One at His Word and trust Him to tell us what He did and did not intend for us to ingest?* I know that concept sounds *radical*. I know it does not fit with popular compromising Christian theology – and will probably raise eyebrows at what dishes we choose to politely bypass at the next potluck dinner we attend.

But I absolutely trust the Holy One. And the last time I looked, theologians were ... well, let's just say that the last time I looked, theologians were just a bunch of *fallible human beings*. So I don't know about you, but I think I'll take my chances with the clear declaration of the Holy One in Torah – and the example set by Messiah – over what any theologian or trainload of theologians say. Until they show me a Scripture where the Holy One specifically asks for a Mulligan, and renounces as a big 'goof' what He said about food and non-food in Leviticus 11, I for one joyfully choose to incorporate His specific instructions on those subject into my life, and to let the theologians take their chances in the 'least in the kingdom' category of Matthew 5:19[a]. As you will recall that where Yeshua affirmed the eternal and unchangeable validity of Torah and declared:

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments,

and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven

But do not for one second misunderstand my motivation in choosing the path of the Holy One's Word over the path of the biased opinions of post-Biblical theologians. I am not making the choice I have just described in an effort to 'earn' righteous standing with God. I already have that – and more - in Messiah. I am not doing it to become His – I am doing it because I AM HIS. I am not doing it to make God love me more – He already loves me more than I could ever comprehend. This won't make Him love me one bit more. I am doing it solely because He has redeemed me, made me a new creation, and re-programmed my mind and heart to want to live the very lifestyle Messiah lived and to want more than anything in the world to do whatever He tells me to do. I make this choice because I love Him. I follow His instructions about what is and is not 'food' for me – for us - because I trust Him. I do it because I want to dine at His Table, and eat what He and His *K'doshim* [i.e. holy ones, saints] eating, at the Great Wedding Banquet and in the Millennial Kingdom. And I do it because I believe with 100% confidence that He knows better than anyone in the world what will help me become all He re-created me to be.

Questions For Today's Study

1. With regard to the Holy One's instructions to us regarding what we are to eat – and not eat:

[A] What type of animals does the Holy One instruct us that God's people are to consider "food"?

[B] List all the animals you can think of that God's people are not to consider "food"?

[C] What are the qualifications for the water creatures the Holy One has ordained to be "food" for His Redeemed people to eat?

[D] List all the water creatures you can think of that do not meet this standard, and thus are not given as food for the Holy One's redeemed?

[E] What birds are not given to God's people as food?

[F] What insects are God's people not to eat?

2. What other instructions does the Holy One give concerning creatures a redeemed people are not to eat?

3. Let's look for a few moments at some of the passages that have been used to justify/rationalize departure from Torah's clear instructions concerning "food".

[A] Some have preached that in Acts 10:9-15 the Holy One "did away" with the instructions of Torah regarding what the people of the Holy One are to eat and not eat in order to be visibly set apart from those who do not belong to Him. How did *Kefa* [Peter] interpret this vision? (Did it, to him, have to do with food or with his view of association with gentiles - and worse, gentiles who were serving the Roman Oppressors? Did this vision change

what Kefa ate, or merely who he felt free to converse with?)

[B] Some have preached that Yeshua's teaching in Matthew 15:1-20 "did away" with the instructions of Torah regarding what the people of the Holy One are to eat and not eat in order to be visibly set apart from those who do not belong to Him. What was Yeshua talking about in that passage? **[Hint:** Look at the question which the *P'rushim* [Pharisees] asked Him to start the discussion; and look at the last phrase of verse 20, where Yeshua Himself interprets His teaching; also, consider carefully what Yeshua did not say, although He certainly had the opportunity to do so].

[C] Some have preached that in Romans 14:1-23 *Shaul* of Tarsus [later called Paul, by men, not by the Holy One] "did away" with the instructions of Torah regarding what the people of the Holy One are to eat and not eat in order to be visibly set apart from those who do not belong to Him. Do you think he was talking about the categories of animals referenced in this week's Torah? Why or why not?

[D] Now that you have read today's aliyah and reviewed some of the teachings of the B'rit Chadasha (by Yeshua, Kefa, and Shaul) about food, write out what you believe about whether it is the Holy One's plan for your life that you should eat bacon, pork chops, ham sandwiches, shellfish (shrimp, crab, and lobster, for instance), rabbit, squirrel, frog legs, or catfish. Be sure to explain the reasons you have for feeling the way you do about this issue.

