

Shiur L'Yom Shishi¹

[Friday's Study]

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| READINGS: | <i>Torah Emor:</i> | Leviticus 24:1-44 |
| | <i>Haftarah:</i> | Ezekiel 44:28-31 |
| | <i>B'rit Chadasha:</i> | I Peter 2:10 |

The lamps on the pure gold menorah before the Holy One must be tended continually.
[Leviticus 24:4]

Today's *Emor* Meditation is Psalm 92;
This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition No. 6, B'racha[Blessing]

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe – Then the Holy One spoke to Moshe ... ***l'emor Tzav et-B'nei Yisra'el*** – speak this charge to B'nei Yisrael ... ***veyikchu eleicha shemen zayit zach katit*** - and they are to take for you pure oil of mortar-pressed olives **Leviticus 24:1-2a.**

Emor's concluding passages, like the ones that preceded them in this parsha, will begin with the precious words: ***Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor*** – Then the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ... **Leviticus 24:1.** These life instructions emanated *directly from the Creator of Heaven and Earth*, as part of the stunning Sinaitic *Kedusha Discourse*. We are learning, through *sh'ma*-ing our King's Voice and *sh'mar*-ing His Covenant instructions, to walk steadfastly in *kedusha* – *i.e.* Divinely-energized holiness – in all situations, under all circumstances ... and to train our children and children's children to do the same.

In this discourse the Holy One has taught us both [a] the level of *kedusha* we are called to operate in and [b] the most common trap doors of *tumah* distraction, seduction, and corruption that we are to steer clear of, in each of the following areas:

- [1] the *courts/beauty realm* of our King (*i.e.* the Mish'kan/Tabernacle);
- [2] the *camp of the Redeemed* (relations with our brother, our neighbor, the poor man, the rich man, the deaf, the blind, the stranger, the *zaken*, etc.);
- [3] our own homes & *interactions with nuclear family members*;
- [4] our *self-life*, *i.e.* our attitudes, moods, appetites, biological urges, thoughts, *EmotionTide*, reactions/responses, judgments/critical analyses, speech, behavior patterns, and calendaring approaches.

We have learned that *tumah* potholes and trapdoors – *i.e.* opportunities to take up conflicting loyalties and indulge unharnessed emotions and attitudes - are going to be encountered in every aspect of life on earth, but tend to be especially problematic when connected to the following:

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- a. Close encounters with animals other than *tahor*-species of livestock;
- b. Close encounters with death and dying;
- c. Satisfying hunger and satiating thirst (eating and drinking);
- d. Reproductive system cycles and the fluids/hormones they activate;
- e. sexual activity;
- f. interpersonal drama;
- g. interactions with the very rich and the very poor;
- h. formulating theories and opinions in our pseudo-intellec[t]s;
- i. abstractualizing/labeling/image-assigning;
- j. marketplace transactions;
- k. conversations & expressions of opinion;
- l. celebrations/observances;
- m. dysfunctional bodily function/symptomology.

Let us review a few of the prophetic messages we have gleaned already this week.

The Parsha of Prophetic Messages – A Partial Review

First of all, we learned the Hebrew name of this week's parsha. While usually translated into English simply as *spea[k]*, or *say*, *emor* means much more than merely to repeat words in sequence in some conversational sense. Particularly in the context of the present discourse of Torah – the *Kedusha* Discourse of Sinai - the Hebrew word *emor* means to *serve as a vessel for the release of a creative word from the Creator to His Creation*.

Spoken to Moshe at this critically important time in the Torah narrative the Divine directive to *Emor* means to *declare forcefully* on earth the Will and Ways and Protocols of the King of Heaven. This *Emor* directive calls forth Kingdom-thoughts, Kingdom-words and Kingdom-actions from ordinary men and women. It means release a life-giving empowerment of Divine energy to go with the calling to Kingdom-lifestyle. The parsha is full of '*Kingdom First*' messages. For redeemed, called, anointed kohanim of the Bridegroom-King, the only reasonable course of action is to *put His Kingdom's message first in everything they do*.

Secondly, we learned that the *Sh'ma* people of the Holy One have a Divine Calling and Mission to *sanctify* - and never *profane* – their Beloved Bridegroom's Name.

Thirdly, we learned that the materials the Holy One directed in Torah be brought to the altar as *korban* were never intended to be used as a means of ordinary support and sustenance by the *kohanim*. We learned that any benefit the *kohanim* enjoyed from the *korbanot* brought to the altar of the *Mish'kan* by the Hebrew people was incidental - a mere pleasant by-product of the 'drawing close' process which was the much more significant substance of the *korbanot* instructions. We learned that

the materials of *korban* the Holy One called for were merely the *medium of approach* – i.e. the *surrogates* - through which those who brought them entered the precious place of *intimate Covenantal communion* with the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Ya'akov. We learned that the members of the Redeemed Community who chose to bring the physical materials of *korban* to the *Mish'kan* were not religious devotees acting out of a sense of obligation or a desire to curry favor or in hopes of getting forgiveness or wrangling some kind of material blessing but were instead *passionate, star-struck lovers* – the fervent, lovesick ones among the Betrothed Bride-to-be of the Holy One. We learned that those seeking to make *korban* at the brazen altar of the *Mish'kan* came at their Bridegroom-King's invitation, to be near the One their soul loves, to visit with Him on His terms, to renew and revitalize their covenant vows of *na'aseh v'nishmah*, and to share intimate moments of communion with Him there at the altar, with His Friends.

