



Parsha Shemini (Eighth)
Leviticus 9:1-11:47
Beit Emet Congregation ~ Vancouver, WA
Ben Ehrhardt, Shamash
3/29/08
www.hearoisrael.org

This week's Torah Portion really fits together with "**Parsha Tzav**" from last week, as this *parsha* completes the "*ordination*" of the priesthood and the establishment of the "**Service of the Dwelling Place**" We really need to be studying these things now, as we've learned that Yahweh reveals truth to us and teaches us "*in season*". Ahmein? Well, the "**eighth day**" with which this week's **Parsha Shemini** opens was indeed the eighth day of the month of Abib. B'nei Yisra'el were coming up on the anniversary of their deliverance from Mitzrayim, by Yahweh's Mighty Right Arm. Now this year, in Gregorian 2008, is a leap year, in that we're in Adar Bet, or the 13th month. And, Pesach is four weeks from now. However, in a normal year, these two *parshot* occur just before and during Pesach (Passover). So, when I say that we're "*in the season*" to learn the deeper things surrounding the priesthood and the service of the Dwelling Place (Tabernacle, Temple or our hearts), we are truly where we need to be to hear from Yahweh, if we're listening.

This inauguration day is so significant that Torah returns to it in several *Parshot*; in **Shemot** (Exodus), **Wayyiqra** (Leviticus) and **Bemidbar** (Numbers). Remember, there is no "*before*" and "*after*" in the Torah. In **Parsha Pekudei**, at the end of **Shemot**, you'll remember that we read the account of Moshe erecting the Mishkan on Abib 1, drawing Elohim's Cloud to descend and His "**Kavod**" (*esteem*) filled the Tent of Meeting. This Parsha, Shemini, narrates how Aharon and his four sons inaugurated the Mishkan with special offerings and how Yahweh's fire from heaven descended onto the altar and His Kavod was manifest before the people.

According to the rabbis, by emphasizing that this was the "**eighth**" day, Torah alludes to the fact that, with Aharon and his sons' completion of their ordination and the inauguration of the Mishkan, that the Children of Yisra'el ascended above the natural order of things. Remember that seven is the number of completion in Yahweh's dealings with His creation. Eight is the number of new beginnings and the number of His revelation. First, we have the 6 days, or 6,000 years, of the creation. Then we have the 7th day (Shabbat) or the Messianic 7th millennium. Finally, we will see the 8th day or 8th Millennium, when Yahweh comes down into the New Jerusalem to physically dwell with His people forever. On that "**eighth day**" Elohim moves all creation to bring the spiritual and physical worlds together, for those who follow His Word, into His presence. So here in the Torah, He chose the "**eighth day**", the day of ordination and inauguration, to give us a picture of our ordination as a Kingdom of Priests and our acceptable service in His Dwelling Place. Remember what we read last week, in **Kepha Aleph (1st Peter) 2:4-5**; ***Drawing near to Him, a living Stone – rejected indeed by men, but chosen by***

Elohim and precious – you also, as living stones, are being built up, a spiritual house, a set-apart priesthood, to offer up spiritual slaughter offerings acceptable to Elohim through Yahshua Messiah.

Now also, we can look to the word “**eight**” or “**eighth**” for some further understanding. In the Hebrew, it is “**shemini**”, spelled “*shin-mem-yud-nun-yud*”. It is from the root word “**shemen**” (*shin-mem-nun*) which means “**oil**”. And, it represents the “**anointing**”. In fact, the difference between the two words, **shemini** and **shemen**, are two “**yuds**” (**two hands**). The anointing, with oil and with Ruach ha Kodesh, was accomplished by what? By the laying on of hands. Further, as we read last week and this week, the priests laid their hands on the heads of the “**sin offerings**” in order to identify with, or to lay or transfer upon the offering their guilt. In the case of anointing, it represents the transfer of Ruach ha Kodesh from, in this case, Moshe to Aharon and his sons as priests. Now, the numeric value of “**eight**”, as written “**shemini**”, is 410, which equals “**Sh’ma**” (**hear and do**), “**Kodesh**” (**set-apart**), “**Mishkan**” (**Tabernacle** or **Dwelling Place**) and “**isha’fayh**” (**shall be poured out**). And, the number “**eight**” (**8**) equals “**habah**” (**who comes**), “**bo**” (“*beit-vav*” or **upon him**) and “**ahav**” (**love**). And, to complete the thought here; “shemen” (the oil) letters add up to 390, which equals “**shamayim**” (**heaven** or **heavens**). This is why the rabbis teach that the “*dew of the heavens*” and the “*dew from YHVH*” in Scripture, in addition to being rain, is a metaphor for Ruach ha Kodesh, as in **Mikah 5:7** or **Zekaryah 8:12** and numerous other places.

