

Shiur L'Yom Chamishi¹

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah B'midbar:** Numbers 4:1-15
 Haftarah: Hosea 2:21-22
 B'rit Chadasha: I Corinthians 12:18-20

This is the service of the sons of K'hat ...

[Numbers 4:4]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 135:1-12;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 5, *Rofei* - the Petition for Healing

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe v'el-Aharon l'emor – And the Holy One spoke to Moshe and Aharon, saying ... *Naso et-rosh b'nei K'hat mitoch b'nei Levi* - Lift up the head of the sons of K'hat from among the sons of Levi ... *l'mishpeichotam l'veit avotam* - for its families, and father's households. Numbers 4:1-2.

The revelation burst the Holy One has in store for us today pertains to the seed and bloodline of Levi through *K'hat*. That is, of course, the DNA strand from which Moshe, Miryam, and Aharon all came. Just remember, when it comes to the Sinaitic *mitzvot*, every picture tells a passion-play quality story. While we focus on the *K'hati* - i.e. those who bear K'hat's unique chromosome sequence – the manifestation of *avodah* the Holy One lays out in the verses we read today is designed to send a greater message - a message of *worldview*, of Kingdom *priorities*, and of *selfless service* that should inspire us all.

What Bloodline is This? And What Special Manifestation of Redemption Will This Bloodline Present to the World?

K'hat himself was born in the Promised Land, in the generation of the famine that resulted from the betrayal of Yosef. He was part of the 70-soul caravan that traveled to Egypt with Ya'akov in the time of the great descent. He died in exile, and it appears that while in the land of sphinxes and cuneiforms he accomplished little make the world to be a better place except siring and raising four sons of the covenant to carry on the Covenant bloodline. His earthly remains now lie buried somewhere in an unmarked and uncelebrated Egyptian tomb. But that is not the end of K'hat's story. He had sons. And through his sons, K'hat's destiny and calling live on. Indeed, Moshe, Aharon, and Miryam are among his long list of prodigious descendants. To them K'hat was not a nameless, faceless ancestor, but a beloved *patriarch*. Numbers 26:58-59.

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The Holy One places a great calling upon every human life. Yours is no exception, Dear Reader. Do you know your great calling?

Nevertheless, great callings do not get realized or recognized automatically. For some reason, sometimes the greatness of a calling never seems to manifest in any visible way at any time during the called individual's natural life cycle. Sometimes people the Holy One has destined for great things chooses a lesser destiny. Sometimes the world is not changed for the better. Sometimes it is even changed for the worse. But the Holy One is not deterred. Even if we so live our lives as to fail to leave any perceptible mark on world history, He stores all each person's unrealized callings and unexercised gifts in the genetic make-up of their children and children's children. And somewhere down the line, when conditions are more favorable – and someone is willing – He breathes fresh life into them like bellows blow fresh life into the embers of an old fire. And the flame arises again, as bright –or brighter – than ever.

In today's aliyah the Holy One is about demonstrate this process by breathing upon the descendants of K'hat and resurrecting the great calling He placed on K'hat's life. The name of K'hat will be honored – not by reason of his own personal accomplishments or victories, but by reason of the faithful Kingdom service of his descendants².

The Great Covenant Kingdom Mystery Concerning Fathers and Sons and Mothers and Daughters

You do realize that this world is ultimately all about fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, do you not? The Holy One started it by prophetically empowering the human beings He created to *'p'ru ur'vu – be fruitful, and multiply*³. And it was so from the beginning. It still is so today. And that is the only reason you and I and all the people we love – and even those we choose to hate - are around to give us that option.

If you stop the process ... well, if you could stop the process ... do you know what would happen? The world as we know it – and the great hope of redemption – would cease to exist. It is all *in the genes*, they say. We are – especially in the

² In the Ketuvim portion of the TaNaKh the K'hatim are mentioned in connection with the four kings – David, Hezekiah, Y'hoshafat, and Yosiah. During David's reign the family of a K'hati was among the those assigned to direct the singing in the Tabernacle. **I Chron. 6:16–23; cf. Ps. 88:1.** K'hati were also privileged to participate in the installation of the Ark in Jerusalem. **I Chron. 15:5.** In the days of King Y'hoshafat, when the nation of Y'hudah was invaded by the Moavi and Ammoni, it was the K'hatim who led the service of intercession. **II Chron. 20:19.** Descendants of K'hat also participated in the cleansing of the Temple in the time of Hezekiah. **II Chron. 29:12.** Yosiah tapped two descendants of K'hat to supervise the work of renovating the Temple. **II Chron. 34:12.** In the era of Ezra and Nehemiah the descendants of K'hat were put in charge of the changing of the showbread. **I Chron. 9:32.**

³ Genesis 1:28; see also Genesis 9:1, 7, 28: 3, and 35:11.

natural things of life – the product of our genetic strains. We are not hatched on earth – we are *begotten*. We have an earthly source. We draw life from an earthly taproot. And we are designed and empowered by our Creator to *become* an earthly source and a life-giving root for future generations as well.

