

פרשת
תצוה
Parashat Tetzaveh

*Shemot / Exodus 27:20-30:10 , Ezekiel 43:10-27
Mark 4:35-5:43*

To Live our Lives as a Holy People before a Holy God

In Parashat Tetzaveh, we read how Moshe describes the consecration process for Aaron and his sons as they enter into the service of the Lord. The Torah speaks of the laying on of hands upon the head of the animal to be sacrificed. (*What is the significance of placing the hand upon the head of the animal?*) We are told the blood of the animal is sprinkled upon Aaron and his sons. The Scriptures also say, *29:22 'You shall also take the fat from the ram and the fat tail, and the fat that covers the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them and the right thigh (for it is a ram of ordination), 29:23 and one cake of bread and one cake of bread mixed with oil and one wafer from the basket of unleavened bread which is set before the Lord; 29:24 and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and shall wave them as a wave offering before the Lord. (NASB)* What is the point and significance of the wave offering? Based upon *Bamidbar / Numbers 8:9-11*, we are also told that *8:11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD. (NASB)* Here we are told Moshe presented the priests as a wave offering. What does that mean and what is the significance of following this procedure? The wave offering is described in the Torah as a symbolic

act indicating the offering was for the Lord. Portions of the things offered were literally waved in the air before the Lord. The wave offering is first seen here in *Shemot / Exodus 29:19-28* in the description of the ordination ceremony of Aaron and his sons. This is the only instance where part of the wave offering was consumed by fire (see *Shemot / Exodus 29:25*). The remainder was “waved” to the Lord God Israel but taken by Aaron, his sons, and Moshe as food. Other instances of wave offerings include the breast of a Peace Offering (Shelamim Korban, *Vayikra / Leviticus 7:28-34*), a lamb from the cleansing sacrifice of a healed leper (*Vayikra / Leviticus 14:12*), and two loaves of bread with two lambs of the sacrifice affiliated with the Feast of Shavuot (*Vayikra / Leviticus 23:15-21*). The Torah describes the largest wave offering of all was of an entire tribe and this seems to be by reason of their loyalty during the episode with the golden calf (see Parashat Ki Tisa in *Shemot / Exodus 32*), God accepted the Levites in the service of His temple in place of the firstborn male of every Israelite family (see *Rashi on Bamidbar / Numbers 3:12*). A wave offering was a portion of a sacrifice presented to the Lord God, which was then released by the Lord for the use of those involved in the sacrifice where the meat fed the families of the priests. The text today illustrates the Lord’s provision for those who gave (or sacrificed) of themselves in service to Him. How do these things related to us today? The wave offering presented a significant portion of the priestly service before the Lord. These things may be related to our attitudes we need to have on a daily basis in order to be willing to do God’s will. In other words, attitudes that will facilitate a state of openness and readiness to listen, obey, and serve the HaShem. This is part of what the Apostle Paul meant when he spoke of presenting ourselves as living sacrifices. (*Romans 12:1-3*) This is also related to how we surrender ourselves to the Lord on a moment-by-moment basis. From this perspective, the wave offering, as it is related to us today, may be summarized in the following way, (i) to present our bodies as a living sacrifices, (ii) to deny ourselves in relation to our own thoughts, emotions and desires that are contrary to God’s word, (iii) to obey God’s mitzvot, meaning that we get up and put into action what the Lord God has asked us to do, and (iv) to take every thought captive and dealing with those things that are not of faith in our lives. These Scriptures teach us very practical applications to

God's Word in relation to the Sacrifice. We must be willing on a daily basis to allow the Spirit of God to search us and to expose what is not of him. This may be why in the commissioning of Aaron and his sons, there was the laying on of the hands and the blood of the bull, coupled with the sacrifices and the wave offering before the Lord. Note that not only were the sacrifice, the grain, and the oil waved before the Lord, but also the entire life of the priest, and even the entire community (Levites) of the faithful stood as an offering before God. Let's discuss this further in this week's Torah portion.

This week we are looking at *Shemot / Exodus 29:10-24*.