With all of that in mind, let’s begin with **Wayyiqra 9:1-8**; ***And on the eighth day it came to be that Mosheh called Aharon and his sons and the elders of Yisra’el. And he said to Aharon, “Take for yourself a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering, a perfect one, and bring them before YHVH. And speak to the children of Yisra’el, saying, ‘Take a male goat as a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old, perfect ones, as a burnt offering, and a bull and a ram as peace offerings, to slaughter before YHVH, and a grain offering mixed with oil. For today YHVH shall appear to you.’ ” And they took what Mosheh commanded before the Tent of Meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before YHVH. And Mosheh said, “This is the word which YHVH commanded you to do, so that the esteem of YHVH appears to you.” And Mosheh said to Aharon, “Go to the altar, and prepare your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people. And make the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as YHVH has commanded.” So Aharon came near to the altar and slaughtered the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself.***

Here, Moshe called (**qara** or **drew near**) Aharon and his sons and the elders of Yisra’el. It’s very interesting how Moshe follows Yahweh’s protocol and example here. The third volume of Torah is named Wayyiqra; not Leviticus, as the Greek suggests. Wayyiqra means “**and He called**” or “**and He drew near**”. In fact in **chapter 1, verse one** we are told that Yahweh “**called**” or “**drew near**” to Moshe before He gave him instructions. Moshe follows this example when giving instructions to Aharon and his sons, on behalf of the people. Remember too that last week we saw that the text also suggests that Moshe called the elders and all the people to the “**gate**” of the Mishkan to be witnesses that Yahweh was setting apart Aharon and his sons as priests and that Moshe was not just appointing his family. This whole process of setting themselves apart and the service of their ordination shows that the priests were not to “**lord it**” over the people. They were in fact to be servants to all; a concept that Yahshua taught His talmidim. You see the

“*Kingdom of Priests*” that Yisra’el is meant to be, are not to be masters over people; but to be a light to the world and make taught ones of all mankind.

It’s also very interesting, that in **verse 5**, we read in the Hebrew “***Ohel Mo’ed***” for the Tent of Meeting instead of “***Mishkan***” Tent of Meeting, or Tabernacle in the King Jimmy, appears in Scripture some 328 times. Usually the Hebrew word used is “***Mishkan***”. But, here is one of the 60 times that “***Ohel Mo’ed***” is used. As we’ve learned before, “***Mo’ed***” literally means “***set***” or “***appointed time***”. So in these verses we see the inauguration of the “***Tent of the Appointed Times***”. Remember, three times a year (*three Mo’edim*) all the men of Yisra’el were to present themselves before Yahweh.

Now, after all of Moshe’s instructions for the dedication of the service of the Tent of Meeting, on the “***eighth day***”, he concludes; “***This is the word which YHVH commanded you to do, so that the esteem of YHVH appears to you.***” Moshe is commanding the priest here to do only that which Elohim has said regarding the service of the Tent of Meeting. Perhaps he already feared that some of the kohanim would be tempted to “*do their own thing*” and show off, or use Yahweh’s Shekinah (*His Presence*) to keep the people “*worked up*” in ecstatic worship. Elohim set the rules for worship. After this dedication of the priesthood and the Tent of Meeting, the people were to go about their daily lives, following, studying and practicing the Instructions that their Creator gave them; all of which have deep meaning. As a person truly learns and understands more and more the mitzvot (*instructions*) of Yahweh, we press into Him and His Presence grows inside us until a true worship experience is begun in our “***Ohel Mo’ed***”, our “***Tent of the Appointed Time***”.

