

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah Kedoshim:** Leviticus 19:23-37
 Haftarah: Ezekiel 20:18-26
 B'rit Chadasha: I Peter 1:10-12

You are to sh'mar all My statutes and all My judgments, and you are to asah them.
[Leviticus 19:27]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 119:171-172;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition No. 5, *Rofei*, the Prayer for Healing.

Vechi-tavo'u el-ha-aretz – When you go into the land ... *unetatem kol-etz ma'achal* – and you have planted/established all kinds of trees for food ... *va'araltem orlato et-piryo* – you are to consider the fruit of the trees uncircumcised Leviticus 19:23a.

The Holy One has programmed all the life forms of the ecosystem in which we live to depend upon His faithful maintenance and wise administration of the *zera v'katzir* – i.e. *seed time* leading to *harvest* – cycles that He designed and oversees. According to His Word, *terra firma* is empowered to produce grasses and stands of grain each spring. Trees are given bud, flower, and fruit in their appointed seasons of productivity. Each species of creature is provided nourishment appropriate to its needs. Each is activated by the heat of the sun. Each is energized by light. Every genus is driven to reproduce itself, spending its substance for the generation that will follow. That is what the Holy One's first blessing He spoke over each element of the glorious ecosystem He called forth out of primordial *tohu v'vohu* goo was *p'ru ur'vu* – i.e. *be fruitful and multiply/increase* – means. That is what makes the world go around.

Be Fruitful ... and Multiply/Increase

If the world is to continue in operation as the Holy One designed it, somewhere on earth – indeed pretty much everywhere on earth - trees must produce and bring forth fruit. The Holy One set this process in motion long ago, when He said “*Let the earth bring forth . . . the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself*”. Genesis 1:11. Mankind also must bring forth fruit. The Holy One set this in motion very early as well, starting His conversations with the first man, as well as with Noach and his sons, with “*Be fruitful.*”

That is why, on the hillsides of Eretz Yisrael, David sang so sweetly to the sheep under his charge of *about a man who brings forth fruit in season*. Psalm 1:3. How

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about you? Are you bearing fruit as you were created to do? If you are bearing fruit, is the fruit you are producing *circumcised* fruit – or *uncircumcised* fruit? Is it *good* fruit – or *bad* fruit? Is it *fruit of the Spirit* – or *fruit of the flesh*? Is it the *fruit of the tree of life* – or *fruit of the tree of the knowledge of 'good' and 'evil'*? And do you know how to recognize the difference between these types of fruit – in your life as well as in the lives of others?

Fruit-production, it turns out is what the Kingdom of Heaven is all about. Not beliefs. Not theology. Not ministry. Not hype or hyperbole. Not institutions. Not buildings. Not synagogues. Not churches. Not rabbis. Not preachers. Not apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, or evangelists. Not sermons, sacraments, sacrifices, and a schedule full of 'services' ... but *fruit*. Fruit *in which is seed for reproduction according to kind*. For *B'nei Yisrael* that means something very special. It means being *kedoshim* – *i.e.* a nation of human beings infused with and radiating ecosystem-nurturing *kedusha* energy – even as our Creator is *Kadosh* – *i.e.* infused with and radiating ecosystem-nurturing energy. We are called to love our Redeemer-King's Creation and all its Creatures - including our neighbor, the foreigner, and even those who consider themselves our enemies, with a love that looks, feels, tastes, sounds, and makes people feel exactly like His does. That is the fruit of the Kingdom. That is why the fruit produced by the *Ruach* – the essential environment for the introduction, operation, and administration of the Kingdom – is not information, education, ideology, philosophy, or religion - but a delightful cornucopia overflowing with all the best things human beings have to offer the world – namely *love, joy, and peace*, overlain with layer upon layer of *patience/longsuffering/steadfastness, kindness and goodness*, presented with a bouquet of *faithfulness, gentleness, and self-denial*.

Love Language, Love Chapter , and Love As the Firstfruits of the Kingdom of Heaven

The realization that we are not merely redeemed from bondage to the kingdoms of this world, but are redeemed *to become holy as our Bridegroom-King Himself is holy* should always send reverberations through our souls. And learning, as we have been doing in these studies recently, what becoming *holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy* entails should always cause waves of aftershocks to pulsate through our bodies. Being holy as He is holy, we are discovering, means *loving our neighbor as He – the Creator of all Things – loves them*. Absolutely incredible. I am still trembling. I hope you are too, dear ones. I hope none of us ever stop trembling.

In the Kingdom of Heaven, we are learning, love is not something one gives in order to get more; love is something one gets in order to give away. In the

Kingdom of Heaven, we are learning, loving human beings – whether or not we want to, or feel like it, and whether or not they deserve it - is something we *just do*. We don't do it for them. We don't do it for ourselves. We do it for our King – and His Grand Redemptive Plan. It is not 'logical'. It is not 'just' or 'fair'. It is also not by any means optional. Loving – and never stopping loving, for any reason - is an essential part of our covenant calling. It marks us off from all other cultures. It is the *sine qua non* evidence of our New Creation identity. It, above all things, is what tells the world in no uncertain terms that we are the people of the Bridegroom-King.

But we need to understand, and let the world know, that loving human beings is not something we do reluctantly or grudgingly in obedience to a Divine command. Loving others is just what our Bridegroom-King does and Who He is – so it is also what we do and who we are. Loving others – the way we have been loved by our Redeemer - is our highest *joy*. It is our ultimate *delight*. We also need to understand, and let the world know, that we do not love others in *hopes of having our love requited*, or of *feeling good about ourselves*, or of earning any kind of earthly or heavenly reward. Loving human beings is simply the only reasonable response a person can make to how powerfully we ourselves are loved – and loved unconditionally, extravagantly, and immeasurably well - by our wonderful God. Freely we have received; freely we give. Anything else is hype. Anything else is a deceptive form of false godliness, tarnishing the reputation even as it denies the power of the real thing. We are learning, therefore, that our calling is not to relate to our fellow men in a slightly more civilized manner than other men relate to each other; our calling is instead to relate to our fellow men *the same way our Bridegroom-King relates to us*. The Holy One is, of course, having to teach us love HIS WAY. Old habits die hard. We have to learn love and its ways all over again. We have to become like little children, asking our Bridegroom-King to teach us what love is – and what it looks like in every situation we face and every interaction in which we participate.

What is “Love”?

The Western idea of love is narcissistic and self-centered. It is all about how the thing or person makes the person doing the 'loving' FEEL. A Western-minded person thus only thinks he can 'love' [i.e. has a 'feeling' of attraction, affection, and good-will] people if, when, and to the extent they in turn make him or her 'feel' good and/or appreciated. That is not the Holy One's way. That is not even close to Biblical, covenantal love. That kind of love – that cheap, self-obsessed, totally unsatisfying imitation of love – needs to die. We need to get free of it. We need to learn to 'do love' the Holy One's way. For that reason, in the *Kedusha*

Discourse of Torah the Holy One is redefining for us everything about what we think ‘love’ is. Our Bridegroom-King has far too glorious a plan of redemption in mind for us and the world to let us continue to define love in terms of emotions and warm, fuzzy feelings, and pleasant reactions. If His radical plan of bringing Heaven to earth person by person, household by household, interaction by interaction, and life-challenge by life-challenge is going to move forward through us, He is not about to let us carry the fallen world’s weak concepts of love into our assigned spheres of influence. He is not about to let us think of love in terms of tender affections, looks of approval, requited advances, or shared assessments of worth. He is teaching us to define ‘love’ as a life-pathway, with a well-defined set of parameters involving specific, concrete types of *behaviors*.

