

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: *Torah B'ha'alotcha:* Numbers 9:15—10:36
Haftarah: Zechariah 3:8-10
B'rit Chadasha: I Corinthians 10:12

On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted.

[Numbers 10:11]

Today's Meditation is Revelation 2:8-11;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #7, *Kabat* [Ingathering]

Uv'yom ha-kim et-ha-Mishkan – Then, on the day the Mish'kan was raised up ... *kisah he'anan et-ha-Mishkan l'ohel ha-edut* – the Cloud covered/sat upon the Sanctuary, the tent of the testimony Numbers 9:15a.

The clock has started ticking! Awake! Awake! Pull up those tent pegs! Fold up those tents! Grab your babies. Take up your assigned posts. All together now, repeat after me: “*Arise, O Holy One, and may your enemies be scattered!*” The appointed time to launch our glorious campaign to bring the blessing of Heaven to every nation, culture, family and bloodline of earth has come!

***Who Determines the Times and the Seasons?
Who Charts the Course – and Who Walks it out?
Who Leads - and Who Follows?***

The mantras of the nations of this world are ‘*follow your heart*’, ‘*follow your dreams*’, ‘*follow your hunches*’, ‘*follow your lust*’, ‘*follow our opinions of justice and morality at all costs*’, ‘*follow our orders upon penalty of death*’, and, of course, the ubiquitous ‘*follow the money*’. The Covenant People of the God of Israel, however, are a counterculture; no matter where we live, our mandate is to always ‘*Follow our King – and Him alone!*’ The Holy One of Israel is our Shepherd. We, His sheep, *sh'ma* His Voice, and follow Him. As He did for Avram, the Holy One is ever leading us in the course of a great – indeed epic - journey. He is taking us somewhere with world-changing potential. Our life is a pilgrimage. He lets us rest awhile in green pastures, then He gets us up abruptly and leads us beside still waters. In valleys of the shadow of death He teaches us to walk circumspectly, and cling tightly to Him; then He causes us to laugh, rejoice, and dance like calves released from their stalls. Whenever our King moves, we move. Whenever He stops, we stop. Wherever He leads, we go. It is as simple as that. *Sh'ma*-ing our Shepherd-King's Voice and following Him – while simultaneously

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resisting the temptation to leave His Side to follow any man, idea, cause, appetite, movement, creed, philosophy, ideology, institution, or religion - is our *delight*, our *mark of identification*, our *job description*, and *the essential key to our leaving the hurting people and failing cultures of the world we encounter along the way better than we found them*. And ready or not, today the Radiant Cloud representing the Manifest Presence of the Holy One our God is going to lift up off of the ground. That will be all the signal we need. Just like that, we will know that our blessed time at Sinai basking in our Bridegroom's glorious shade and soaking in His amazing outpouring of betrothal promises and prophetic empowerments is over. Sinai has happened. At this very special place, across the span of eleven and a half lunar cycles, we have just had the inestimable privilege of participating in the most amazing encounter ever to transpire between the Creator of the Universe and representatives of the human species. As Sh'lomo wrote about this season in the Song of Songs: *He brought us to His banqueting table – and His banner over us was love!* It has been delicious. Every day – at least since the golden calf debacle - we have delighted to sit in the Bridegroom-King's 'shade'. His fruit – *i.e.* the pleasant fruit of His *love*, His *joy*, His *shalom*, His *patience*, His *kindness*, His *goodness*, His *faithfulness*, His *gentleness*, and His *selflessness* – has been sweet to our taste. With this fruit He has sustained and refreshed us, morning-by-morning, and His Right Hand has been constantly under our head, and His Left Hand has embraced and supported us. **Song of Songs 2:3-6.**

There Is A People Arising ...