OK. So, Aharon first brings a sin offering for himself. This is interesting in light of the last several weeks’ studies. You see, the Hebrew word used here for “***sin offering***” is “***chatta’ah***” (Strong’s #2403), spelled “*chet-tet-aleph-hey*”. While “***chatta’ah***” means “***sin offering***”, it also means “***the habit of sinning***” (***sinfulness***), according to Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon. So, Aharon brought his “***sinfulness***” and laid it on the altar to be burned. Then he offered his ***burnt offering***, his “***olah***” or “***ascension***”. Remember what we’ve learned about the *burnt offering*; ***olah*** also means to *ascend* as on a stairway. When Aharon brought his sinful nature to the altar, Yahweh burned it up. It was gone. His involvement with the golden calf was burned up on Yahweh’s altar. He could now ascend to Yahweh. Now, after his sin was atoned for, he could make the “***chatta’ah***” for the people. As a Kingdom of Priests, we are to bring our sinful nature and lay it on Yahweh’s altar to be burned, and then help others do the same. That’s what the love of Elohim is. I believe that this is what Sha’ul was referring to in **1 Corinthians 13:3** when he said; “***And if I give out all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but do not have love, I am not profited at all.***” Now, my computer is on the fritz and I’m without my Aramaic study tools; however, in the Greek, the word Sha’ul used for “***body***” is “***soma***”. ***Soma***, according to Thayer’s Greek Lexicon means “***body***”, as in a human or animal sacrifice; but also, the “***incitement of the flesh to sin***” or “***sinfulness***” Let me add just one more thing to the meaning of “***sin offering***” The numeric value of the letters in “***chatta’ah***” is 23 which equals “***chai***” or “***life***”. Baruch HaShem Yahweh!

Now, let’s continue with **Wayyiqra 9:9-24**; ***So Aharon came near to the altar and slaughtered the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself. And the sons of Aharon brought the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put it on the horns of the altar,***

and poured the blood at the base of the altar. And the fat, and the kidneys, and the appendage on the liver of the sin offering he burned on the altar, as YHVH had commanded Mosheh. And the flesh and the skin he burned with fire outside the camp. And he slaughtered the burnt offering, and the sons of Aharon presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled on the altar all around. And they presented the burnt offering to him, with its pieces and head, and he burned them on the altar. And he washed the entrails and the legs, and burned them with the burnt offering on the altar. And he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which was the sin offering for the people, and slaughtered it and made it a sin offering, like the first one. And he brought the burnt offering and made it, according to the right-ruling. He also brought the grain offering, and filled his hand with it, and burned it on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning. And he slaughtered the bull and the ram as peace offerings, which were for the people. And Aharon's sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled on the altar all around, and the fat from the bull and the ram, the fat tail, and the covering, and the kidneys, and the appendage on the liver, and they placed the fat on the breasts, and he burned the fat on the altar. But the breasts and the right thigh Aharon waved as a wave offering before YHVH, as Mosheh had commanded. Aharon then lifted up his hand toward the people and blessed them, and came down from making the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings. And Mosheh and Aharon went into the Tent of Meeting, and came out and blessed the people. And the esteem of YHVH appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before YHVH and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. And all the people saw and cried aloud and fell on their faces.

Here Aharon, with the help his sons, makes the sin offerings, burnt offerings and grain offerings for himself and the people. And, with this, the Tent of Meeting has become the Dwelling Place of Elohim. Over the past couple of weeks we have studied what these offerings mean to us as Yisra'el. But, there are a couple of things here that we've looked at before, that we should revisit for a minute; as they apply here also. **Verse 10** states that Aharon specifically took the "**fat**", the "**kidneys**" and the "**appendage**" or "**lobe of the liver**" of the **sin offering (chatta'ah)** and burned them on the altar. Now, you'll remember that we learned how washing the inward parts (**qereb**) is the cleansing of our personality; and how washing the thighs or legs (**qara**), also the kneeling or bowing down, is the cleansing of our worship. Now, the "**fat**", which in Hebrew is "**cheleb**" (Strong's #2459) means "**abundance**". The "**kidneys**" or "**kilyah**" (Strong's #3629) literally means the "**seat of our desires and affections**" or "**reins**" (**that which steers or drives us**). Now, the "**lobe of the liver**" or "**yothereth min qabed**" (Strong's #3508, 4480 & 3516) translates also as "**the leftover of heavy grieving**".