Fourthly, we have learned that the *korbanot* the Holy One's people brought to the Holy One at such times were *precious gifts of bridal love*, each of which bore the Bride's *unique fragrance* and revealed her *unique essence*. We have learned that each time a member of the Redeemed Community "laid hands" upon an item of *korban* before surrendering it into the hands of the Holy One's appointed priest *something very spiritual happened* which, at least in the eyes of the Holy One, resulted in the offeror actually *imparting himself or herself into it*. We have learned that the intense desire of the offeror was actually for *herself* to become the food for her Bridegroom; and that through her laying on her hands the food/gifts she brought ceased to be no mere meat, grain, oil, etc., and in the eyes of her Bridegroom, actually became *her*. And we learned that from the moment she laid her hands upon the 'stuff' she brought to her Bridegroom's altar took on *her fragrance and her personality* in the Bridegroom's eyes it could never be owned by any human being – priest, prophet, or king. It was from that moment on the Holy One's, and *His alone*. It was not – and would never be - some priest's fee or honorarium.

In fact, we have learned through our studies this week that the materials of *korban* were never to be considered to become the "property" of the *kohanim*, nor were they to be spent or used however the priest might like. We learned that the consumption of these materials of *korban* in a 'holy place' and in a respectful, reverent manner, was a *duty* of the priesthood – indeed, one of the priest's main parts in the "dance" which the Holy One choreographed for the sons of Aharon. Why? Because the priests were to enjoy these things *on the Holy One's behalf*, and thereby, through their act of eating on the Holy One's behalf, they were to symbolize the Holy One and His Bride-to-be "breaking bread" together as a covenant meal - the last step in the dance of love between the Betrothed Bride-to-

be and the Bridegroom.

Fifthly, we learned that the Holy One instructed everyone who contemplates approaching Him through a *korban*-surrogate to become *personally involved* with the *korban*-surrogate he had selected. The selection of materials through which to make *korban* was to be a very personal, intimate walk with the Holy One. The person desiring to make *korban* was to select the best he had, then personally inspect the animal or produce for any “defect”, “spot”, or “blemish”.

We learned that the reason that any animal or bundle of produce which one of the Holy One’s redeemed brought to the altar as a substitute for himself must not be in a blemished state was that for a person to bring a blemished item as a surrogate would not only dishonor the Holy One but would cause the offeror to miss the mark of the deep, intimate level of relationship the one making *korban* was attempting to attain.

Sixthly, we learned that as the Holy One’s *k’doshim* we have been given a visible platform/stage in time upon which to recount in the sight of all the world the various facets of the Divine Bridegroom’s glorious plan of redemption and sanctification. We learned that a big part of our Mission and Calling in life is to infuse the elemental aspect of human existence on earth – *i.e. time* - with holiness through participating with the Holy One in a repeating series of regularly repeating *mo’edim* [usually translated into English as “festivals”]. But we have learned that these *mo’edim* are intended by our Divine Bridegroom to serve as sequential episodes in an epic drama of redemption – a multi-act play through which we as the Holy One’s witnesses are called to retell over and over again the greatest story of love imaginable. We learned that the *mo’edim* are an important part of our Bridal identity and mission on earth.

Whew – what a week of prophetic messages!

And Now ... On to the Subject Matter of Today’s Aliyah

In the concluding aliyah of *Emor* we will learn even more about the distinct purpose and calling in life of the Holy One’s *sh’ma* people. This aliyah will cover three subjects. The first two will be matters of the “inner court” of the *Mish’kan* [Tabernacle]. The Holy One will give us instructions about *keeping the oil fresh and flowing, keeping the menorah burning and keeping bread on the table of the Holy One’s Presence*. With this, the great Kedusha Discourse will reach its end. The revelation download of *Emor* will then conclude with a shocking story – the narrative of both the first fight and the first outburst of blasphemy in the *Mish’kan* era. For the first time since work on the *Mish’kan* project started [see Exodus 35], interpersonal drama arose in the camp. The story of this intense outburst is real, but

the Writer of the Torah also uses it a parable through which to illustrate pictorially the main themes of the *Kedusha Discourse* – i.e. the importance of us *becoming holy* as our Bridegroom-King is holy, and *sanctifying His Holy One's Name*.

SPOILER ALERT: THIS DISCOURSE-ENDING NARRATIVE WILL BE A UNIT TEST OF ALL WE HAVE LEARNED HERETOFORE!

‘Keeping the Light On’- for the Visitation of the Bridegroom-King

The first subject the Divine Bridegroom will address in today's aliyah is the procedure for keeping an ample supply of pure oil for the *menorah* in place at all times. I call this *partnering with the High Priest to keep the Kingdom Lampstand burning*. We are called to work in close partnership with the High Priest. It is our responsibility to keep fresh, pure oil coming – and it is his responsibility to faithfully employ the oil that we produce and provide to Him in the grand enterprise of keeping the Kingdom's lamp burning clean and bright. What is our assignment? We are to tend the olive trees; to steward the groves in which they grow, and to do what is necessary, at all times, in all seasons, to keep them flourishing. We are to tend them faithfully, prune them when necessary, and harvest them when they are ready. We are to become masters of the disciplines of the olive press - i.e. *gat shemane* (Gethsemane). We are to do whatever it takes, day by day, season by season, to provide High Priest with Kingdom-quality, holy oil.

Is this obligation to be taken literally and performed physically? Not when there is no earthly *Mish'kan* in operation, as is presently the case. But the obligation does not go away just because it cannot be fulfilled in the physical, temporal realm. We just have to look a little deeper at the *mitzvah* and its implications – past the *p'shat* [literal] level, to the levels of *remez* [that of which the literal hints or foreshadows], of *drash* [spiritual application], and of *sod* [mystery; ultimate, unchanging Divine purpose]. Hence we pray ‘*Open our eyes, O Holy One, that we may see wondrous things in your Torah!*’ For I am a stranger on the earth – do not hide Your mitzvah from me! For my soul bursts with longing for your judgments at all times.’ **Psalm 119:18-20**. In that spirit, with that hunger, we begin see that the mitzvah of the oil hints at, applies to, and beautifully describes and draws us into virtually every essential feature, facet, and discipline of Covenant life. The process of producing and presenting pure, freshly mortar-pressed olive oil provides the perfect picture of what our day-by-day engagement with and meditation on Torah should look like and consist of. It describes what our *sh'mar*-ing of our King's *mishpatim*, our *asah*-ing of His *mitzvot*, and our *zachar*-ing of His Testimonies should look like and consist of. It also describes what our prayer life should look like and consist of. It describes, as well, what our interactions with one another – which some like to just call ‘fellowship’ or ‘assembly’ – should be focused on and consist of. All of

these – and their fruit - should be pure in motive and pure in action. Freshly pressed in the mortar of real-life experience – never stale, historical, or produced by abstract thought, belief, or ivory tower theorizing.