The Hebrew verb the Holy One used in connection with the radical, transformational, definitional empowerment ‘*you will love your neighbor*’ is *ahav*². While we have come to translate this verb into the English language as love, the Hebrew commitment of *ahav*-ing bears little resemblance to the ‘love’ verb most people throw around in casual conversation. What is the substance of the *ahav*-ing our Bridegroom-King created us to flow in? What is the depth, the breadth, the width, and the height of the kind of love He is calling forth prophetically from us? This is the substance of what He is now teaching us in Torah. *Ahav*-ing is not about our feelings or our affections; it is about the stewardship of precious soul. *Ahav*-ing is not about getting our fleshly needs met; it is about co-laboring with the Bridegroom-King to meet the deepest needs of others. *Ahav*-ing has nothing whatever to do with how something or some one makes US FEEL. *Ahav*-ing requires digging deep into the Covenant treasure chest, looking beyond fleshly things and personal likes and dislikes, and imitating our Father in Heaven. It involves making and then patiently, relentlessly following through on a covenant commitment to care for and serve others - no matter what hindrances, obstacles, challenges or personal sacrifice may be involved in doing so. To *ahav* does not mean to feel sentiments of physical attraction, affection, kinship, or goodwill toward something or someone. To *ahav* means to highly value, prioritize, greatly appreciate, see great potential in, something or someone, and therefore to steadfastly pursue, nurture, and patiently and unselfishly guide that thing or person to the place of maturity and fruitfulness the actor visualizes. *Ahav*-ing is therefore never conditional upon any form of response or requital; nor is it to be accompanied by mixed motives or mixed signals; it is a radical plan of action we commit to pursue in partnership with the

² Strong’s Hebrew word # 157, this verb is first used in Genesis 22:2, to describe the quality and substance of Avraham’s relationship with Yitzchak – *in contrast to his relationship with Yishmael*. Hebraically, *ahav* is not something one *feels* – it is something one *does* because of a conscious choice, or preference.

Holy One.

But Who is Our “Neighbor”?

The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as ‘neighbor’ is **re’a** [resh, ayin]. It is a noun derived from the verb root *ra’a, resh, ayin, hey*, which means “he pastures/grazes”. Hence, a “neighbor” is anyone and everyone who ‘grazes in the same pasture’ - or works in the same field, office, enterprise, or factory - as you do. It is anyone you encounter on your journey through life. It is everyone with whom you share any element of life.

A ‘neighbor’ can thus be a fellow Hebrew or a gentile. It is anyone with whom you have to choose to either cooperate with or compete against, but who - because of his presence in your sphere of influence - you simply cannot ignore.

What Specific Actions/Attitudes Must Be Present In Order for “Love” to be ‘Ahav’?

The Holy One does not want to be vague, hazy, or ambiguous about what love consists of. He wants us to know what *ahav*-ing someone looks like and consists of in real life and real time. He has therefore laid it out for us in very, very specific terms. He has therefore made it clear that the substantive elements of His ***ahavat l’rei’acha*** empowerment upon our lives are:

1. *Being forthright, honest, and above reproach in all dealings with our neighbor [Leviticus 19:13 (a)];*
2. *Respecting each neighbor for the unique creation of our Heavenly Father that he is and not seeking to take away from him anything the Heavenly Father has entrusted to his stewardship [19:13 (a)];*
3. *Withholding from no person the Essentials of Human Dignity, which each human being deserves by reason solely of being the Creation of our Bridegroom-King [19:13(b)];*
4. *Resisting the fleshly temptation to judge other people and situations based upon what we see with our eyes and/or hear with our ears [i.e. according to the ‘flesh’, meaning on the basis of information you gather empirically by observation or by listening to gossip], but to instead choose to see, think about them, talk about them, react to them, and behave toward them as the Holy One Himself would [i.e. in righteousness] [19:13 (c)];*
5. *Viewing and Treating No Man as Inferior to Ourselves or as an Object of Mockery or Scorn, but as one loved and highly valued by the Creator [19:14]*
6. *Behaving toward, reacting to, speaking to, and treating people exactly – and only - as the Holy One would if He was wearing our skin [19:15(a)];*
7. *Favoring neither the rich or the poor; but instead considering each human*

being to be unique and valuable, whatever his or her station or present circumstances [19:14(a)];

8. *Neither listening to, giving credence to, or repeating any negative stories about anyone, ever [19:16 (a)];*
9. *Not allowing ourselves to think, say, or act like any ‘neighbor’s’ life is not worth saving or that their difficulties are deserved [19:16 (b)];*
10. *Never allowing ourselves to indulge any hatred, offense, unforgiveness, animosity, malice, or ill-will toward any human being [19:17 (a)];*
11. *Being up front³, out in the open, about our covenant identity, mission, and calling with all people; [19:17(b)];*
12. *Not attempting to minimize or cover up our breaches of covenant or help any person ignore theirs; [19:17(c)];*
13. *Becoming an instant forgiver and an agent of reconciliation [hold no grudge, and never try to personally punish or see that people ‘pay’ for their misdeeds]; [19:18];*

In shorthand form, considering all the above substantive elements, we are always to do unto our neighbor exactly as we would have him/her do unto us. But we know better than to ever again get lazy, and try to divorce any one or any combination of these elements from the others, much less merely substitute the ‘golden rule’ summation for the substance of its component parts. We know now they are all totally connected and interdependent. And we are realizing, at last, that there is no way we can walk the *ahavta l’rei’acha* empowerment of our Bridegroom-King independent of either Him or His Book of Instructions.

We are trembling because we now know that *ahavta l’rei’acha*, as defined in Leviticus 19, is why we were redeemed. We are called to spend our lives learning – and putting into practice - what each of the aforesaid elements of *ahavta l’rei’acha* mean in real interactions between real people in the heat of real life. These empowerments, we are realizing, define the holiness to which we are called.

We are beginning to understand as well that Y’shua of Natzret did not in any wise introduce to mankind the ‘*loving your neighbor as yourself*’ language. It was there all along - in the *Kedusha* Discourse of Torah. Leviticus 19 is the Torah’s ‘love chapter’ every bit as much as I Corinthians 13 is the Apostolic Scriptures’ ‘love chapter’. And while there are many concepts and cheap counterfeits of ‘love’ other than the Biblical, Divinely Authored, one described in Leviticus 19 as *ahav*, if we accept a non-Hebraic, non-Biblical concept of love, all we will do is sow to the wind. Without *ahav*-ing others we will inevitably fail

³ The Hebrew word used by the Holy One here is *yakach*, meaning to *be clear, be up front, shine* [hence Yeshua’s teaching ‘*let your light so shine before men, that they see your good works*’]

in the most essential purpose for which were redeemed.

This Is Mission-Critical; There is No ‘Other Hand’

Our Bridegroom-King is the most joyful Being in the Universe. He can be –indeed usually is - happy, playful and fun. He sings over us. He dances with delight. He smiles almost all the time. But He can be serious as well. And while He is still smiling, He is not by any means fooling around in the *Kedusha* Discourse. He is downloading the *weightier matters* of Torah. The Holy One has a plan, you see – and it is radical. He actually intends to redeem humanity and gradually restore Creation from its fallen estate to its Eden-like potential. And He intends for us to play a critical supporting role in that plan. That is why He is getting very, very real with us in the Book of Leviticus. As He gets serious with us, He is expecting us to respond accordingly. He expects us to get very, very real with ourselves – and the world. He is making our calling clear.

