

Introduction to Parsha #25: Tzav¹

READINGS: ***Torah Tzav:*** **Leviticus 6:8 – 8:36**
 Haftarah: **Jeremiah 7:21 – 9:23**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Hebrews 8:1 – 9:15**



Enjoin/Instruct Aharon and his sons
[Leviticus 6:9]

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the Gevurot, Part III

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor – *And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ...* ***Tzav et-Aharon v'et-banav l'emor*** – *Enjoin/Instruct Aharon and his sons, saying ...* ***Zot torat ha-olah*** - *These are the protocols for making an olah/ascension* **Leviticus 6:8-9.**

The beachhead of Heaven's invasion of earth has been established. The stage for the Great Passion Play we are act out to awaken all peoples and nations of the world to the stunning reality of the goodwill of their Creator and the brilliance of His Grand Plan of Redemption and Restoration is ready. The King of all Kings is holding court and greceiving diplomatic visits from men for the first time since Adam's expulsion from the Garden of Ede. Kedusha energy – the energy that fuels the Throne Room of the Almighty God – is pulsing through the camp like electricity. Divine speech is pouring our in torrents, and the torrents are forming a river of life that refreshes hearts and restores souls².

The Time is Coming to Freely Give Away

The Wonderful Things That We Have Been Freely Given

Once again, as was the case in parsha *Vayikra*, the subject upon which we are being briefed is *Heavenly Courtier/Kingdom Ambassador Approach and*

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² See Psalm 46:4: *There is a river* [Hebrew *nahar* – *a confluence of rushing streams that flow together*] *the rivulet of which bring simchah to the city of God, to the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.*

Communion Protocol. We are called to enter and abide in the Holy One's Presence – and we are learning how – *i.e.* under what conditions, and according to what protocols - those things are possible. We are being trained in the disciplines necessary for transcending the mundane/profane, corrupt, and unclean realm of the 'seen' in which we have been deployed on our Kingdom mission and the holy/beautiful 'home base', *unseen* realm of *Imanu-El*. We are learning the secrets of *Ya'akov's Staircase*. He who has ears to *sh'ma*, let him *sh'ma*!

Calling Humble Servants Willing To Die to Self-Will and Engage With Fallible Human Beings According to Kingdom Protocols

Our Bridegroom-King's radical plan for the redemption of mankind as a species and for restoring Creation to Edenic beauty – using the sons and daughters of the Avrahamic Covenant as His catalysts for transformation - is unfolding before our eyes. He Who redeemed us and brought us to the Sinaitic equivalent of *Ya'akov's Staircase* is patiently training us to become Masters in Ascending and Descending that staircase. He is teaching us critical disciplines through which we can draw *kedusha* energy, inspiration, 'helicopter-view' perspective, wisdom, understanding, counsel, and empowerment from our encounters, conversations, and interactions with Him in His Beauty Realm that we can release/disseminate in practical ways in the earthly realm. He is apprenticing Moshe in the arts, steps, and protocols of Divine Approach, Interaction, and Empowerment so that he can turn around and apprentice us in the same arts, steps, and protocols, after which we can turn around and apprentice our children and children's children in the same skills. He intends for us to not only experience and marvel at, but to absorb and become vessels of, the majesty and *shalom* of His Beauty Realm. He wants us to model that majesty and share that *shalom* everywhere that the sole of our feet shall tread. He wants us to learn, then share with the world, practical ways of demonstrating His 'Cleft of the Rock' Attributes - Mercy, Compassion, Patience/Long-suffering, Covenant-Faithfulness, Graciousness, Forgiveness, and Cross-generational commitment to bloodlines. He has chosen Aharon and his sons as Moshe's first *apprentice class* for this potentially world-changing training program. Those men will set the bar for us – even as Messiah's Melki-Tzedekian shadow provides the benchmark for them. They will show us what a '*kingdom of priests*' looks like in microcosm. They will set the example – both of *what to 'do* - see Elazar and Itamar ... and, alas, also of what *NOT TO do* - see Nadav and Avihu.

Living With the Manifest Presence of the Creator – And A Few Fully-Devoted Kohanim – In Our Midst

The Courts of Heaven have been replicated with the stuff of earth. An Embassy of the Beauty Realm is now open and operating on the Desert floor. The Creator of the Universe has burst forth out from infinity and has taken up a physical dwelling among men. The Redeemed Community's operating system is downloading one

software package at a time from the Celestial Main Frame. And, as a result, we find ourselves in the throes of the Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover.