Why does He want us to work with Him on this? For the Light, He said. This mitzvah - the mitzvah of pure, flesh-free oil - is critical to our great light-bearing mission. See **Isaiah 42:6-7²**, in **Matthew 5:14-15³**, and **Philippians 2:13-15**. We cannot do it without the Kohen doing the heavy lifting; but He will not do it without us playing our part.

What is the Secret of Producing Fresh, Mortar-Pressed Oil?

One of our assignments/assigned disciplines is to keep the *oil* – in Hebrew, *shemen* – fresh. Think of the mortar and the pestle. Our ‘mortar’ is our life situation, day-by-day, moment-by-moment. The situations, circumstances, challenges, and pressures of life are always doing the ‘olive pressing’. They will either bring out the flesh – or the oil! What is the pestle? The *pestle* is the *kedusha* realm – i.e. the things our King has described as *kadosh*/holy. This realm includes: 1. the Holy One’s Presence and Persona, invited by humility and accessed by conversational prayer, maximized by following royal court protocol; 2. The Holy One’s words/*Torah*; 3. the Holy One’s *Ruach* (empowering, quickening, inspiring Breath); 4. the *Sabbath*; 5. the *Mo’edim*; 6. *Eretz Yisrael* (the holy land), 7. Hebrew language (*lashon ha-kodesh* - the holy tongue); 8. *Tziyon* (i.e. ‘Zion’) the holy mountain; 9. *Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem), the holy city; and 10. *B’nei Yisrael* (the holy people).

Our fleshly appetites; our urges, drives, and desires’ our will, our mind, and our emotions; our attitudes; our word; our reactions/responses; and our behaviors - these are the olives. As the pestle of the Presence beats and presses these ‘olives’ against the hard surface of our life circumstances, what is to come out is ‘pure oil’ for the light. That means heartfelt prayer. That means meditation on the Words of Torah – as we lie down, as we rise up, as we sit to eat, and as we walk by the way. That means shalom. That means joy. That means patient trust. That means steadfast hope. That means persevering faith. That means irrepressible joy – no matter what the circumstances. That means humility, and kindness, and gentleness. Such things the Holy One can use as ‘light’ to the gentiles.

Our ‘oil’ is never to be allowed to get stale. It is never to be allowed to be corrupted by chunks of our flesh – or debris from the atmosphere. It is never to be

² Isaiah 42:6-7: *I, the Holy One, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.*

³ In Matthew 5:14 Yeshua tells His disciples: *You are the light of the world ... let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in the Heavens.*

allowed to dry up. It is never to be allowed to turn rancid. We are to stay fully engaged. Each day we are to take steps to assure that we – as individuals and as a Covenant Community - never run out of, or even run low on, *the fuel of revelation*.

As stated above, the Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as ‘oil’ is ***shemen***. *Shemen* does not refer to a petroleum deposit from the depths of the earth; it refers instead to the clear liquid that is extracted from the flesh of the ripe fruit of the olive tree. We are each to learn very well the way to *Gat-shemeni* – the olive press. And we are to constantly be about the business of crushing the flesh – *i.e.* the animalistic, temporal, self-obsessed aspects of our personas and personalities - in order that pure and precious oil – *i.e.* *shemen* - can be released into the world ***for the light***. Let us continue the reading to see how this plays out:

Michutz l'farochet ha-edut b'Ohel Mo'ed

Outside the cloth partition in the Tent of Meeting

y'aroach oto Aharon

Aharon is to arrange it and set it in order⁴

me'erev ad-boker lif'nei Adonai tamid

from evening to morning, constantly before the Face of the Holy One.

chukat olam l'doroteichem

This is to be an eternal law for all your generations.

[Leviticus 24:1-3]

In the geography of the *Mish'kan* (a shadow on earth of a spiritual reality in Heaven) the *Menorah* [*i.e.* the golden lampstand] was located in the Inner Chamber. What went on inside the Holy Place of the *Mish'kan* was not visible to anyone but the Holy One and the appointed priests. The *ministry of the Menorah* was done in private – and was not part of any communal worship experience. And yet in order for the priest to be able to perform it ordinary people, people like you and me, had to press real oil from the flesh of real olives and bring that oil to the priest.

The daily Menorah service was - and in its spiritual counterpart is - *a personal act of devotion*, performed with the substance of this world in private in the “inner chambers”. Nevertheless the Holy One lovingly instructs us His *k'doshim* that it is absolutely essential that this private, personal type of priestly service be done every day - festival or no festival, community worship experience or no community worship experience. Why? Because the Holy One knows - and wants His people in all generations to know - that unless this private, personal, intimate act of inner

⁴ The Hebrew verb is *y'aroach*, *yod*, *ayin*, *resh*, *kaf sofit*, a derivative form of the verb root *arach*, *ayin*, *resh*, *kaf sofit*, Strong's Hebrew word #6186, pronounced *aw-rawkh'*. The first Biblical usage of this verb root is in Genesis 14:8, to describe a military attack according to a predetermined strategy. See also Genesis 22:9, where the verb is used to describe the process of placing of wood by Avraham upon the altar he built on Mount Moriyah, on which he was prepared to present Yitzchak as an *olah*.

chamber renewal is done by His people, outward expressions of “worship” will mean nothing. Indeed, it will like day old manna become a stench in the nostrils of the Holy One and the world - because it will become mere religious “hype”. And *hype* is, after all, the precursor of *hypocrisy*. And both hype and hypocrisy in His people cause His Holy name to be *profaned*. Just the thought of such things makes me shudder. But behold, Torah calls us to a more excellent way.

