

3-28-26 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene – *Tzav* (command!)
Torah Portion; Lev 6:8(6:1 in the Chumash) – 8:36
Haftarah: Special reading for Shabbes HaGadol: Mal 3:4-24
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Heb 10:19-25

Encouragement

Central question of this message: Are you encouraging others?

Today is Shabbes *Tzav*. It is also called “Shabbes HaGadol”, the “great Sabbath.” It is “great” because it immediately precedes the crowning jewel of our holy festivals – Passover.

The name of our parasha, *Tzav*, comes from the eight word in the English and the sixth word in the original Hebrew.

Lev 6:8

8 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 9 "**Command** Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the law for the burnt offering (olah): the burnt offering (olah) itself shall remain on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it.

6:1									
וַיִּדְבֹּר	יְהוָה	אֶל־	מֹשֶׁה	לֵאמֹר:	צוֹ	אֶת־	אַהֲרֹן	וְאֶת־	בְּנָיו
And spake	the Lord	unto	Moses,	saying,	Command	Aaron	and	his sons,	is
1696	3068	413	4872	559	6680	175	853	1121	9999
					2				
הַחֹרֶת	הָעֹלָה	הִוא	הָעֹלָה	עַל	הַבֹּקֶר	עַד־	לַלַּיְלָה	כָּל־	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
the law of	the burnt offering:	It	the burnt offering:	because of	the morning,	unto	night	all	the altar
8451	5930	1931	5930	5921	1242	5704	3915	3605	4196
וְאֵשׁ	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	תִּקְרָה	בּוֹ:						
and the fire of	the altar	shall be burning	in it.						
784	4196	3344	871a						

Today we are only a few days away from Passover. And one of the sacrifices found in the portion for today speaks to us uniquely of this season and the important symbolism found in it.

I am going to divide the passage we will focus upon in chapter 7 into two parts, and I will discuss each separately. Each segment has a slightly different lesson for us. But they will both come together in a beautiful way as we eventually put them together.

Let's begin at Lev 7:11.

Lev 7:11-12

11 'Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the Lord. 12 'If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer **unleavened** cakes mixed with oil, and **unleavened** wafers spread with oil, and cakes of well stirred fine flour mixed with oil.

This describes a particular type of peace offering, that of thanksgiving.

They say that the thanksgiving celebration was invented by the Pilgrims. I have already taught you that the concept of a thanksgiving meal predates Plymouth by at least a couple of millennia.

In the Hebrew, the “thanksgiving offering” is called the *korban todah*. And it has special ingredients.

That which is offered is composed of larger pieces of unleavened matzoh (unleavened bread), small pieces of matzot, and they all are “anointed with oil”. And I want you to recognize and remember that

the Hebrew word for “anointed” is *moshiach* (Messiah). That will be important in a bit.

Put these interesting facts in the back of your mind for a second. We use them in a few minutes as we assemble a bigger picture.

Leaven is generally prohibited to be offered on the altar, whether it be offered with meat, or grain.

Ex 23:18-19

18 "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.

Lev 2:11-13

11 'No grain offering, which you bring to the Lord, shall be made with leaven, for you shall not offer up in smoke any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to the Lord. 12 'As an offering of first fruits, you shall bring them to the Lord, but they shall not ascend for a soothing aroma on the altar.

Leaven, in scriptural symbolism represents sin. Rv. Shaul refers directly to this concept when he is urging the believers in Corinth to put away sin to clean up their lives, just as they clean their homes for Passover.

1 Cor 5:6-8

6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? 7 Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the feast (Passover), not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Since leaven represents sin, then these large and small pieces of *unleavened* bread represent something that is sinless – pure and holy.

So, in the second of our two segments of teaching, let's now look at the next part of this passage. Here we see something that at first seems to be out of place.

Lev 7:13-14

13 'With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of **leavened bread**. 14 'And of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to the Lord; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings.

Leavened bread? Mixed with *unleavened* matzoh? How can that be a pure offering? Doesn't that seem to be the mixing sinfulness and righteousness... a mixing of the holy and the worldly? How can that make any theological sense?

There is a way to reconcile this, and I will make sense of it to you in a minute.