As a result of what has happened on this mountain we bear little resemblance to the rag-tag group of slaves who fled Egypt in the middle of the night. We are now the betrothed Bride-to-be of the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Ya'akov. We are now in full possession not only of the Holy One's covenant promises but also His instructions as to how to live as His Bride day by day. We are now a *sh'ma people*. We are now *the appointed witness throng* of the Creator. And we now have His *sh'kinah*² to lead us, to provide a *sukkah* of *shalom* over us, and to re-assure us of His abiding love. What we have experienced at this mountain transcends showers of manna and fountains of living water flowing from a rock. What we have been privileged to experience at this mountain has been the sweet, free, transformative flow of pure Revelation from Heaven. We have abided in the Creator of the Universe – and are now absolutely saturated with Divine Speech. We are awash in

² The *sh'kinah* is not and never has been a 'goddess'. Nor is the *sh'kinah* the 'wife' of the Holy One, as some have mistakenly taught. The *sh'kinah* is merely that aspect of the Holy One's Oneness that He shows to us - whatever He causes to 'pass by' us as we tremble in our respective clefts of the rock. Call it a theophany if you want to, or call it the '*preincarnate Messiah*' if you prefer. I am personally reluctant to get that dogmatic, because, to me, the *sh'kinah* is whatever tangible form the Holy One in His Wisdom chooses to show human beings; *i.e.* it is *whatever particular aspect of Himself happens to be most relevant to them at the moment*.

Mercy and Lovingkindness. We are steeped in Wisdom from His Heart and His Mouth and well as His Throne.

So when the Cloud lifts there will be no time for board meetings, budget analyses, or feasibility studies. All motions any man might make or resolutions any man might propose are suddenly *'out of order'*. Seconds will become irrelevant; amendments unnecessary. Discussion will moot; debate blasphemous; and calling for a vote futile. Everyone in the camp will merely stop whatever he or she was doing - however important it might seem to them at the time – gird up his or her loins, scramble in double-time to 'battle stations', and join the throng in singing: ***Kumah Adonai ... v'yafutzu oyeveicha ... v'yanusu mesan'eicha mipaneicha!*** When the Cloud starts to move, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, households, clans, and tribes will all step lively. There should not even be a question of anyone staying – or getting left – behind.

One Last Look Around Sinai:

Our Last Few Moments of Basking in the Bridegroom's Shade

Have you ever moved from one house or apartment to another? It is human nature to feel a twinge of nostalgia when packing up what is precious, discarding what has outlived its usefulness, and leaving a place that has been an important part of one's life behind. Often we treat ourselves to 'one last look around'. Even the ugly village of *Anatevka* – the famous *shtetl* in *Fiddler on the Roof* - deserved a nostalgic glance on the way out. How much more is the glorious mountain of Sinai worthy of a moment of reflection? It was after all at Sinai that we *heard the Beautiful Voice of our Bridegroom-King with our own ears for the first time*. Alas, the experience was too much for us to handle. We were far *too immature a bride*. So our wonderful Bridegroom gave us something we *could* deal with – the continual abiding presence of a manifestation of His glory. He gave us the *Radiant Cloud of His Presence*. It is something we should always remember.

This mountain is where – individually and collectively as a people - we were betrothed to the Creator of the Universe forever. This mountain is where we first spoke the words of endearment and commitment our King longs – and deserves - to hear from His Beloved every day: ***Kol asher diber-Adonai na'aseh v'nish'ma*** – i.e. we will *asah* and we will *sh'ma* all the words of the Holy One! This mountain is where we learned that assembling with each other for the sake of assembling, appointing our own leaders and designing our days and modalities of worship, are the surest ways to bring death and destruction into our camp - and to misrepresent our Bridegroom-King to the world. This mountain is where we learned what it feels like – and how transformational it is – to be forgiven a great transgression. Here is where we first discovered that he who has been forgiven much is he who

loves much.