The apple truly does not fall far from the tree - but it does fall. And if not consumed by the world it does reproduce. If it reproduces what comes forth tends to look very much like the battered old stump slowly decaying a short distance away. If you look closely enough you will see the same strengths – and alas, you will often see traces of the same weaknesses.

In every decade of life we tend to look – and speak, and act - more like our biological father and/or mother. But here is the beautiful reality of the Covenant the Holy One established with mankind: *We are not put on earth merely to reproduce our biological father or mother; what we are put on earth to do is to honor them.* And ultimately what honoring them means in the great strategic plan of the Creator is to *expand the positive contours of platforms of life each of them passed down to us while decreasing the negative contours that limited their honor in the course of their walk.*

Our lives are designed to constitute a precious Covenantal gift of the Holy One to our fathers – a gift that carries forth, and has the potential to increase the honor of, our father’s name, while erasing from the memory of man the negative, broken, destructive aspects of his fallen nature. It was true for Avram, son of Terach. It was true for Yitzchak, son of Avraham. It was true for Ya’akov, son of Yitzchak. It was true for Yosef and Yehudah, sons of Ya’akov. It was true for Moshe son of Amram, and for Y’hoshua son of Nun, and for David son of Yishai, and for Sh’lomo son of David. It is true for you and for me. And it will be true, as well, for our children and our children’s’ children.

The Holy One’s Plan for Expanding the Platform and Honoring the Name of K’hat, Son of Levi

The Creator of the Universe blessed Avraham, and promised to keep covenant with all his descendants, and use them to release blessings upon the world⁴. Avraham sired *Yitzchak*, and the covenant proceeded⁵. Yitzchak sired *Ya’akov*, and the blessing continued. Ya’akov then sired a total of *12 sons*, the third of which was named *Levi*, and the promise expanded. Levi went on to have three sons himself, and the covenant endured Egyptian bondage. Torah is now turning the spotlight upon on the descendants of Levi’s three sons. And today the focus is on the

⁴ See Genesis 12:1-3, 22:17.

⁵ See especially Genesis 26:24.

descendants of the son to whom Levi gave the name ‘*K’hat*⁶.

The members of this man’s family – those the Torah calls *K’hatim* - have a *very important calling* – a calling very pertinent to *all talmidim of Messiah* who are privileged to live in a post-Pentecost world. You see, Dear Reader, all the progeny of *K’hat* are called and empowered to be ‘*carriers of the Glory*’.

Introducing Mishpachah K’hat – the “Carriers of the Glory”

The Hebrew name *K’hat* literally means “*ally*”. As mentioned above, the original *K’hat*, son of the patriarch Levi, had some very famous descendants. Three of them we have come to know very well through Torah - namely Moshe, Aharon, and Miryam. But there were many, many more descendants of *K’hat* present at Sinai than those three high profile leaders. In fact Torah specifically tells us that the male descendants of *K’hat* alone numbered 8,600. **Numbers 3:28**. This made the clan of *K’hat* by far the largest clan of the house of Levi⁷.

The Holy One had a very important and strategic mission in mind for these men – and their sons and their sons’ sons forever.

The Holy One loved *K’hat* – and his father Levi – as well as Levi’s father Ya’akov, Ya’akov’s father Yitzchak, and Yitzchak’s father Avraham. Being the Relentless Lover He is, the Holy One would not – will not - let the seed of those He loves fall to the ground and die without bringing forth a great harvest traceable to that seed.

What will that harvest look like? The end of the story has not all been written, of course, but here is a small foretaste from Scripture. In the Ketuvim portion of the TaNaKh the *K’hatim* are mentioned in connection with the four kings – David, Hezekiah, Y’hoshafat, and Yosiah. During David's reign the family of a *K’hati* was among the those assigned to direct the singing in the Tabernacle. **I Chronicles 6:16–23; cf. Psalm 88:1**. *K’hati* were also privileged to participate in the installation of the Ark in Jerusalem. **I Chronicles 15:5**. In the days of King Y’hoshafat, when the nation of Y’udah was invaded by the Moavi and Ammoni, it was the *K’hatim* who rose up and led the people in intercession. **II Chronicles 20:19**. Descendants of *K’hat* also participated in the cleansing of the Temple in the time of Hezekiah. **II Chron. 29:12**. Yosiah tapped two descendants of *K’hat* to supervise his lifework of renovating the Temple. **II Chron. 34:12**. In the era of Ezra and Nehemiah the descendants of *K’hat* were put in charge of the changing of the showbread. **I Chron. 9:32**.

⁶ *K’hat* is spelled *qof, hey, tav*, and is sometimes transliterated into English as *Kohath*.

⁷ In comparison, the Clan of *K’hat*’s brother Gershon numbered only 7,500 males and the Clan of *K’hat*’s brother Merari numbered a mere 6,200 males.

May the sons and daughters of K'hat alive today, and those yet unborn, continue to bring honor to the name of their rather undistinguished progenitor – and glory to the Bridegroom-King - by living and walking with the Holy One in a way that the Holy One can use to keep expanding his *platform of life* throughout the Earth.