Who are we? It may surprise you to know that we are not called to be *theologians sitting in ivory towers*. We are not called to conduct intellectual debates on points of doctrine or halakhah. We are not called to be *judges sitting in marble halls of theoretical justice*. We are not called to be *refugees from the world hiding in fortresses with familiar religious symbols on the walls, familiar religious catch-phrases filling the air, letting stained-glass windows obscure our vision what is really happening to real people in the world around us*. We are not called to be *crusading vigilantes shouting through masks of self-righteousness at every thing and and slashing at everyone that we perceive, through our flawed lenses of short-term memory and self-interest, as being ‘wrong’, ‘immoral’, ‘heretic’, ‘blasphemous’, or ‘unfair’*. We are not called to be *political activists tilting at the illusory windmills in the realm of ideas, nomenclature, and ideology*. We are not called to be *frightened, germ-and-demon-phobic hermits hiding in bunkers*. We are not called to be *superheros*. We are not called just to be holy either in our minds or in a vacuum. We are called to be holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy. Yes, you heard correctly – our calling is to become holy *as the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the Universe is holy*.

Wow! Bomb dropped. Mind blown. Fear and trembling proceeding apace. Reverence, wonder, and awe operating in full measure. So that is what this *kingdom of priests* and a *holy nation* gig is all about.

Is this ‘*holy as He is holy*’ concept madness – or is it absolute brilliance? It it foolishness – or is it impeccable, unassailable wisdom? Is it intimidating – or is it inspiring? Depending upon the depth of your relationship with the Bridegroom-King, and the extent of your commitment to His Kingdom, it can be either one.

What it is, you see, is the narrow path that leads through the straight gate to life, health, and peace. What it is – and what it means for the world - is what the great love story between the Bridegroom-King and His chosen Bride-people is all about.

***Further Defining What ‘Holy As He Is Holy’ –
And Using His Love Language - Look Like In Real Time***

If being holy as our Bridegroom-King is holy does *not* mean becoming a theologian, a judge, a refugee, a crusading ideologue, a political activist, a hermit, or a superhero – well, what exactly *does* it mean? What does it consist of? How does it play out in a real world, with real people, in real time? That is what we are finding out, dear ones. Certain things about this calling to be holy *as-our-Bridegroom-King-is-holy* are coming into focus. We now know certain things about our King – both from personal experience and from being flies on the wall as He described Himself to Moshe in both the Burning Bush and the Cleft of the Rock encounters. Because we know Him, we know that being holy *as He is holy* will have to mean that we *hear and are moved by the cries of the afflicted, the oppressed, and the enslaved peoples of the world*. Because we know Him, we understand that being holy *as He is holy* has to mean releasing into our world *unfailing, new-every-morning, mercies* - like the Holy One our God does. We know, just because we are getting to know our Covenant Partner, that being holy *as He is holy* will have to mean engaging in *surgically-precise, carefully-measured deeds of self-less compassion* like the Bridegroom-King does, instead of coming in like a wrecking ball and inflicting vengeance for the sake of vengeance. We know it has to mean *steadfastly persevering in faithfulness to the Avrahamic covenant – day in, day out, year after year, decade upon decade, as long as we have breath*. It has to mean being holy *in jaw-dropping, knee-buckling forgiveness, as we follow our King’s example of forgiving the human beings who slander, injure, steal from, abandon, betray, or even torture us*. That means we are to be holy in *refusing to give up on the redemptive process with regard to any human being*. That means we are to be holy *in introducing blessing into every conversation and shalom into every situation*.

All this is pretty mind-blowing, of course. As we are discovering in *Kedoshim*, however, these things are just the fringes of what it means to be holy *as our Bridegroom-King is holy*. Are you ready to surrender wholeheartedly to the Bridegroom-King’s plan to train you to become *that kind of holy*? It will mean living on the point of the spear. We are the ‘asset’. We are the ones He sends to the front lines. We are the one He trusts to navigate the flashpoints and diffuse the landmines on the borderlines between the *kadosh* [i.e. holy, God-originated] and the *chol* [i.e. common, man-originated] and between the *tahor* [i.e. clean, or leading to

wholeness and shalom for humans] and the *tamei* [*i.e.* unclean, or leading to fragmentation of soul and conflict of priorities and loyalties for humans].

***Living Holy Lives On the Point of the Spear –
Flashpoints on the Borderline between the Kadosh and the Chol:
#1: The Calling To Exercise Self-Control In the Land***

The land of Israel was designed by the Creator of the Universe and lovingly sculpted by His Hand to serve as the ‘home turf’ for His Kingdom. He called Avraham out of the land of the Eastern mindset to go there, to sojourn there, to mark off the land’s boundaries, and to introduce both His Name and His Ways to its mountains and valleys, cities and fields. A few generations later the Holy One called all who would *sh’ma* the ***Lech Lecha*** call out of bondage in the land of the Western mindset to same land, in order that they might displace the darkness-loving and uncleanness-obsessed Kena’ani peoples who had taken over and were polluting His chosen land with innocent blood, were perverting His precious gift of sexuality, and were using it as a base of operations to spread the worship of base human desires and introduce unclean spirits to the rest of the world.

The Holy One promised all who responded to His call to go to *Eretz Yisrael* that He would make the land there supernaturally productive. He prophetically declared it to become a ‘*land flowing with milk and honey*’. He promised to make it the closest thing to the Garden of Eden humanity had known since the Fall. But it was not advanced methods of agricultural science that would bring this about – it was the Holy One. Every fig tree, every oak; every pomegranate tree, every date palm; every evergreen, every vine, and every olive tree in the land – they were going to be empowered from on High to produce fruit far beyond any normal or expected yield. This was to be a testimony to all generations of the goodness of the Holy One. I call it ‘*the testimony of the trees*’.

□
On the third day of Creation week the Holy One said, ***Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree [in Hebrew, *etz p’ri*] that yields [Hebrew *oseh*, from the verb root *asah*] fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth.*** And, of course, it happened just as the Holy One decreed. Now every *etz p’ri* – i.e. fruit tree - has a *testimony*. It is a glorious testimony that declares in every generation the great wonder of *empowerment from on high*. And every piece of fruit a tree ever produces, in any generation, says to mankind: “*You too can bring forth fruit – there is a corresponding empowerment for you!*”

Moreover, the Holy One has repeatedly likened us, His People, to fruit trees. His use of the simile is both poetic and prophetic. If, as, when, and to the extent we delight in and meditate upon the Torah we truly become ‘***like a tree planted by the rivers of living water, which brings forth its fruit in season***’. Psalm 1:3. The man who trusts in the Holy One, and whose hope is the Holy One, truly does become ***like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, that***

does not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will stay green, and that does not become anxious in the year of drought, nor cease from yielding fruit. Proverbs 17:7-8. The heritage of David is that we who worship the Holy One will be *like a green olive tree flourishing in the house of God, as we trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.* Psalm 52:6. The Psalmist also declares that the righteous shall flourish like the *date-palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of YHVH will flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing, to show that the Holy One is upright.* Psalm 92:12-15. In the latter days the Holy One further expressly promises to make us as *trees of righteousness, the planting of YHVH, that He may be glorified.*” Isaiah 61:3. Like the trees that grow by the River of Life, our leaves – the evidence of our abiding life-force – are intended for the healing of the nations?

