

Shiur L'Yom Sheni¹

[Monday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Chukat:*** Numbers 19:1-22
 Haftarah: Judges 11:1-7
 B'rit Chadasha: John 3:10-15

Take for yourselves a red heifer

[Numbers 19:2b]

Today's Meditation is Proverbs 7:1-4;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 11, Y'rushalayim [Jerusalem]

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe v'el-Aharon l'emor – And the Holy One spoke to Moshe and Aharon, saying ... ***Zot chukat ha-torah asher-tzivah Adonai*** – these are the trustworthy ordinances of Torah that the Holy One enjoins ... ***daber el-B'nei Yisra'el*** - Say to B'nei Yisrael ***veyikchu eleicha farah adumah*** – take for yourselves a red heifer Numbers 19:1-2a.

I sometimes call the week we study *Chukat* the Week of *Returning to the Mystery Realm*. There are mysteries everywhere. Can a cow be holy? Can the ashes of a cow, when mixed with living water, play a part in removing *tumah* [i.e. 'uncleanness'] from, and restoring *wholeness* in, human beings? Do '*waters of cleansing*' really play a role in the Holy One's Grand Plan for the redemption of mankind as a species and for the restoration of Creation to its intended state of beauty, fruitfulness, and *shalom*? Or, upon reading the opening lines of parsha *Chukat*, do you hear a familiar voice whispering in your ear: ***Did God truly say ...?***

Setting the Stage for Parsha Chukat

The curtain of parsha *Chukat* opens to find the generation of the Exodus – the generation the Holy One brought out of Egypt '*with a mighty hand and with an uplifted arm, and with great miracles*' – rapidly dying off. Talk about the '*greatest generation*' – these folks saw some things the modern world cannot even imagine! They saw unfathomable cruelty of a Pharaoh bent on genocide. They saw the power and precision of the plagues the Holy One unleashed on Egypt in order to free them. They saw the Manifest Presence of the Creator of the Universe descend to earth in the form of a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day. They saw the Sea of Reeds parted by a Breath of the Holy One's Mouth. They saw manna fall from Heaven, and rivers of water pour forth from a rock. They saw an army of seasoned warriors from Amalek decimated by a bunch of disorganized slaves whose commander in chief was a stonecutter and whose battle plan was to prop an 80-

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year -old prophet up on a rock and have two men hold up his arms toward Heaven. They saw the Clouds of Heaven form a *chuppah* over Mount Sinai, stood before the Holy One *en masse*, and heard with their own natural ears the Beautiful but Awe-inspiring Voice of their Creator declare ten prophetic, identity-reshaping empowerments over them and their progeny forever. They built a scale model replica of the Throne Room of Heaven on the sands of Sinai – and they did it exactly according to a supernatural pattern the Holy One showed to Moshe in His 40 days and 40 nights on the Mountain.

More of Torah consists of the chronicles of this generation than addresses any other subject. Alas this generation's time to dance and fret across the stage of this world is drawing to a close. The 'greatest generation' is leaving us in droves. *Chukat* is therefore the critical 'tipping point' section of Torah in which the Holy One shifts our focus – and that of the world - AWAY FROM the failures of the generation of the Exodus TO the potential He intends to bring forth from the generation of the Great Conquest.

Who Remains From the Greatest Generation – and For What Purpose?

Of all those who were 20 years of age or more at the time of the sin cycle that began at Kadesh-Barnea there will only be two men - *Kalev* [Caleb] of the tribe of *Y'hudah* [Judah] and *Y'hoshua* [Joshua] of the tribe of Efrayim – who will make it out of this desert. Having listened to and trusted in the slander of the spies concerning the land that the Divine Bridegroom had prepared for us as a bridal chamber² the remainder *rejected* and *refused to enter into*, much less attempt to possess, the promised land of the Holy One. They asked to die in the desert – and dying in the desert is exactly what they are doing. And yet even in a generation who has flatly refused that which the Holy One offered on a silver platter there is much *chen* [*i.e.* empowering favor, often in our day called *grace*] being revealed in the camp of the redeemed each day. *Chen*, you see, is *an integral component of the eternal covenant* the Holy One made with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Ya'akov.

