

Shavua Tov

Weekly  Parsha

A Rood Awakening! Torah Commentary
By Glenn McWilliams

Special Torah Portion: *Shemini* שמיני

“Eighth”

On the eighth day, Moses summoned Aaron, his sons, and the elders of Israel.

Vayehi bayom ha **shmini** kara Moshe le-Aharon ulevanav ulezikney Yisra'el.

Scripture for study:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 9:1 – 11:47

The name of our portion this week holds the key to what is being taught in the portion itself. Our portion begins:

Leviticus 9:1 And it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel.

This eighth day is counted from the previous seven days that were commanded as a part of the consecration ritual for Aaron and his sons.

Leviticus 8:33 And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall He consecrate you. ³⁴As He hath done this day, so YHWH hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you. ³⁵Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of YHWH, that ye die not: for so I am commanded. ³⁶So Aaron and his sons did all things which YHWH commanded by the hand of Moses.

Here we should remember that numbers have meaning in the Scriptures. E.W. Bullinger writes:

“Seven. Denotes spiritual perfection. It is the number or hall-mark of the Holy Spirit’s work. He is the Author of God’s Word, and seven is stamped on it as the water-mark is seen in the manufacture of paper. He is the Author and Giver of life; and seven is the number which regulates every period of incubation and gestation in insects, birds, animals and man.”¹

Bullinger goes on to demonstrate a number of instances in the Scriptures where the number seven indicates a sense of spiritual completeness.

"Beni-ha-Elohim, 'sons of God,' occurs six times-

1. Gen. vi. 2.
2. Job ii. 6.
3. Job xxxviii. 7.
4. Ps. xxix. 1.
5. Ps. lxxxix. 6
6. Dan. iiii. 25.

Beni-El-hai, 'sons of the living God,' once -

7. Hos. i. 10.

The two names Shem and Japheth, who received their father's blessing, occur together seven times; but six of these are in connection with Ham whose posterity was cursed!

*The food of Egypt is given in six items (Num. xi. 5), viz., fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic; whereas the enumeration of the Divine provision of Emmanuel's land is marked by the number seven (Deut. viii. 8), wheat, barley, vines, fig-trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey."*²

We may also think of the seven branches of the menorah,³ the seven spirits of the Holy One,⁴ the seven days of unleavened bread,⁵ the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles,⁶ the seven days of consecration,⁷ and possibly the greatest of these symbols, that of the week of creation.

***Genesis 2:2** And on the seventh day Elohim ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. ³And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which Elohim created and made.*

***Exodus 20:11** For in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

***Exodus 31:17** It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.*

Clearly the number seven conveys the sense of completeness and wholeness. Thus Aaron and his sons remained in the courtyard of the tabernacle for seven days until their time of consecration was complete. So our portion begins on the eighth day, or the day after the consecration of Aaron and his sons was complete. Like the number seven, the number eight also has symbolic significance in the Scriptures. The number eight is the number of new beginnings.

*"Eight. Denotes resurrection, regeneration; a new beginning or commencement. The eighth is a new first. Hence, the octave in music, color, days of the week, etc. It is the number which has to do with the LORD, who rose on the eighth, or new 'first-day.'"*⁸

It is on the eighth day that Aaron and his sons began to function in the tabernacle as the *Cohen Gadol* and the *cohanim* of the children of Israel. It is on the eighth day that Moses turned over the duty of the *Cohen Gadol* to Aaron, and that the tabernacle began to function in its official capacity as the very heart of the life and worship of the children of Israel. This understanding of a new beginning goes much deeper than merely the fact that the tabernacle and priesthood functioned for the first time. To appreciate the power of this portion we must understand the purpose of the tabernacle and priesthood in the lives of the children of Israel.

We have said many times that YHWH desires to tabernacle with and in the children of Israel. From the very first letter of the Torah we are taught that the Creator desires to dwell among His creatures. The first letter of the Torah is the Hebrew letter Bet in the word *Bereshit* - "In the beginning."⁹ While the Hebrew language does not employ upper and lowercase letters, there are occasions in the Torah when a letter is written larger or smaller than usual. Such is the case with the first letter Bet. In ancient Hebrew the letters were not phonetic symbols as our modern letters are, but were pictures that conveyed an idea. The idea conveyed by the letter Bet is that of a tent or house. Thus we learn from the very opening letter of the creation narrative that the Creator is building His house or dwelling place among His creation. Originally man was to be the place where Elohim would be seen in His creation. For this reason man was created in the image of Elohim.¹⁰ Through the fall of man in the Garden of Eden the image of Elohim was distorted and corrupted. This corruption came through the mixture of man's sensual knowledge of good and evil with the Creator's revealed knowledge. With his senses and reason awakened, man now began to perpetuate his own ideas, ideals, and image. So it is that after the fall we read that Adam brought forth a son; not in the image of Elohim, but in his own image.