Our covenant faithfulness is forever connected with the productivity of the fruit trees in the land of Israel. The fruitfulness of the trees of Israel is designed to be, to each generation, a *covenant sign*. In Leviticus 26:3 ff the Holy One will make this clear, prophesying over us:

*If/as/when/to the extent you walk in My statutes
and keep My commandments, and perform them,
then I will give you rain in its season, the land will yield its produce,
and the trees of the field will yield their fruit.*

*Your threshing will last till the time of vintage, and the vintage will last till the time of sowing;
you will eat your bread to the full, and will dwell in your land safely.*

Supernatural? You had better believe it. This is the testimony of the trees in the land of Israel. If, however, the ‘testimony of the trees’ is to be seen by our progeny and by the world for the miracle it is, we can never pretend to take one ounce of credit for it. Nor should we or our children ever take the miracle of the trees of Israel for granted – or forget that the fruitfulness of the trees is directly related to the Redeemed Community’s collective faithfulness to our Covenant with the Bridegroom-King. In order for the ‘testimony of the trees’ to have its intended redemptive effect in the world, and in order for our children and the world to clearly see the fruitfulness of Israel’s trees as the miracle and covenant sign it is therefore, the supernatural blessing on the trees had to be activated in a supernatural, covenantally prescribed way. Just as Moshe had to lift his rod, or speak, in Egypt to activate the supernatural event the Holy One wished to bring forth, so the Holy One calls upon all people of Israel to do something special to activate the miracle of the trees within their geographical sphere of influence.

The Holy One therefore introduced a brilliant protocol designed to maximize the impact of the ‘testimony of the trees’ in every place in the land of Israel, in every household, in every generation. He called for all His People to take a giant step of

faith each time a sapling and seedling was planted in Israel's soil. Here are the Bridegroom-King's instructions:

*When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food,
then you are to count their fruit as uncircumcised.
Three years it is to be as uncircumcised to you. It is not to be eaten
But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy,
a praise to the Holy One. And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit,
that it may yield to you its increase: I am the Holy One your God.*
[Leviticus 19:23-25]

How are you responding to the testimony of the trees? Have you activated the miracle and covenant sign of the trees of Israel? Are the trees of the forest clapping their hands over your life yet?

***Living Holy (Kedusha Energy Emanating) Lives
On the Point of the Spear –
Flashpoints on the Borderline between the Kadosh and the Chol:***

#2. Rejecting Bloodthirst. Bloodlust, and All Things Macabre

The land of Israel has been chosen by the Holy One for very special Kingdom purposes. From the Mediterranean to the Jordan, from Dan to Be'er-Sheva, and beyond according to the Holy One's design, it is the primary beachhead from which the Holy One intends to launch Heaven's invasion of the earth. This is the stage upon which the Holy One intends to act out His Passion Play for the world. This is the place where His Kingdom – and His Priesthood - is to be modeled for all to see. This is the place where Messiah will walk, talk, teach, and perform signs and wonders. This is where Messiah will surrender His life-blood as an atonement, then rise from the dead and ascend into Heaven. This is the land upon which the Holy One will pour our His Ruach upon all flesh. This is where Messiah will return to earth in the flesh and set up His Kingdom and His Throne. It is from this land that He will rule and reign, as the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Holy One through His Messiah. That is SOME KIND OF HOLINESS, Dear ones. And it is a holiness that is to be joyfully cherished, carefully guarded, and passionately protected against all corruptive influences. Those who live there live on the point of the spear. And everywhere they go is a potential flashpoint on the borderline between the *kadosh* and the *chol* and between the *tahor* and the *tamei*.

Nothing pollutes land like the unnecessary shedding of blood. That is one of the main reason why the Holy One decreed that bloodthirsty, anger-driven, and violence-obsessed populations are to be given no place in Israel. The Holy One said: *When you have come into the land ... **Lo tochlu al-ha-dahm** – i.e. You will not to partake of the blood. Leviticus 19:23, 26 [(a)].*

Our Bridegroom-King's warning against partaking of blood has many potential applications. At its most basic, elementary level this *lo tochlu* instruction of the Holy One surely means refusing to ever eat, drink, or ingest anything with the blood of either a human being or an animal in it. See e.g. **Leviticus 17:12-14**⁴. What dishes would that rule out? The British culture is famous for using the blood of pigs or cows as an ingredient in sausage. This is called 'blood sausage' or 'black pudding'. That would clearly be 'off-limits' for people of the covenant. Some cultures have been known to add animal blood to soups and stews; others have a practice of adding blood to meat sauces. Some oriental cultures feature a dish of solidified animal blood, called *blood tofu*. All such dishes fall clearly within the Holy One's express prohibition.

Of course, the Holy One's ***lo tochlu al-ha-dahm*** injunction carries far more than dietary implications. We who have been redeemed by the Holy One are not to be people of either *vengeance* or *violence*. We are not to *hate*. We are not to be *bloodthirsty*. We are not even to kill any creature the Holy One has made for sport or as a form of entertainment, or at any time or under any circumstance that the killing of an animal for food is non-essential. See **Leviticus 17:2-4**⁵. We are not to be sadistic or cruel. We are to always respect life – and realize that the life of every creature is in its blood. We are therefore never to shed any blood – human or animal – unnecessarily. We are not to participate in a plan, conspiracy, or governmental policy that does so. Doing any of these things would be to misrepresent the heart and ways of the Bridegroom-King. And if we were to do such a thing in the holy land of Israel, we would be polluting that holy land with innocent blood – just like the Kena'ani, the Philistim, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Islamists have consistently done. That is no way to honor our Creator – or to teach the world His Ways.

The first Biblical usage of *dahm* is in Genesis 4:10 as follows: ***“And he [the Holy One] said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood [i.e. ‘dahm] cries to me from the ground!’*** Blood has a *frequency* and a *voice*. It transmits

⁴ In Leviticus 17:12-14 the Holy One said: ***No one among you is to eat blood, nor is any stranger who dwells among you to eat blood. Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he is to pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You will not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it will be cut off.***

⁵ In Leviticus 17:2-4 the Holy One said: ***Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills it outside the camp, and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the Holy One before the tabernacle of the Holy One, the guilt of bloodshed will be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man will be cut off from among his people.*** Remember, when this instruction was given, manna was falling from Heaven. There was therefore no need whatsoever for men in the camp of the Redeemed to kill animals for food.

sound waves that the Holy One can hear. And, since man is created in the image of the Holy One the sound waves transmitted by blood affect us as well. In our fallen state we cannot interpret the message of the blood as can the Holy One. The closer we get to Him, however, the more perceptible the cry of innocent blood becomes to us. We, like our Bridegroom-King, begin to respond to its frequencies. And that is why we treat the blood with utmost respect and care. That is why we take the act of *shedding of blood* very, very seriously.

Living Holy (Kedusha Energy Emanating) Lives
On the Point of the Spear –
Flashpoints on the Borderline between the Kadosh and the Chol:
#3: Building a Totally Occult-Free Society

What other practices common to other nations and peoples are incompatible with the holiness of the holiest land on earth? Anything having to do with the dark arts – i.e. the ‘occult’ – definitely falls into this category. Hence the Holy One tells us plainly that we are to have an ‘occult-free’ society. Specifically, He says:

Vechi-tavo'u el-ha-aretz

When you have come into the land . . .

lo tenachashu v'lo te'oneinu

You will not practice divination and you will not practice soothsaying

Leviticus 19:23, 26 [(b)]

Lo tenachashu. Our English Bibles translate the first of the ‘occult-free’ society injunctions as ‘*You will not practice divination*’. The English word ‘divination’ means any ‘art or practice that seeks to foresee or foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge, usually by the interpretation of omens or the aid of supposedly supernatural powers. This definition clearly encompasses things like fortune-telling [*i.e.* through omens, crystal balls, crystals, tea leaves, palm-readings, clairvoyants, fire, or otherwise], astrology/horoscope-watching, contacting and receiving communications or premonitions from ‘spiritual guides’ through transcendental meditation, and the mystical art of *Tarot*. The operative verb in the Hebrew, however, is even broader than this. The Hebrew verb is ***nachash*** [nun, chet, shin]. It means to *hiss* or *whisper*. When used as a proper name, it is the name Torah gives to *the serpent of the garden*. To *nachash* means to agree with and mimic the serpent’s thoughts, speech, and behavior.