Hence our ancestors are by no means wandering aimlessly. They are being Divinely directed in all their travels. When the Holy One's pillar of fire and cloud lifts off the desert floor and moves they get up off the desert floor, pick up stakes, and move with it. Where He leads, they follow. Whenever the pillar of fire and cloud stops, *they stop* and set up camp. Where He lodges, they lodge.

² To listen as someone else speaks *l'shon ha-ra* is as much a violation of Torah as to speak it oneself. Hence the Holy One instructs us in Torah “***Do not accept a false report***”. Exodus 23:1.

Everywhere the Pillar of fire and cloud leads the two million or so people in the Camp of the Redeemed find more than enough living water flowing from a rock to quench their thirst and meet their needs. Every morning during each repeating period of ‘*shesh yamim*’ [six days] an abundant supply manna falls from Heaven to feed every soul in the Camp – from the youngest to the eldest – and from the most innocent child to the hundreds of thousands of stiff-necked men who picked up stones against Y’hoshua and Kalev when they dared suggest that B’nei Yisrael should go up and possess the Promised Land as the Holy One had said.

Every Seventh day something marvelous happens in the Camp, and household by household the men, women and children all enter into a sublime ‘time warp’ of supernatural rest. No matter how much the people in the Camp walk their sandals do not wear out. *Alas however, so far their sandals are handling this wilderness experience a whole lot better than they are. They* wore out a long time ago. They who once declared to the Holy One with such fervent passion under the Chuppah at Sinai *Na’aseh v’nish’ma* [we will/make/form do (whatever You say), and we will sh’ma (Your Voice and Your Words)] – well, they talked the talk alright, but they just couldn’t – or at least didn’t - *walk the walk*.

First of all, they built and worshipped a golden calf, calling it ‘*our god who brought us out of Egypt*’. Then they grumbled and complained at every stop in the desert. Worst of all, when they got to K’desh Barnea they flat out refused the Holy One’s gift of the promised land. In short, since leaving Egypt they have rebelled against Moshe, Aharon and the Holy One *too many times to count*. And now, unfortunately, *worn out* is perhaps the best description of what they are. Oh they don’t grumble as much any more. They don’t gripe at Moshe near as often over the lack of leeks, onions, or meat. Neither idealistic revolutionaries like Korach nor opportunistic demagogues like Datan and Aviram can be found among them much these days.

Indeed it appears that those who were over 20 at the time of the *chet ha-meraglim* [sin of the spies] have finally accepted their fate. And meanwhile those of us who were under 20 years of age at the time of the great rejection-sin of our forefathers are growing up ‘*desert tough*’. We are resigned not to repeat our forefathers’ mistake.

***What Will Be Our Generation’s Motto? Will It “Never Again!”
Or Will it Be “Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be Done?”***

Early on the motto that summed up the attitude of the second generation was ‘*Never again*’. We just did not want to be like our fathers. We did not want to make their mistakes. We did not want to succumb to their fears. We did not want

to suffer their fate. But while the ‘Never Again’ mantra may have initially sounded to the uninformed ear like an admirable motto inspired by passion, we soon found that all it really meant was that we started off our time on the stage of Torah more *traumatized by the past* than we were tuned in to what our Divine Bridegroom was doing – and wanting to engage us in doing – in the days of our Visitation.

It took awhile for us to realize He wanted more for us than we did. It took some pretty intense desert experiences for us to realize that He has – and is in the process of implementing - a glorious plan to redeem Creation. It took a lot of challenges that went light years beyond ‘Never Again!’ to make us understand that He was going *to personally lead us into and establish us as a kingdom of priests in the strategic piece of real estate we call the ‘Promised Land’*.