When we bring our "**sin offering**", our "**chatta'ah**" (**sinfulness**) to Yahweh's altar, we are to specifically include the "**fat**" (**cheleb**), the **abundance or the pleasure it gives us**; the "**kidneys**" (**kilyah**) or "**the reins of our emotions**"; and the "**leftover of our grieving**" (**yothereth min qabed**), our **guilt**. He will burn them up. They'll no longer exist. Remember what Yahweh told the prophet in Yeshayahu / Isaiah 43:25; "**I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and remember your sins no more.**" Then Yahweh can wash our **personality**, our "**qereb**" (remember it's the same word as **qarab**, or **drawing near**) and our **worship**, our "**qara**" will be clean and acceptable.

Then, we read something that is often overlooked, as **verse 11** tells us that Aharon took the "**flesh**" (**basar**) and the "**hide**" (**owr**) and "**burnt**" (**saraph**) with "**fire**" (**aish**) "**outside the camp**".

OK, this gets good folks. Remember, “**basar**” (*flesh*) also translates “**to announce**” or “**preach**” as in the “**Good News**” or “**Gospel of the Kingdom**”. Yeshayahu / Isaiah 52:7 says; *How pleasant upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims deliverance, who says to Tsiyon, “Your Elohim reigns!”* And now Vanna, what Hebrew word is used here for “**brings**”? Yes, you don’t need to buy a vowel; it’s “**basar**”. You’ll find the second witness is **Nahum 1:15** which reiterates this same term. OK, now “**owr**” (*hide*) which is Strong’s #5782, 5783 & 5784, translates also as “**arouse**”, “**awaken**”, “**raise up**” as from slumber, (*Ephraim*); also “**to provoke**” as to jealousy (*Yehudah*); also, “**to be made blind**” (*as in both houses*) and “**to be made naked**” (*aware of sin*) and to “**rejoice**” (*be glad*). Dwell on these a moment; all in reference to the Gospel of the Kingdom. It brings all of these to “**light**”. You see, the last meaning of “**owr**” is “**light**”. Next is “**saraph aish**” (*burned with fire or burning fire*). This is where the word for “**seraphim**” comes from. **Seraphim** literally means “**burning ones**”. After our altar experience, our “**chatta’ah**” to Yahweh, we are to go outside the camp and “**basar**” (**announce** the Gospel of the Kingdom), **arouse** Ephraim from his slumber, **provoke** Yehudah to jealousy, help remove the **blindness** of both houses and **rejoice** with our brothers and “**light their fire**”. Ahmein? To say it more correctly, be and make others “**servants of fire**”.

At this, the Kavod, the Esteem and Presence of Yahweh Tzava’ot came down and consumed the **fat** (*the abundance*) on the altar. And the people cried aloud and fell on their faces. A better word here for cried aloud, “**ranan**” in Hebrew, would be that they “**sang out with joy**” as they fell on their faces.

Now, that we have a better understanding of these offerings and the setting apart of Aharon and his sons (the priesthood) and how we are to relate to all of this, we can read one of the most written about chapters in Torah, by Yehudah, Yisra’el and the church. Let’s go on to **Wayyiqra 10:1-11**; *And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aharon, each took his fire holder and put fire in it, and put incense on it, and brought strange fire before YHVH, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from YHVH and consumed them, and they died before YHVH. Then Mosheh said to Aharon, “This is what YHVH spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me let Me be set-apart! And before all the people let Me be esteemed!’ ” And Aharon was silent. And Mosheh called to Misha’el and to Eltsaphan, the sons of Uzzi’el the uncle of Aharon, and said to them, “Come near, take your brothers from before the Set-apart place out of the camp.” So they came near and took them by their long shirts out of the camp, as Mosheh had said. And Mosheh said to Aharon, and to El’azar and to Ithamar, his sons, “Do not unbind your heads nor tear your garments, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people. But let your brothers, all the house of Yisra’el, bewail the burning which YHVH has kindled. And do not go out from the door of the Tent of Meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of YHVH is upon you.” And they did according to the word of Mosheh. And YHVH spoke to Aharon, saying, “Do not drink wine or strong drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the Tent of Meeting, lest you die – a law forever throughout your generations, so as to make a distinction between the set-apart and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, and to teach the children of Yisra’el all the laws which YHVH has spoken to them by the hand of Mosheh.”*

As I said, there has been much written about this event. In fact, if you enter Nadab and Abihu into a web search engine, you have more hits than the Beatles. There are all kinds of theories about what happened here. And, it’s possible, as you know by the four levels of scripture

interpretation, for more than one of them to be correct. What I want to offer today is what I see in Scripture, based on what we just read in **Chapter 9**.

