

Eat and drink to the esteem of YAH

Parashat sh'mini (26) – Eighth

Torah: Wayyiqra 9:1 to 11:47

Haftarah: Shemu'ĕl Bĕt 6:1 to 7:17

Apostolic Writings: lb`rim 7:1-19

We concluded two weeks ago with the inauguration of the first high priest of *Yisra'ĕl* and his four sons who were appointed priests. They had to stand at the entrance of the *mishkan* for seven days as being set apart to *YAH*. Our *sidrah* starts with וַיְהִי' בַּיִּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי (va-y'Hi b'yom ha-sh'mi-Ni), and it happened on the eighth day. Here we notice two things: first, the term "and ... it happened", which almost seems to tell us something ominous. *Aharon* had, after all, brought a sin offering to atone for the incident with the golden calf, and afterwards he and his sons had brought sin offerings for themselves, as well as a dedication offering. These men had now rightfully received their certificates which they could frame and hang on the wall to show that they had officially passed the offices for which they were appointed by *YAH*. However, it seems like something is not quite right...

Secondly, we see the word 'eighth', which is also the official title for this *sidrah*. From experience we already know that the number eight in Scripture always refers to a new beginning. Where the number seven signifies completion and spiritual fulfillment, the number eight follows almost as an abundant number, and we can also consider it as seven plus one – a term indicating revival and renewal. At eight days old, a boy is circumcised, during which he receives his name and officially starts life on earth (*cf. Berěshith* 17:12; 21:4 *et al*). This is a reference to the circumcision of the heart after the birth from above, rebirth, during which a *talmid* of *Yeshua* starts a new life as a *Torah*-believer (*cf. Qolasim* 2:11). On the eighth day, the first-born of man and animal was dedicated to *YAH* (*cf. Shemoth* 22:30).

There were eight people on the ark; this is the number that was to create new life on earth, people from whom we all descend. *Yeshua* was resurrected from the dead shortly after the seventh day, at the start of the first day, but it could also be considered the eighth – the beginning of his new life in an immortal body. The number eight is the first cube, the product of two times two times two. In the *mishkan* the most setapart place was a cube of 10 cubits (derived from dimensions in *Shemoth* 26:16-18); in the temple the most setapart place was a cube of 20 cubits (*cf. Melakim Aleph* 6:2, 16, 20). Dimensions for the new *Yerushalayim* is given to us as a cube of 12 000 *stadia* (*cf. Ḥazon* 21:16), approximately 2,216 kilometers.

Now, on the eighth day, the priests may leave their posts at the tabernacle to start their tasks of bringing sacrifices. This chapter follows a similar structure as the previous one we ended with two weeks ago, but we learn:

Wayyiqra 9 ⁶And Mosheh said, "This is the word which יהוה commanded you to do, so that the esteem of יהוה appears to you."

while reading here about the Manifested Presence of YAH, we see two verses earlier "For today יהוה shall appear to you". Scripture does not contradict itself in any way, because YAH cannot appear in any other way than with His Manifested Presence. This is where the veneration for YAH starts in the tabernacle. Sacrifices were not an end in themselves, but a means by which the Presence of YAH could be made visible for the rest of the nation to experience. The Presence of YAH, the shechinah, was the object of worship at the tabernacle and the moment has now arrived when the esteem of YAH would become visible.

When *Aharon* brings his first sin offering (*cf.* 9:8-11), followed by a burnt offering (*cf.* 9:12-14), he publicly shows the nation his admission of guilt and the need for forgiveness. After this, *Aharon* brings four sacrifices on behalf of the nation (*cf.* 9:15-21): a sin offering, burnt offering, grain offering and peace offering. It is not offered for specific sins, but rather for the general sins of the nation, and in this way they are consecrated to be able to offer worship to *YAH* as He requires, thereby also bringing His blessing upon them.