This mountain is where we first saw the face of a man glowing with the light of the Holy One's Divine Countenance. This mountain is where we saw – and experienced firsthand – what it feels like to be empowered by the *Ruach HaKodesh* [*i.e.* the very Breath and Spirit of the Holy One] to perform tasks and flow in creative energy far beyond our frame of reference, human understanding, strength, or natural abilities. This mountain is where we put aside all our differences with each other, overcame all the wounds of the past, subordinated all our fleshly appetites and ambitions of personal grandeur to a Higher Purpose, and collaborated to build and furnish an earthly dwelling place fit for inhabitation by the Creator of the Universe. This mountain is where we learned the critical differences between what is *holy* and what is *common*, and what is *clean* [*i.e.* leading to wholeness, wellness, and shalom] and what is *unclean* [causing fragmentation, corruption, distraction, and destruction].

It was at this mountain we saw fire fall from Heaven - and learned that could be either a good thing for us or a bad thing for us, depending upon what we were engaged in at the time. It was at this mountain that we first hear felt the empowerment of the Holy One's Fatherly Blessing. At this mountain the world was forever changed. Many questions about the Creator of the Universe and the purpose of mankind were answered here. Many eternal truths were established in us here. But now another mountain – the mountain called *Tziyon* – calls our name.

Our Last Day At Sinai

Our assigned aliyah for today begins as follows:

Uv'yom hakim et ha-Mishkan

On the day that the Mish'kan [tabernacle] was set up,

kisah he'anan et ha-Mishkan l'ohel ha-edut

The cloud covered the Mish'kan, the tent of the testimony;

uva'erev yihyeh al ha-Mish'kan

then, in the evening, on the Tabernacle

kemar'eh-esh ad-boker

something appeared like fire [and remained] until morning.

[Numbers 9:15]

Of course, the *Radiant Cloud* did not come into existence on Sinai. Nor did it first enter our consciousness there. We first encountered the Great Billowing *Cloud* at the place known as *Etam* - our second stop after leaving Egypt. **Exodus 13:20-22.** From the point forward, by day the *Sh'kinah* was unto us a 'pillar of cloud' giving us supernatural shade from the glaring desert sun [the primary god of Egypt]. By night the same manifestation was unto us as a 'pillar of fire' illuminating our journey

and keeping predators away.

It was the *Great Billowing Cloud* in fact which the Holy One used to hold Pharaoh's army at bay and throw it into a state of confusion while He Himself was preparing the Redeemed Community for the miraculous deliverance experience of *Yam Suf* [Sea of Reeds]. For in Exodus 14 we are told:

*... the pillar of cloud moved from before them, and stood behind them.
It came between the camp of Mitzrayim [i.e. the Egyptians] and the camp of Yisra'el;
and there was the cloud and the darkness, yet gave it light by night:
and the one didn't come near the other all the night.*

[Exodus 14:19-20]

While encamped at Sinai however we have come to know the *Cloud* in a *new light*. We came to become familiar with and dependent upon this sheltering, overshadowing manifestation of the Presence of our Divine Bridegroom in our midst³. The Hebrew concept of *sh'kinah* thus deserves some examination – as it embodies some wonderful imagery and life-transforming truth.

The Hebrew word *sh'kinah* is derived from the ancient Hebrew verb root *sh'kan*⁴, which is usually translated into English as 'He dwells' or 'He abides', or 'He rests'. The letters of this Hebrew verb form a beautiful hieroglyphic-like picture⁵. The first letter is *shin*, which pictures ascending flames of fire [the most prevalent Biblical form of manifestation, by the way, of the Holy One's glorious Presence]. The second letter is *kaf*, which pictures the cupped wings of a flying creature - a bird or a *seraf* [depending upon the context]. The third letter is the *nun sofit*, the picture of the ultimate son or heir, Messiah. Hence, the Hebraic word picture is of the Holy One manifesting in three ways: One, in the form of fire [Sinaitic revelation]; two, in the form of the *seraf* [which, interestingly enough, means 'burning one', tying it back to the first form of fire] either singularly or plurally; and three, in the form of the Messiah - Who was, of course, descended upon by the winged creature (*as* a dove) at the time of His *mikveh* and public annunciation - tying the imagery back to the second form, that of the 'winged creature' - and Who, of course, in His risen, ascended, glorified body includes and exudes both one and two, in order to be the 'exact representation' of the Holy One.

