

# PARASHAT TZAV

(GIVE AN ORDER)

LEVITICUS 6:1 [8]-8:36

## ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

**Y**eshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

### Haftorah Reading

Jeremiah 7:21–8:3; 9:22(23)–23(24)

### B'rit Chadashah

On being a living sacrifice: **Romans 12:1–2**

On Yeshua being our High Priest and the ultimate sacrifice: **Hebrews 4:14–5:10; 7:1–28; 8:1–6; 9:1–28; 10:1–39; 13:10–14**

On being a pure spiritual temple: **2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; 1 Peter 1:14–16**

On the spiritual priestly garments of the saints: **Ephesians 6:10–18**

### Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- **6:1(8)** The Law of the Elevation or Burnt (*Olah*) Offering
- **6:7(14)** The Meal or Grain (*Minchah*) Offering
- **6:17(24)** The Sin (*Chatat*) Offering
- **7:1** The Guilt (*Asham*) Offering
- **7:11** The Thanksgiving (*Todah*) or Peace (*Shelamim*) Offering
- **7:19** Eating in a State of Contamination
- **7:22** Fat and Blood Not to Be Eaten
- **7:28** The Parts of the Offering to Be Burned and Those Given to the Priests as Gifts
- **8:1** Consecration of Aaron and His Sons for the Priestly Service in the Tabernacle

### Study Questions For This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

**1** **6:3(10)**, *Linen britches*. The Jewish rabbis teach that every Israelite should be a human temple. If he is set-apart (*kadosh*), then his temple is kadosh; if he sins he contaminates it. This is consistent with the teachings of the apostles (see the above B'rit Chadashah readings). Furthermore, in this Parashah we see the High Priest donning a “fitted” linen tunic and britches “on his flesh,” which was an illusion to robes of righteousness (Exod 6:3[10]). Most of us have too casual a view of sin: something a righteous and set-apart Elohim hates and calls an abomination (Ps 5:5; Prov 6:16–19). Sin will damn us eternally (Ezek 18:4,20; Rom 6:23). Sin sentenced Yeshua to a hideous death on the cross in our place. (Selah: pause and reflect.)

Perhaps the greatest area of sin is with our mouths; it defiles our spiritual temple probably every day! (Read

Mark 7:14–23 and Jas 3:1–12.) It sows discord among brethren, speaks vanities, murders and lies—things which Elohim (his Hebrew name referring to the judgment side of his character) hates and calls an abomination in Proverbs 6:16–19. The tongue is a world of iniquity, especially behind closed doors where we let down our guard with our family and loved ones. There our tongues rip, slice, slash, murder, speak vanities and hypocrisy almost without measure. The word *Babylon* comes from the Hebrew word *bavel* meaning “confusion or mixture” referring to when the languages of men were confounded at the Tower of Babel. How can we be a righteous and set-apart priesthood offering up praise and worship to our Creator with our lips when 30 minutes before our lips were murdering our wife, children, husband or someone else on the way to Shabbat services? Is this not confusion? A divided heart? A forked (serpent’s) tongue? Scripture plainly tells us to come out of Babylon’s ways (Rev 18:4). The writer of Hebrews says, “Follow shalom with all men, and holiness, without which no man can see the Master” (Heb 12:14). If we could but tame the tongue, then we would be able to steer the whole temple of our ship (to mix metaphors) into the glorious harbors of holiness and relationship with man and with our Creator. Let’s stop and take some time to repent of our sinfulness in these areas.