***Out of One's Covenant Identity Come Both One's Assigned Placement
and One's Assigned Tikkun-Making Function***

The main body of the *K'hat* clan was given instructions to set up their camp to the South of the *Mish'kan* - on the 'right hand' so to speak Moshe, Aharon, and the priests. The function of the *K'hatim* was to be to serve a function that I as aforesaid like to call being "*carriers of the glory*". Between the ages of 30 and 50, at least, their lot in life was to be the caretakers of and whenever and wherever the Camp of the Redeemed moved to physically the *Ark of the Covenant*, the *golden menorah*, the *table of showbread*, the *golden altar of incense*, the *brazen altar and laver* and all other furnishings from the *Mish'kan's* interior.

"Wow!", you may be tempted to say. These men were chosen to *carry the holy things of the Holy One!* They carried *the ark of the Covenant on their shoulders!* It sounds exciting, doesn't it? But let's look closer. The actual instructions of the Holy One in regard to this subject were as follows:

***When the camp moves forward, Aharon is to go in, and his sons,
and they are to take down the veil of the screen,
and cover the ark of the Testimony with it,
and they are to put a covering of sealskin on it,
and spread over it a cloth all of blue and put in its poles.***

***When Aharon and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary,
and all the furniture of the sanctuary,
as the camp moves forward;
after that, the sons of K'hat are to come to carry it:
but they are not to touch the sanctuary, lest they die.
These things are the burden of the sons of K'hat in the Tent of Meeting.***

[Numbers 4:5-6, 15]

The actual work of carrying the ark and other furnishings of the *Mish'kan* was therefore not nearly as exciting as you might think. The *k'hatim* dealt with the Ark and other furnishings *as manual laborers only*. They were not allowed *even once in their lives* to touch - or even see - the Ark, the Table of His Presence, the Golden Altar, or the Menorah. Before they would be called to carry the furnishings of the Holy Place and Holy of Holies, according to today's Torah *those furnishings had to be completely covered with two to three layers of covering cloths*. All the *K'hatim* ever got to see, much less touch, were *the covering cloths - i.e.* the fringes of the Holy One's glory.

The sons of K'hat were, however, *forever close to* - and forever responsible for the sanctity of the holiest things on earth. And that can be very, very good – or very, very bad. Let me explain.

***The Tragic Failure of David Melech, King of Israel,
To Honor and Follow This Essential Covenant Protocol***

We all now know simply from reading parsha *B'midbar* how the Holy One instructed us to move the ark of the covenant. First, the *kohanim* [priests] were called in to cover the ark with [a] the *veil*, [b] a *sealskin tarp*, and [c] a *special blue linen covering*. Then Levi'im from the clan of *K'hat*, whose job it was to pick up the carrying poles on the sides of the ark were called in. On the High Priest's command, working in unison, these men would grab and lift the poles. It required coordinated, cooperative effort. They could not be 'Lone Rangers'. They all had to lift at the same time, take the pole to and stop at the same height [no matter how tall or short they might be in relation to the others], and then hold the ark steady and keep it level even when their arms got weary.

Then, on the High Priest's next command, they had to start a synchronized march. They marched not as individuals but as a team. They had to stay in step. They had to establish and conform to a cadence and a rhythm. They then had to keep marching until the High Priest told them to stop. They each had to hold up their assigned portion of the weight of the ark until they received the instruction to set it down.

Carrying the kedusha energy that inheres in the ark of the Holy One is not a task for solo prima donnas –it is a task that requires a synchronized, committed team. It also is a task that must follow the Holy One's Divine Instructions and Protocols. It cannot be handled any old way a self-interested human being – even an anointed king – decides is 'good enough'.

So what is this *David Melech*, King of Israel – the sweet psalmist Pretty *basic stuff*, right? – a man after the Holy One's own heart - thinks he is doing in I Chronicles 13⁸? Let's examine the Biblical account of the events leading up to this tragic incident. David said to the entire *kahal* of Yisrael:

*If it seems good to you, and if it be of the Holy One our God,
let us send abroad everywhere to our brothers who are left in all Eretz-Yisra'el,
with whom the Kohanim and Levites are in their cities that have suburbs,
that they may gather themselves to us;
and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we didn't seek it in the days of Sha'ul.[Saul]"*

⁸ A parallel account is found in II Samuel 6.

*All the assembly said that they would do so;
for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.*

*So David assembled all Yisra'el together,
from the Shichor [the brook] of Mitzrayim even to the entrance of Hamat,
to bring the ark of God from Kiryat-Ye`arim.*

*David went up, and all Yisra'el, to Ba`alah,
[that is], to Kiryat-Ye`arim, which belonged to Yehudah,
to bring up from there the ark of God the Holy One
that sits [above] the Keruvim, that is called by the Name.*

*They carried the ark of God on a new cart, [and brought it] out of the house of Avinadav:
and Uzza and Achyo drove the cart.*

*David and all Yisra'el played before the Holy One with all their might,
even with songs, and with harps, and with psalteries,
and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.*

[I Chronicles 13:1-8]