The bringing by *each individual person* in the Redeemed Community of pure oil can be likened to the personal daily rededication of one’s heart and life to the Holy One. This process of daily renewal, even more than the *Mo’edim*, is the essence of the lifestyle of the Redeemed. This is, after all, what gives the observance of the *Mo’edim* meaningful. The Menorah is *the flame symbolizing the continuing viability and faithfulness of the Holy One’s people*. Its fire makes a statement that resounds throughout the Heavenly realms, saying to all with ears to hear: The Holy One’s redemptive plan for mankind and Creation is alive and well ... for behold – the *Sh’ma People* live – and are still producing pure oil, freshly pressed in the mortar of life experience!

***The Holy One’s Redemptive Plan for Mankind and Creation
is Alive and Well ... for Behold – the Sh’ma People live!***

The eyes of the Holy One go to and fro over the earth. They watch over His *Sh’ma* people jealously. In unseen ways every day Divine Hands provide the *Sh’ma* people everything they need to survive, flourish, and fulfill their divine destiny. He is our Protector, Defender and Vindicator. He is our Sustainer. He is our Deliverer and Redeemer. Protecting our welfare while safeguarding our development is His Covenant undertaking – and His delight. And we return His love. Rightly do we love Him! We show Him the love He deserves by joyfully participating with Him in the Divine Mission of redemption and sanctification. We make sure we have fresh oil for the lamp of life - day-by-day, week-by-week, year-by-year, and generation-by-generation. And those who serve the Redeemed Community as priests trim the lamps and rekindle the flame at the beginning of each day at sundown, all through the dark of night, throughout all generations.

Reading Torah’s instructions concerning the menorah brings to memory the radio commercial for a budget motel company, at the conclusion of which the announcer with a warm, friendly voice says: “*We’ll leave the light on for you.*” Think of the menorah as *the light the Holy One wants left on in His chambers - for whoever yet will come*. And now see this truth: *We are that menorah!* The oil that fuels our light is the pure oil that comes from the pressing of our flesh as we *sh’ma* the Words and surrender to the Will of the Holy One in ordinary affairs and circumstances of daily life.

May the light of the *menorah* burn brightly in you, and in me, and bring real, meaningful illumination to the dark world in which we live. May you see the imagery of this as you light of the Sabbath candles tonight. May it reflect in the faces of all who sit at your table this *Erev Shabbat*. Keep pressing the flesh to release the precious oil. Keep the lamp burning evening to morning. Keep the light on - for the Visitation of the Bridegroom-King ... and to hold out the beacon of hope for us, for our children, and for all nations and peoples of the world.

The Bread Of Life

The next subject covered by the Holy One in *Emor* is another important aspect of “inner court” ministry - the priestly act of placing of the *Bread of the Presence* (literally, the Bread of His Face) on the Table of Showbread. The Holy One directs that this take place every Sabbath⁵. As long as the earthly *Mish'kan* stood, every Friday as sundown approached⁶ designated priests would bring trays of the “*Bread of His Face*” into the Holy Place and arrange them on the table that sat beside the Menorah. Here is what the Holy One says about this in the Torah:

V'lakachta solet v'afita otah shteym esreh chalot

And take of the finest grade of wheat flour and bake it into twelve loaves.

V'samta otam sh'tayim ma'arachot

Arrange [these loaves] in two stacks,

Sh'nei esronim yihyeh ha-chalah ha-echat

Each loaf shall contain two-tenths [of an ephah].

shesh ha-ma'arachet

six loaves to each stack.

al ha-shulchan ha-tahor lif'nei Adonai

This shall be on the undefiled table that is before the Face of the Holy One.

V'natata al ha-ma'arechet levonah zakah

Place pure frankincense alongside these stacks.

V'hayetah l'lechem l'az'karah isheh l'Adonai

This will be the memorial portion, burned unto the Holy One.

B'yom ha-Shabat b'yom ha-Shabat y'ar'cheinu lif'nei Adonai

From Sabbath to Sabbath these shall be arrayed before the Holy One's Face.

tamid me'et b'nei-Yisra'el b'rit olam

It is an eternal covenant that this must come from the Israelites.

[Leviticus 24:5-8]

The Covenantal actions of bringing fine flour and baking special loaves of bread

⁵ Read Exodus 25:23-30 for background on this aspect of inner court *avodah* [service].

⁶ The Shabbat runs from Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown – corresponding to the ‘evening and the morning’ of the 7th day of Creation.

for the table were, like the tending of the flame of the Menorah, a private matter – a means by which the priests among the Holy One’s people would acknowledge *Shabbat* by *Shabbat* that it is solely by His Presence they [we] live and solely through His Presence that they [we] have provision.

Day by day we are to keep the light of our souls burning brightly for Messiah. Shabbat-by-Shabbat we are to spread a fresh table for Him. Remember therefore as you make *HaMotzei* at your *Erev Shabbat* table tonight, holding up the loaves of Challah, that the bringing of the loaves and the placement of them on the table can be likened to our “seeking the Holy One’s Face” as well as His “Hand”. According to Torah, you see, the *challot* are to be placed *lif’nei Adonai* – i.e. before the Face of the Holy One.

Likewise the making of *HaMotzei* on Erev Shabbat can be likened to our coming before *Him* - individually and as families - and revealing our “face” to *Him*. As we look honestly at ourselves we find that we put on “masks” during the week. Usually we do this quite unintentionally in response to the demands of daily life or as a result of an attempt to cover up sin - or the painful shallowness - in our lives. Each *Erev Shabbat* we are called to *peel off all the masks, be real* with the Holy One and with ourselves. We are called to *return to our real identity as k’doshim* - sons and daughters of the Holy One who were made in His likeness and created in order to sanctify His Name in the earth. May I challenge you to let that be your focus and your mission this evening – and all through the upcoming Shabbat?