Shemot / Exodus 29:10-24

29:10 'Then you shall bring the bull before the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the bull. 29:11 'You shall slaughter the bull before the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 29:12 'You shall take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; and you shall pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. 29:13 'You shall take all the fat that covers the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and offer them up in smoke on the altar. 29:14 'But the flesh of the bull and its hide and its refuse, you shall burn with fire outside the camp; it is a sin offering. 29:15 'You shall also take the one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram; 29:16 and you shall slaughter the ram and shall take its blood and sprinkle it around on the altar. 29:17 'Then you shall cut the ram into its pieces, and wash its entrails and its legs, and put them with its pieces and its head. 29:18 'You shall offer up in smoke the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to the Lord: it is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the Lord. 29:19 'Then you shall take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram. 29:20 'You shall slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right

אֶת-הַדָּם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: כֹּא וְלָקַחְתָּ מִן-הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר עַל-
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּמִשְׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְהַיִּיתָ עַל-אַהֲרֹן וְעַל-בְּגָדָיו וְעַל-בָּנָיו
וְעַל-בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו אֹתוֹ וְקֹדֵשׁ הוּא וּבְגָדָיו וּבְנָיו וּבְגָדֵי בָנָיו אֹתוֹ:
כֹּב וְלָקַחְתָּ מִן-הָאֵיל הַחֹלֵב וְהָאֵלֶּיָה וְאֶת-הַחֹלֵב | הַמִּכְסָּה
אֶת-הַקָּרֵב וְאֶת יְתֵרֶת הַכֶּבֶד וְאֶת | שְׁתֵּי הַכְּלִית וְאֶת-הַחֹלֵב
אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהֶן וְאֶת שׂוֹק הַיָּמִין כִּי אֵיל מִלְּאִים הוּא: כֹּג וְכִפֵּר
לְחֶם אַחַת וְחֵלֶת לְחֶם שְׁמֶן אַחַת וְרָקִיק אַחַד מִסַּל הַמִּצּוֹת
אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: כֹּד וְשָׁמַתְּ הַכֹּל עַל כַּפֵּי אַהֲרֹן וְעַל כַּפֵּי בָנָיו
וְהִנַּחְתָּ אֹתָם תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

In the commissioning of Aaron and his sons, we are told, *29:10* ‘Then you shall bring the bull before the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the bull. (NASB) The bull was then slaughtered (*29:11*), its blood was put upon the horns of the altar (*29:12*). A ram was brought and offered up as a whole burnt offering (*29:15-18*) and a second ram was brought in which the text states, *29:20* ‘You shall slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron’s right ear and on the lobes of his sons’ right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet, and sprinkle the rest of the blood around on the altar. (NASB) Aaron and his sons including their cloths are consecrated in this way (*29:21*) by the application of the blood. A portion of this ram was then offered along with bread as a wave offering before the Lord (*29:22-24*). In the descriptions of Aaron and his sons, they were willing vessels of God’s life and love, presenting their bodies, their time, and their efforts in the service of the Lord. The commissioning of Aaron and his sons, the laying on of the hands with the blood of the bull and the rams, coupled to the sacrifices, and the wave offering before the Lord, all of these things illustrates the willingness to serve in the manner in which God wants. The conclusion is in relation to the attitude that we must have “*on a daily basis*” is to be willing vessels of God’s Life and Love, which is coupled to the presenting of our bodies as living sacrifices (*Romans 12:1-3*). As *Romans 12:1* says, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*”



The Torah provides us with the themes of judgment and salvation due to sin, for example, the vast majority of mankind was condemned to destruction, while God placed His favor upon a few (Noah and his family). This theme reoccurs often in connection with the idea of Grace (Chesed, Mercy) in the Torah and the Tanach. In the Hebrew Bible, the word translated for grace comes from two Hebrew words (Strongs, BDB, Gesenius):

חֶסֶד

grace, mercy, kindness, charity, favor,
graciousness, favor

חַן

grace, mercy, favor, charm, beauty, prettiness, loveliness

The first occurrence of the word חֶסֶד is found in *Bereshit / Genesis 19:19* with Lot saying, “*Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness (חֶסֶד), which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die.*” (NASB) Here Lot speaks of finding mercy, kindness, graciousness in the eyes of the Lord in fleeing from the destruction at Sodom. The rabbis say in *Midrash Tehillim 112, Part 1* that the man who fears the Lord is blessed, and this is to be taking into consideration with respect to *Mishley / Proverbs 31:30*, לְשֹׁקֵר הַחַן וְהַבֶּל הַיָּפִי אִשָּׁה יִרְאַת-יְהוָה הִיא תִתְהַלָּל: which speaks of Grace being deceitful. The Midrash states, “*For the Holy One, blessed be He, values neither beauty nor riches, only fear of sin, as it is said, A woman that fears the Lord, she will be praised.*” This concept of “*fearing sin*” is related to the fear of God and His judgment that would lead to death, paralleled to an eternal separation from His presence (see *Luke 12:5, Hebrews 10:31*). The fear of the Lord God is having a reverence for the Lord and His ways. *Hebrews 12:28-29* states, “*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.*” This reverence and awe is exactly what the fear of God means for His children. Solomon