Oy veh, what a *show*! The best musicians in the kingdom, and ‘*all Yisrael*’ singing, clapping, dancing, and calling it – and believing it to be - “*worship*”. What a rush, to be part of such a thing! Goosebumps would be busting out all over. We would really be impressed. I dare say, if we did not know Torah we would be not only impressed, but *overwhelmed*. But the Holy One knows *Torah* – and He knows *the hearts of men*. He knows what it takes for His Glory to touch and transform the Hearts of men in such a way as to further His Eternal Kingdom instead of the temporal kingdom of a man. So the Holy One was not impressed in the least. He saw it all for exactly what it was. So Scripture says:

*The af [literally, nose] of the Holy One was kindled against Uzzah⁹;
the Holy One smote him there for [his] error; and there he died by the ark of God.*

[II Samuel 6:7]

Here is a truth the religious world has yet to fully grasp. This particular procession arranged by David was neither *of*, *for*, or *about* the Holy One. The Holy One knew it even if David didn’t. The Holy One knew *what David’s motivation was*, even if all Israel – indeed all mankind – was taken in by David’s past history of greatness and his present show of piety. The Holy One knew that even if David, “all Yisrael”, and the ill-fated Uzzah son of Avinodav thought they were doing a ‘good thing’ by moving the ark without – and without regard to - Divine instructions, they were mistaken and deceived.

⁹ Scripture does not tell us specifically from what tribe Uzzah, son of Avinodav, came. In light of the fact that his family’s house is where the ark was prior to the move, and that house was in Gibeah [the home of Shaul (Saul), of the tribe of Benyamin], it is probable that Uzzah was either a *Binyamini* [Benjaminite] or a *Y’hudi* [Judah-ite]. If Uzzah’s father Avinodav is the Avinodav who was one of David’s older brothers, of course, that would make him a Y’hudi. As I said, this is unclear. What is NOT UNCLEAR from Scripture, however, is that Uzzah was NOT a Levi, much less a K’hati - and hence should never have been involved in the transportation of the ark.

The Holy One knew the hearts of everyone involved. He knew that when it came right down to it the whole enterprise was for – and about – something other than His Glory. He knew what this procession – like most of the pomp and circumstance of organized religious activity - was promoting was something antithetical to Him. He knew it was *lo tov* [not good, and not capable of producing good].

Is There Still a Lesson for Us In the Death of Uzzah?

So what exactly WAS the procession that resulted in Uzzah’s death all about? Why was it so *lethal* despite its seeming (on the surface of things) good intentions? Everyone will ultimately have to answer these questions for themselves. I offer only my personal perspective. In offering this perspective I do not mean to insult, demean, or cast aspersions on David, on Uzzah, or on anyone else alive then or now. Please do not accept what I am about to say in a critical or judgmental spirit. Please do not look around you today with a critical eye, fix your eye on some person or group different from you, point your finger, and say “Aha – *those people* are practicing pagan idolatry and calling it “worship”!” The comments I make are designed to focus attention *not on others but on us*. What others do we cannot control or change – what *we* do is what we have both the ability and the responsibility to change, to conform our actions to the word of the Holy One.

If Scripture records errors made by men and women we have reason to believe knew, or at least should have known, the Holy One better than we do [like David], it is to WARN US, not to cause us to become puffed up in our Torah knowledge. If we are to learn from David’s mistake we must ask ourselves how this man after God’s own heart made such a *glaring and tragic blunder*? How did he ‘mess up’ so badly on such a simple, rudimentary *mitzvah* as how – and when – to move the ark? Some might speculate that perhaps David simply had never studied and did not know Torah. Raised in the fields around *Beit-Lechem*, they might reason, perhaps the focus of his youth was solely on learning to play the harp and lyre skillfully and on fine-tuning the skill of the sling with which he would protect his father’s sheep. Perhaps, they might conjecture, there was simply no time for David’s father *Yishai* [English Bibles have nicknamed him “*Jesse*”] to teach him Torah. Perhaps, they might suggest, *other things* just seemed more important at the time. Perhaps. But if so that is very sad – sad for *Yishai*, sad for *David*, sad for *Uzzah* . . . and sad for Israel.

Alas, if that is the situation or mindset in your home - or mine, or anyone’s for that matter - it is sad for the world. But I personally believe David *did* study Torah. Why? Primarily because of the content of David’s psalms. In Psalm 19 for instance we read:

The Holy One’s Torah is perfect, restoring the soul.

*The Holy One's testimony is sure, making wise the simple.
The Holy One's precepts are right, rejoicing the heart.
The Holy One's mitzvah is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Holy One is clean, enduring forever.*

*The Holy One's ordinances are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the extract of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them is your servant warned. In keeping them there is great reward.*

[Psalm 19:7-11]

And in Psalm 40 David says:

I delight to do your will, my God. Yes, your Torah is within my heart."