- 2 **6:9(16), (20)27,(22)29**, The Tabernacle contained an altar upon which was barbecued meat that was at times eaten by the priests. Upon the same altar was baked unleavened bread, which was offered to YHVH and then eaten by the priest. The Jewish rabbis teach that not only is an Israelite’s body a tabernacle or temple, but that one’s table within one’s home is like an altar in the temple and should symbolize charity and hospitality—eternal values that should be transmitted to one’s children. So when there is no physical, earthly temple, the principles of the earthly temple are upheld in what we do with our bodies and what occurs in our homes. How diligent have you been to live out these principles in the temple of your body and the temple of your home?
- 3 **6:5(12)–6(13)**, The fire on the Altar of Sacrifice was to never go out; it was a permanent fire. The priest was to stoke up the fire each morning after it had died down during the night. What does this speak of in the believer’s life? Does the term “morning devotions” ring a bell?
- 4 **7:11–17**, The rabbis teach that in the world to come (*olam haba*) after Messiah’s coming, and after the establishment of his eternal kingdom, a perfect world will exist without sin, therefore eliminating the need for the atonement offering. Nonetheless, the Thanksgiving Offering will continue as a means to thank Elohim and to offer praise to him. What does this teach us about what our attitude of gratitude toward YHVH should be? How grateful are you? How much of your prayer time is spent in thankfulness and gratitude versus the “gimmes”: “gimme this” and “gimme that?” We are commanded to give thanks to YHVH for **all things** (Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; Col 3:17). Have you disciplined yourself to be grateful to YHVH for all things—both the good and the bad that happens—to find his blessing in everything, and to let his joy and heart of gratitude penetrate your heart and mind in all circumstances? To do so is to tap into YHVH’s river of life. To do so is to let your light shine in such a way as to confound the natural mind of man and to cause those around you to wonder at your source of inner strength, joy, love and light. To do so adds health to your body and years to your life.
- 5 **7:19–21**, The peace offering had to be offered in a state of spiritual purity on the part of both the meat and the eater. If either were impure (including impure thoughts on the part of the person making the offering) the offering was disqualified, and the person was even liable to punishment (or being “cut off” from the camp of Israel). What does this teach us about the state of one’s heart versus the religious act itself or about YHVH’s view of hypocrisy? Religious activity is only as meaningful and efficacious as the condition of the individual’s heart doing the service.

What did Yeshua teach about those who would leave their gift at the altar, but whose hearts were impure due to offence they had with their brother? Did the Father accept such a gift? (See Matt 5:23–24.) YHVH says in Hosea 6:6, “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of Elohim more than burnt offerings.” In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul states that all religious activities, head knowledge and spiritual giftedness is meaningless and valueless in the eyes of the Father if not accompanied by a heart of love. Why do you keep YHVH’s commands? Out of duty and legalism or out of love and faith? When you offer up your religious service to YHVH (i.e., praise and worship, devotions, Torah-obedience, good deeds to others, etc.), do you have impure thoughts of bitterness, anger, or resentment against your neighbor? If so, repent and allow

YHVH's love to cleanse your heart so that you can offer up a pure, undefiled and acceptable sacrifice to him.

**6** 7:28–34, The peace offering was the only offering where the owner participated in the actual ceremony. In the ceremony, both the owner of the animal and the priest took part in this offering with the priest placing his hands under those of the owner who lifted and waved the meat in all four directions of the compass and then lifted and lowered the meat. The purpose of this, according to the rabbis, is to teach us that YHVH controls existence everywhere (in all four directions, and in heaven and below the earth). This is also to teach us that we are to be contented with our lot in life and that all is under the Creator's care and control. What was the Apostle Paul's attitude about his lot in life? Philippians 4:11–13 and 19 says:

Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Messiah which strengthens me. ... But my Elohim shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Messiah Yeshua.

What can we learn from Paul? Do you fight your lot in life giving way to coveting, greed, lust, materialism, striving, anguish and discontent? Or do you thank YHVH for what you have, for the rich blessings you have thanks to his grace, then place your cares and desires upon him and let him bring them to fulfillment (See Pss 37:4–7, 23–25.)? Do you go through life with an attitude of ingratitude or gratitude? It's your choice and you will reap what you sow.

It is interesting to note that the parts of the animal waved during the peace offering were the breast (housing the heart) and the right thigh (which is the leg representing power and strength). These body parts speak of *heart* and *action*. What does this teach us? Is emotion and good intentions without corresponding action acceptable to the Father? On the contrary, is mechanical and legalistic action without heart acceptable? Relate this to Paul's teaching about the letter of the law killing, but the spirit of the law bringing life (2 Cor 3:6). Does this relate to Yeshua's discussion with the woman at the well in John 4 where he states that the Father is seeking those who will worship him *both* in spirit and in truth (verses 23–24)?