A Step Back Into Narrative:

The Parable of the Man Who Profaned the Holy One’s Name

Our parsha concludes with a stunning story – a real-life parable involving a man born of the union of a Hebrew woman and an Egyptian man. Notice how this story is juxtaposed against the injunction for us to bring ‘*pure oil, of freshly mortar-pressed olives, for the light*’. Notice, for that matter, how this story is intentionally placed against the backdrop of the *Kedusha Discourse*. We are being taught about contrasts. We are being taught both who we are supposed to be, and how we are to live AND who we must not be, and how we must not live. I have no doubt that this story actually happened exactly as it is represented in Torah. And I also have no doubt that the Holy One chose to have it recorded in Torah at just this strategic place, in order to put an exclamation mark on everything He has been teaching us at Sinai.

We have been taught – radically charged – that we are to be *kedoshim*, even as the Holy One is *kadosh*. We have been taught – radically charged – that we are to separate the holy from the profane, and the clean from the unclean – and limit

engagement with the profane and unclean. We have been taught – radically charged – that we are to bless and not to curse. But what if one of us – or a lot of us - just ignored everything we have been taught? What if we got stiff-necked and rebelled against every radical charge we have been given at Sinai. We are about to find out. We are about to read the story of the ultimate *anti-kedoshim*, *anti-kohen*, and *anti-shalom-asah-er*. Here is how that story – the greatest contrast to the lessons we have been taught at Sinai - is presented in the inspired Scroll:

Vayetze ben-ishah Isre'elit

And an Israeli woman's son

v'hu ben-ish Mitzri betoch B'nei Yisra'el

whose father was Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel;

vayinatzu b'machaneh ben ha-Isre'elit v'ish ha-Isre'eli

and this Israeli woman's son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp

Vayikov ben-ha-ishah ha-Isre'elit et-ha-shem vayekalel

And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name and cursed.

[Leviticus 24:10-11]

Notice the five ‘*anti-Kedoshim*’ aspects of what the man in question is described as doing:

1. *he prioritized his own interests and feelings over either the shalom of the Redeemed Community as a whole OR the Grand Redemptive and Restorative Plan, of the Holy One;*
2. *he engaged in an argument with a fellow member of the Camp, which he then let escalate into a full-blown grudge match/fight/feud;*
3. *instead of taking whatever controversy he had with this fellow member of the Camp to the elders, the judges, or the priests, he took matters into his own hands;*
4. *he blasphemed the Name of the Holy One; and*
5. *he let his mind think, and his lips form and pronounce, curses instead of blessings.*

This is an illustration of the spirit of *anti-Kedoshim* at work. It is nothing new. It is all about the flesh, the pseudo-intellect, and the poisonous fruit of the tree of the knowledge of ‘good’ and ‘evil’. And alas, its flaring nostrils and debris can be seen at work virtually any day, in any place, over any petty little issue of pride, ambition, offense, or uncontrolled fleshly appetite.

The First Interpersonal Drama Clash of the Mish'kan Era – IS ON!!!

Ever since the Community of the Redeemed received and became energized by the forgiveness of the Bridegroom-King despite their scandalous precipitation of and participation in the sin of the golden calf, there has been a sweet atmosphere of

shalom in the camp. There has been no interpersonal drama. There have been no angry shouts. There have been no accusations. There has been no *lashon ha ra*. There has been no fighting. Forgiveness – and trusting the Holy One instead of self-assertion – always yields *shalom*; unforgiveness, and self-promotion always yield the opposite. Unforgiveness and offense always testify to a total absence from our lives of four very important *kedoshim* characteristics: 1. *Shalom*; 2. *simchah* – i.e. abiding joy; 3. *Ahavat l're'eicha* – i.e. the love of your fellow man; and 4. *yirat Adonai* – i.e. the reverential fear of the Holy One.

Alas, the sweet season of forgiveness empowered *shalom*, *simchah*, *ahavat l're'eicha* and *yirat Adonai* is about to be rudely interrupted. Oh, the Presence of the Holy One in the Camp is still palpable – even visible. Nevertheless, something dark and sinister this way comes. Many years ago, back when the Hebrew people were still slaves in Egypt, *Shelomit*, a young woman from the tribe of Dan, had become impregnated by an Egyptian man. We are spared the gory details of the union; they are not relevant to the parable. The child *Shelomit* bore turned out to be a son – a young man of mixed race, half Hebrew and half Egyptian. Let's see – the last child of that mixture we knew was ... *Yish'mael*, the *wild donkey of a man*, whose *hand was against every other man*, and every other man's hand against him. **Genesis 16: 11-12.** Time passed. The son of *Shelomit* grew up. We can assume, since no siblings are mentioned, that the young man was a firstborn – and was thus one of the thousands saved from the plague of the firstborn by having a parent who followed the Holy One's lamb's-blood-on-the-doorposts Passover protocol. We can assume that he walked, side-by-side with everyone else in the Redeemed Community and mixed multitude, through the divided waters of the Sea of Reeds. We can assume that when they reached the other side safe and sound his voice joined the voice of the Throng, singing '*Ashirah L'Adonai ki ga'oh ga'ah*'. We can assume he ate daily of the manna the Holy One provided, and that he drank often from, and washed many times a day in, the sweet, cool, refreshing living water that the Holy One provided miraculously the entire community from a rock. We can assume that he, like everyone else in the Camp, heard the Great Shofar of Heaven blow at Sinai. We can assume that he stood alongside the others as the beautiful Voice of the Creator of the Universe rang out over the earth, proclaiming who He created and promised to empower each of them –including the son of *Shelomit* – to become. We can assume he was also present, months later, when the Manifest Presence of the Holy One descended on and filled the *Mish'kan*, and again seven full days later when fire fell from Heaven on the brazen altar. Oh, this young man did not have an easy life, I am sure. But no one does. There are no easy lives. But whatever difficulties life presented this man, he was by no means a stranger to, or untouched by, the majesty, the beauty, the kindness, or the power of the Holy One.