You can see all three of these forms of manifestation weaving in and out, so to speak, in the visions the prophet Ezekiel saw, which He called merely *k'vod Adonai* – i.e. 'the glory of the Holy One'. Ezekiel 1:1-28; 3:23, 8:4, 9:3, 10:4, 18 -19,

³ In Torah this manifestation is not called the *sh'kinah*. It is merely referred to as *ha-anan* [the Cloud].

⁴ *Sh'kan* is *shin, kaf, nun sofit*. Strong's Hebrew word # 7931, it is pronounced *shaw-kan*'.

⁵ Those who regularly participate in this series of studies have come to know that my practice is to look at the '*Hebraic word picture*' of the verb root involved as well as other Biblical usages of the verb root - especially the first Biblical usage.

11:22-23, 43:2, 4-5, AND 44:4. See also Daniel 7:9-10, and Revelation 4:1-9.

The hieroglyphic-like mural which this combination of letters portrays is the same picture we see in Matthew 3:16 when the Spirit of the Holy One (represented by the *shin* – picturing ascending flames of fire) descended like a dove (represented by the *kaf* – picturing a bird in flight), upon our Rabbi (represented by the *nun sofit* – picturing an ultimate Son and Heir who lives forever).

Addressing the Much Misunderstood ‘Femininity Factor’

To make the word *sh'kinah* one adds the Hebrew letter *hey* (which makes the “h” sound) to the end of the verb root *shakan*. In Hebrew, the addition of a *hey* at the end of a word is the accepted and understood method of “feminizing” it. *Dan* (*dalet, nun*), for instance, is *male*, while *Dinah* (the same root - *dalet, nun* - but with a *hey* added to the end) is *female*. Some of the sages of Israel say therefore, since the word *sh'kinah* is of *feminine gender*, that it represents the nurturing, ‘motherly’ aspects of the Holy One’s character. Like a mother watching over, and protecting, and providing the needs of, a toddler, so, according to these sages, did the Holy One watch over, protect, and provide the needs of the fledgling community in the wilderness. This does not mean that – as the feminists want us to believe - the Holy One is a “woman” or that He should be referred to as a “she”. It also does not mean that the *Sh'kinah* is a ‘goddess’, or the mystical ‘wife’ of Divinity after the pattern of pagan belief systems, much less the spiritual ‘mother’ of Messiah. It merely acknowledges that the Holy One is an *echad* [perfect unity] of characteristics we in our finite, post-Fall, human minds, think of as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ – as was the original Adam.

Keep in mind that in Hebrew the consonant *hey* is more than a symbol of feminine gender. It is a hieroglyphic picture of a window - revelation, seeing in, seeing out, getting perspective in a form processible by the human brain. So to me, therefore, the *sh'kinah* is merely the fire, seraf, and Messiah aspects of the Holy One's boundless substance REVEALED - made visible in a form that can be processed by the human mind. Taking the Hebrew hieroglyphic we discovered in the root word *sh'kan*, it can be said that *sh'kinah* represents the abiding Presence and empowering of the Holy One upon *the Bride* - just as the *sh'kan* represents the abiding Presence and empowering of the Holy One upon the *Bridegroom*. It is the *same* empowering. And yes, *this empowering will rest upon us again!* He will yet again make His *sh'kinah* to be a *sheltering Presence for all who run into it*, and it will be a *light for all who walk in darkness*. And it will *rest upon, and emanate from, us* – from you and from me. Hence the Holy One speaks prophetically to us⁶