The cold, hard reality is that our generation is no *better* than the previous one. Indeed, our generation has its own set of ‘issues’, as will soon be obvious to all. Our generation will face – and sometimes fail miserably in the navigation of - it’s own set of challenges and it’s own array of temptations. At times our generation will behave even more disgustingly than our forefathers did. So it will not by any means be because of any superior *merit* in us that we will be the generation that enters into and possesses *Eretz Yisrael*. But solely on the basis of the ***chen*** of our Divine Bridegroom we of this generation will enter into and possess that land. *For the sake of His own glory* – and because it is now time to implement the next phase of His Grand Redemptive Plan for Creation - the Holy One will lift the whole nation up on eagle’s wings and take it into the very land that our fathers refused to possess.

What Does This Have to Do With A Red Heifer?

Today’s aliyah confronts us with a “*chukah la olam*” [a script that will endure as long as the world endures] for the Holy One’s People. The script relates to *the passage from death to life*. It uses a prop – the ashes of a red heifer, mixed with “living” water³. This teaches us that being in the presence of death (the ultimate curse of the sin in the garden of Eden) has an adverse effect upon the Holy One’s people, that requires an *act of separation* – and being washed clean with a kind of water which we are powerless to find, purchase, or obtain for ourselves.

Heretofore in Torah we have heard nothing of a *red heifer*. Now however - at the

³ The Talmud claims that the ceremony involving the Red Heifer was the only one of the Holy One's instructions that Sh'lomo [Solomon], who the Bible calls the wisest man who ever lived, did not understand. Although the priest obediently offered the sacrifice as instructed by the Holy One, even Solomon did not, say the sages, understand why the obedience of the priest would make him *tamei* – since no other act of slaughter instructed by the Holy One rendered the priest *tamei*.

point that the generation of people the Holy One redeemed from bondage began ‘dying in the desert’ like flies - the voice of the Holy One broke the Finiteness Barrier and spoke the following words:

Zot chukat ha-torah – *These are the trustworthy ordinances of Torah the Holy One enjoins*

Daber el-B’nei Yisra’el - *Say to B’nei Yisrael . . .*

veyikchu eleicha farah adumah – *take for yourselves a red heifer*

tmimah asher eyn-bah mum - *which has no blemish,*

asher lo-alah aleiha ol - *and which has never had a yoke on it.*

A diligent search is to be conducted. Everyone in the camp who owns cattle is to participate. What is to be sought is one flawless heifer, reddish in color, which has never put under a yoke. Once all cattle have been inspected, and the one animal who meets the specifications - because the Holy One knows that only one will - is located, the heifer is to be brought to Aharon’s son Eleazar. Eleazar will then lead the heifer through the Camp to a designated place outside the perimeter. There he will supervise a *kosher* slaughter of the animal in connection with which its lifeblood is collected in a basin.

Eleazar was then to dip his finger in the heifer’s blood and sprinkle it in the direction of the *Mish’kan*. Seven times he was to repeat this sprinkling motion. Afterwards, the carcass of the beast – including its flesh, any remaining blood, and entrails – was to be burned. While the fire was burning the priest was to add three items to the conflagration, namely: 1. **etz erez** cedar wood, 2. **ezov** hyssop, and 3. **ush’ni tola’at** and crimson. The priest was then to immerse his vestments and his body in a *mikvah* – and he would be *tamei* until evening. As soon as the sun was fully set he would reenter the camp. Hmmmmm. What is *this* all about, you ask?

You are not alone in raising your eyebrows over this passage of Torah, Dear Reader. An ancient Midrash quotes Sh’lomo [Solomon] - about whom it is written: “***Sh’lomo was wiser than every man on the face of the earth***” - saying about this passage:

*I was able to comprehend all the [other difficult passages in the Torah],
but with regard to the passage of the Red Heifer, I asked and I sought;
I said, ‘I will become wise, but I [saw that it was far from me].’⁴*

If Sh’lomo – the wisest man who ever lived – couldn’t figure this one out ... **ARE WE SUPPOSED TO MAKE SENSE OF IT?**

Learning the Script One Page At a Time

The Holy One knows we learn best through *doing*. He knows we are primarily *visual* and *kinetic* learners. If we see something done and do it ourselves a few

⁴ This is one midrashic interpretation of Ecclesiastes 7:23.

times it becomes *real* to us. So many things (like the *Moed'im* [feasts], the *mikveh* [immersion in water with every change in status], and the *korbanot* [what theologians like to call “sacrifices” or “offerings”]) are scripted for us by the Holy One, created as Divine Dramas designed to teach and transform our “head knowledge” into *practical wisdom and trustworthiness*.