Of course, we the reader of Torah did not walk even one step in this man's shoes. In all honesty, we have never even heard of him – or even known that he exists – until now. The Holy One knows the full story, of course. All we know of the young man is what we are given to read in this brief narrative. *Vayetze betoch b'nei Yisrael* we are told. The Hebrew verb employed means to *depart* – *i.e.* to leave on a journey. Vayetze is the phrase used by Torah to describe Ya'akov's leaving his father and mother's tents and heading off for Charan to find a wife. Was this young man planning on leaving the camp of the redeemed, too? Was he planning on going back to Egypt, to his father's house? We do not know. But whatever his plans were, he never made it out of the camp. On his way out, he had an encounter with another man – an unidentified Hebrew. Alas, the encounter did not go well.

Vayinatzu b'machaneh, we are told. The Hebrew verb in this phrase is *natzah*, meaning *to grab by the hair*. Who started this fight – and who grabbed who by the hair first – is nowhere stated in the text. Who was to blame for the fight is simply not an issue. In the eyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, assessing blame for an event is never a 'thing'. In the Kingdom, the focus is resolution, not retribution. The point is that stuff happens – the men fought. They grabbed hold of each other. And that is all we the reader need to know about the fight itself. We are not supposed to take sides. We are not to get caught up in our neighbor's interpersonal drama.

Unfortunately, the story does not end with the fight. *Vayikov et-ha-shem vayekale*, we are told. There are two Hebrew verbs in this phrase. There are two elements to this man's offense. The first is a derivative of *naqab*⁷; the second is a derivative form of *qalal*.

The first verb, *naqab*, which our English Bibles have historically translated as 'blaspheme', literally means to disembowel, to hollow out; to evacuate or make empty. In the course of war or fighting, it means to pierce, perforate, or thrust through with a spear or other sharp object, causing an opponent's insides to pour out. What does the text of Torah tell us that the son of Shelomit *naqab*-ed? It says he *naqab*-ed *ha-shem* – *i.e.* the name, the characteristics, attributes, and unique personality of a person or thing. What the text does not specifically tell us is whose name the young man *naqab*-ed. Generations have assumed, based upon what happened next, that the name he *naqab*-ed was that of the Holy One. No one knows exactly what the son of Shelomit did or said – but it is clear that whatever he did and/or said, it reflected *absolute disdain for the Holy One* and *total disrespect* for all the Holy One had done for him.

The hieroglyphic of the Hebrew word *naqab*, as I read it, is that the son [nun]

⁷ Naqab is *nun*, *kuf*, *beit*. Strong's Hebrew word #5344, it is pronounced *naw-kawb'*.

elevates himself to be head [*kuf*] of the household [*beit*]. That is the perfect picture of *rebellion*. That demonstrates a lack of the basic element necessary for the Holy One's community to function – honor of father and mother. That means *every man for himself*, and *whatever feels good, do it*. Do you recognize that picture? You should. It is the cornerstone of the 21st Century Western culture in which we live. But you do not have to succumb to this cultural disease process. Resolve to be an overcomer and transcender.

The second verb used by Torah to describe the actions of the son of Shelomit is *qalal*. It means to diminish something or someone in value, by taking weight or glory from it, thus reducing its influence, the respect shown to it, and/or its status of honor. Can a mere man's words or behaviors really disembowel or diminish the honor of the Name of the Holy One? Of course they can. They can – and do – each time they *reduce the Holy One's Name to a by-word*. They can – and do – each time they make our Great King's Name – and indeed all He is – appear meaningless, valueless, and unimportant, by *throwing His Holy Name around flippantly in casual conversation*. They can – and do – each time they *elevate the emotions of the moment, or the issues of the day to prominence over the calling and essential purpose of life – i.e. to continually sanctify the Holy One's Name, whatever the circumstances*.

But What Does the Holy One Say Should Be Done With the Son of Shelomit?

The people in the camp had never seen or heard any such thing – at least since leaving Egypt. Even with the golden calf incident, there had been a thin veneer of respect - real or feigned - among those who participated in the disgraceful debacle. But this? They did not know what to do. They apprehended the young man and brought him to Moshe. Moshe, of course, had a history of anger management problems and violent behavior as well. See Exodus 2:11-13 and Exodus 31:19-28. But in this case, Moshe had no answers either. So into the difficult situation the Holy One spoke.

Divine Message #1: *Take it Outside*

The Holy One's first instruction to Moshe was: ***Hotzei et-ha-mekalel el-michutz l'machaneh*** - i.e. *Take the one who has released the extreme negativity outside the camp ...*. Leviticus 24:14a. The camp of the redeemed of the Holy One's Redeemed is no place for either negativity or judgment. Those things belong to unclean and profane realms. If they are to exist at all, they must not be allowed to pollute the atmosphere, or distract the attention, of the camp.

Divine Message #2:
Let No One Sit in the Seat of the Scornful
or the Ivory Tower of the Theoretical Justice; this is a Hands-On Matter

The second instruction the Holy One gave Moshe was: **v'sameichu chol-hashom'im et-yedeihem al-rosho** – i.e. *And let all the hearers [of the extreme negativity] lay their hands on his head.* **Leviticus 24:14b.** The Holy One directed every person in the Camp who actually heard the extreme negativity spoken by the son of Shelomit to physically lay their hands upon his head. One-by-one. Personally. Not on social media. Not through the ‘gossip grapevine’. Not on some editorial page. Note, if you will, that the laying on of the hands of each affected person mirrored the action that was required of any man bringing an animal to the altar as his surrogate of approach. By laying on one’s hands, a person acknowledges ‘*this could/should have been me. I am no better than this one. I deserve no better than his fate.*’ *Selah*, dear one. As the Master said: **Let him who is without sin**

Divine Message #3:
The Rocks Will Cry Out

The third instruction the Holy One gave was **veragmu oto kol-ha-edah** – i.e. *and let all the witness throng heap up.* **Leviticus 24:14c.** Historically, the directive to *ragam* in this instance has been interpreted as meaning to stone the man to death. Perhaps that is really what was meant. But it is not what the Holy One said. *Literally, ragam* just means to gather stones and make a heap or pile out of them. It does not mean to throw them or use them to execute someone. Consider the story of what happened when Ya’akov and Lavan concluded their quarrel at *Gilad* [Gilead]. Ya’akov had all the men go gather stones and pile them up into a heap. Then Lavan said: ***“This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Avraham, the God of Nachor, and the God of their father judge between us.”*** Genesis 31:52-53.