⁶ The promise is made to the ‘*daughter of Zion*’ – those who will, in the future reside in Y’rushalayim or in the tribal allotment of Y’hudah. Jews – natural descendants of both Y’hudah and Benyamin - will

in Zechariah 2:10-11:

*Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come,
and **sh'kanati** [I will dwell manifestly] in the midst of you," says the Holy One.*

*And many nations will be joined to the Holy One in that day,
and will be My people:*

*and **sh'kanati** [I will dwell manifestly] in the midst of you,
and you will know that the Holy One of hosts has sent me to you.*

[Zechariah 2:10-11]

The Essential Prerequisite for the Great Billowing Cloud to Dwell Among Us

Please note however a very important and abiding principle of spiritual life which we learned – or should have learned – at Sinai:

**Wherever the *Manifest Presence of the Holy One* abides,
Torah is: [1] the sole standard of truth and [2] the constitution of human life.**

No Torah means *no Manifest Presence* - it's just *that simple*. If we want to see the *Great Billowing Cloud* manifest in the world again do not think we can make it happen through any means other than returning to Torah. So do not think we will ever see a great move of the Holy One if we remain divorced from the Torah He gave us on Sinai. Do not think the Holy One will allow us to continue to spread the false doctrine that Torah is a covenant that has somehow *passed away*, been *superseded*, or *become obsolete*. The Torah is the blueprint of the DNA of all those in covenant with the Holy One, just as it was the blueprint for the DNA of Messiah. Studying – and then living – Torah is the purpose and destiny for which we have been redeemed.

The Torah is, after all, *the bridal covenant between the Holy One and His Beloved*. It is that which defines the character, nature, thoughts, words, and deeds of the Bride that the Holy One will come to claim. It is not a set of 'laws' to obey – it is a *prophetic description of who the Holy One created us to be!* The various *mitzvot* [covenant-affirming actions] of Torah are, you see, the selected garments of our Bridal Trousseau⁷. For anyone whom the Holy One has redeemed to reject the *mitzvot* of Torah in favor of any other lifestyle is well ... at the very least it is for that person to *be out of uniform*. At least for the moment our ancestors understood this principle. Hence we are told:

Al-pi Adonai yachanu

According to the Holy One's word they set up camp

experience this – as will all the 'foreigners' who join themselves to the God of Israel, as described in Isaiah 56.

⁷ A *trousseau* consists of the possessions, consisting of clothing and linens, that a bride assembles for her marriage.

v'al-pi Adonai yisa'u
and according to the Holy One's word they moved

et-mish'meret Adonai shamaru
keeping their trust in the Holy One

al-pi Adonai b'yad Moshe
according to the Holy One's word through Moshe.
[Numbers 9:23]

One Last Detail: Learning to Tune Our Ears and Hearts to Heaven's 'Whole Tone'

We have now had our 'one last look around' and moments of reminiscing. Before we leave *Har Sineh* however there is still *one last little detail* the Holy One wants us to take care of. Do you remember how the events at this mountain began back in Exodus 19? It was with the sound of a *great shofar*. Well, we are now about to be given a 'bookend' which will marking off the sojourn at *Sineh*. The first 10 verses of Numbers chapter 10 will contain instructions from the Holy One to Moshe concerning the making of another kind of wind instrument. It will be at the sounding of that instrument, not the shofar, which the final march will begin.

There is a new sound coming into our spiritual lives – the 'true tone' of silver trumpets. The silver trumpets we are to respond to in the Wilderness season are going to be entrusted exclusively to and sounded by Aharon and his descendants. Here are the specific instructions of the Holy One in this regard:

Aseh lecha sh'tei chatzotzerot kesef
Make for yourself two silver trumpets⁸.

mikshah ta'aseh otam
You are to fashion them out of beaten metal.

V'hayu lecha l'mikra ha-edah
Make them for the convening of the witness throng

Ul'masa et ha-machanot
and to make and break camp in relation to the[coming] journeys.