First, I'd like to point out that, according to many rabbis and scriptural linguists, Nadab and Abihu were twins; as were El'azar and Ithamar. While there are a number of grammatical indications in the Hebrew from singular and plural verbs that accompany descriptions of twins versus just siblings, there is also the fact that all 11 times that they are mentioned in **Shemot, Wayyiqra, Bemidbar** and **Dibre HaYammim Aleph (1 Chronicles)**, they are mentioned as Nadab and Abihu. Even when mentioned with their brothers, there is the "*pair*" thing going on; Nadab and Abihu, El'azar and Ithamar. Also, in the listing of the generations of Aharon in **Bemidbar / Numbers 3:4**, we read; *And Nadab and Abihu had died before YHVH when they brought strange fire before YHVH in the Wilderness of Sinai. And they had no children. So El'azar and Ithamar acted as priests in the presence of Aharon their father.* This phrase is repeated in **1 Dibre HaYammim 24:2**. The rabbis point out that they believe they were twins also from the fact that they acted in unison regarding the offering of strange fire (apparently without discussing it beforehand) and that scripture records that they had no children. They cite the evidence that twins often have actions and reactions that mirror each other; as well as lives that parallel.

In any event, these two are listed together as Aharon's oldest sons. These two were the "*heirs apparent*" to Aharon, as High Priest. Remember, they went part way up Mt. Sinai with Moshe, Aharon and the seventy elders in **Shemot 24:9-11**; *And Mosheh went up, also Aharon, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Yisra'el, and they saw the Elohim of Yisra'el, and under His feet like a paved work of sapphire stone, and like the heavens for brightness. Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the chiefs of the children of Yisra'el! And they saw Elohim, and they ate and drank.* There they all saw the Elohim of Yisra'el and they ate and drank together. When Moshe left them to go up into the cloud of Yahweh's Presence on top of the mountain, after He gave Moshe the instructions for the Mishkan, He chose them for the priesthood in **Shemot 28:1**; *"And you, bring near Aharon your brother and his sons with him, from among the children of Yisra'el, for serving as priest to Me: Aharon, Nadab and Abihu, El'azar and Ithamar, the sons of Aharon."* Some suggest that during their seven days of ordination and becoming set-apart, they would surely have been kept from drinking wine, as they did on Mt. Sinai after they beheld Elohim. They go on to suggest that since Yahweh instructs Aharon, after their death, that no one to come into the Sanctuary after drinking wine or strong drink, that Nadab and Abihu must have been drinking on the "*eighth day*" inauguration.

This whole scenario happens in just two verses, **1&2**; *And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aharon, each took his fire holder and put fire in it, and put incense on it, and brought strange fire before YHVH, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from YHVH and consumed them, and they died before YHVH.* Let's examine these for a moment. First, we read that each took his fire holder. The KJV and Strong's say *censer* here, which is an incense holder. These are not accurate translations according to Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon. The Hebrew word is "*machtah*" (Strong's #4289), spelled "*mem-chet-tav-hey*" which means a vessel used to remove burning coals, or for the taking away of *terror* or *destruction*. They each put "*fire*" (*aish*) in them and put "*incense*" on it. The Hebrew word used here for incense is "*qetoreth*" which is a "*sweet smelling burning*". Scripture says they brought "*strange*" fire before Yahweh. *Strange*, or "*zuwr*" in Hebrew is Strong's #2114 which means to be *estranged, loathsome, to turn away from* or *become a foreigner*.

In **Shemot 30**, Yahweh gave the ingredients for the “**set-apart**” incense and stated in previous chapters that it is to be burnt on the altar of incense; and some of it (*beaten very fine*) is to be placed before the Ark of the Witness by the High Priest only at Yom Kippur, according to **Wayyiqra 16**. So, whether Nadab and Abihu became prideful and were showing off for the people, or whether they just got caught up in the moment; they worshipped Yahweh, not as He commanded, but as strangers, foreigners, pagans. They took fire, not coals and put incense in it and brought it before Yahweh. Remember, the word “**before**” is “**paniym**” (**in His Face**). Picture it. Just as His Presence had filled the entire Dwelling Place, the people were on their faces in true, set-apart worship; these guys take fire and set-apart incense in their pans and hold them up in Yahweh’s Face. In fact, we’re not told what fire they put in the fire holders; it might have been the fire from Yahweh that consumed the fat on the altar.