Even as our King's majesty, wisdom, and kindness are being revealed in tangible ways all around us, we are being immersed in and swept away by the glory of the Most Glorious Life Force that has ever existed. Captivated by His Beauty and Goodness, we are choosing voluntarily to adjust our attitudes, priorities, thoughts, conversations, reaction patterns, and behaviors to His higher-level protocols. The holes that have been eaten in our individual and collective souls by the fruit of the tree of knowledge are all being exposed to the light – and a lot of corrupted flesh is falling to the cutting room floor. There are some gasps. There are some whimpers. There are some tears. But deep down in our hearts we want this transformation every bit as much as our Bridegroom does. Everything un-Bridelike in us simply has to go. Everything that hinders us becoming one with our Bridegroom-King – and becoming trustworthy partners in His Grand Plan of Redemption - has to be surrendered to the Master's scalpel.

Introducing the Great Surgeon – And His O.R. Crew

As we begin the study of the twenty-fifth parsha Moshe is about to have another God-encounter. The Creator of the Universe is about to release another set of prophetic empowerments over us! Another download of Kingdom Protocol will soon be coming our way. The Voice of the Holy One starts it all off by saying:

Tzav et-Aharon v'et-banav

Enjoin/Instruct/Empower Aharon and his sons

l'emor zot torat ha-olah

saying "This is the torah of the ascent"

We might as well get used to the word 'ascent' - it is the substance of this new life to which we have been called. If you prefer, just substitute '*journey to a higher realm/sphere*' every time you see 'ascent'. Whatever you choose to call it, however, what we are talking about is an Avrahamic lifestyle of upward focus and transition – *i.e.* a steady, purposeful seeking of a *city that has Heavenly foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*. This kind of perpetual ascent/immaculate journey is the secret ingredient of our joy. It is the foundation of our health, wellness, and hope of wholeness. And it is the essential key to our steadfast, unshakable *shalom*. It is, in addition, the sole reason for any positive impact we have on any person we meet or place we go in this life.

You see, Beloved, we are called to become *masters of ascent*. We have to learn the secrets of the staircase. It starts with Aharon and his sons, but it ends with us. Aharon and his sons are merely the firstfruits of a much greater priesthood that the Holy One has promised to establish in us, His People. See **Exodus 19:6**. They are

forerunners, models, prototypes, and guides. They blaze the trails and level the narrow road pathways first; but we are called to learn the protocols too, so that, when our time comes, multitudes can follow their inspiring lead. See **Isaiah 66:21; Revelation 1:6, 5:10, and 20:6**. The instructions given for Aharon and his sons are ultimately instructions for us as well. The Aharonic household's calling is to serve as runway models; but we are the sandal-meets-the-sand-folk who are called to wear the beautiful garments and live out the awe-inspiring avodah they model for us in *real time*.

The first thing the Holy One is going to release over Aharon and his sons – and ultimately us – in *Tzav* is something the text calls *torat ha-olah*. This Hebrew phrase literally means *the torah - i.e. the teaching, instruction, essential protocol - of ascent*. We are taking the elevator up into the realm of our King. We are getting acclimated to the eminently more holy environment in which He Whom our Soul Loves dwells. As a precursor to co-regenting with Him on earth in a future day, we are being taught how make our entrance to His Courts, and then how to follow the scent of the oil, the trail of the blood, the sound of the waters, and the path of the incense to our assigned places and roles. We are being acclimated. We are undergoing re-orientation. We are not only being invited to share space with *cherubim, serafim, elders, saints*, and the *Glorious One Who sits on the Throne*; we are being trained to *work alongside and in harmony with them*.

But ... *we are human*, we want to shout. We are mere sons of Adam and Chava. How can we, as mortal men, be expected to function in the rarified atmosphere where the Creator dwells? Learn a few protocols is not going to cut it - we need to be transformed – from the inside out and from the outside in. We need ... well, we need an Ultimate Extreme Divine Bridal Makeover!