The fact that these sacrifices are repeated many times makes us realise that these were only the instructions given by *Mosheh* to *Aharon* and his sons on behalf of *YAH*, the rules according to which it had to be carried out. As in many other instances, events are not necessarily in order of occurrence, but we see the preparation and when everything is in place, things happen immediately afterwards. Up to now no sacrifices had actually been offered and there was no fire on the altar. Since *YAH* gives the commands and will be honoured by all these rituals, it would be nothing less than appropriate for Him to light the fire:

Wayyiqra 9 ²⁴ and fire came out from before יהוה and consumed the ascending offering and the fat on the slaughter-place. And all the people saw and cried aloud and fell on their faces.

The general feeling amongst of most sages is that *Aharon* and his sons prepared everything for the sacrifices. They also placed wood on the altar, performed the necessary laying on of hands, prepared the offerings, and placed them on the altar. Once everything is ready, fire goes out before *YAH*, lighting the fire, and this is the fire we read about that should never be extinguished. Compare the sacrifice that *Eliyahu* brought when he was teaching the *Ba'al* priests they only worshipped idols (*cf. Melakim Aleph* 18:17-46). This fire that descends upon the altar, causing the offerings to go up in smoke, is the Presence of *YAH* of which we had read in previous verses.

When studying the honouring of *YAH* in the tabernacle, we see the term 'cult' which is also used as veneration. Some people, even followers of *Yeshua*, may be offended when they are considered being part of a cult. Consulting a dictionary, however, we find two explanations:

- 1. System of religious beliefs and rituals, ceremonies, etc. that accompany them.
- 2. Attitude or tendency in a community or group of people that is characterised by an exaggerated or fanatical admiration for and veneration of someone or something, accompanied by their own customs, symbols or expressions, or someone or something that is venerated in this way.

Both these descriptions are in line with the Way of Truth! There are certain religious beliefs with rituals and ceremonies, while this is a (separate) group of people who do not honour and worship anything but the Creator-EI. There are indeed also their certain customs, such as *Shabbat* and the set-apart festivals, with symbols such as the wearing of *tztziyot* (tassels), the *m'norah* and the *shofar*. All these customs and symbols are not just something chosen randomly by people, but can be found in Scripture and is a command of *YAH*! Another word related to cult is the word 'sect', something the mainstream church likes to use to insult people who have been called to come out of *Babel* for true spiritual food. The definition of sect reads as follows:

group of people who adhere to a particular religion, disconnected from the main church or the established religion.

The question that immediately arises here: who or what established the "established religion"? If this established religion was established by man, it means nothing because there is no certainty about who or what is being worshipped. On the other hand, if YAH had established this 'religion', the main church means nothing, because only He is to be worshipped in this cult or sect. Sha'ul was in Yerushalayim before the Sanhedrin and was addressed by advocate Tertullus in the presence of governor Felix while accusing Sha'ul:

Ma`asei 24 ⁵"For having found this man a plague, who stirs up dissension among all the *Yehudim* throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the *Natsarenes*,

Yeshua hailed from Natsareth and his followers were therefore known as Natzarim (Nazarenes). Misleading translators like to use the incorrect word 'christian' in various translations of Ma'asei 11:26 and 26:28, but this is a word derived from the Greek $\text{Xpiot}\delta\varsigma$ (chriy-stos), which simply translates as "the anointed one." It is therefore not a name, but a title or office. Followers of Yeshua were initially mostly from amongst the Yehudim and would not want to introduce themselves according to the office of their teacher, but from his place of residence, as was the custom of that time and even the case to this day.

This 'sect' posed a great danger to the Pharisees and Sadducees, because many of their followers deserted to Yeshua. That is why Sha'ul, at the beginning of his ministry, was instructed to persecute and even kill Yeshua's followers. However, his zeal is the reason he was called on his way to Dammeseq to become a follower of Yeshua. Unfortunately he had enemies on both sides of the fence – first the Natzarim and then some groups of the Yehudim. The sect of which he was the leader at that time, however, still exists, now stronger than ever and each of us on the Way of Truth may proudly say that we are part of it. We are not part of the main church any longer, because we have broken away from the lie of the whore church according to the command of Ḥazon 18:4. We have our own rituals, ceremonies, signs, customs and sayings, all taken from the manual that YAH has given us. HalleluYah!