said in *Mishley / Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. (NASB)* Until we understand who God is and develop a reverential fear of Him, we cannot have true wisdom. The understanding of who God is comes by our living out our lives according to His Word. True wisdom comes only from understanding who the Lord God is by living out the commandments. This teaches us what it means by He is Holy, Just, and Righteous in relation to who we are, a people who are dependent upon His Mercy. This is the point of *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:12, 20-21* **יב וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׂאֵל מִעַמֶּךָ (פי) אִם-לִירְאֶה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַקֵּת בְּכָל-דְּרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ וּלְעַבֹד אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ: ... כ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִירָא אֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד וּבוֹ תִדְבַק וּבִשְׁמוֹ תִשָּׁבַע: כא הוּא תְהַלֵּתָךְ וְהוּא אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה אִתָּךְ אֶת-הַגְּדֹלֹת וְאֶת-הַנּוֹרְאֹת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ: כב בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ יִרְדּוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ (מִצְרַיִם וְעַתָּה שְׂמָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב: 10:12 'Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ... 10:20 'You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. 10:21 'He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen. (NASB)** The fear of God is the basis for our walking in His ways, serving Him, and, yes, loving Him by reason of the manner in which He loves us and has delivered us again and again. The biblical definition of the fear of God, for the believer, includes understanding how much the Lord hates sin and fearing His judgment on sin even in the life of a believer. This is illustrated in the Apostolic Writings according to *Hebrews 12:5-11* which describes God's discipline of the believer. While it is done in love (*Hebrews 12:6*), it is still a fearful thing. Consider the life of David, it was said that David was a man after God's own heart, but when he sinned, the punishment went either to himself, to his family, or to the nation of Israel. How important it is to watch and guard against sin in our lives. The Scriptures suggest our own personal sin could be affecting our immediate family by reason of God's discipline in our lives. As children, the fear of discipline from our parents no doubt prevented some evil actions. The same should be true in our relationship with God, right? We should fear His discipline,

and therefore seek to live our lives in such a way that pleases Him. The way this is accomplished is in His Torah which was lived out for our example in Yeshua the Messiah. Based upon the Scriptures, we have His promise that nothing can separate us from His love (*Romans 8:38-39*). We also have His promise that He will never leave us or forsake us (*Hebrews 13:5*). Fearing God means having such a reverence for Him that it has a great impact on the way we live our lives. The fear of God is respecting Him, obeying Him, submitting to His discipline, and worshipping Him and His awesomeness. These concepts here are related to the examination of our hearts. Ask yourself “*Am I consistently seeking the Lord in my life each day?*” “*Am I striving for His righteousness each day?*” “*Do I have a conviction of sin?*” “*Where is the power of the resurrection in my life today to overcome sin, which is promised according to the Apostolic Writings?*” “*How is the Lord working in my life each Day?*” “*Does my heart long for all of these things, or do I just go on from day to day without hardly a thought about it?*” These things are at the core of what it means to sanctify our lives for the Lord, and to be a Wave Offering before the Lord daily. These are the things that distinguish us the children of God from those who are not His!

The Midrash (Midrash Tehillim 112, Part 1) states in relation to fearing the Lord, “*So was Abraham praised, as it is said, For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice (Bereshit / Genesis 18:19); and again, For now I know that you are a God fearing man (Bereshit / Genesis 22:12).*” This fear led Abraham to teach his children of God’s ways, and in keeping them himself and teaching them to his children. Abraham demonstrated that he was a God fearing man. Does your life demonstrated you are a God fearing man or woman? The rabbis cite the following passage, “*Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man be praised for his wisdom, But let him that is praised, be praised for this, that he understands and knows Me (Jeremiah 9:22-23).*” They speak of Jeremiah’s words:

Jeremiah 9:20-24

9:20 Now hear the word of the Lord, O you women, And let your ear receive the word of His mouth; Teach your daughters wailing, And everyone her neighbor a dirge.

9:21 For death has come up through our windows; It has entered our palaces To cut off the children from the streets, The young men from the town squares. 9:22 Speak, 'Thus says the Lord, 'The corpses of men will fall like dung on the open field, And like the sheaf after the reaper, But no one will gather them. ' 9:23 Thus says the Lord, 'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 9:24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the Lord. (NASB)

Take note of Jeremiah's words, the wise man is not to boast of his own might, or of wealth, he is to boast that he "*understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness (רַחֲמִים, mercy/grace), justice and righteousness on earth.*" Understanding and knowing the Lord presupposes that we understand and know how the Lord has been working in our own lives. To see the Lord exercise lovingkindness (Mercy, Chesed), Justice, and Righteousness leads one to realize it is by the Lord's mercy that He has done these things on our behalf even in the midst of our sin and unfaithfulness. The key is to perform Teshuvah (Repentance) and turn from our ways towards the ways of the Lord and try-try again! We as God's people are to live a repentant life daily, meaning that we are continually seeking God's ways and to have success in our lives for God's glory! Jeremiah says the Lord delights in Mercy, Justice, and Righteousness, and likewise we as His children who live by our faith are to love and do justice and righteousness towards others, and to show mercy to all!