**7** As the laws of the offerings are given, we see the following mentioned: fine flour, olive oil and frankincense (6:8[15]); burned with fire, unleavened bread (6:10[17]), repeatedly baked and broken into pieces (6:14[21]); consecration of and anointing oil on the priests (6:15[22]; 8:1ff); contamination and koshering (6:20[27]; 7:19); innards and feet of the sacrificed animal washed in water (8:21); fire offering (7:25) and ritual washing (8:6). What is this all speaking about? It is about set-apartness (holiness) before YHVH. How set-apart or *kadosh* is your life? Be brutally honest. How does YHVH see you in light of what you say, do and think? As we approach the *Pesach* (Passover) season, we must not pass over these questions lightly, but we must examine ourselves to be certain that during the Passover Seder when the time comes to partake of the third Cup of Redemption we are not guilty of drinking it unworthily to our own damnation. (Read 1 Cor 11:27–32.)

**8** 8:23, What is the significance of the priests having a drop of blood from the sacrificed ram placed on the right ear, thumb of the right hand and great toe of the right foot? To the casual observer unlearned in the ways of YHVH and his Torah this may seem to be a curious, if not ridiculous ritual. But upon closer examination, what message is YHVH trying to communicate to Aaron and his sons as they are being consecrated to service in the Tabernacle? What can we learn from this example given to us upon whom the ends of the age are come? (1 Cor 10:11). What do these body parts metaphorically represent in the believer's life?

## HAFTORAH READING — JER 7:21–8:3; 9:22(23)–23(24) “The Sacrifice of the Wicked Is an Abomination” (Prov. 15:8)

This Haftorah portion reveals that the purpose of sacrifice and of all outward acts of worship should be to deepen the inward sense of religion and to stimulate one to a set-apart life. Jeremiah, speaking for YHVH, decries the uselessness of religious activity when accompanied with unholiness and unrighteousness. Furthermore, he denounces the mere mechanical performance of acts of worship; of the superstition that the Temple ritual could be a guarantee of security from the judgments of Elohim while the Israelites were divorced from obedience

to YHVH's Torah. Only whole-hearted repentance could avert a national disaster brought on by YHVH's judgments (*Soncino Pentateuch*, p. 439).

**1** What is the true meaning of religion and what was the true purpose of the Temple? The deeper purpose of the Temple was to transform people into living temples. If they acted one way while in the Temple and another way while outside the Temple, then the Temple activities had only become a mockery of YHVH, a farce and a repugnance to the very one they had supposedly come to worship. Humans may kid themselves, but they cannot deceive the One who reads hearts and minds. He is not moved by outward show or appearances. What are your true heart motives for pursuing the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith? If it is for any reason other than out of a deep, abiding love for Yeshua, for a desire to draw close to the Father in a personal one-on-one way, to walk in righteousness as an act of faith and worship toward him, then your motives need to be reevaluated and readjusted.

**2** Let us define some applicable words here:

- ☞ *Pretense*: a claim made or implied, but not supported by fact; ostentation.
- ☞ *Ostentation*: excessive display; pretentiousness.
- ☞ *Hypocrisy*: a feigning to be what one is not or to believe what one does not; the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion.