[Psalm 40:8]

The ancient scrolls containing these psalms clearly tell us that these words were written by David. Psalms such as Psalm 78 and 119, which contain similar declarations, probably were also *written at the direction of*, David. Psalm 78, a Psalm of *Asaf*, tells us:

*Hear my Torah, my people.
Turn your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable.
I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known,
and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children.
We will tell the generation to come the praises of the Holy One,
His strength, and his wondrous works that he has done.
For he established a testimony in Ya`akov, and appointed a Torah in Yisra'el,
Which he commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children;
That the generation to come might know, even the children who should be born;
Who should arise and tell their children that they might set their hope in God,
and not forget the works of God, But keep his mitzvot ...*

[Psalm 78:1-7]

And Psalm 119, of course, is the famous "ode" to the Torah, containing page after page, line after line, of praise for the Holy One *as the Giver of the Torah*. This majestic psalm of love for Torah begins as follows:

*Blessed are those whose ways are blameless,
Who walk according to the Holy One's Torah.*

The Psalm proceeds for over one hundred and fifty verses on the same theme, and ends as follows:

*Your Torah is my delight. Let my soul live, that I may praise you.
Let your ordinances help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep.
Seek your servant, for I don't forget your mitzvot.*

[Psalm 119:175-176]

So no, I do not believe for a moment that the problem which led to the tragic death of Uzzah was that David was *ignorant of* or *unlearned in* the Torah or the truths

spelled out for us in today's aliyah of parsha *B'midbar*. I believe instead that David was – as are most of us – simply unskilled in *applying* Torah to *his time*, to *his life*, and to *his actions*. I suspect that David was, as are most of us, *unskilled in subordinating his plans, hopes, dreams, aspirations, and actions to Torah*. I believe that David was, as are most of us alas, better at submitting to Torah in *theory* than in actual *practice*. So I believe that this was the reason that though David *knew* Torah, when it came right down to it he did not *submit* to it as the basis for his conduct or as the standard by which to determine what is and is not worship and what does and does not honor the Holy One.

What do I mean? Consider these revealing lines, in the midst of the discussion of the moving of the ark, describing David's reaction to the death of Uzzah:

David was displeased, because the Holy One had broken forth on Uzzah; and he called that place Peretz-Uzzah, to this day.

David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?"
[I Chronicles 13:11-12]

Ouch! David wanted the ark of the Holy One brought "home to me", Beloved. *He* wanted it for *himself*. He wanted it *his way*, for his pleasure, in his timing. The whole ark-moving event was – at this point, at least - *all about David and David's will*, not about the Holy One and His¹⁰. Perhaps David was overcome by the desire to be known as '*the man who brought the ark to Jerusalem*'. Perhaps he wanted to be the one who led the grand procession, reveling in the feeling that he was ushering people into the presence of God. Perhaps he wanted everyone to see, and talk about, how great a worshipper he was. Perhaps the hypnotic power of music¹¹

¹⁰ At this point I must reiterate that the point of this exercise is not to condemn David, who after all cannot – and most certainly need not - defend himself. The point is instead to look at what can go wrong when *our* spiritual energies are misapplied.

¹¹ The word *music* is a Greek word meaning '*of the muses*'. It is thus blatantly pagan and completely foreign to Hebraic thought. Biblical Hebrew has no word for 'music', merely referring to *sounds* – *i.e.* vibrations – and *psalms/songs*. *Music*, on the other hand, is a very, very, dangerous thing, because its sensuality is based upon inspiration from at best pagan, and at worst demonic, sources. The only instruments of sound specifically mentioned in the first five books of the Bible as being used in worship of the Holy One are the *timbrel* [in Exodus 15, at the Song of the Sea] and the *shofar* [or ram's horn]. Even the *silver trumpet*, though specifically mentioned in Torah, was not used for worship in the community that collectively received the Torah of the Holy One at Sinai and thereby experienced the Holy One's manifest Radiant Presence more tangibly than any other generation; the silver trumpet was used only for making announcements to the community. This is not to say that other instruments are necessarily bad, only that their introduction and use should not happen as a matter of course, or to give someone a function or position in the community, or to enhance the mood of a meeting, or open people's hearts so they will be responsive to a sermon [isn't that a form of witchcraft?], but only upon a specific, tested, trustworthy word from the Holy One, for a purpose He has specifically commissioned. There is nothing wrong with sounds or with songs – *unless* they bring more glory to the musician or singer than they do to the Holy One. In other words, when the song is finished do the people more likely say "*What a song!*", "*What a talent!*", or "*What a voice!*" or "*What a worshipper!*" - or do they say "*What a God!*".

and the fleshly excitement it can generate, had so affected his soul that he was unable to separate true worship from the “freeing” feeling one’s flesh experiences when he or she allows himself/herself an emotional release.

***Beware Forms and Methodologies of ‘Worship’
That Draw a Crowd or Stir Up Emotion, but Are ANYTHING BUT
Worship in Spirit or in Truth!***

Whatever David’s motivation or mindset was that fateful day it is clear that he felt it unnecessary to either consult the Holy One or consider applying Torah’s instructions to the situation. He called a meeting, brought in the musicians and singers, and *the show was on*.

Oh it was no doubt a *great show*. It no doubt drew a tremendous crowd. It reached the multitude ... with something. But *with what did it really reach them?* It reached them with *death*, not life. It reached them with *David*, not with the Holy One.