The same verb, *ragam*, is used later, in verse 23, to describe what the community of the redeemed did in regard to Shelomit’s son. Nowhere does the text of Torah say this particular man died. Nowhere does it refer to his body, or in regard to him use the traditional words of execution, **mot yamut** [i.e. death, surely he will/must die]. The rocks that were gathered and piled up may or may not have been used to ‘stone’ him to death that day; but one thing is for sure, those stoned were to become a witness. They were to have a voice. They were to cry out, on behalf of the redeemed community, to the son of Shelomit: ***“I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Avraham, the God of Nachor, and the God of their father judge between us.”***

The Pronouncements

Dealing With Difficult Situations Going Forward

The Holy One did not stop by telling Moshe and the Redeemed Community how to deal with this one instance of extreme negativity in the camp. So that everyone would know the protocols going forward, he announced that, in the future, certain forms of extreme negativity were to be handled with the *mot yamut* – *i.e.* death, surely he will/must die – purging protocol. Specifically, the types of conduct for which *mot yamut* would, in the future, be called for included:

1. anyone who *naqab*'s the Name of the Holy One [Leviticus 23:16]; and
2. anyone who *nakah*'s [*i.e.* aggressively and maliciously attacks, strikes, tears apart, and/or murders] another man] [Leviticus 23:17].

We who are redeemed, and enjoy the wonder of the Holy One's presence in our midst, are called to love the Holy One with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. We are also called to love our neighbor as we ourselves have been loved. To *naqab* the Name of the Holy One is to completely abandon the first aspect of our mission; to *nakah* another human being is to completely abandon the second. They are both evidence of *an advanced, dangerously contagious, infection with the tumah of death*. Such a level of *tumah*, a level that has been allowed to grow and grow without restraint, is totally inconsistent with the life, health, and *shalom* that the Redeemed Community is called to model to the world.

The Holy One's call is still going out. We are each here on earth at our appointed such a time as this to open and keep flowing a fountain of beautiful, healing blessing. Resolve, dear one, to relish life. Resolve to look for the potential for greatness in all people, and to always pursue only that course of action the Holy One teaches us will bring an increasing measure of *shalom* to all situations. Bless every single person within your sphere of influence - while you have the opportunity. Bless them with *smiles of affirmation of the Divine Sparks within them* – whether or not those sparks are what they are manifesting when you see them. Bless all people the Holy One brings into your sphere of influence with *words that bring out the best in them*. Bless them with *the outflow of your own intimacy with the Bridegroom-King*. Bless them with *shalom* from His Throne. Bless them with joy from His Countenance. Bless them with patience from His Long-suffering, Slow-to-Anger Spirit. Bless them with wisdom from His Brilliant Mind. Bless them with a '*we can do this thing*' attitude. Bless them with *mature behaviors and noble deeds that inspire the greatness* within them. And most of all bless them with a sincere '*it is my privilege to know you*' approach. That – not judgment or criticism – is why the Holy One put them in your life, and put you in theirs?

Questions For Today's Study

1. The opening verses of today's aliyah deal with the ***menorah***.

- [A] What kind of oil is to be used?
- [B] Where is the Menorah to be located?
- [C] During what time period is the Menorah to be lit?
- [D] Who was instructed to trim and light the Menorah?
- [E] The light of the Menorah was said to burn "before" something. What?

2. The second subject covered by today's aliyah is another aspect of "inner court" ministry - the placing of the Bread of the Presence (literally, the Bread of His ***Face***), Shabbat after Shabbat.

- [A] How many loaves were there to be? Why this number?
- [B] How much flour was to be in each loaf?
- [C] Where were the loaves to be placed?
- [D] How were they to be arranged?
- [E] On what day, at what time, was this bread to be so arranged?
- [F] The purpose of doing this is stated in verses 7 and 8. Explain the purpose(s) the bread was to serve.

3. Parsha ***Emor*** concludes with a startling story. As you read this story consider the absolute shock that the community experiences, and carefully consider the reason for this shock. Take on the attitude of a news reporter - get curious - what exactly happened? Unfortunately, I fear that today there would be no shock should such a thing happen. Indeed such events happen daily - in churches and synagogues as well as on college campuses and in marketplaces.

Each of us should pause and *examine himself*. The Holy One's people are to think, *speak*, and act in a manner that will sanctify the Name of the Holy One in the eyes of the world. The opposite of *sanctifying* something is to *profane* it - to cause it to be disrespected or ignored as meaningless, unimportant, and irrelevant.

- [A] Who is the central figure in the story?
- [B] Who was his mother? His father?
- [C] Who got in a fight?
- [D] What did the central figure in our story do that got everyone's attention?
- [E] What did the people do first?
- [F] What did the Holy One tell Moshe to do with the man?
- [G] How was he to be executed - note each of the steps in the procedure.
- [H] As a result of this incident, what further instruction did the Holy One give to Moshe for the people to follow?
- [I] Look up the verb "blaspheme" in Strong's and Gesenius. What is the Hebrew word, and what does it mean? This is a very important definition to

remember, because it goes far beyond what you might have thought!