*Genesis 5:1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that Elohim created man, in the likeness of Elohim made He him; ²male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. ³And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, **after his image**; and called his name Seth.*

From this point onward man continued to spiral downward, living more and more in the lower realm of his animal nature, instincts, appetites, and fallen human reasoning. Let us understand that before the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened, man received his knowledge and understanding through direct revelation or communion with the Creator. The Spirit of the Creator communicated knowledge to the spirit of man, which then informed his soul how to feel and think. The soul then informed the man's body how to respond to the world around him. When man's eyes and senses were awakened, this process was reversed and a conflict emerged within man. Man's awakened senses, independent of the Creator, began informing his soul how to feel and think. Now man was forced to choose between the Creator's revealed knowledge and his own sensual knowledge. In this way man was forced to choose between living by the spirit and living by the flesh. The apostle Shaul clearly understood this conflict when he wrote:

Romans 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity against Elohim:

for it is not subject to the law of Elohim, neither indeed can be. ⁸So then they that are in the flesh cannot please Elohim.

It was man living predominately by his flesh that evoked the Creator to purge His creation by means of the flood.¹¹ It was man living predominately by his flesh that caused the Creator to confuse man's language and scatter man to the ends of the earth.¹² Not all men lived by their animal nature; there were a few throughout this time that continued to listen to the Spirit of the Creator and live by His revelation. Here we may recall the likes of such men as Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So it is that YHWH ELOHIM chose the descendants of these men of the spirit to become the place where He would dwell upon the earth. After delivering them from bondage and oppression in a fleshly world of perversity and idolatry, YHWH ELOHIM invited the children of Israel to become His living image in the world. It is to Israel that the world would turn to see and know their Creator; therefore YHWH called upon the children of Israel to become both His priestly people and His living tabernacle.

***Exodus 19:5** Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: ⁶And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

***Exodus 15:17** Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O YHWH, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O YHWH, which Thy hands have established.*

***Exodus 25:8** And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*

The children of Israel were instructed to keep their camp clear of all defilement because YHWH ELOHIM walked and dwelt among them.

***Numbers 5:1** And YHWH spake unto Moses, saying, ²Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: ³Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell.*

***Deuteronomy 23:13** And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee: ¹⁴For YHWH thy Elohim walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.*

Again, the apostles Shaul and Kefa clearly understood that it was in the people that YHWH ELOHIM would tabernacle among men.

***1 Corinthians 3:16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of Elohim, and that the Spirit of Elohim dwelleth in you? ¹⁷If any man defile the temple of Elohim, him shall Elohim destroy; for the temple of Elohim is holy, which temple ye are.*

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of Elohim, and ye are not your own?

2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of Elohim with idols? for ye are the temple of the living Elohim; as Elohim hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.

Ephesians 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in YHWH: ²²In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of Elohim through the Spirit.

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Elohim by Yeshua Messiah.

Whether the tabernacle of wood, cloth, and skin was in YHWH's original plan or was a response to the shortcomings of the children of Israel has been dealt with in earlier portions. At the present moment it is enough for us to understand that the tabernacle and priesthood were given to be an object lesson for the children of Israel to understand what it means to be a fit habitation for the Holy One to abide in. Just as the children of Israel were to be an example to the rest of the world, so the *cohanim* and the tabernacle were to be the example for the children of Israel. The fact that the priesthood and the tabernacle began functioning on the eighth day was no mere coincidence. The choice of the eighth day was to communicate to us a message about new beginnings; not for the tabernacle of wood, cloth, and skin, but the tabernacle of our beings!

The new beginning begins after seven days of consecration. For seven days Aaron and his sons separated themselves from the world and remained in the courtyard of the tabernacle. Their first function was to offer the animal sacrifices for themselves and for the children of Israel. Again, let us be clear concerning the message of these animal sacrifices. The letter to the Hebrews tells us quite specifically that the blood of bulls and goats does not take away our sins.