We have all seen plays and/or movies in which an actor or actress we know has taken on a role very different from their personality. It is also well known that most actors and actresses *actually assume* - during the play’s run or the filming of the movie, at least - *the different personality they are portraying*. It is called “getting into the part”. They become who the playwright wants them to be, to fulfill his purposes. They trust that every line, every page, every prop, and every scripted movement, however insignificant or unconnected it may seem at the time, is a necessary part of the whole. They will understand it when it is over. And that is okay. Meanwhile, they just do it because it is in the script.

It does not take a spiritual genius to understand that the Holy One is the Playwright of our lives. It does not take much wisdom to understand that we are the actors and actresses in His play. It is painfully clear that we have to step *outside our personalities* when we step forward to play a role in His Divine Drama. It is in *the script* of the Holy One – scripted meditations, scripted words, and scripted conduct - that we find the vehicle for being transformed from self-consumed blobs of humanity into what the Holy One creates us to be, to fulfill His purposes. The leading man in the drama is Messiah. All our roles find meaning in His. But the Holy One desired for the world to come to understand His Character by the way in which we, His people, act out their roles in relation to Messiah.

Let us not only study the script. Let us not only go through the scripted motions and say the scripted words. It is time to *get into the part*, and be transformed into the image the Playwright desires to create – the image of sons of God. The world is waiting. All creation is groaning in eager expectation. The show must go on.

The Importance of the Red Heifer to Us Today

Today’s aliyah describes the important *ceremony of the red heifer*. Rabbinical law forbids Jews from setting foot on the Temple Mount until and unless they have been *ritually purified in accordance with Torah*. Stay with me on this. In these days when discussions are going on concerning the building of a ‘Third Temple’ it is very important. Since water containing the ashes of a perfect red heifer is required for ‘ritual purification’ according to Rabbinic law those who wish to build and inaugurate the *avodah* of Torah in a Third Temple must first have a perfect red heifer ready. According to Torah, you see, the ashes of a Red Heifer are necessary in order to inaugurate the Temple *avodah*.

Now do you get it? The Temple Mount, the Temple itself, and everything connected with it, including the Priests, have to be sprinkled with the *waters of separation*. And the *waters of separation must be from the* Pool of Siloam and contain . . . the ashes of the Red Heifer. This mysterious liquid containing the ashes of a perfect red heifer along with cedar wood, hyssop, and a special scarlet dye is said by the Torah to take away the defilement from everything on which it is sprinkled. Through covenant, this special water does on earth what in Heaven is recognized as bringing forth the holy in people and washing away that which is *profane* and *ordinary* and *fragmented* and defiled by contact with the world. If there are no Red Heifer ashes there can be no *waters of separation*. If there are no waters of separation, there can be no *access to Temple Mount*, and *no Temple building*, *no Temple worship*, and *no qualified priesthood*. Indeed, without being sprinkled with the waters of separation devout Jews will not even scale the mount where the Temple once stood.

Israeli government officials and military leaders therefore have long regarded the requirement for the ‘perfect’ heifer as a stroke of good fortune preventing any serious armed conflict with the Muslims over Temple Mount. Then came March, 2002. In that month what some have called the first “red heifer” meeting rabbinical standards of purity since at least the time of the destruction of the Temple was born in Israel. The fuse to a political – if not spiritual - powder keg was suddenly lit. One Jewish activist put it this way: *"We have been waiting 2,000 years for a sign from God, and now He has provided us with a red heifer."*

The *Mishnah* states that there have been a total of nine red cows burned in the history of Judaism. It was taught that the tenth heifer would be burned in the time of the Messiah. Thus, the Red Heifer is seen as *a harbinger of the imminent coming of the Messiah and reestablishment of the Temple*. Some Christian groups see the birth of the calf as yet another sign indicating the imminence of the Second Coming of Yeshua of Natzret to establish the kingdom and millennial reign.