Who did the procession glorify? It glorified *David*, not the Holy One. With what did the procession ‘reach’ the people? It reached the people with *a form of religion* - not a living, breathing, growing, life sustaining relationship with the Holy One. And what is worse, this procession – like most of what men call ‘worship services’ – masqueraded, and has been portrayed for centuries, as worship of the Holy One in spirit and truth.

It is time we understood what really happened that fateful day. We in twenty-first century Judeo-Christian life are often like the David of that day, constantly ‘going down’ in presumption and self-will with the idea of bringing a holy ark into our little worlds. But that is not what the Holy One calls us to do. We are to focus not on bringing the ark of the covenant into our little worlds, but are to focus on submitting our little worlds to the holy ark, and to the One Who makes the ark holy. Like David, we’ve got it *exactly backwards*.

Please note that the text does not say that the Holy One *told* David to do any of the things he did on that fateful day. Please note that there is no “*The Holy One spoke to David, and said ...*” anywhere in the account. Please note also that David never asked the Holy One if a musical extravaganza or a grand processional – nor, for that matter, even his proposal for the relocation of the ark - was His will. David knew, instead, what *the people wanted* – after all, we are told that when he proposed the idea of moving the ark to Jerusalem¹², he couched it in spiritual

¹² Not, we will subsequently discover, to Mount Moriah where it belongs, but to Mount Zion where David maintained his residence, and where he eventually designed and set up, according to his own tastes and preferences, a temporary tent NOT MODELED AFTER THE MISH’KAN, at which there was neither

language:

*David said to all the assembly of Yisra'el, "If it seems good to you,
and if it be of the Holy One our God,
let us ... bring again the ark of our God to us."*

*All the assembly said that they would do so;
for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.*

[I Chronicles 13:4]

He started by saying "*if it seems good to you ...*", then, almost as an afterthought, said "*and if it be of the Holy One our God.*" Then, he decided on his own how to do what both he and the people wanted – without further inquiry or mention of the Holy One - and went right to it. Very notably in the text David did not consult the Holy One. Just as notably David simply failed to consider what Torah had to say.

Please do not misunderstand. The purpose behind the discussion of these things is not *to slander David*, who cannot – and of course need not - defend himself. David was - unlike most of us –*wise enough to learn from his mistakes*. Let us as well learn the painful lesson of David and Uzzah. Ceremonies and religious services are not – never have been, never will be, cannot be - what *worship in spirit and truth* is all about.

Worship in spirit and truth is instead a lifestyle of *sh'ma*-ing the Holy One's Voice. Worship in spirit and truth is *sh'mar*-ing and *asah*-ing the Holy One's Torah *day-in and day-out*. Worship in spirit and truth is constantly, consistently, and convincingly teaching His *mitzvot* and *mishpatim* to our children, speaking of them *as we sit in our homes* and *as we walk by the way*, and writing and rewriting them on the doorposts of our houses and in our gates.

So please understand, the call of this aliyah - as of all the Torah - is an *upward call*. It is a call away *from* that which is prevalent and alluring in religious circles but which leads to death. And it is a call *to* that which is *true* and *real* and which truly *brings honor to the Holy One and His Messiah*. May our generation *not repeat our beloved ancestor David's mistakes*. May we never:

[a] project ourselves and our talents and 'anointings', instead of the Holy One, to the world,

[b] offer to the world merely another *form* of religion instead of a living, breathing, life-sustaining, Torah-based relationship with the Creator of the Universe, or

[c] usher in *death* instead of life.

altar, nor table of showbread, nor laver, nor menorah, but merely hired musicians playing music in pre-arranged shifts, to attract a crowd.

Where Do We Go From Here?

So where do we go from here? The secret - *the answer* - I believe, is found in the pursuit of the Holy One primarily *through TORAH* instead of through religious activities which meet with public approval, make us appear pious, draw a crowd, and/or give us “goose bumps” or a “freeing” feeling. Torah is designed by the Holy One as an invitation to Divine Encounter. It challenges us to think like our Creator thinks, speak with His wisdom and compassion, and act with His faithfulness. It drives us to the end of ourselves and beyond. It constantly pushes us to the threshold of destiny – *i.e.* the place where we realize both our need of and desire for His Companionship and Direction, hence we begin to earnestly seek Him, to passionately cry out to Him, to willingly surrender to Him, and to faithfully follow Him.

The Holy One is calling His people to make a *great transition*. He is calling us away from the limiting platform where we actually define our new creation identity in terms of what religious organizations and institutions we attend, and confuse our mission on earth with the practice familiar forms of ‘services’, shows’, sacraments, ceremonies, and programs that our flesh. He is calling us back to the place He designed for us – *i.e.* the place where we humbly and joyfully embrace Him through the Torah. As we make this transition however, we *must not* let our study become merely an academic exercise. Torah is not just a body of information to learn - It is Kedusha-infused wisdom. It is the power source for the Divine Light the Holy One sheds upon our pathway. All decisions, all relationships, all religious practices, are to be filtered *through its words of instruction*. It is designed to point out, then through partnership with Him begin to transcend, the limitations of our flesh.

However well we may be able to teach, preach, sing, make music, dance, plan, or conduct a religious service, the real truth of the matter is that – whatever we might want to believe or whatever encouraging friends may tell us - we can simply never carry His glory or usher in His Presence *any way other than as Torah directs*.