What does Scripture have to say about *hypocrisy*? Please read

- Job 13:16; 15:31,33,34; 20:4,5; 27:8-10
- Psalm 78:34-37
- Proverbs 15:7; 21:27
- Isaiah 1:13,15; 29:13-16; 48:1-2; 66:3-5
- Jeremiah 3:10; 7:4, 8-10
- Hosea 10:1,4
- Matthew 6:1,2,5,16,24; 7:5,15,21-23; 15:7-9, chapter 23
- Luke 11:39,42,44,52
- Romans 16:18
- Galatians 6:3
- Titus 1:16
- James 1:8,22-24,26; 2:14-26; 3:17
- 2 Peter 2:1-3,17,19
- 1 John 2:4,9,19; 4:20
- Revelation 3:15-18

**3** Now let's review some statistics relevant to the state of the American Christian church from George Barna's book, *The Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators—A Statistical Report on the State of Religion in America*. This book was first published in 1996, yet how much has the American church changed for the better since then? Here are some startling statistics:

- ☞ 85% of Americans claim to be Christian
- ☞ 10% of Americans are "Bible Christians": that is, they fully accept biblical authority, total trust in Christ for salvation, are evangelistic and are active in a church, and believe in moral absolutes.
- ☞ 25% of Americans are "Conventional Christians": they claim total trust in Christ for salvation, are involved in a church, they exercise a privatized faith, believe in moral relativism and appreciate the Bible.
- ☞ 28% of Americans are "Cultural Christians": they have a universalistic world-view, their religion is works based (i.e., they believe that good people will go to heaven), they are moral relativistic, nominal church involvement and are Christian in name only.
- ☞ Of those who claim to be Christian, only 40% believe in a literal Satan; 63% believe in the accuracy of the Bible; only 30% read their Bible in a week; only 57% agree that good people will go to heaven; only

31% believe in a fiery place of torment after death; 37% believe hell is only symbolic; only 9% knew what the “Great Commission” was; 63% had no idea what “John 3:16” referred to; and only 35% could accurately define the meaning of the word *gospel*.

- 4** YHVH sent the prophet Jeremiah to warn the nation of Israel of impending doom if it failed to repent of its disobedience to him. He then cites many examples of various sins that had become odious in YHVH’s nostrils. In their smugness, the Jews felt secure because they possessed the Temple in Jerusalem. Surely YHVH would not allow the Jews to be destroyed for the sake of his House. Yet Jeremiah warned that this security was a false one and to prove his point he calls to their attention the example of the Northern Kingdom, which had already been taken captive a couple of generations earlier. What parallels do we see in the Christian church that are similar to those of the Southern Kingdom of Jeremiah’s day? How about in the Messianic Movement? How many Christians (or Messianics) take comfort in the notion that America is a “Christian nation” and that certainly YHVH would allow nothing disastrous to happen here? Some take comfort in America’s military and economic might. Others feel that a pre-tribulation rapture will carry them “out of here” when the going gets tough. Is it possible that some might be in for a rude awakening one of these days when things don’t go as planned? We know from history that the Temple in Jerusalem—as if it were some lucky talisman—did not protect the Jews who, while their Temple was ablaze, were being dragged off as slaves. Could the unexpected happen to America, or any other country? Is YHVH any more duty-bound to protect us than he was the Jews of that day?
- 5** **7:31–32**, Child sacrifice as part of their cultic rituals was how the ancients disposed of unwanted children even as abortion serves the same wicked and grisly purpose in our day. These children were offered on the altars of Tophet while priests beat drums to drown out the shrieks of the children being burned alive (*ArtScroll Chumash*, p. 1167). Jeremiah prophesied that those Jews who practiced this holocaust would become victims themselves with their very own carcasses becoming food for the scavenger birds. It has been said that the abortion rate is the same in the American Christian church as that of non-Christians. How concerned are you about the slaughter of the innocent in America, and what are you doing about it?
- 6** In this Haftorah portion, Jeremiah condemns the Jews for a number of sins. In this text, identify the societal or social sins for which that nation was guilty. YHVH is not only concerned about personal holiness, but societal holiness, as well. What are you doing personally to better the world around you? We are not only called to improve ourselves, but to help improve our fellow man. In so doing, we evidence the love of Yeshua who loved us while we were yet sinners, and we demonstrate to a lost and hurting world that we are spiritual ambassadors for a heavenly kingdom that is founded on love and outgoing concern for others. We show the world that there is another way—the way of love and giving, which is the way of Yeshua, the Savior and Messiah, in whose footsteps we are to be following.