The existence of a rabbinically qualifying red heifer in Israel after so many centuries has encouraged orthodox Jewish groups to begin a concerted push for the building of the Third Temple. That is on going. The red heifer discovered in 2002 will be followed by others. A Third Temple will be built.

Distinctive Features of the Red Heifer Ceremony

There are several features of the red heifer ceremony.

1. The Necessity That the Priest Take the Heifer Outside the Camp

The red heifer ceremony is the only sacrifice associated with the Sinaitic system that was to be offered anywhere but on the *mizbeach* [altar] in the *Mish'kan* [or, later, the Temple]. Torah specifically required that the red heifer, unlike any other animal presented as a *korban*, be slaughtered completely *outside the camp*.

2. The Only Female Approach Surrogate

Through Moshe, the Holy One commanded the people to bring a red heifer to Him. Notice that it was NOT a *bullock* but a *heifer*. The Red Heifer was *the only female animal* the Torah said we are to slaughter. All the other approach-surrogates mentioned in the Bible are bullocks and rams. Why? From a prophetic standpoint it might be proposed that the Holy One is represented in maleness while Israel – the Holy One’s Betrothed Bride-to-be – is represented by femininity. According to this position, the red heifer could be considered a symbolic representation of Israel. Her redness could be considered symbolic of her ‘earthiness’ – i.e. her failure to distinguish herself from the rest of mankind despite having the Torah. Her being taken outside the camp could be equated to the current exile. Her slaughter could be equated to the Holocaust. And the ashes of those burned in the Nazi ovens of death could be equated to the ‘ashes’ that are to be carefully collected and added to living water to make waters of purification.

3. The Participant Becomes Tamei

In addition, it is interesting that the one who offered the sacrifice became *tamei* in the course of the same procedure through which the one for whose benefit it was applied became *tahor*. It is this aspect of the *chukah* that has most troubled the sages.

The Antidote for the Waters Moshe Made Israel Drink After the Sin of the Golden Calf

Some sages link the Red Heifer with the sin of the golden calf. In Exodus 32:34, Aharon said that the golden calf *came out of* the fire. Moshe pulverized the golden calf and threw its ashes into the water. Moshe forced the entire Redeemed Community to drink the water - which caused a plague of *death* in the camp. See **Exodus 32:35**. With the Red Heifer, on the other hand, the process was pretty much the exact opposite. Instead of the heifer coming out of the fire, it was to be thrust *into* the fire. And, when *its* ashes were mixed with water, instead of bringing a plague, it brought people touched by death back to the realm of *life*⁵.

⁵ The Red Heifer’s ashes had a practical medical effect as well as its more obvious spiritual element. The water of purification described in Number 19 actually had the ability to destroy germs and infection. The resulting water of purification solution contained ashes from the Red Heifer sacrifice combined with cedar, hyssop and scarlet thread. This water of purification contained "cedar" oil that came from a kind of juniper tree that grew in both Israel and in the Sinai. This cedar oil would irritate the skin, encouraging

The Holy One indicates that we who are confronted by death, yet remain alive, should have a way to sanctify ourselves from our contact with sin's harvest. "*It is for us the living . . .*" Abraham Lincoln said. Or, as Torah puts it:

*He who touches the dead body of any man will be **tamei** seven days:
he is to purify himself therewith on the third day,
and on the seventh day he shall be **tahor**:
but if he doesn't purify himself the third day,
then the seventh day he shall not be **tahor**.*

*Whoever touches a dead person, the body of a man who has died,
and doesn't purify himself,
defiles the tent of the Holy One; and that soul will be cut off from Yisra'el:
because the water of separation was not sprinkled on him,
he will be **tamei**; his **tamei** status is yet on him.*

[Numbers 19:11-13]

The way of sanctification – that through which we “pass over” from the realm of death to the realm of life - is the atoning death of a pure, spotless animal. In Hebrew, the “red heifer” is a *parah adamah*. Note the connection with Adam (*adamah*, the word we translate “red”, is the feminine form of Adam). It is as if the Holy One says, “*I will raise up from the same source as man, who sinned in the garden, one who will atone for the sin which there began.*”

The procedure for preparing “*water of cleansing*” – which the Holy One’s “script” says is to be sprinkled on all who desire to transition from the realm of death to the realm of life - is set forth in today’s aliyah.