4. In the Haftarah for today the ark is finally brought to Jerusalem. It is, however, not placed in the *Mish'kan*, as the Holy One instructed in Torah (the one built after the pattern of the Throne Room of Heaven). David improvised. He built his own tent, after his own tastes, and filled it with music. David assumed the role of the *Kohen Gadol*, performing priestly functions for Israel – the very thing for which his predecessor, Shaul, lost the kingdom. But he certainly won the favor of the crowd – if not of his own wife. And there was *trouble in paradise*.

*They brought in the ark of the Holy One, and set it in its place,
in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it;
and David approached the Holy One through korbanot olahot and korbanot shl'amim.
When David had made an end of making korbanot olahot and korbanot shl'amim,
he blessed the people in the name of the Holy One of Hosts.*

*He dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Yisra'el,
both to men and women, to everyone a cake of bread, and a portion [of flesh],
and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed everyone to his house.*

*Then David returned to bless his household.
Mikhal the daughter of Sha'ul came out to meet David, and said,
"How glorious was the king of Yisra'el today,
who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants,
as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovers himself.*

*David said to Mikhal, "[It was] before the Holy One,
who chose me above your father, and above all his house,
to appoint me prince over the people of the Holy One, over Yisra'el:
therefore will I play before the Holy One.*

*I will be yet more vile than this, and will be base in my own sight:
but of the handmaids of whom you have spoken, they shall honor me.
Mikhal the daughter of Sha'ul had no child to the day of her death.*

[II Samuel 6:17-23]

- [A] What kind of *korbanot* [offerings of approach] was/were omitted when the Tabernacle was set up in Y'rushalayim?
[B] Who acted as "priest" when this Tabernacle was set up?
[C] Who blessed the people this time?
[D] What was the significance of having everyone eat a "cake" or "loaf" of bread at the dedication?
[E] Why does the Bible say David went home?
[F] Describe in your own words what happened when David went home.
[G] If you had been David, how do you think you would have handled Mikhal's criticism?

5. In today's suggested reading from the B'rit Chadasha we read the following continuation of the Acts 5 narrative:

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. The young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband.

[Acts 5:9-10]

- [A] What did Kefa [Peter] say was the sin of *Shefirah* [Sapphira]?
[B] How was her sin described differently from the sin of *Hananyah* [Ananias]?

*May the Holy One's instructions regarding food
Draw you ever nearer to the fruit of the tree of life in the garden.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Daniel 1:1-20

In the third year of the reign of Yehoiakim king of Y'hudah came Nevukhadnetzar king of Bavel to Y'rushalayim, and besieged it. The Holy One gave Y'hoiakim king of Y'hudah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God; and he carried them into the land of Shin`ar to the house of his god: and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

The king spoke to Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring in [certain] of the children of Yisra'el, even of the seed royal and of the nobles; youths in whom was no blemish, but well-favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and endowed with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace;

and that he should teach them the learning and the language of the Kasdim.

*The king appointed for them a daily portion of the king's dainties,
and of the wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished three years;
that at the end of it they should stand before the king.*

Now among these were, of the children of Y'hudah, Daniyel, Hananyah, Misha'el, and `Azaryah.

The prince of the eunuchs gave names to them:

*to Daniyel he gave [the name of] Belteshatzar; and to Hananyah, [of] Shadrakh;
and to Misha'el, [of] Meshakh; and to `Azaryah, [of] `Aved-Nego.*

*But Daniyel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties,
nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs
hat he might not defile himself. And God made Daniyel to find kindness and compassion
in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. The prince of the eunuchs said to Daniyel,*

*"I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink:
for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths who are of your own age?*

In this manner would you endanger my head with the king.

*Then Daniyel said to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed
over Daniyel, Hananyah, Misha'el, and `Azaryah:*

"Prove your servants, I beg you, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

Then let our faces be looked on before you,

and the face of the youths who eat of the king's dainties; and as you see, deal with your servants."

So he listened to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

*At the end of ten days their faces appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh,
than all the youths who ate of the king's dainties. So the steward took away their dainties,
and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.*

*Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom:
and Daniyel had understanding in all visions and dreams.*

*At the end of the days which the king had appointed for bringing them in,
the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nevukhadnetzar.*

*The king talked with them; and among them all was found none like Daniyel,
Hananyah, Misha'el, and `Azaryah: therefore they stood before the king.*

*In every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them,
he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters
who were in all his realm.*