[J] This story is the setting for the announcement of certain standards of justice which the Holy One says are to prevail in the Redeemed community. Hebrew scholars tell us that “eye for eye”, “tooth for tooth”, etc. are Hebrew idioms for “punishment fitting the crime”, or “just and fair compensation”, rather than actual literal commands to maim wrongdoers. Whether this is the case or not, keep in mind who, in each case, was to inflict the punishment. Was it the injured person? His kinsmen? The elders? or the community as a whole?

[K] Why in your opinion does the answer to the preceding question (whose responsibility is it to inflict punishment for wrongdoing) make a difference?

4. Our concluding haftarah reading for parsha **Emor** is Ezekiel 44:28-31, which reads:

*They [priests after the order of Tzadok] shall have an inheritance:
I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no possession in Yisra'el;
I am their possession.*

*They shall eat the minchah [grain brought as a surrogate for korban minchah],
and the chata't [animals brought as surrogates for korban chata't],
and the asham [animals brought as surrogates for korban asham];
and every devoted thing in Yisra'el shall be their food.*

*The first of all the first fruits of everything, and every kind of korban-surrogate,,
of all your korbanot, are to be for the Kohen:
you are also to give to the Kohanim the first of your dough, to cause a blessing
to rest on your house. The Kohanim are not to eat of anything that dies of itself,
or is torn, whether it be bird or animal.*

[A] According to this passage what is to be the food of the *Tzedakkim* (priests after the Order of Tzadok, who in Ezekiel's temple will perform the “inner court” ministries of the Bread of His Presence and the Menorah)?

[B] What will their eating of this food symbolize?

5. The B'rit Chadasha reading for today is I Peter 2:10. Our English Bibles translate this verse as follows:

*[He has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light]
who in time past were no people, but now are God's people,
who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

This is Kefa's reference back to one of the most dramatic revelations of the TaNaKh, found in the book of Hosea. In that book a *navi* [i.e. prophet] to the “Northern Kingdom” received a heart-breaking instruction from the Holy One: “Go, take for yourself a wife of prostitution and children of unfaithfulness; for the land commits great adultery against the Holy One.” Hosea 1:2. As instructed Hosea

went out and married a prostitute - a woman our Bibles tell us was named *Gomer*⁸ [*gimel, mem, resh*, Strong's Hebrew word #1586)]. Alas, *Gomer* continued running around with other lovers. As a result she bore three children of unknown fathers. The Holy One gave each of these three children a prophetic name: the eldest son He called *Yizre'el* [meaning 'scattered']; the middle child, a daughter, He called *Lo-ruhamah* [meaning 'not loved']; and the youngest of the three, another son He called *Lo-ammi* ['not a people group/nation']. After these three children were born the Holy One promised Hoshea that He would one day reverse the negative aspects of their names. He promised that *Yizre'el* [scattered] would one day be called GATHERED, because the Holy One will, in time, re-gather [i.e. harvest] the people He has scattered. He promised that *Lo-ruhamah* (not loved) would one day be called *RUHAMA* [loved] and that one day *Lo-Ammi* (not a people/nation) would come to be known instead as *AMI* [My People].

Prophetically through these name changes the Holy One was declaring that in the fullness of time He would restore the children to the heritage of their mother's Husband.

[A] What are Hoshea 1:10 and chapter 2 of Hosea talking about?

[B] What is Kefa [Peter] saying in I Peter 2:10 – i.e. what does it mean that we are now a “people” and have “obtained mercy/love”?

[C] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as “mercy” [NIV, “love”] in Hosea 2:23. Write the Hebrew word in Hebrew letters with vowel markings and as transliterated into English. Then describe the Hebraic concept that that word entails.

[D] How does today's verse (I Peter 2:10) relate to I Peter 2:4-9.

*As we kindle the Shabbat candles and place the Challah bread on our Shabbat table tonight, ,
may we and all the k'doshim experience the renewal of the Fire of the Holy One,
may we see Him Face to Face, and may all our masks be removed,
so that we may sanctify, and not profane, His Holy Name.*

The Rabbi's son

⁸ The name *Gomer* is Biblically significant – as that was the name of the eldest son of *Yafet* [Japheth] – son of Noach. Recall that Noach had three sons – Cham, Shem, and Yafet. Shem was the progenitor of Avraham and the Arabic peoples. Cham was the progenitor of the Kena'anim [Kana'anites] and Egyptians. Yafet was the progenitor of the Europeans, Asians, and most likely the native Americans. According to the prophecy announced by Noach, Shem would have pre-eminence, and Yafet would dwell in the tents of Shem. Hoshea [a form of Yehoshua/Y'shua], marrying Gomer, is considered by some to be symbolic of the dispersion of the seed of Avraham throughout the lands of the descendants of Yafet [Europe, Asia, and America]. In those distant lands, many of the dispersed descendants of Ya'akov/Yisrael intermarried with goyim and produced children separated from, and having no heritage in, the covenant land, or understanding of or interest in the Torah.

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 92: *A song for the day of Shabbat.*

*It is a good thing to give thanks to the Holy One,
To sing praises to your name, Elyon;
To proclaim your lovingkindness in the morning and your faithfulness every night,
With the ten-stringed lute, with the harp, and with the melody of the lyre.
For you, HOLY ONE, have made me glad through your work.
I will triumph in the works of your hands.
How great are your works, HOLY ONE! Your thoughts are very deep.
A senseless man doesn't know, neither does a fool understand this:
Though the wicked spring up as the grass,
And though all the evildoers seem to flourish, they will be destroyed forever.
But you, HOLY ONE, are on high forevermore.
For behold your enemies, HOLY ONE -
Behold, your enemies will perish; all the evildoers will be scattered.
But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox.
I am anointed with fresh oil.
My eye has also seen my enemies.
My ears have heard of the wicked enemies who rise up against me.
The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.
He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
They are planted in the Holy One's house. They will flourish in our God's courts.
They will still bring forth fruit in old age.
They will be full of sap and green, to show that the Holy One is upright.*