One of our Sages, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040 – 1105 CE) is generally considered by most as one of the greatest Rabbis of the Middle Ages. He is also known by the nickname Rashi. He was a member of the Beit Din in Troyes, France, and later was Chief

Judge. He wrote comprehensive commentaries on the Tanach and Talmud. He wrote of this passage:

One bread (piece) of each of these different kinds shall he take as a heave offering for the priest who performs the rite connected with it (the קרבן), and the rest may be eaten by the owner (Menachot 77b). The flesh of the sacrifice also belongs to the owner with the exception of the breast and the shoulder of it, just as the waving of the breast and the shoulder is expressly prescribed later on, (Leviticus 7:31 Leviticus 7:32) in the case of the “peace offerings”, thus making them become the portion of the priests (cf. Leviticus 7:31 Leviticus 7:32), and the sacrifice of acknowledgement comes under the term שלמים (Zevachim 4a).

We see that this particular offering is divided between the priests and the one bringing it to the altar. There is a statement found in a work entitled, *The Torah: a Women's Commentary*, directly upon this passage.

A portion of this offering goes to the priest. Another goes to the party who is offering the sacrifice. This sacrifice

thus enables the entire community to share a meal with each other and—symbolically—also with God.

I love this commentary, because it captures perfectly the next point I wish to make.

G-d has hidden in His Torah a multitude of clues about His nature, as well as regarding His plan of redemption. I believe this passage gives us an important signpost for the ultimate peace offering, if we will only see it.

The way all these amazing pieces come together is amazingly consistent with G-d's plan we will see on full display this coming week when we see the holy connection between Yeshua and the Passover.

Let's begin with the concepts of the offering belonging to the High Priest, and that High Priest being Himself, sinless.

Heb 4:14-16

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold

fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Let's apply that to the large matzoh, and small pieces of matzoh. All anointed with oil.

Begin with the anointing (*lit.* Moshiach) with oil.

Luke 7:36-50

36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and reclined at the table. 37 And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume (oil, but which also has special ingredients which give it a pleasing aroma), 38 and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping

them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, **and anointing them** with the perfume. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon (interestingly, his name is the same as the root word for "oil"), I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." 41 "A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." 44 And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. 45 "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. 46 "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. 47 "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been

forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." 48 And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." 49 And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" 50 And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Let's first answer this question that they had. It is the most important question ever asked and answered upon this earth. "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" None other than Yeshua! The anointed (Moshiach) One. He, at the time of this question being asked, had just been anointed. Not a coincidence.

Focus now on the big matzoh... and the smaller pieces.

Fast forward to this coming Wednesday night. As we are in the early stages of the Passover celebration, we take the *middle matzoh* (unleavened bread) from the three-compartmented cover called the *echad* (lit. unity).

Current Jewish tradition has forgotten the symbolism of the three matzot and why we take only the center piece at this time. They have constructed a convenient dodge from the obvious by saying it

represents the Cohenim, the Leveim, and Israel. Were these segments of Israel always unleavened? Much Scripture says otherwise.

But we as believers can see it. The three matzot represent the classical Hebraic understanding of the tri-une nature of G-d. Some today describe this tripartite G-d using the concepts “Father”, “Son”, and “Holy Ghost”. So, the middle matzoh represents ... the Son.

At this part of the meal we take the middle matzoh, and break it in half, placing the larger half back in the cover. We take the smaller part and wrap it in fine linen and it is hidden. That process is described by saying it is “buried” (the traditional Jewish term used) until it is retrieved at the end of the meal.

The middle matzoh is thus divided, and not all remains at the table. But in a real way Yeshua was also divided. He was not with us in His fullness. He left behind those things that distinguish him most from us so that He could take on human form and live among us.

He was not omnipresent. He was only one place at a time. He was not omniscient. He didn't know everything – He prayed constantly

to the Father for guidance. He was not omnipotent. He had limited power. He got hungry. His feet hurt. He could be murdered.

But what we saw walking among us in the flesh showed us the most important parts of who G-d is. And Yeshua showed us what a sinless life looked like. He lived this life to show us that we can also live this life of holiness.

At the end of our Passover meal, a child retrieves the “buried” matzoh, and the father of the home redeems it from him. It’s called the “Afikomen”. That’s a Yiddish word meaning “I have come”.

Then the father makes the blessing, breaks the Afikomen matzoh, and then distributes small pieces of that matzoh to all participants at the table.

But all these small pieces of matzoh are in their essence identical to the larger piece from which they all came. And it is this symbolism that Yeshua drew upon that important Passover night before He went to the garden where He was arrested.