Yeshua As Our Model of What Worship in Spirit and Truth Really Looks Like and Consists Of

Let us contrast the ways of David in connection with his ill-fated attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem with dancing and song to Yeshua’s activities and lifestyle. David, in connection with the incident in question, carried on in many ways that drew attention to himself and earned him legendary status. Yeshua, however, who is surely to be *our* model of true worship, is never portrayed as doing any of the things ‘in the *name* of worship’ that David did. Not once is Yeshua said to have publicly danced, or sung, or played instruments. Yeshua was [is] instead *a*

constantly flowing fountainhead of Torah wisdom, compassion, counsel, and prayer. Messiah always sought to give all the glory to the Holy One, accepting none in the Name Yeshua.

Torah is – must always be – our only “how to” manual. Take away Torah from our lives and we take away all that is *holy, just, and good*,¹³ and divorce ourselves from that which is breathed by the Spirit of the Holy One¹⁴. And when that happens we find ourselves *officiating at a lot of funerals - and doing a lot of theorizing about why “bad things happen to good people”*.

***Our Tikkun-Making, Shalom-Asah-ing Mission –
To Serve As Humble, Faithful Carriers of the Glory
TODAY, in Real Time***

As we discussed at the beginning of this shiur, the Holy One designated the family of Levi’s son *K’hat* as His designated representatives to ‘carry the Glory’. They were to be the custodians, stewards, and fierce guardians of the ark of the covenant, of the golden altar of incense, of the table of showbread, of the Menorah, and of all the other sanctified furnishings of the *Mish’kan*. Their ‘*carrier of the glory*’ calling was not merely a matter of historic interest but is very pertinent to all *talmidim of Messiah who are privileged to live in a post-Pentecost world*. Why do I say that? Remember what happened at *Shavuot - i.e. Pentecost - in the year of Messiah’s death, burial, resurrection and ascension?* At that time, according to the Book of Acts, as 120 *talmidim of Yeshua* sat ‘waiting’ as instructed:

*... suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind,
and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

*Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.
and they were all filled with the Ruach ha-Qodesh*

[Acts 2:3-4]

Explaining this, Kefa [Peter] declared to all with ears to *sh’ma*:

*... this is what was spoken by the prophet Yoel:
'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says the Holy One,
that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh ...*

Fifty days or so earlier Yeshua of Natzret had prophesied of this very event before it occurred, saying:

*I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper,
that He may abide with you forever -
the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive ... will be in you.*

At that day you will know that I am in My Father,

¹³ See Romans 7:12: “*the Torah indeed is holy, and the mitzvah holy and righteous and good.*”

¹⁴ See among many other verses Romans 7:14. Shaull said: “*the Torah is of the Spirit [Ruach]*”.

and you are in Me, and I am in you.

In the post-Pentecost world in which we live it is not merely *mishpachah K'hat* that is called to 'carry the Glory', it is every talmid of Yeshua's Divine Mission in life to carry the Glory wherever he or she goes. As Shaul of Tarsus put it, this shows forth a profound *mystery*, specifically:

*... the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations,
but now has been revealed to His k'doshim [holy ones].*

*It is to them the Holy One willed to make known
what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles:
which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory.*

[Colossians 1:25-27]

"We understand all that", you say, "but what does that have to do with the Torah – and *mishpachah K'hat*?"

Pause for a moment and remember *what lies at the heart of the most important furnishing the K'hatim carried*. The most important furnishing was the ark of the covenant. And at the heart of the ark of the covenant lay what? *The tablets of Torah!* The tablets of Torah have always been – and will always be - at the epicenter of the Glory. Hence only if you carry the tablets of Torah in your heart, before your eyes, upon your hands, as you walk through life in Messiah, and he in you, can you truly function for him as a carrier of the glory the way Messiah did – and the way the Holy One intends for you to do.

Questions for Today's Study

1. In regard to the clan descended from Levi's son *K'hat*:

[A] What age group of *K'hatim* were counted in the census?

[B] Why was this particular age group counted?

[C] List the steps which were to be followed in connection with the moving of the Ark of the Covenant.

[D] At what point were the *K'hatim* called in to lift and carry?

[E] What functions did the *K'hatim* perform when the camp was stationary?

[F] In the vision *Yochanan* [John] had of an open heaven (Revelation 4:1-5:14), was the Ark visible to him?

[G] The B'rit Chadasha indicates that at the moment of death of Messiah Yeshua, the veil in the Temple between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, was rent from top to bottom. Had there been an Ark in the Holy of Holies at that time (there was not, as the last time the Ark was seen was at the time of the destruction of the First Temple, by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon), who was the only person on earth who could have seen it? Why is this so?

2. In today's Haftarah aliyah, in verses 21-22 of chapter 2 of Hoshea, there is a

three-fold use of the word translated by the King James Version as “**hear**” [the NIV translates this as “*respond*”; The Complete Jewish Bible translates it as “*answer*”].