And through this, Aharon had to remain silent as his two oldest sons were judged right in front of him. As Moshe spoke out the words of Yahweh; ***‘By those who come near Me let Me be set-apart! And before all the people let Me be esteemed!’*** Aharon was witness that his sons had not esteemed Yahweh. So, he watched as his nephews came in and carried them out by their set-apart priestly garments (untouched by the fire) to bury them outside the camp. Yahweh, through Moshe, then gives Aharon and his two remaining sons a stern warning that they are not to grieve in the presence of Elohim, but let all Yisra’el mourn the judgment of their sin. Then, He warns them not to leave the **Set-apart Place** as His anointing is on them for their service to Elohim. Further, they are commanded to make a distinction between the profane and that which is set-apart, and that which is clean from that which is unclean. Then, they were commanded to teach the people His Torah as given through Moshe.

Now, let’s finish **Chapter 10** with **verses 12-20**; ***And Mosheh spoke to Aharon, and to El’azar and Ithamar, his sons who were left, “Take the grain offering that is left over from the offerings made by fire to YHVH, and eat it without leaven beside the altar, for it is most set-apart. And you shall eat it in a set-apart place, because it is yours by law and your sons’ by law, of the offerings made by fire to YHVH, for so I have been commanded. And the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution you eat in a clean place, you, and your sons, and your daughters with you. For they are yours by law and your sons’ by law, which are given from the slaughterings of peace offerings of the children of Yisra’el. The thigh of the contribution and the breast of the wave offering they bring with the offerings of fat made by fire, to bring as a wave offering before YHVH. And it shall be yours and your sons’ with you, by a law forever, as YHVH has commanded.” And Mosheh diligently looked for the goat of the sin offering and saw it was burned up. And he was wroth with El’azar and Ithamar, the sons of Aharon who were left, saying, Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a set-apart place, since it is most set-apart, and Elohim has given it to you to bear the crookedness of the congregation, to make atonement for them before YHVH? See, its blood was not brought inside the set-apart place. You should have eaten it without fail in a set-apart place, as I have commanded.” And Aharon said to Mosheh, “See, today they have brought their sin offering and their burnt offering before YHVH, and matters like these have come to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been right in the eyes of YHVH?” And when Mosheh heard that, it was good in his eyes.***

Here is a curious event. Moshe restates that the priests have a portion of the “**burnt offerings**” (*olah* = **ascension**), the “**peace offerings**” (*shelem* = **covenant of peace**) and the “**wave offering**” (*tenuphah* = **lifting up**) is to be eaten by them in a clean place. Moshe mentions the “**grain**”, the “**thigh**” and the “**breast**” portions. Remember last week in, *Parsha Tzav*, we learned what these terms represent. The “**grain offering**” or “**minchah**” is an oblation of the people, at the three aliyah Feasts as they “**olah**”, “**ascend**” themselves and become “**burned**” (*qatar* = **joined**) to Yahweh. The “**thigh**” here is actually the “**right shoulder**” or “**shoke**” is the **first-born’s burden** or **authority** (*ministry*). The “**breast**” or “**chazeh**” is the **beholding of Yahweh face-to-face**. All these are the priests’ portion.

Now Moshe diligently sought the ram of the sin offering, also a portion belonging to the priests. They were to eat it and symbolically bear the sins of the people. Actually the words for “**diligently sought**” here are “**darash darash**” which, when used twice like this indicated “**he demanded to know**” what happened as he saw it had been burned up (*saraph*). We are told that Moshe was “**angry**” with El’azar and Ithamar because they had not done what was commanded. And, Aharon answered; “**See, today they have brought their sin offering and their burnt offering before YHVH, and matters like these have come to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been right in the eyes of YHVH?**” The phrase “*matters like these have come to me!*” in Torah is simply “**qara**” (Strong’s #7122) meaning “**to cause evil to happen**” or also to “**proclaim publicly**”, both of which fit what happened here. Aharon tells Moshe that having borne what had happened, Yahweh knew they were not ready to take their portion and bear the sins of the people also; and Moshe agreed.