*. . . bring for yourself a red heifer without spot, in which is no blemish,
[and] on which never came yoke.*

*You are to give her to Elazar the Kohen; he is then to lead her forth outside of the camp,
and someone is to kill her as he looks on:
and Eleazar the Kohen is to take of her blood with his finger,
and sprinkle her blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times.*

*Someone is to burn the heifer in his sight;
her hide, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, is he to burn:
and the Kohen is to take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet,
and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.*

[Numbers 19:2-6]

Today’s aliyah will also discuss two specific situations where a person becomes *tamei* by being in close contact with death. [Remember, *tamei* is usually incorrectly translated as “unclean”, but actually just means *assigned a time alone for meditation and*

the person to vigorously rub the solution into their hands. Most importantly, the hyssop tree/bush would produce hyssop oil. Hyssop oil, which contains 50 percent carvacrol [an antifungal and antibacterial agent] has antiseptic and antibacterial qualities.

communion with the Holy One concerning an event which has occurred in a person's life].

Questions For Today's Study

1. Let us begin our study of parsha *Chukat* by searching out meaning from the name itself.

[A] What is the Hebrew name for this week's first Torah parsha?

[B] What is the English meaning of that Hebrew name?

[C] Look up the Hebrew word (and its verb root) in Strong's and Gesenius, and describe the Hebraic word picture you see there.

[D] List the other instructions of Torah that are specifically referred to as *chukat*, as opposed to *mitzvot* or *mishpatim*. [Hint: see Exodus 12:17, Exodus 13:10, Leviticus 23:14, Leviticus 23:21-31, Leviticus 23:41, Exodus 27:20-21, Leviticus 24:3, Exodus 28:43; 29:9, Leviticus 3:17, Leviticus 16:29,31, and 34, Leviticus 17:7, Numbers 10:8, and Numbers 19:10.]

[E] The Holy One considers the *chukat* He has given us in Torah as just as important as the *mitzvot* and the *mishpatim*. List the blessings He says flow from the *chukat*, using the following passages as your sources: Leviticus 25:18-19, Deuteronomy 6:1-3 and 30:16.

2. Today we will be confronted with a ***chukah l'olam*** [a script Divinely-designed to endure as long as the world endures] for the Holy One's People. The script relates to the passage from death to life. It uses *a prop* – the ashes of a red heifer, mixed with “living” water.

[A] List the 5 requirements concerning the animal that is utilized in preparing the water that is the subject of today's aliyah.

[B] Who was to oversee the slaughter of this animal?

[C] Where was the slaughtering to take place?

[D] What was to be done with the first blood taken from the animal?

[E] What was to be done with the rest of the animal's blood, hide, and carcass?

[F] What three things were to be put on the animal as it was being burned?

[G] What was to be done with the ashes of the animal?

[H] Where were the ashes to be kept?

[I] How and when were these ashes ever to be used?

[J] What effect did participation in this ritual have on those who participated?

[K] For what period of time did touching a dead body make one “*tamei*” [our English Bibles mistakenly translate this as “unclean” or “ritually impure”]?

[L] What was the scripted procedure for terminating this *tamei* status?

[M] What happened if this procedure was not followed?