1. A Series of Short Staccato Blasts Is Now Our Cue for Imminent Departure

With regard to the journey immediately before us – the march from *Mount Sinai* to the land of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov - we are told how the trumpets will provide *the cue for our departure*. As the Cloud begins to move, a series of short

⁸ In Hebrew the instrument we call this instrument a *chatzotzerah*, *chet*, *tzade*, *resh*, *hey*. This noun is derived from the verb *chatzar*, *chet*, *tzade*, *resh*, Strong's #H-2690, meaning to make a loud, piercing noise.

staccato notes is to be sounded by the *kohanim* on the silver trumpets. At this sound the tribes on the Eastern side of the camp are to set sandal to sand and depart. An identical series will be sounded to set the tribes on the Southern side of the Camp in motion – and so on until all the tribes are on their way.

2. The Call to Assemble at the Entrance to the Mish'kan

These two silver trumpets are also to be used as the cue for us – or our princes - to ‘muster’ or come together for future messages from the Holy One. Torah says:

V'take'u bahen v'no'adu eleycha

When [both of the trumpets] are sounded with a long note

Kol ha-edah el-petach Ohel Mo'ed

the entire witness throng is to come to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

V'im-b'achat yitka'u

If a long note is sounded on [only] one of them, however

V'no'adu eleycha ha-nesi'im rashei alfei Yisra'el

the princes, leaders of thousands in Israel, shall come on your behalf.

Do you understand? When both silver trumpets sound a *tekiah* [i.e. a long blast], everyone in the camp is to stop what they are doing and assemble as a nation at the entrance of the *Mish'kan*. When only one trumpet sounds a lone *tekiah*, however, only the princes of the tribes and the leaders of thousands are to gather.

3. The Call to Battle

Both in the course of our wilderness march and after we get to the Promised Land the trumpet is also the sound that will alert us - and inspire us to put our trust in the Holy One – each time we have to go to war. Our presence will offer *hope* and *shalom* to all – but alas, the people around us will seldom see it that way. They will see us as disturbing the status quo. They will attack us. They will do it viciously and with malice. Time after time, we will have no choice but to take up arms and defend our families, our homes, and our way of life. Hence, the Holy One instructs us:

Vechi-tavo'u milchamah b'ar'tzeichem al-ha-tzar ha-tzorer eitchem

When you go out to battle in your territories against an enemy who attacks you,

v'ha-re'otem b'chatzotzrot

you are to sound a staccato blast on the trumpets.

V'nizkartem lifnei Adonai Eloheichem

You will then be remembered before the Holy One your God,

V'noshatem me'oyvechem

and will be delivered from your enemies.

4. The Announcement of the Mo'edim

The sound of the silver trumpets is also to be heard on all the special days of the Holy One's special 'Bride's' calendar. The Holy One tells us specifically that we are to sound a blast on the trumpets *b'yom simchatchem uv'mo'adeichem uv'roshei chodshechem* – i.e. on [our] days of rejoicing, on [our] festivals, and on new-moons.

5. The Presentation of Korban Olah or Korban Shelem At the Mish'kan

The sound of these trumpets is also to accompany the most joyous of our approaches to the Holy One through surrogates⁹ at the *mizbe'ach* [altar] of the *Mish'kan*. As the Divine Bridegroom says:

Al oloteichem v'al zivechei shalmechem

When you appear with korbanot olah and korbanot shlamim

v'hayu lachem l'zikaron lifnei Elohechem

This is to be a remembrance before your God.

ani Adonai Eloheichem

I am the Holy One your Lord.

We are being trained not to 'do our own thing' in regard to any aspect of our walk with the Holy One. We are being trained to be a *sh'ma* people – a people who responds as a Bride to the Trumpet-like Voice of the Bridegroom. Every time we surrender our will to His, and every time we pause to acknowledge and celebrate the *shalom* we have in our hearts and/or with our fellow men, we are to *sound the trumpets loudly*. Blessed are those who know the joyful sound, Dear One!