After setting up the sacrifices, *Aharon* stretches out his hands toward the nation and blesses them. He has now officially taken over as high priest and is empowered to bless them. In order for *Mosheh* to be relieved of his temporary task, he and *Aharon* go into the *mishkan*. What happens there is unknown, but most scholars agree that *YAH* officially relieved *Mosheh* of his temporary position, inaugurate *Aharon*, after which both come out and collectively bless the nation. Hereafter *YAH*'s Presence is visible, the fire on the altar is lit and consumes the sacrifices.

We see the awe that this scene inspires in the actions of the nation:

Wayyiqra 9 24b And all the people saw and cried aloud and fell on their faces.

Two people, part of this nation, men who had just succeeded in becoming the first priests of YAH's Kingdom on earth, however, thought they could do better. We see no detailed explanation in Scripture of what they did wrong, but only that Aharon's two eldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, brought "strange fire" before YAH. There are a few possibilities that commentators have suggested:

- w they approached the altar of incense without authorisation and possibly tried to light the incense;
- Ψ they were under the influence of wine or strong drink, following the prohibition in v. 9;
- They went behind the dividing curtain to the most set-apart place;
- whey did not take fire from the altar for their firepans, but lit their own fire;
- in their zeal and excitement they added something of their own that was not permitted.

Regardless of these theories and possible violations, their violation was serious enough to justify the death penalty. They sacrificed with strange fire and were consumed by the fire of *YAH*. The same fire that lit the altar and consumed the offerings consumed them instantly. *Torah* mentions three times (*cf. Wayyiqra* 10:1; *Bemidbar* 3:4; 26:61) that this strange fire was an action that was not done in obedience and submission. In this we find one of the most important lessons for our own lives: we cannot serve *YAH* in our own way, only in the way He prescribes for us in His Word. We make ourselves unclean by doing things our own way, that's why we read the words that *Sha'ul* teaches the people of Corinth (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 4:16):

Qorintiyim Aleph 11 ¹Become imitators of me, as I also am of Messiah.

Despite many prophets, the nation did not pay attention to warnings or signs and therefore *Yeshua* had to come to earth as a role model to teach us how to live *Torah* out physically. When we live by our own standards, we also bring strange fire, something that is a powerful element, as it is hot and it burns. Fire may be represented by our enthusiasm, the energy that moves us to sing, to praise, to pray. However, if there is an impure motivation that moves us, we bring strange fire. We must do everything according to Scripture; if it is not in Scripture, we do not do it. For this reason, it is important that our eyes, ears and minds are not set on worldly things, but on what we learn from Scripture.

In the *haftarah* we are taught about the death of XIV (`Uzah), when he stretches out his hand to prevent the ark of the covenant from falling off the cart. His intention was good, but he was not authorised to touch the ark of the covenant. In fact, the manner in which *Dawid* brought the ark into *Yerushalayim* was not the prescribed method and therefore he had to do it again at a later stage, with the priests carrying the ark. No matter how good our intentions may be, *YAH* will not accept it if not done according to His rules. Nowhere in Scripture do we read of births that are commemorated. On the contrary, the two times we read about birthday celebrations in Scripture, it has bad consequences (*cf. Berěshith* 40:20-22; *Mattithyahu* 14:6-12). Although it may be a nice gesture to celebrate christmas during which jesus' birth is supposed to be commemorated, this is not an institution of *YAH*; it is definitely not the birthday of our Salvation, *Yeshua*, as *YAH* would not have anything to do with His Kingdom being aligned with pagan holidays. Feel free to read an Afrikaans article by Johan Kriel, Goeie Bedoelings (Good Intentions), in which he elaborates on this in much more detail.

The death of *Aharon*'s two eldest sons passed rather unnoticed. *YAH* would not allow a joyous gathering to be marred by disobedience, therefore *Mosheh* called family members to collect the remains of the men and take them outside the camp, after which he simply proceeded with the events. *Aharon* and his remaining two sons were consecrated and not allowed to come into contact with a dead body (*cf. Bemidbar* 9:7; 19:11 *et al*). Although the next of kin were not able to mourn the death of the two deceased at that moment, the nation was allowed to mourn; mourning for *Aharon* and his two surviving sons would take place later. In this way *Eleazar* and *Itamar* replaced their older brothers, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, in the same way *Yehudah* and *Lĕwi* replaced their older brothers, *Re'ubĕn* and *Shim'on*. Although the latter two had not physically died when they were replaced, their transgressions brought about spiritual death.