Nadab and Abihu; their names held much promise. Nadab means “*willing*”, “*generous*”. Nadab, spelled “*nun-dalet-beit*” (*Messiah-door-house*) speaks of what he was called to become. Abihu, meaning “**he is father**” is spelled “*aleph-bet-yud-hey-vav-aleph*” (*Master-house-hand-revelation-connected-Master*) which would indicate that perhaps he was chosen to be the people’s connection to the House, the Hand (*works*) and the revelation through the Father.

This tragedy happened because of sin; because of disobedience to Yahweh. They didn’t think it important to do what Elohim commanded concerning “**worship**” and service. We need to reflect on this folks. Yahweh, the Infinite and Eternal One, Creator of all that is, can only be approached on His own terms. Our “**qorban**”, our “**drawing near**” to Him can only be as He prescribes it. He simply has not left worship to the wishes of man. The whole purpose of the Torah is to tell us how to worship and have fellowship with Him.

Virtually all of us here today have come from some sort of church background. If we were to visit a church professing belief in Mashiah today, what might we see in the way of worship? In one church we might see people lighting candles, burning incense and praying to statues. At another we might see people chanting and kissing icons. At one we might hear an organ and a fifty piece orchestra. At still another, people might be clapping and shouting as a musicians jam on stage. At another, you might see a drama group, a costumed presentation or even a “*singing x-mas tree*”.

While the reformation recognized that the worship of Elohim had been perverted by Greek and Roman paganism; instead of returning to the pattern of worship established in Scripture, we simply mixed in our own American pagan culture that worships self, success and entertainment. I’m not advocating visiting church; just look at christian TV. In most settings, it’s all about

entertainment with music groups, big name soloists, skits, plays, comedians, celebrity guest speakers. People even clap after a performance just like they were in the theatre or at a concert. Even the teaching has become long on “*story-telling*” and short on Scripture.

We need to ask ourselves; “Who sets the standard for what’s permissible in worship, Yahweh or man?” Most “*believers*” would admit man does. After all, it’s about what makes us feel good in worship. If I don’t feel it, I can’t draw close to Him. After all, we don’t want new people to feel uncomfortable here. What will bring in more sheep? What we at Beit Emet need to ask ourselves is; “*What does Yahweh want?*” “*What kind of worship pleases and esteems Him?*” “*How can we be obedient in worship?*”

Yahweh admonishes us in **Debarim / Deuteronomy 12:32**; “***All the words I am commanding you, guard to do it – do not add to it nor take away from it.***” Nadab and Abihu added to the commands of Yahweh and paid the ultimate price. David added to the commands of Elohim in the Haftorah portion in **2 Samuel 6** and Uzziah paid the price. Qayin added to the commands and his sacrifice was not accepted. Yarob’am added and took away from the commands of Elohim and caused the whole House of Yisra’el to sin in worship, leading ultimately to their divorce from Yahweh. The list goes on and on.

So, are we not to sing before our Elohim? As Sha’ul would say, “*Yahweh forbid!*” Music and singing and dance, as part of worship, is everywhere in Scripture; just as praying, teaching and the offerings (***qorban*** or *drawing near*) are worship. So, what do we do? The key here is in **Wayyiqra 10:10** where Moshe instructs Aharon, El’azar and Ithamar to; “***make a distinction between the set-apart and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean,...***” This *sidrah* goes on in **chapter 11** to give the Torah of kashrus, clean and unclean animals. This is why we study Torah to learn how to make the distinction between the set-apart and the profane. It can never be about us, or working the crowd into a worshipful mood. We, as His children individually, are responsible to Yahweh for our heart attitude in worship. Each of us must learn how to come before Him in our own prayer closet and together as Yisra’el. As David said in **Tehillim / Psalms 19:14**; “***Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be pleasing before You, O YHVH, my rock and my redeemer.***” Sha’ul admonishes us in **Romans 12:1-2**; ***I call upon you, therefore, brothers, through the compassion of Elohim, to present your bodies a living offering – set-apart, well-pleasing to Elohim – your reasonable worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you prove what is that good and well-pleasing and perfect desire of Elohim.***

Oh Yahweh, guide and direct your children as we seek to worship you in “***Spirit and in Truth***”.

Baruch HaShem Yahweh.