And We're Off!

As soon as the two silver trumpets are placed in the hands of the priests the Cloud began to move. Elazar and Itamar put the trumpets to their lips and sounded a series of staccato blasts. And then, at long last ... *we are off!*

***And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month,
on the twentieth day of the month,***

that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony.

***And the children of Israel set forward to begin their journeys out of Mid'bar Sinai;
and the cloud abode in the Mid'bar Paran.***

***Thus they first took their journey
according to the instruction given by the Holy One through Moshe.***

[Numbers 10:11-13]

Ready or Not, Here We Go!

Today is the day of transition. The Billowing Cloud is moving, and the time has come for us to *take down our tents* and *pack our meager belongings*, and *walk off*

⁹ There is no specific instruction for blowing the silver trumpets in connection with *korbanot minchot* [grain offerings] with *korbanot chat'atot* [sin offerings] or with *korbanot ashamot* [guilt offerings].

into the desert - family-by-family, clan-by-clan, household-by-household. The appointed day of our Bridegroom for us to say farewell to Sinai is upon us. The eyes of all Creation are watching us. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov - along with Yosef and his brothers, among myriads of others - have risen to their feet on the balcony of Heaven, and are loudly cheering us on. Flags are flying. Banners are waving. Trumpet blasts are sounding. The wind produced by the movement of the Pillar of Cloud stirs our heart with new hope, new excitement. And off we march ... toward our destiny. A season of intense testing in the vast desert 'proving ground' awaits us. An obstacle course has been prepared for us. Good-bye Sinai!

Questions For Today's Study

1. The last few verses of Numbers chapter 9 [verses 15-23] deal with the wondrous *Divine Manifestation* that accompanied B'nei Yisrael on the wanderings through the desert. We are told:

*... the cloud covered the Mish'kan [tabernacle], even the Tent of the Testimony:
and at evening it was over the Mish'kan
as it were the appearance of fire, until morning. So it was continually.
The cloud covered it, and the appearance of fire by night.
And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tent,
after that the people of Israel set out;
and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel encamped.

At the word of the Holy One the people of Israel set out,
and at the word of the Holy One they encamped;
as long as the cloud rested over the Mish'kan, they remained in camp.

Even when the cloud continued over the Mish'kan many days,
the people of Israel kept the charge of the Holy One, and did not set out.*

[Numbers 9:16-19]

Close your eyes with me, Dear Reader, and try to imagine what it was like. How do you think it felt to have the *Great Billowing Cloud* of the Holy One with you at all times, sheltering you, protecting you, leading you, encouraging you, overshadowing you. Try to imagine hearing the "word of the Holy One" verbally telling you when to move forward, and when to stop and rest and wait.

[A] How did the Redeemed Community know when to break camp, what direction to go when they marched, and when to stop and set up camp?

[B] What did the Cloud look like *at night*?

[C] What did the Cloud look like *during the day*?

[D] Look up the word "cloud" in Strong's and Gesenius. Write the Hebrew word and its verb root, and describe the Hebraic concept you see developing in Gesenius.

[E] Read the article on "cloud" in THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JEWISH SYMBOLS, if you have it, and look up "cloud" in dream interpretation books, if you have any.

[F] Considering Strong's, Gesenius, and any other sources you have read, how would you describe this particular "cloud"?

2. The first 10 verses of Numbers chapter 10 contain instructions from the Holy One to Moshe concerning a particular type of trumpet.

[A] What type of trumpet is called for in this passage?

[B] How many of these instruments was Moshe to make?

[C] What two things were these instruments to be used for?

[D] Who was to utilize these instruments?

[E] What was the connection between these instruments and the breaking of camp, which is the subject of the rest of today's parsha?