Hebrews 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Therefore what purpose do these sacrifices and offerings serve? The offerings and sacrifices taught in great detail throughout the book of Leviticus are all proclamation. Each of these sacrifices and offerings are a shadow picture of the true and efficacious sacrifice of Yeshua Messiah. Every offering and sacrifice reveals some aspect of the Messiah's sacrifice. Thus when the children of Israel gave their offerings and made their sacrifices they were not putting their faith in the blood of bulls and goats, but in the promise of the Holy One to send a true Deliverer, Redeemer, and Savior. Until then it was their faith, as demonstrated in their obedience, to offer their sacrifice that provided them atonement. But there is yet a secondary proclamation made through these offerings and sacrifices. The name of these offerings and sacrifices in Hebrew is *korban*, from the root Kof, Resh, Vet, which means "to draw near." The purpose for bringing *korban* is to demonstrate to YHWH ELOHIM one's desire "to draw near" to Him. The lessons of

this Torah portion teach us that there is a protocol to follow and a grave danger in presuming to draw near to Him in our own will and way.

In the opening chapter of our portion we quickly realize that even the *Cohen Gadol* and the *cohanim* must follow this protocol. Even those who have been consecrated must not presume to come into the presence of the Almighty. We should here recognize that the tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrificial system are the keys to drawing near to the Holy One. We should also recognize what an incredible gift of grace and mercy YHWH ELOHIM has extended to us by implementing such a system for us. Those who do not understand the Torah as “grace” should truly meditate upon this portion until it becomes clear to them. What we should understand from these chapters is that there is no mixture in YHWH ELOHIM. YHWH is pure and holy; therefore if we truly desire to draw near to Him we must put away the mixture in our lives.

It may be helpful here if we take a moment to understand our lower or animal nature. When man was created, he received his instructions and knowledge from above. When man fell, he began learning from his experience and senses or flesh lived below. Man and animals are both created and living beings. Man and animals both have a soul (the source of animation and life) and a body. Animals, however, are not spiritual beings. Animals live by their instincts and senses. Animals live largely by their appetites and urges. Animals are not moral beings. Man, on the other hand, was created to be the image of Elohim. We were not created to live by appetites, impulses, and urges, but by the Word of YHWH.

Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of YHWH doth man live.

Matthew 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Elohim.

Man was also distinguished from the animals by the right of dominion given to him by the Creator.

Genesis 1:27 So Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim created He him; male and female created He them. ²⁸And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Man is further sanctified or set apart by his willingness and ability to submit to divine Law. The spiritual aspect of man seeks to rise up and restore communion with the Creator and source of its life, peace, joy, and fulfillment. The spiritual nature of man desires to be a joy and delight to its Creator. The animal nature seeks only to satisfy its carnal appetites, impulses, and urges without regard to the Creator, its neighbor, or the impact upon the world around it. It is this animal nature that Shaul refers to as the “flesh” or “carnal man.” Again, as we have stated above, it was man living in this animal nature that provoked the Creator to judge the world and

purge it with the flood. Shaul also tells us that the carnal man cannot please Elohim nor discern His truths, for they appear foolish to him.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of Elohim: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Romans 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity against Elohim: for it is not subject to the law of Elohim, neither indeed can be. ⁸So then they that are in the flesh cannot please Elohim.

For those who desire to draw near to the Creator and Holy One of Israel there is a protocol which demonstrates one's willingness to put away the old life lived in the flesh or animal nature. This is the new beginning celebrated on the eighth day. After separating oneself from the old world for seven days, which is symbolic of being completely separated from the world, then the various animal offerings are brought to the altar to demonstrate one's willingness to put this old animal way of life to death. We should here make the connection between the covenant of circumcision on the eighth day and this eighth day ritual marking a new beginning for the children of Israel as a nation. In both cases the reality is that what we are before the eighth day, we are not after the eighth day. We here draw a distinction between our lives as lived prior to entering the covenant and our lives after entering the covenant. Both Kefa and Shaul taught this very truth.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light: ¹⁰Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of Elohim: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. ¹¹Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; ¹²Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify Elohim in the day of visitation.

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; ¹²That at that time ye were without Messiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without Elohim in the world: ¹³But now in Messiah Yeshua ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Messiah.

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of Elohim; ²⁰And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yeshua Messiah himself being the chief corner stone; ²¹In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in YHWH: ²¹In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of Elohim through the Spirit.