Confirmation is given as to which parts of the offerings must be entirely burned in smoke and which may be eaten. The wave offering is also described, but there is something we need to emphasise:

Wayyiqra 10 ¹⁵"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 יהוה. And it shall be yours and your sons' with you, by a law forever, as 'הוה has commanded." [emphasis added]

As we previously learned about a main church and a sect, it is that same main church that insists, in fact, proclaims, that *YAH* had made certain changes to His rules over time, especially after the death, resurrection and ascension of *Yeshua*. However, this is once again a lie from hell that people suck out of their thumbs to justify their own shortcomings, a serious way of self-justification. We searched several

dictionaries for the word 'forever' and not a single instance could be found where the word means anything other than "for as long as time exists". Most people these days immediately see the time of day when picking up their cellphones, so time still exists, therefore the rules of YAH and institutions of the covenant are still in force. The covenant made with Noaḥ was an eternal covenant and we still see the sign of it after a good thunderstorm or rain shower. That covenant has obviously not passed, therefore it makes sense that all other rules, ordinations, would still be in place. Try jumping off a building and see if the gravity law of nature had been taken away. Why would YAH remove one or more of His original rules and keep others in place?

The commands, institutions and rules that YAH gave us, mostly through Mosheh, are all eternal (cf. Shemoth 31:16; Wayyiqra 24:8; Bemigbar 18:19 et al). From this it is clear that the doctrine of dispensation, also known as the dispensational teaching, is a false doctrine. According to this doctrine, certain of YAH's rules are only valid during certain periods. When the relevant period is over, YAH either changes certain rules or adds new rules. This deceitful doctrine divides humanity into various dispensations, time periods, and it is considered a violation to transfer rules from one dispensation to another. Each dispensation has its own set of rules that are valid only for that period.

Two of these doctrines that most people should be aware of, is the "dispensation of law" and "dispensation of grace". According to almost every christian, the dispensation of the law would expire with *Yeshua*'s death and resurrection, after which everything suddenly changes by removing some rules (laws) and introducing new ones. This trick is aided by many translators who still hold to the "old testament" and "new testament." They believe that the old has now made way for the new! Take a look at the teaching of 119 Ministries: The Error of Dispensationalism to learn more about this and the error of christendom.

In this way, all people who adhere to the 'old' rules are attacked as false teachers who want to impose their 'laws' on others, people who supposedly no longer have to keep them. They miss the point that "under the law" only has to do with the "doctrine of the law" and do not understand what *Sha'ul* meant by his statements. These stray and misled people oppose every rule related to temple service because, according to them, favour has now replaced animal sacrifices. It is a fairly modern doctrine and has contaminated many christians worldwide, who also create a false image of *YAH*, as it portrays Him as Someone who does not keep His word and promises. It must be noted, though, that animals sacrifices have temporarily put on hold due there not being a temple and no priests.

The end result is that this false doctrine also goes against what *Yeshua* intended, since he never mentioned a period of law and a period of grace. On the contrary, he affirmed that *YAH*'s instructions and rules would be valid until heaven and earth pass away:

Mattithyahu 5 ¹⁷"Do not think that I came to destroy the *Torah* or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to complete. ¹⁸"For truly, I say to you, till the heaven and the earth pass away, one *yod* or one *tittle* shall by no means pass from the *Torah* till all be done. ¹⁹"Whoever, then, breaks one of the least of these commands, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the reign of the heavens; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the reign of the heavens.