First of all, to *nachash* is to cynically ask, when faced with a challenge as to which the Holy One has given specific instructions: “***Did God truly say ...***” Genesis 3:1. It is to presume or seek to have spiritual insight that did not come from the Holy One – especially that kind of insight that emanates from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is supposed insight into what is ‘good’ vs. what

is ‘evil’, what is ‘fair’ vs. what is ‘unfair’, and what is ‘right’ vs. what is ‘wrong’. To *nachash* is therefore to elevate the opinions of one’s own fallen mind and the desires of one’s own fallen will over the instructions and ways of the Bridegroom-King. Secondly, to *nachash* is to sarcastically declare, when faced with a consequence the Holy One has clearly stated would apply to an action: ***‘You will not surely die ...’*** In other words, it is to presume to know more than, or something different from the loving instruction of, the Creator of the Universe. Such would be ‘dark’ knowledge indeed –if it existed. It does not exist, however. It is an illusion, a deception, a sleight of hand. But it is nevertheless attractive to a human being in search of ‘knowledge’ and/or lusting after the power to manipulate and control others. Thirdly, to *nachash* is to blatantly impugn the Holy One’s goodness by accusing Him of improper or unkind motives toward mankind. Remember the last thing – the serpent said to Chava – that which ‘clinched the deal’ with her. He said: ***“God knows that in the day you eat of [the fruit He has told you not to eat] you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*** Genesis 3:5. To *nachash*, therefore, always includes substituting the knowledge and pleasure that man and an unclean spirit acting in concert can obtain for the knowledge, pleasure, and purpose for which the Holy One designed for mankind – which was to be His shadow on, and evidence His goodness, His Wisdom, and His very image to all creatures upon, the earth.

Nachash-ing includes all forms of divination and witchcraft, of course. But it covers so much more. It covers attitudes of entitlement. It covers the indulgence of unfettered, unsundered curiosity. It covers the desire to manipulate and control people and situations. And it covers every aspect of de-valuing, demeaning, or slandering the Holy One, His instructions for living, or His Ways.

Lo te’oneinu. Our English Bibles translate the second of the Holy One’s ‘occult-free society’ injunctions as *‘You will not practice soothsaying’*. The English verb *soothsaying* means foretelling or controlling future events by sorcery. It includes all kinds of magic, spell-casting, potion-formulation, and sorcery. The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as soothsaying is ***anan*** [ayin, nun, nun sofit]. It literally means to *cause clouds to form – hence to conceal or act covertly in order to deceive*⁶.

At this point it should be very clear that we are supposed to seek knowledge and insight into the future, and guidance in situations and relationships, from the Holy One. We are to do this through prayer, through reading, studying, and meditating upon, and walking out the instructions of Torah as well as the rest of Holy Writ in

⁶ The Egyptians openly practiced and trusted in the dark arts. See Exodus 7:11, 22, and 8:7. Hence, such practices were within the Holy One’s instruction that ***According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you are not to do.*** Leviticus 18:3.

the footsteps of Messiah. We should realize that seeking to satisfy our curiosity or appetite for either power or knowledge from any other source is incompatible with loving the Holy One our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. But just in case there is still any lingering question in our minds as to whether there is ever to be any exception to the ‘occult-free’ society He is calling us to form in the land, our Bridegroom-King goes further, later in today’s aliyah, and says:

Al-tifnu el-ha-ovot v'el-ha-yid'onim

Give no regard to mediums and/or familiar spirits;

al-tevakshu l'tom'ah vahem Ani Adonai Eloheichem

do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Holy One your God.

[Leviticus 19:31]

Al-tifnu el-ah-ovot. Our English Bibles translate this instruction from the Bridegroom-King as ‘*give no regard to mediums*’. The Hebrew verb the Holy One used [the one our English Bibles translate as ‘give regard to’] is a derivative form of the verb root *panah* [peh/feh, nun, hey]. It literally means to *go toward, visit, or turn to, or turn one’s face (or heart) to or in the direction of* something or someone. The Hebrew noun the Holy One employed in this injunction – which our English Bibles translate as ‘mediums’ or ‘wizards’ – is the plural form of the noun *owb* [alef, vav, veit]. *Owb* literally means *a vessel*. In the spiritual context, a person who channels or conveys a message for a spirit not his own is an *owb*. When dealing with anyone other than the Holy One or His prophets, we are always talk to the person that is visible to us directly. We are not to speak or respond to anyone who can supposedly channel, or who say they are communicating on behalf of, a person or spirit that we cannot see.

Al-tifnu el-ha-yid'onim. Our English Bibles translate this instruction from the Bridegroom-King as ‘*give no regard to . . . familiar spirits*’. The Hebrew noun the Holy One employed in this injunction – which our English Bibles translate as *familiar spirits* – is *yid'onim* [yod, dalet, ayin, nun, yod, mem sofit]. The verb root of this noun is *yada*, meaning to *have intimate, experiential knowledge*. We are to have *yada* only with the Holy One. Seeking to have *yada* with or through anyone or anything besides the Holy One and His Ways is the essence of *idolatry*.

Ovot and *yid'onim* are corrupting, polluting influences. They hold out the false promise of knowledge and power – but all they really give is *fragmentation of mind, heart, and soul* and a *point of entrance for unclean spirits into all those areas of our persona and relationships*. We cannot seek both the Holy One and wizards/familiar spirits. We cannot serve two masters. We are therefore to avoid both wizards [*ovot*] and familiar spirits [*yid'onim*] like the plague.

***Living Holy (Kedusha Energy Emanating) Lives
On the Point of the Spear –
Flashpoints on the Borderline between the Kadosh and the Chol:
#4: Presenting Ourselves to the World In His Untarnished Image***

If we are to committed to become *holy as our Bridegroom in Heaven is holy*, it is going to change everything about us – including how we present ourselves to the world. We will wear the uniform of our King. We will joyfully adopt His dress code. We will want to be identified with Him – not with the stars, starlets, and celebrities of our culture. If we love the Holy One our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength, we will honor the way the Holy One made us – and we will choose not to disfigure the person the Holy One made for Himself in the interest of either fashion, artistry, or self-expression. As the Holy One puts it:

Lo takifu pe'at roshchem

You are not to shave around the sides of your head,

velo tashchit et-pe'at zekaneicha

nor are you to disfigure the edges of your beard.

Veseret lanefesh lo titnu bivesarchem

You will not make any cuttings in your flesh according to your desire,

uchtovet ka'aka lo titnu bachem ani Adonai

nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Holy One.

[Leviticus 19:27-28]

The rest of the world considers skin and the parts of the body that the Holy One has chosen to cover with hair to be areas for self-expression and seduction. That is why it pays people to *tattoo* the skin and to *style* and *cut designs into* the hair. We who belong to the Holy One, however, have no need to express ourselves – our mission is only to praise and serve our King. We therefore will eschew all tattoos, piercings, cuttings, and cosmetic surgeries - indeed all things that tell the world we think we can do a better job of designing our bodies and defining who we are than our Creator did. And we will realize it would be toally incompatible with our New-Creation identity and mission to even entertain the idea of seducing anyone with our physical beauty. After all, we have captured the heart of the Creator of the Universe with one glance of our eyes. And He is everything to us – isn't He?