Therefore what we witness on this notable eighth day is the phenomenal and awesome mercy and grace of YHWH ELOHIM being received by the children of Israel who eagerly desire to draw near to their Deliverer, Redeemer, and Savior. We witness as YHWH extends to them the path and means by which they, by their faith in and obedience to the Word of YHWH, may atone or cover their sins until Messiah comes to take them completely away. We witness as those drawing near are afforded a means by which to demonstrate their willingness to put away their animal nature that led to sin and alienation, and now embrace a life lived in communion with the Holy One of Israel. So we witness Israel entering a new beginning as the spiritual people of YHWH ELOHIM, a covenant people who are called to a higher realm of living in the world.

What follows the opening chapter of our portion is to serve as a clear warning against the sin of cheap grace and presumption. Moses both promised and warned the children of Israel that YHWH ELOHIM would appear in their midst.

Leviticus 9:4 Also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before YHWH; and a meat offering mingled with oil: for to day YHWH will appear unto you.

Leviticus 9:6 And Moses said, This is the thing which YHWH commanded that ye should do: and the glory of YHWH shall appear unto you.

Leviticus 9:23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of YHWH appeared unto all the people.

The children of Israel had already trembled and feared in the presence of the glory of YHWH as they saw it upon Mount Sinai.

Exodus 24:17 And the sight of the glory of YHWH was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

It is this very glory that caused the people to beg Moses not to hear the voice of YHWH ever again.

Exodus 20:18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not Elohim speak with us, lest we die. ²⁰And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for Elohim is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. ²¹And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where Elohim was.

It was this glory that caused Moses, the psalmists, and the prophets to describe YHWH as a consuming fire and a refiner's fire.

Deuteronomy 4:24 For YHWH thy Elohim is a consuming fire, even a jealous Elohim.

Psalm 97:3 A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about.

Malachi 3:2 But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.

Clearly we should understand that YHWH will not share His honor with other elohim; nor will He tolerate mixture among those who agree to be His image. We are expressly forbidden to add to His revelation or to invent novel ways of approaching Him.

Deuteronomy 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of YHWH your Elohim which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their elohim, saying, How did these nations serve their elohim? even so will I do likewise. ³¹Thou shalt not do so unto YHWH thy Elohim: for every abomination to YHWH, which He hateth, have they done unto their elohim; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their elohim. ³²What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Ten times in the first nine chapters of the book of Leviticus we are told that Moses, Aaron, and the children of Israel did as YHWH had commanded them.¹³ But now suddenly with Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, we read that they did as was NOT commanded.

Leviticus 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense therein, and offered strange fire before YHWH, which He commanded them not. ²And there went out fire from YHWH, and devoured them, and they died before YHWH.

Nadab and Abihu clearly transgressed the protocol and acted in their animal nature. I want to be very clear here. Nadab and Abihu were not evil and wicked men; but they were men. Even though they had just completed seven days of separation and consecration, they fell nevertheless. This should serve to warn all of us against the subtlety of our animal nature. The sin of Nadab and Abihu was the sin of presumption driven by their own desire to serve and draw near to YHWH. While the motivation for their actions may have seemed good and noble, it was disobedience nonetheless. Proverbs twice repeats the wisdom:

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Let me share two well-meaning examples of such thinking; one from the Scriptures, and one from my own life experience.

King Saul was told expressly by YHWH through the prophet Samuel to go and utterly destroy the Amalekites, sparing nothing from this kingdom.

1 Samuel 15:2 Thus saith YHWH of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. ³Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

Instead of destroying the Amalekite kingdom completely, Saul took prisoners and booty with the intention of making a big offering and sacrifice before YHWH. As well-intended as this thought may have been, it was not what YHWH had commanded.

1 Samuel 15:10 Then came the word of YHWH unto Samuel, saying, ¹¹It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto YHWH all night.

So Samuel went to Saul and rebuked him mightily, saying,

1 Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath YHWH as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of YHWH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. ²³For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of YHWH, He hath also rejected thee from being king.