Yeshua came to teach us not to bring strange fire before YAH. He fully lived out Torah, being the Living Torah! We see a preview of the temple that Yeshua will establish himself:

- Dibrei haYamim Aleph 17 ¹²"He does build Me a house, and I shall establish his throne forever. ¹³"I am to be his Father, and he is to be My son. And My loving-commitment I do not turn away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. ¹⁴"And I shall establish him in My house and in My reign forever, and let his throne be established forever." '"
- Dibrei haYamim Aleph 22 ¹⁰He does build a house for My Name, and he is to be My son, and I am to be his Father. And I shall establish the throne of his reign over Yisra'ĕI forever.'

The prophet Yeḥezqĕl describes the new temple complete with animal sacrifices (cf. Yeḥezqĕl 40 to 48 in its entirety), while in Ḥazon 21 we have a description of the temple in the new Yerushalayim. We may not allow ourselves to be deceived by the enemy, or by people who believe his lies over the Word of YAH.

During this event of the death of *Aharon's* two sons, he did not utter a word. He remained silent and rightfully received a reward for it. Every command from *YAH* was passed on by *Mosheh*, but here *Aharon* is addressed directly, possibly also because he is now officially serving as the high priest:

Wayyiqra 10 8 And יהוה spoke to Aharon, saying,

This is a clear sign that *YAH* has not rejected *Aharon* and still considers him the high priest. In a similar way, *YAH* sometimes speaks directly to us, but if we concern ourselves with strange fire, we will not hear Him. In the lives of all of us, there can only be clean or unclean – there is nothing in between, as we will soon learn regarding foods. We see a well-thought-out expression from the pen of an American commentator¹:

"No amount of fleshly zeal or 'false fire' can substitute for Spirit-filled devotion to the Lord. Be sure the 'fire' of your ministry comes from God's altar and not from this world."

The ceremony ends with *Mosheh* rebuking *Aharon* for not eating his share of the sin offering, whereby *Aharon* justifies himself (*cf. Debarim* 26:14):

Wayyiqra 10 ¹⁹And Aharon said to Mosheh, "See, today they have brought their sin offering and their ascending offering before יהוה, 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 יהוה?"

When a priest eats his part of the sin offering, he has also spiritually eaten the sins of the nation. *Aharon* was in mourning for his two eldest sons and he did not want to take their sins upon himself as well. This again refers to *Yeshua* who took upon himself the sins of all mankind in order for *YAH* to forgive our sins; in this way we will stand clean before Him and therefore be able to enter the heavenly tabernacle.

Suddenly, as in many other cases, the topic changes and we move from a narrative to an ordinance. From *Shemoth* 14 to *Wayyiqra* 25 we see a structure of failures and shortcomings of the nation, after which *YAH* gives further regulations every time:

Failures/defects	Bylaws added afterwards
Murmuring from Mitsrayim to Sinai (Shemoth 14-19)	Mosaic covenant (Shemoth 25-31)
Incident with the golden calf (Shemoth 32)	The priestly laws (Tabernacle (Shemoth 33 – Wayyiqra 9)
Incident with Nadab and Abihu (Wayyiqra 10)	Additional priestly laws (Wayyiqra 11 – 17)
Offerings to goat demons (Wayyiqra 17)	Laws surrounding being set apart (Wayyiqra 17 – 25)

Food is the most important element for any human and animal, something we can't do without, with water being the exception. In His wisdom, *YAH* created different animals, both on land and in the sea, which keep the ecology in line, as well as promoting cleansing of the earth. While we learned about what the priests would eat, a complete set of rules regarding different types of meat was added to the regulations. This is done expressly because of the institution made shortly after the flood, during which *YAH* allowed *Noaḥ* to eat meat – something that had not been part of the human diet since Creation:

¹ Wiersbe, Warren W. The Bible Exposition Commentary/Pentateuch. Colorado Springs, Colo.: Cook Communications Ministries, 2001.

Berĕshith 9 ³"Every creeping creature that lives is food for you. I have given you all, as I gave the green plants.

This verse gives the average person carte blanche to assume that he can eat anything, but that is not what YAH intended. Noaḥ already knew from tradition about clean and unclean animals (cf. Berĕshith 7:2-3, 8). Now, after the flood, when he gets the green light to slaughter and eat animals, there is no uncertainty about what he may eat and what he must avoid. However, it seems as if this has been lost over time, possibly through the doctrine of dispensation or man's greed, therefore YAH has to outline it very clearly – even with examples of specific animals.