***Living Holy Lives On the Point of the Spear –
Flashpoints on the Borderline between the Kadosh and the Chol:
#5: Rejoicing in and Rererencing the Sabbaths and Holy Things***

Earlier this week we talked at length about the Holy One's instructions to us regarding the critical importance to the covenant – and our mission – of joyfully embracing His love-gift of Sabbaths. What Sabbaths is He talking about? All of

them. This includes: [a] the weekly *Shabbat*, [b] the work stoppages spelled out in Leviticus 23 in connection with the *Moed'im* [festivals] and *Yom Kippur*, [c] the *Shemittah* [7th year 'sabbatical' of the land], and [d] the *Yovel* [the 50th year "Jubilee", where a cessation from labor is prescribed as an incident of reclaiming one's inheritance].

How we relate to the Sabbaths established by our King provides an essential litmus test as to how we really feel about the quality and wisdom of His leadership. As we discussed in Monday's study, the Psalmist speaks of the Shepherd who *makes his sheep lie down in green pastures*. **Psalm 23:2(a)**. To lie down when the urge of the flesh, occasioned by the lust of the eyes for the green pastures that surround us, is to graze requires a great inner peace and sense of higher priority. The preceding line of the Psalm says '*The Holy One is my Shepherd; I will never lack*'. The question is this: "Do we trust His leadership enough to rest when He says it is time to rest- even when there are things that our eyes tell us need to be done? The message that failing to trust the Holy One's leadership and provision enough to stop and take delight in the Sabbaths He has established sends is the exact opposite message the world needs to hear. It is not the message of a BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE who delight to know and serve a WISE and BENEVOLENT KING.

He is building His Kingdom, and is quite capable of doing so without our help. He only lets us participate at all because He is a kind and loving Father. We are not to shine OUR light on the "nations" – we are to reflect HIS. Hence the Holy One once more reiterates His instructions regarding the critical importance of the Sabbaths that He has established for us and the land He is providing us. He now makes it clear that the observance of His Sabbaths is mission-critical to our stewardship of the land. Hence the Holy One tells us that, even when we enter the land:

Et-shabtotai tishmoru

You will keep My Sabbaths

umikdashi tira'u ani Adonai

and you will reverence My sanctuary: I am the Holy One.

[Leviticus 19:30]

Living Holy (Kedusha Energy Emanating) Lives

On the Point of the Spear –

Flashpoints on the Borderline between the Kadosh and the Chol:

#6: Dealing With Groups of People Most Cultures Undervalue

Holiness the Holy One's way – the way that reflects His love language – will cause us to highly value, and be actively involved in protecting, a lot of people the rest of the world totally undervalues or discards. This includes: 1. The daughters/young

women of the world; 2. Foreigners; and 3. the Elderly.

Our Calling to Special Watchfulness Over/Protection of Daughters

Here is a fundamental truth: How any society/culture/nation or ethnic group deals with three groups of people will say volumes about both how influential they have the potential to be now and how strong they will be in future generations. The first area of relations that reveals the values, priorities, present potential, and future impact of a society, culture, nation, or people-group are its relations with *its women*. Here is what the Holy One has to say about that.

Al-techalel et-bit'cha l'ha-z'notah

Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot,

v'lo-tizneh ha-aretz umal'ah ha-aretz zimah

lest the land fall into harlotry and the land become full of perversion.

[Leviticus 19:29]

An *Avrhamaic Covenant People* highly values and carefully guards the purity of its daughters – and, for that matter, the daughters of anyone who sojourns within its borders. A kingdom of priests understands that *today's young girls and young women are tomorrow's educators and matriarchs* – and as such hold the future of the culture in their hands⁷.

What is absolutely prohibited in regards to young women? Our English Bibles call it 'prostituting'. But what Americans think of when they hear the word 'prostituting' is not nearly broad enough to cover the depth of what the Holy One is talking about. He is not just talking about selling a young woman into formal prostitution – i.e. human trafficking. He is talking about taking away her innocence – and/or her virginity – however that may occur. The Hebrew verb our English Bibles translate as 'prostitute' is *chalal*, meaning to *perforate, pierce, or penetrate*. It means to take something or someone that is whole, pure, and unadulterated and introduce something foreign and corrupt into it. It means to take something that is undivided in devotion and purpose and make it become conflicted – playing many conflicting roles, and serving multiple conflicting masters. A holy nation does see its young women, treat them as, or train them to become objects for either sexual pleasure or exploitation. A holy nation does not incentivize its young women to flaunt their bodies publicly, flirt, or use sexuality as a means of getting something they want. People of the Kingdom do not refer to young women by derogatory slang terms like *bitches, ho's, dames, broads, winches, eye-candy, etc.* People of the Kingdom treasure young women, and refer to them as *banot* – i.e. which

⁷ Of course, women can also be physicians, artists, architects, engineers, lawyers, writers, inventors, entrepreneurs, politicians, soldiers, financiers, and the like – but by Divine design their primary impact upon the world, the Holy One's grand redemptive plan, and the culture of the nations is as a matriarch and educator. Truly the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

connotes both *daughters* – flesh of our flesh - and *household builders*. A holy nation does not encourage its young women – or any young women - to dress provocatively, to talk dirty, to start drama, to chase after money, fame, or sensual pleasure, to hate men, or to become either nags, shrews, drama queens, or divas. It does not encourage them to try out their sexuality in ways that the Holy One has warned us against – much less ways He has called an abomination.

Lo-tizneh ha-aretz. The way a society treats and trains up its young women defines how much and how lasting an impact that society will have on the world – and whether that impact will be positive or negative. Think of the culture of Shechem – and the way its prince thought and acted toward Ya’akov’s daughter Dinah. In that culture, a girl was just a piece of property to be used and discarded. Think of Sodom – and how living there, in the midst of perversion, induced Lot to offer his daughters to a mob to use as objects of perverse lust. Think about Kena’an, and how living there caused Y’hudah to think about and treat Tamar. Think of Charan, and how its cultural view of young women is evidenced by the way Lavan treated Rachel and Leah. Note that all those societies have disappeared from the face of the earth. Now look at the Hebrew culture, and think particularly of the honorable interactions Boaz had with the young woman Ruth.

Our Calling to Special Concern for And Kind Treatment of Foreigners

The second area of relations that reveals the values and priorities of a society/culture/nation are its relations with *foreigners/outside*s. Hence the Holy One instructs us that, when we enter the land of promise, we are to welcome foreigners, treat them with dignity – even though we are never to adopt or adapt to their way of thinking or living. The Holy One specifically instructs us:

Vechi-yagur itcha ger be'artzechem lo tonu oto

And when a stranger⁸ dwells with you in your land you are not to mistreat⁹ him.

Ke'ezrach mikem yiheyeh lachem hager hagar itchem

The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you,

ve'ahavta lo kamocho

and you are to love him as you yourself are loved;

⁸ In Hebrew, *ger* – i.e. a sojourner or temporary resident. This is what Avram was in ‘Egypt and Gerar.. See Genesis 12:10 and 21:23-24. This is what Lot was in Sodom. See Genesis 19:19. This is also what Ya’akov was in the house of Laban. Genesis 32:4.