Luke 22:19-21

19 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "**This is My body** which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

Yeshua's body was sinless and holy. What happens next with that representation of sinlessness? It is broken – so that everyone at the table could have a piece of Him – and a piece of the Father – and a piece of the Spirit.

And the cup that He took next? That was the third cup. All the cups of Passover have a name – the *cos geulah*. It is the cup of redemption. And His words actually continued the theme presented by the spilling of the second Passover cup – the cup of judgment.

The second cup was poured-out onto the plates of the celebrants. Each drop of wine which fell into those plates represented the plagues of Egypt which secured the freedom of the Hebrews and the mixed multitude that left with them.

At the declaration of the final plague – the death of the firstborn – the celebrants poured-out the entire remaining contents of the second cup into the plate. Passover wine is required to be red, because it represents the blood of the Pesach lamb. It sits in a red pool in the plate before us as a testimony of how our physical freedom from slavery was purchased by His blood.

Yeshua wished for us to see a greater aspect of that same symbolism in the third cup. I see the third cup as the wedding cup of the Lamb. It represents our redemption from spiritual slavery and death. And that is a far greater redemption than merely from slavery in Egypt.

And what did that redemption cost? It was the blood of the Lamb of G-d (who takes away the sins of the world. See John 1:29). It was the most costly sacrifice of all.

Heb 9:24-28

24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands,
a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now
to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 nor was it that
He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters
the holy place year by year with blood not his own. 26

Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin **by the sacrifice of Himself.** 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

What was the effect of that sacrifice to us? We are cleansed of our sins by accepting that sacrifice. Yeshua offers this third cup as His proposal for marriage. Do you accept the offer?

But have you pondered *the other side* of that equation? There is one, you know.

As we are cleansed of our sins by accepting Him, He is defiled by our sins as He takes them upon Himself.

2 Cor 5:20-21

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin (to be) sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

He was sinless and took our sins upon Himself. He made us clean, as He became full of our sin.

And that's how we can resolve the mystery of the unleavened bread and the leavened bread in the same sacrifice.

Let's read the first part of the passage again and assemble all these puzzle pieces together to make a picture.

Lev 7:11-12

11 'Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the Lord. 12 'If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of well stirred fine flour mixed with oil.

Yeshua was our unleavened sacrifice. A larger part, broken and divided into smaller parts of the same matzoh. He was anointed with not only oil, but the best mixture of oil with the most delightful fragrance.

And now the second part.

Lev 7:13-14

13 'With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of **leavened bread**. 14 'And of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to the Lord; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings.

Our leavening was taken into His body as our sacrifice. He made the ultimate peace offering to the L-rd – His holy life. And all of this belongs to Him as the High Priest who sprinkles His own blood for our peace. This peace offering should give us joy. We should be thankful.

But there is one further point I would like to show you before we end. It lies in the very name of the parashah, *Tzav*.

Tzav is translated as “command”, and it certainly does mean that. The first use of that word is when G-d commanded Adam regarding not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, found in Gen 2:16.

But I think there’s more to it. And so did our sages. Rashi said that *tzav* implied *ziruz*, which means *personal urging*.

Rav Yakov Weinberg¹ wrote that this verse demonstrates that even Aaron the High Priest needed occasional encouragement.

And it is clear that the encouragement of which he speaks is not internal – for that is the office of the Spirit of G-d.

This type of urging is external, and it comes from each of us to one another. His advice is consistent with that offered by Rv. Shaul to the congregation in Thessaloniki.

1 Thess 5:11

¹ Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg, 1923 – 1999, was an orthodox Rabbi and the Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore MD.

11 Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

We are all members of a community. In these days before Passover, we have already begun to get the *chometz* – the leaven – out of our homes. As we do so, I pray we are also getting the *chometz* out of our lives.

Heb 10:19-25

19 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and **let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, **but**

encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

Aaron the High Priest needed a little personal urging, some encouragement, every now and again, to do the right thing.

Yeshua needed some personal urging and encouragement from outside of Himself as well, to go through with the sacrifice that lay ahead of Him at Passover.

The Spirit of G-d provides some encouragement to us in our spirits, but we still need to love one another and encourage one another as well. That is one of the reasons for us to form congregations.

Everyone has some *chometz* in our lives that needs to be purged. Including me. Let's spend the remainder of this Shabbes encouraging one another.