All unclean animals are unclean for one of two reasons:

- 1. They feed on blood, directly or indirectly;
- 2. they were created to cleanse the earth.

Surely no one on earth would open a vacuum cleaner, shake its contents into a pan and fry it for dinner! However, this is similar to what someone would eat if they were to eat an unclean animal. Pigs will literally eat anything thrown at them, including the body parts of other animals, even their own offspring! Birds of prey eat rats, snakes and other animals, while lobsters and shellfish clean the sea floor along with a few species of fish that do not have scales. If we were to eat any of these animals, we might as well put the contents of a vacuum cleaner in a pan and stir-fry that for dinner. We can especially challenge the advocates of pork and unclean seafood to do this! The meat of these animals absorbs the toxins by what they ingest and is harmful to the human body, therefore *YAH* has placed a ban on them. Pure animals, in contrast, process their food intake according to a system intricately designed by our Creator and their meat normally contains no toxins, provided they are bred under the right conditions.

If we eat anything that is unclean, whether meat or vegetable, we thereby defile our bodies. We see a clear command that forbids this:

Wayyiqra 11 ⁴³ 'Do not make yourselves abominable with any swarming *creature* – the one swarming, and do not make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. ⁴⁴ 'For I am 'oyour *Elohim*, and you shall set yourselves apart. And you shall be set-apart, for I am set-apart. And do not defile yourselves with any swarming *creature* – the one creeping on the earth.

Keep in mind that our body is the temple of *YAH*, both individually and corporately. When one person in the body is unclean, it defiles the rest of the body. At the same level, we should not tamper with the genetic makeup of fruits and vegetables, neither with that of man. Any fruit or vegetable that does not contain the original seed can be harmful to the human body. Butcheries and stores that supply these products should not be supported.

When we are set apart unto YAH, it means that we are different, almost peculiar. He is set apart and therefore we must also be set apart, otherwise we can never be in a covenant relationship with Him. It is impossible to have a relationship with someone you do not know and respect. Being set apart through obedience to YAH's rules not only creates an intimate relationship with Him, but it is also reflected by everyone who follows this way of life. The more faithfully we abide by the rules of YAH, the closer we are to Him and the more He will be reflected in us. In the model prayer that Yeshua teaches us, we pray daily:

Luqas 11 ²And He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in the heavens, let Your Name be set-apart, let Your reign come, let Your desire be done on earth as it is in heaven. ³ "Give us day by day our daily bread.

About 15 years after Yeshua ascended into heaven, we learn from a very faithful talmid:

Kepha Aleph 1 ¹³Therefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, set your expectation perfectly upon the favour that is to be brought to you at the revelation of יהושע Messiah, ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts in your ignorance, ¹⁵ instead, as the One who called you is set-apart, so you also should become set-apart in all behaviour, ¹⁶ because it has been written, "Be set-apart, for I am set-apart." [emphasis original]

With all this information at our disposal, the best way forward would preferably be to grow our own crops and raising our own animals, or at least buy meat from reputable butchers. No restaurant can be trusted these days because we do not know what type of food they serve and how it is prepared and cooked. This leaves few alternatives for people on the Way of Truth. We could possibly arrange with one another to get together from time to time to have a meal, even during the week, instead of supporting unclean restaurants and their pagan owners, people who reject *YAH* and His rules in any case. After all, this is how the people in *Yisra'ĕl* lived before and after *Yeshua*'s life on earth, together in unity.

With *Pesach* for this year something of the past, we encourage everyone to make a new commitment to be set apart the way *YAH* wants us to be. For everyone still sitting here, as well as those online: Welcome to the sect of the *Natzarim*!

Shabbat shalom!

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Sources:

Unless otherwise stated, all text is quoted from The Scriptures (2009)². Due to personal conviction, the word 'God' is replaced with the Hebrew 'Elohim' or sometimes inflections thereof.

You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series – Dr. Bob Utley

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