⁹ In Hebrew, *yanah* – i.e. act violently, oppress [like what the Egyptians did to the Hebrews]. See Exodus 22:21: ***You are to neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress [yanah] him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*** See also Deuteronomy 23:15-16: ***You are not to give back to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you. He may dwell with you in your midst, in the place which he chooses within one of your gates, where it seems best to him; you are not to oppress [yanah] him.***

ki-gerim heyitem b'erezt Mitzrayim ani Adonai Elohechem
for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Holy One your God.
[Leviticus 19:33-34]

Think for a moment about the way Avraham treated Elezar the Syrian. He considered and treated the foreigner who sojourned with him as his own son. On the other hand, think of how Laban of Charan treated Ya'akov. He deceived him. He lied to him. He tricked him. He took advantage of him. He treated him like a second class citizen. Think also of how Egypt greeted Avram and Sarah, and how Gerar greeted Yitzchak and Rivkah. Both of these cultures took what they wanted – the women, and treated the men as outcasts. Think about how the Midyani, the Yish'maeli and the Egyptians treated Yosef; they considered and treated him as *inferior* – fit only to be their *slave*. Consider as well how cruelly the Babylonians greeted the captives from Yehudah after the conquest of Jerusalem. See Ps. 137:3: ***Those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth. Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Tziyon!"*** And finally, consider also how cruelly Haman the Agagite of Susa, and the people of Persia, treated the Jews sojourning in their area time of Ahasureus, Mordechai and Hadassah.

We are to be models of hospitality. An essential part of our calling as the model nation/culture of the world is to model the Holy One's heart of kindness toward those who are far from home – out of their natural environment. We are therefore to show outrageous hospitality to foreigners – even though we are never to adopt their customs, their value matrix, their calendars, their mindsets, their modes of dress and adornment, and/or their priorities. And of course, neither are we to let them seduce us into inquiring into, running after, joining them in the worship of, or in any way serving their gods.

Our Calling to Special Concern for And Respectful Treatment of the Elderly

The third area of relations that reveals the values and priority of a society/culture /nation are its relations with its elderly. The Holy One instructs us:

Mipnei seyvah takum vehadarta p'nei zaken
'You will rise before the gray headed and will honor the presence of an old man,

veyareta me'Eloheicha Ani Adonai
and you will fear your God: I am the Holy One.
[Leviticus 19:32]

Why? What can old, slow-moving, grey-headed people contribute to the world? Why should they be valued above the society's athletes, rock stars, rainmakers, politicians, celebrities and ... well, you know - *beautiful people*?

Mipnei seyvah takum. In youth-obsessed and entertainment-focused cultures, the

elderly are not treated well at all. Having passed their physical prime, and begun to lose some or all of their physical beauty, they are either secretly or openly marginalized. Some might call it ‘age discrimination’.

The Kingdom of the Holy One is to be different. Since neither physical strength and beauty nor the ability to produce wealth or entertainment are priorities among the Holy One’s redeemed, the elderly are honored and revered. The Holy One’s people are always to set the ‘gold standard’ for all cultures and ethnic group as to how to value, honor, draw wisdom from, and care for, our elderly.

***Living Holy (Kedusha Energy Emanating) Lives
On the Point of the Spear –***

Flashpoints on the Borderline between the Kadosh and the Chol:

***#7: Maintaining Unassailable, Uncompromising Integrity
in Interpersonal Dealings***

In the Kingdom of Heaven – for that Kingdom’s earthly representatives – there can be no division between ‘spirituality’ and ‘business’. As we discussed, we are to love our neighbor – and care for the foreigner - and to do both in very practical ways. That includes all our business dealings as well as all our ‘ministry’ dealings. Hence the Holy One states very clearly:

***You will do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume.
You are to have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin:
I am the Holy One your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt***

[Leviticus 19:35-36]

We are to take no shortcuts in business dealings. Whatever others may do or say to entice a customer or close a deal, we are to maintain integrity, honor, and honesty. We should not project to the world that what we are about is money. If we live modestly and frugally, and neither try to live beyond our means or indulge ourselves with the luxuries and extravagances of this world, we will not get ourselves into debt nor have any need to use either trickery or oppression to extract money from the people we are put here on earth to bless.

***Living Holy (Kedusha Energy Emanating) Lives
On the Point of the Spear –***

Flashpoints on the Borderline between the Kadosh and the Chol:

#8: Embracing Our New-Creation Identity, Lifestyle, and Mission

Our mission on earth is eminently challenging, but our assigned task is not particularly complicated. We are to bring the ways and the atmosphere of Heaven to earth – day by day, conversation by conversation, situation by situation, in real ways, in real time. The instructions of our King are the tools/implements we have

been given for this task - and they are all we need. In all the interactions we have with people or with the challenges of life, what we are supposed to do is simultaneously apply the teachings and release the spirit of our Bridegroom-King's Torah. Everywhere we go, whatever situation we face, in everything we do, we are to seek wisdom from – and walk in the ways set forth in - the Torah, even as we praise our King and spread the sweet fragrance of His *love*, His *joy*, and His *shalom*. We cannot play our part in our Covenant Partner's Grand Redemptive Plan for mankind and Creation without being immersed in - and walking out and giving practical application to - His Torah. Hence the Holy One concludes today's jam-packed aliyah by saying:

Ushmartem et-kol-chukotai v'et-kol-mishpatai

And you will cherish/treasure/carefullyguard all My statutes and all My judgments,

v'asitem otam ani Adonai

and make them come alive: I am the Holy One.

[Leviticus 19:37]

The Holy One has a game plan. He has given us a playbook. All we have to do is stick to the plan and do what the King's instruction manual says. The power to overcome is not in us – it is inherent in the Words themselves. The *chukot* [i.e. statutes/ordinances] and the *mishpatim* [i.e. judgments/declarations of what our King would do in a given situation] are *pearls of crystallized wisdom*. They are the weapons of our warfare. They are the strategies of our victories.

Contrary to common misunderstanding, the Holy One does not put upon any human beings – Jew or Gentile - the responsibility to either 'fulfill' or 'obey' His instructions. His instructions are Divine in origin, and infinite in scope, implication, and application. No human being can 'fulfill' – or even 'obey' – even one of them in any meaningful sense. That is not the objective.

I know. This is probably not what you have been taught. I cannot help that. But I can show you right in the text of Torah what the Holy One really DID tell us to do with/in regard to His Torah. And when I show you that, it will set you free from the false burdens men have been putting on other men for generations – if you will trust what the Bible says instead of what men have said about it.

First of all, it helps to remember that the Holy One has never and will never use English words to describe our responsibilities in covenant. The English language, in its earliest form, did not even come into being until about 1000 CE – which was some two and a half millenia after the Torah was given. The Holy One therefore never once uttered the injunction for us to 'fulfill' or 'obey' any of His instructions. Both 'fulfill' and 'obey' are English verbs, and both embody and represent very English cultural concepts.

If the Holy One did not tell us to ‘fulfill’ or ‘obey’ His *chukot* and *mishpatim*, what did He tell us to do with them? He used Hebrew verbs. He spoke to Hebrew people, from and into a Hebraic mindset. As we discussed, Hebrew verbs are infinite in scope. They parallel the growth of a single acorn to a vast forest, or a single grain of wheat to a majestic field ripe to the harvest. Each Hebrew verb represents an ever-expanding continuum, covering every point of growth and maturity from *genesis in thought* to *seed form* to *rooting and spouting* to *root and stem formation* to *root and stem solidification and expansion* to *limb production* to *leaf production* to *budding* to *flowering* to *fruit formation* to *fruit maturity* to *reproduction* – and then repeating the entire process in the next generation, year after year, season after season, forever. If you understand that about Hebrew verbs, all you have to do now to understand what the Holy One has empowered us to do with His *chukot* and *mishpatim* is to look carefully at the specific verbs He used to describe the part we are to play vis-à-vis those infinite life instructions.