[N] Verse 13 refers to the water containing the ashes of the parah adamah [red heifer] as the “water of separation”. In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the

word our English Bibles translate as “separation”, and write it and the Hebrew verb root in Hebrew letters, with appropriate vowel markings⁶. Then, after reviewing Gesenius’ notes on these words, and the usage of the verb root in Genesis 31:40 and Esther 6:1 (in both cases, what sleep did), and Proverbs 27:8, Isaiah 16:2, and Jeremiah 4:25 (to describe what a bird did from its nest). Now, *describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing around the Hebrew word.*

3. In Judges 11 we meet a man named **Yiftach** [transliterated in most Bibles as *Jephthah*]. Here is how the sordid history of an unlikely hero begins:

*Now Yiftach the Gil`adite was a mighty man of valor,
and he was the son of a prostitute:
and Gil`ad became the father of Yiftach.
Gil`ad's wife bore him sons;
and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove out Yiftach,
and said to him, You shall not inherit in our father's house;
for you are the son of another woman.*

*Then Yiftach fled from his brothers, and lived in the land of Tov:
and there were gathered vain fellows to Yiftach, and they went out with him.*

[Judges 11:1-3]

[A] Who is the focus of the story?

[B] Look up this person in Smith’s Bible Dictionary, the encyclopedia, or any other source book you can find. Write an essay discussing this person, his name, his background, and his destiny.

4. In John 3:10-12, Yeshua our Messiah speaks with a member of the ruling council - the Sanhedrin⁷ – who had come to inquire of Him secretly, by night⁸. This same very influential man would later speak to the Sanhedrin on Yeshua’s behalf [John 7:50-51], and would, along with Yosef of Arimethea, participate in Yeshua’s burial [John 19:38-40].

*Yeshua answered him, "Are you the teacher of Yisra'el,
and don't understand these things?
Most assuredly I tell you, we speak that which we know,
and testify of that which we have seen,*

⁶ The Hebrew word is *nun, dalet, hey*, Strong’s Hebrew word # 5079, from the verb root **nadad** [*nun, dalet, dalet*, Strong’s Hebrew word # 05074, pronounced *naw-dawd*].

⁷ During the time of Yeshua the Great Sanhedrin met daily in Jerusalem to consider the violations of the traditional interpretations of the Torah that took place in all the Hebrew communities in the known world at that time. The council was made up of 71 men, all of whom were the fathers of families. Some were priests, others elders of the tribe of Y’udah, others scribes, Pharisees, or Sadducees. To belong to the Great Sanhedrin they all must have served in lower Jewish courts before their terms of office in the Great Sanhedrin.

⁸ Nicodemus is identified by Yochanan as a "leader of the Jews" (3:1), and "a teacher of Israel" (3:10). He was of the Pharisaic sect.

and you don't receive our witness.

*If I told you earthly things and you don't believe,
how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?⁹*

[A] Who is speaking in the passage in question?

[B] Who is being spoken *to* in this passage?

[C] According to the speaker, what things should we speak of?

[D] Look up in Strong's the Greek words translated "know" and "seen".

Write the words and definitions.

[E] What Hebrew words meaning "know" and "seen"? do you think Yeshua actually used when He spoke with this son of Israel?

[F] Look up those Hebrew words in Gesenius, then describe the Hebraic word pictures Yeshua was drawing for Nicodemus.

*May we all be cleansed by our great High Priest, pass from death into life,
and then truly live as if we had been raised from the dead and given another chance
to become all we were created to be
and to do all thins we were created to do.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Proverbs 7:1-4

My son, keep [guard, treasure, cling to, cherish] my words.

Lay up my mitzvot within you.

Keep my mitzvot and live;

Guard my teaching as the apple of your eye.

Bind them on your fingers. Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Tell wisdom, "You are my sister."

Call understanding your relative

⁹ This passage is rendered as follows in the Orthodox Jewish Brit Chadasha: "In reply, Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach said to him, You hold the teaching office of rabbi, of moreh b'Yisroel and of these things you do not have da'as? Omein, omein, I say to you, that of which we have da'as we speak, and of that which we have seen, we give solemn edut (testimony), and the solemn edut of us you [pl.] do not receive. If I told you [pl.] about things of the Olam Hazeh and you have no emunah, how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"