***And it will come to pass in that day,
I will hear [Hebrew ayin, nun, vav, hey, transliterated as `anah], says the Holy One,
I will hear [`anah] the heavens, and they will hear [`anah] the earth;
And the earth will hear [`anah] the corn, and the wine, and the oil;
and they will hear [`anah] Jezreel.”***

[A] In your Strong’s Concordance look up the verb translated in these verses as “hear”.

[i] Write this Hebrew verb in Hebrew letters, with vowel markings;
[ii] Write the English transliterations of this Hebrew verb;
[iii] Write the pronunciation of this Hebrew verb;
[iv] Using your Gesenius, trace out the *pa'al* form of this verb, and discuss (with each other, ‘*yeshivah*’-style, and then on paper) the Hebraic word picture this verb paints.

[v] Some other illustrative usages of this Hebrew verb are found in Genesis 18:27 [the first usage], Exodus 20:16, Psalm 147:7, Proverbs 1:28, Proverbs 21:13, Ecclesiastes 10:19, Isaiah 50:2, Isaiah 59:12, Jeremiah 14:7,

[B] When is “that day”, when all the things prophesied in today’s aliyah will occur?

[C] Who will the Holy One “hear”?

[D] Who will the heavens “hear”?

[E] What is the ‘message’ of the heavens and the earth? [Before answering, read Deuteronomy 29:19-20, and Deuteronomy 32:28-43].

[F] Who does our haftarah text say will the earth “hear”?

[G] Who does our haftarah text say will hear the corn, wine, and oil “hear”?

[H] What is the ‘message’ of the grain, the wine, and the oil? [Before answering, read Deuteronomy 11:13-17].

[I] ***Jezreel*** [Hebrew *yod, zayin, resh, ayin, alef, lamed*, pronounced *yeez-ree’-awl*], as we have learned, means “*seed scattered/sown by the Holy One*”. To whom do you think the term “Jezreel”, as used in this verse, refers? [Remember, *Jezreel* was the name the Holy One ordained for the *firstborn son* of Hoshea and Gomer – see Hoshea 1:4].

[J] What do you think verses 21-22 mean?

3. In the B’rit Chadasha aliyah for today Shaul of Tarsus concludes his remarks about the “Body” of Messiah with verses 18-20.

But now the Holy One has set¹⁵ the members¹⁶, each one of them, in the body¹⁷,

¹⁵ The word translated into English as “set” is the Greek verb *titemi*, corresponding to the Hebrew verb *suwm, shin, vav, mem*, Strong’s Hebrew word # 7760.

¹⁶ The word translated into English as “members” is the Greek word *melos*, possibly corresponding to the Hebrew word *yatzurim*, [*yod, tzade, resh, yod, mem*], the masculine plural form of Strong’s Hebrew word # 3338.]

¹⁷ The word translated into English as “body” is the Greek word *soma*, corresponding to the Hebrew word *geviyah* [*gimel, vav, yod, hey*, Strong’s Hebrew word # 1472].

*just as he desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be?
But now they are many members, but one body.*

[A] Who is “setting” things in place in the “body”? [man’s ‘ministry’, or God?]

[B] What is the method being used to “set” in place the “Body” of Messiah?

[C] Read Hebrews 12 and Revelation 6:9-11; 8:1-17, 21:1-3,22-27, and 22:1-7. What is the reason for the “assembling” and “numbering” of the people of the Holy One this time?

*May the Holy One’s People be satisfied with Him,
and be willing to do nothing, be nobody, and have nothing, if that brings Him glory.*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Psalm 135:1-12

*Hallelu-Yah! Praise the name of the Holy One!
Praise him, you servants of the Holy One,
You who stand in the house of the Holy One¹⁸, in the courts of our God's house.*

*Praise the Holy One, for the Holy One is good.
Sing praises to his name, for that is pleasant.
For the Holy One has chosen Ya`akov for himself; Yisra'el for his own possession.*

*For I know that the Holy One is great, that our Lord is above all gods.
Whatever the Holy One pleased, that he has done,
in heaven and in eretz, in the seas and in all deeps;
Who causes the clouds to rise from the ends of the eretz;
Who makes lightnings with the rain; Who brings forth the wind out of his treasures;
Who struck the firstborn of Mitzrayim, both of man and animal;
Who sent signs and wonders into the midst of you, Mitzrayim,
On Par`oh, and on all his servants; Who struck many nations,
And killed mighty kings, Sichon king of the Amori,
'Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Kana'an,
And gave their land for a heritage, a heritage to Yisra'el, His people.*

¹⁸ The term “house of the Holy One” has reference to the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle of Exodus 25] and/or to the *Beit HaMik'dash* [the Temple in Jerusalem] – not to any place of assembly anywhere else. Keep in mind that the *Mish'kan/Mik'dash* was a place on earth designed ‘according to a pattern’ of something in Heaven – something the Holy One showed to Moshe during the 40 days Moshe spent alone on Mount Sinai, and that the matters which took place at the *Mish'kan* and *Beit Ha-Mik'dash* were designed to point men toward the ministry of Messiah in the heavenly reality rather than to focus attention on the ministry of ordinary men [priests and *Levi'im*] in the earthly copy or shadow.