I share this personal experience because I see this same mistake being made repeatedly by others, and therefore hope that my insights will help those who may likewise have fallen to this subtle sin. When I first came out of the church and began learning the Scriptures from a Hebrew perspective, my head was swimming with new thoughts, ideas, insights, and understandings. All of them seemed quite profound to me. I was sure that YHWH was calling me to go and tell everyone what I had discovered. I wanted so much to begin my ministry of service to YHWH, helping other blind fools like myself to see the truth about the church, the Gospel of the Kingdom, the name of YHWH, and above all, the Torah. So I set out to build MY ministry. But nothing happened (*Baruch Hashem*)! I knew I had a calling on my life to teach the Torah – of this I was certain; so I started telling everyone I knew how to keep the Torah. Now after five years of learning, studying, and listening, I realize that I did have a calling on my life to teach the Torah, but I was not commanded to do anything. As well-intentioned as it may have been, I was acting out of my OWN DESIRE to do something meaningful instead of waiting for the Holy One to equip, prepare, educate, and direct me. YHWH humbled me. In the meantime, I had caused offense and confusion for a number of YHWH's lambs.

This is the subtlety of the sin of presumption. There is a great difference between our good intentions and YHWH's will and command. We should not presume to serve YHWH. When He desires our help and services He will clearly call us, and confirm the calling by others. Unfortunately, most of us presume to do His work and get burned. This was the sin of Nadab and Abihu. As the covenant people of YHWH ELOHIM we are to have put our appetites,

impulses, and urges (even the well-meaning ones) to death that we may be completely consecrated and submitted to being the bearer of YHWH's image. Thus we must learn to bridle these impulses when they rise up. We do this by learning to distinguish the difference between our own inner voice and that of the Shepherd. Yeshua declared:

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Learning to make distinctions between the voice of Messiah and our own inner voice, or between the leading of the Holy Spirit and our own animal desires, passions, and compulsions are important skills for us to master. It should not surprise us then that our Torah portion ends with a teaching on the dietary laws.

There is no more basic need in our life than that of food. We should recognize that the need to eat is something that we share with the animals. Our appetites belong to the animal nature. It is this animal nature that most often leads us away from YHWH. Therefore it is here that YHWH begins to sanctify us and equip us for truly drawing near to Him by learning to make distinctions. The dietary laws keep us from satisfying our every appetite. As the children of Israel we are not free to eat like animals. We are called to make distinctions between what is *tamei*¹⁴ and what is *tahor*.¹⁵ Let us here remember that *tamei* and *tahor* are not simply ritual titles. Those things which are declared to be *tamei* are things that are not useful for being the image of Elohim. Those things which YHWH designates as being *tahor* are acceptable and useful for being the image of Elohim. Therefore we, as members of the covenant people of YHWH, are to make a distinction even in what we eat. By showing such restraint we not only live in obedience to YHWH, but we are also sanctified and elevated above the animals. It is in keeping the commandments of YHWH without presumption that we are made ready to stand in the presence of YHWH.

Again we should note the phenomenal grace that YHWH extends to us through the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system. We should understand from these revelations that there is no dichotomy between the Law and grace, for the Law (Torah) IS grace. We should also recognize that it was on the eighth day that Israel celebrated a new beginning, but this was not a one-time event. The tabernacle continued to function every day until the Temple was destroyed in 590 BCE. The daily functioning of the tabernacle reminds us that our animal nature is with us always, and therefore we must be ready to subdue it and put it behind us again and again. We must be ready to do as Messiah Yeshua taught:

*Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow me.*

Those of us who have availed ourselves of the new beginning offered us through the sacrifice and resurrection of Messiah Yeshua must now learn to walk in this newness of life. We must submit ourselves wholly to the perfect will of the Creator as expressed through His perfect Word, the Torah.

SHAVUA TOV !

¹ The Companion Bible, Appendix 10, E.W. Bullinger, Kregel Publications, Pg. 14

² Number in Scripture, E.W. Bullinger, Kregel Publications Pp. 164-165

³ Exodus 25:31ff

⁴ Isaiah 11:2

⁵ Exodus 12:15

⁶ Leviticus 23:34

⁷ Leviticus 8:33-36

⁸ The Companion Bible, Appendix 10, E.W. Bullinger, Kregel Publications, Pg. 14

⁹ Genesis 1:1

¹⁰ Genesis 1:26-27

¹¹ Genesis 6:1-11

¹² Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9

¹³ Lev. 8:4, 9, 13, 21, 29, 34, 36; 9:6, 7, 21

¹⁴ *Tamei* is the Hebrew word usually translated as “unclean.”

¹⁵ *Tahor* is the Hebrew word usually translated as “clean.”