[F] What effect did the Holy One tell Moshe that the sounding of these instruments during war would have?

[G] What effect did the Holy One tell Moshe that the sounding of these instruments over offerings made at *Pesach* and the other festivals would have?

3. Once the silver trumpets are made the Pillar of Cloud that has been stationary for over eleven months begins to move.

[A] On what day did B'nei Yisrael leave Mount Sinai?

[B] Where did B'nei Yisrael go from Har Sineh?

[C] Imagine you are a Levi's son or daughter who was alive on the day they broke camp. Write a journal/diary entry concerning the sights, sounds, feelings, pageantry, and events that took place around you that day. Be creative and be descriptive. Try to enter into the Torah passage and become a part of it. Conclude the entry with a blessing appropriate for the occasion.

[D] How many days did B'nei Yisrael march the first time they set out in their prescribed formations?

[E] Who and/or what led the procession? Why does Torah say this was done?

[F] With what words of Moshe did the marching begin?

[G] With what words of Moshe did the march end?

[H] Who is referred to as "Hobab"? Look up the name in Smith's Bible Dictionary and write the meaning of this name.

[I] What was the first "promise" Moshe made to this man to get him to accompany them?

[J] What was the man's response?

[K] What did Moshe tell the man he was "needed" for? Was he really needed for this? Why or why not?

[L] What was the second "promise" Moshe made to this man to get him to change his mind?

[M] Did Hobab change his mind and go with B'nei Yisrael?

4. In today's Haftarah the Holy One speaks to *Y'hoshua* [Joshua] the high priest and to his associates after identifying them as signs, or *symbols of things to come*.

*Hear now, Y'hoshua the Kohen Gadol,
you and your fellows who sit before you; for they are men who are a sign:
for, behold, I will bring forth my servant, the Branch.
For, behold, the stone that I have set before Y'hoshua; on one stone are seven eyes:
behold, I will engrave the engraving of it, says the Holy One of Hosts,
'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day'.
In that day, says the Holy One of hosts,
'you will invite every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.'*

[A] What do you think it means that Y'hoshua, Zerubbabel, and the angels of Zechariah's fourth night vision were signs, or "*symbols of things to come*"?

[B] What three things did the Holy One prophesy to Y'hoshua and his associates that He was going to do?

[C] Look up the word "*Branch*" in Strong's and Gesenius. Write the Hebrew word and its conceptual definition.

[D] What do you think the "stone" set before Y'hoshua represents? Explain.

[E] What do you think verse 10 means?

5. In I Corinthians 10:12 Shaul of Tarsus gives a word of caution and instruction.

*Now all these things happened to them by way of example,
and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.
Therefore let him who thinks he stands be careful that he doesn't fall.*

[A] To whom does Shaul address these words?

[B] What is the caution?

[C] What is the instruction?

[D] In Strong's Concordance look up the Greek word that our English Bibles translate as "fall". [Hint: it is Strong's Greek word #4098]. Write this word and its definitions. Then try to find the comparable Hebrew word, and search out its Hebraic conceptual meaning [its "word picture"] using Gesenius' Lexicon. Based upon all this what do you think Shaul is really warning us against?

*May your ears be ever attuned to the trumpet call, and may your soul respond
in sympathetic vibration to the words of the Holy One as to how you are to live.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Revelation 2:8-11

To the angel of the k'hillah in Smyrna write:

"The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says these things:

"I know your works, oppression, and your poverty

but you are rich, and [I know] the blasphemy of those who say they are Y'hudim,

and they are not, but are a synagogue of Ha-satan.

Don't be afraid of the things that you are about to suffer.

Behold, the adversary is about to throw some of you into prison,

that you may be tested;

and you will have oppression for ten days.

Be faithful to death,

and I will give you the crown of life.

He who has an ear, let him sh'ma

what the Spirit says to the kehillot.

He who overcomes won't be harmed by the second death.