What do these Scriptures from this week's Torah portion (Parashat Tetzaveh) really mean for us today in practical terms? It means that we must daily give God permission to dwell in us and work through us and expose anything in us that is "*not of faith.*" This means that we must be willing, on a daily basis, to allow His Holy Spirit to search us and expose whatever He wants to in each of us. From this perspective, can you imagine what it would have been like for the entire tribe of Levi to



stand before God at the Tabernacle with the fear of God in their hearts?

The rabbis have the following to say concerning these things.

Tur HaAroch on Shemot / Exodus 29:10

והקרבת את הפר לפני אהל מועד, “*you shall bring the bull close to Tent of Meeting.*” Nachmanides, in referring to the commentary by Ibn Ezra, writes that according to Ibn Ezra both Aaron and his sons placed their hands firmly (סמיכה) on the bull at the time when he brought it in front of the entrance of the Sanctuary. Seeing that the actual presentation of the bull in front of the entrance of the Sanctuary in verse three (by implication) had already been mentioned, it would not be repeated without adding a new dimension to it, he writes that in his personal opinion all that happened at the entrance to the Sanctuary after the bull, etc., were presented there, was that they received the directive to offer these animals as sacrifices on the altar in the courtyard. The only reason the location is mentioned here again, is to ensure that the slaughtering, etc., would be performed in the areas designated for the priests to perform these procedures. There would have been no need to spell out the placing of their hands on the sacrificial animals, as this is always done immediately before the animal is slaughtered.

Talmud Bavli Yoma 40b

במאי קא מיפלגי כדתניא לכפר בכפרת דמים הכתוב מדבר וכן הוא אומר (ויקרא טז, כ) וכלה מכפר את הקדש מה להלן בכפרת דמים אף כאן בכפרת דמים דברי רבי יהודה
With regard to what do they disagree? As it was taught in a baraita: The verse states that the goat should remain alive “to make atonement” (Leviticus 16:10). This indicates that it must remain alive until it effects atonement. Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Shimon dispute which atonement the verse is referring to. The verse speaks of atonement through the application of the blood of the

sin-offering goat. And similarly it states: “When he has made an end of atoning for the Sanctuary, and the Tent of Meeting, and the altar, he shall present the live goat” (Leviticus 16:20). Just as there the reference is to atonement through blood, so too here the verse is referring to atonement through blood. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda.

Note the comments on the priests laying on the hands to the head of the animals before they are sacrificed. The point out that mentioning this a second time draws in a new dimension to the interpretation on the verse according to the commentaries. The death of the animal (its slaughtering) and the collection of the blood was to be performed outside of the tent. The application of the blood was to make atonement for the sanctuary, the altar, and the people. These descriptions are deeply connected to atonement being necessary for all parts of the Tabernacle, and are related to who we are, where atonement is necessary through all of who we are, both inside and out. The reason these things are so important is because of their consistency between the Torah and the Apostolic Writings according to the Apostle Paul (*Shemot / Exodus 29:45-46, and Romans 12:1-2*).

Shemot / Exodus 29:45-46

מה וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים: מו וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: 29:45 *‘I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. 29:46 ‘They shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God. (NASB)*

Romans 12:1-2

12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so

that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (NASB)

These Scriptures from the Torah portion on the Wave Offering teach us very practical applications to God's Word in relation to the Sacrifice and our lives. We must be willing on a daily basis to allow the Spirit of God to search us and to expose what is not of him. This is why the Psalmist stated in *Tehillim / Psalms 139:23-24*, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" This is why in the commissioning of Aaron and his sons, there was the laying on of the hands that is coupled to the blood of the bull, with the sacrifices and the wave offering before the Lord. Note that not only were the sacrifice, the grain, and the oil waved before the Lord, but also the entire life of the priest, and even the entire community (Levites) of the faithful stood as an offering before God. These things suggest, we as God's people are to be presented to Him as holy. This is what Yeshua the Messiah has done on our behalf, and this is our task at hand, to live our lives as a holy people before a holy God!