What verbs does the Holy One use to describe our responsibility in relation to the *chukot* and *mishpatim* of our King? He tells us to engage in two processes in regard to them. First, He tells/empowers us to ***sh’mar*** them. Secondly, He tells/empowers us to ***asah*** them. Let’s look closely what those two responsibilities/empowerments entail. As we do so, keep in mind that those two Hebrew verbs are the exact verbs the Holy One used to describe *what Adam was to do in relation to the Garden of Eden*. See Genesis 2:15: ***Then the Holy One God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to asah and sh’mar it.*** If you have ever taken care of a garden, you should already be figuring out the Holy One’s game plan. His Words – His *chukot* and *mishpatim* – are living seeds. Our ‘job’ is to love them, nurture them, keep water flowing to them, pull the weeds from around them, keep destructive forces away from them, and cause them to bear fruit and reproduce themselves. But let’s get more specific, shall we?

Our Responsibility to Sh’mar – i.e. Cherish, Set a Watch Over, and Guard

The first level of activity our Bridegroom-King tells us to engage in with His *chukot* and *mishpatim* is to *sh’mar* them. Let’s discuss what that entails. Our English Bibles have real difficulty translating this Hebrew verb. They most commonly substitute either the English verb ‘keep’ or the English verb ‘observe’. But neither translation comes anywhere close to capturing the essence of the Hebrew verb *sh’mar*. To *sh’mar* is not to legalistically or ritualistically perform deeds, as our English words “keep” and “observe” imply. To *sh’mar* is a vast continuum of activity – beginning with a genesis of delight. We are to delight in the Holy One’s instructions for living – seeing them as a precious gift from our Bridegroom-King, much receiving a garden as a wedding present. We are therefore to *cherish*, *treasure*, and *prize* the garden and all its plants. We are to

think about how to bring out the beauty and fruitfulness of all the plants in the garden. We are to *marvel at their intricate beauty*, and be *ever thankful* for them, We are *meditate on* them. We are to *talk about* them and show *them off to others*. We are to zealously guard them against corrupting influences. We are to protect them against the thief and the intruder. We are to faithfully nurture *cling to, stand watch over* and *safeguard* them – individually and collectively - *as a sacred trust – for the rest of our lives, through every season*, as the plants He has given us for our garden reproduce themselves – and both feed fill the garden with sweet fragrances and colors and goodness and feed the nations - again and again. To *sh'mar* means *to do these things* in defiance of all voices which call us to expend our time, energy, or passion on anything different. To *sh'mar* therefore means to prioritize the Holy One's words above all else, and to spend time, energy and passion focusing on them, and making sure not a word is wasted or “returns to Him void”.

Now perhaps you can better understand why Y'shua said: ***If you love me, you will 'keep'*** - i.e. *sh'mar* – ***my commandments***. John 14:10.

Our Responsibility to Asah – i.e. to 'Build Out' the Blueprint

The second level of activity our Bridegroom-King tells us to engage in with His *chukot* and *mishpatim* is to *asah* them. Our English Bibles translate this verb as 'do' or 'perform'. But those are English verbs, expressing very English mindsets. The Hebrew verb *asah* is infinitely more rich, beautiful, and full of covenant life and love. The Hebrew verb *asah* paints the picture of *a potter fashioning something recognizable from a lump of clay*. The potter starts with an idea – a blueprint of what he is *asah-ing*. He then works with the clay, mixing it with other ingredients from the environment, in a very 'hands-on', practical manner. Through this hands-on process, and the loving touch and unique artistry of the potter, ordinary ingredients of the environment in which the potter dwells begins to take on the shape of - and through a gradual process, actually *become* - the item pictured in the blueprint with which the whole process began. *Asah-ing* is not 'doing' or 'performing' in any mechanical manner. It is applying wisdom, love, attention, affection, creativity, and vision to situations and challenges of life. It is calmly, methodically, patiently working with those situations and challenges to bring about the plan the Creator had in mind, and make that plan manifest to others and useful for the Kingdom.

Are you getting it, dear one? The instructions the Holy One has been giving us are not to be 'fulfilled' or 'obeyed'. They are a garden of beauty and great potential for the healing of the nations that our Bridegroom-King has given us to delight in, enjoy, nurture, cultivate, bring the best out of, and make useful and beneficial in real time.

Take delight in the Holy One's precious gifts. They are a tree of life to those who take hold of them - and happy *are all* who retain them. **Proverbs 3:18.**

Questions for Today's Study

1. What two Hebrew verbs does the Holy One employ to define our responsibility in relation to His statutes and His judgments?
2. What guidelines does the Holy One give us for dealing with foreigners?
3. What specific occult or 'paranormal' practices does the Holy One tell us are off-limits for His Covenant People?
4. What does the Holy One say about tattoos and about the practice of cutting designs in/shaving parts of our hairy areas – whether done in accordance with popular fashion, as a means of self-expression, or otherwise?
5. In today's Haftarah Yechezkiel is prophesying to the "elders" about the sins of their fathers.

*But I said to their children in the wilderness,
'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments,
nor defile yourselves with their idols,
I am YHVH your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them.
Hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you,
that you may know that I am the Holy One your God.
Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me;
they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments,
'which, if a man does, he shall live by them';
but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them
and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness.
Nevertheless I withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake,
that it should not be profaned in the sight of the Gentiles
in whose sight I had brought them out.
Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness,
that I would scatter them among the Gentiles, and disperse them throughout the countries,
because they had not executed My judgments,
but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths,
and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols.
Therefore I also gave them up to statutes that were not good,
and judgments by which they could not live. And I pronounced them unclean
because of their approaches, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass through the fire,
that I might make them desolate and that they might know that I am the Holy One.*

[Ezekiel 20:18-26]

[A] What are the 'statutes' and 'judgments' of your fathers the Holy One was referring to in verse 18 [i.e. what did He tell the children of Israel not to walk in]? [Hint: see Leviticus 18:1-3]

[B] What ‘statutes’ and ‘judgments’ did the Holy One tell the children of Israel to walk in and keep?

[C] In verse 20, Yechezkiel clearly references a statement made by YHVH in parsha *Acharei Mot* [i.e. Leviticus 18:4-5]. What is that statement?

[D] Why did the Holy One say He ‘withdrew’ His Hand from judgment against Israel when they profaned His Sabbaths and fixed their eyes on their fathers’ idols?

[E] What ‘*statutes that were not good*’ and ‘*judgments by which they could not live*’ did the Holy One give Israel over to when He scattered them as seeds among the nations?

[F] What does the Holy One say is the ultimate purpose of all His judgments upon Israel? [Hint: it is found in the concluding phrase of verse 26].

6. In the assigned B’rit Chadasha reading for today Kefa [also known as ‘Simon Peter’] continues speaking about Biblical holiness from a Hebraic perspective:

*Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully,
who prophesied of the grace that would come to you
searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Messiah who was in them
was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Messiah and the glories that
would follow to them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us
they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you
through those who have preached the glad tidings to you
by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.*

[I Peter 1:10-12]

[A] Kefa begins with a reference to ‘this salvation’ - in the Greek text, *os soterias*. To understand what he means by ‘salvation’, look up the first usage of the Greek word *soterias* in the Scriptures. It is found in Luke 1:69-75 in the ‘Magnificat’ song of Miryam.

[B] What, according to Luke 1:71, are we ‘saved’ from?

[C] What, according to Luke 1:72-75, are we ‘saved’ for?

[D] Kefa testifies that the prophets of the TaNaKh had a certain spirit in them. How does Kefa describe the spirit that indwelt the prophets?

*May the Bridegroom-King come to you, dwell in you,
and transform you to the point where you become holy even as He is holy.*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Psalm 119:171-172

My lips will utter praise; for You teach me Your statutes.

*My tongue will speak of Your word,
for all Your commandments are righteousness.*