***The Korbanot Protocols Discourse of Torah –
The Holy One's Protocols for Dealing With the Five Most
Fundamental Spiritual Needs All Human Beings Have After the Fall***

Since the devastating blow the species of man incurred in the latter part of Adam and Chava's reign over the Garden of Eden every human being that has been born or will be born comes to the planet afflicted with *five fundamental spiritual needs*. I call them "*the five gaping holes in every human soul*". The Holy One knows all about these holes – and the toxic effect they have on our lives and relationships. He knows their depth, length, and breadth. And He knows the cure for each one. The five approach protocols described in last week's parsha represent the essential beginning steps of the Holy One's brilliant plan to fix these gaping fissures where all kinds of scar tissue and uncleanness tend to build up. He wants to *make us whole*.

Identifying and Dealing With Gaping Hole/Tumah Invasion Site #1:
The Gap Between His Will And Ours

The first and usually the biggest gaping hole in every human soul is the tremendous chasm that has opened up between His Will for our lives and our own. This is caused by the uncontrolled operation of our selfish desires and fleshly appetites. Every human being's most fundamental essential human need is to put to death the *tamei* life force – the life-force of the Serpent – that is fueled and driven by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Some in Judaism call this *yetzer ha-ra* – i.e. the 'evil impulse'³. Some in Christianity call this destructive force on the planet our 'old man'. Others call it 'the flesh'. Whatever one chooses to call it, however, it is the inevitable result of ingesting the fruit of the tree of the 'knowledge of good and evil'. It is what comes forth when we approach life according to what we see with myopic natural eyes, what we hear with our hearing-impaired natural ears, what we feel with our horribly corrupted human emotions, and what we think, opine, theorize, theologize, and reason with our handicapped natural minds.

A life lived under the influence of the life-force of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a life spent *wasting precious energy, passion, time and resources trying in vain to cover up what we instinctively sense is our own nakedness* [see Genesis 3:7]. It is a life of *running and hiding from the Holy One's overtures of friendship* [see Genesis 3:8]. It is a life of *always finding a way to blame someone else for everything we see as 'evil'* [see Genesis 3:12-13]. A life lived under the influence of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a life characterized and traumatized by opinions of what is 'right' and what is 'wrong', what is 'fair' and what is 'unfair', what is 'reasonable' and what is 'unreasonable', what is 'moral' and what is 'immoral', what is 'important' and what is 'trivial', what is 'essential' vs. 'expedient' vs. 'inconvenient', and what is 'provable' and what is 'incapable of proof'. It is thus a life that is not only insecure and miserable in itself but is guaranteed to eventually make everyone with whom it comes in contact become insecure and miserable as well.

Why does this Serpentine-infested life force have to die? Because *no one who lives by this life force can ever eat of the fruit of the tree of life*. Genesis 3:24. Remember that the Holy One told Adam that in the day he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would 'surely die'.

Ume'etz ha-da'at tov v'ra lo tochal mimeinu

³ This is the inclination of the heart of man to pursue our own flesh's will and desires instead of the Holy One's Will and Desires. See Genesis 6:5 & 8:21; see also Numbers 15:39(b), and Jeremiah 17:9. Yeshua described it in Matthew 15:19, when He said: ***out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*** Cf. Galatians 5:19-21.

... of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you are not to eat,

ki b'yom acholcha mimeinu mot tamut
for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die."
[Genesis 2:17]

Every human being that has come into the world since Adam ingested the fruit of that tree has been born under and subject to this Divine death sentence. Most human beings however spend great portions of their lives in arrogant denial of this basic and incontrovertible spiritual truth. Oh but weep not! Decreeing right up front that the Serpentine life force at work within us must be put to death was one of the most merciful things that the Holy One has ever done. The death of this corrupted life force absolutely **MUST** occur for the good of everyone concerned. See **Colossians 3:5, 8-11**. The sooner this toxic, serpentine life force dies the better.

Cooperating with the Holy One in putting this corrupt life force to death without killing the rest of us is the primary need of Fallen man. The *Korban olah* approach protocol is the Holy One's choreographed execution strategy to keep the *tamei* life force fueled by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from broadening the huge gap between the Holy One's Will and our will even further. It represents and defines His choreographed *tikkun* strategy for filling up the largest gaping hole in our soul with His Divine Breath, Words, and Nature.

Identifying and Dealing With Gaping Hole/Tumah Invasion Site #2:

A second gaping hole in every human soul is the rupture that occurs every time we look at the material things the Holy One introduces into our sphere of influence through the lustful, prideful, voyeuristic eyes of our flesh rather than through the lens and heart of the Holy One. When we look at material things – possessions, wealth, provision – as being something to use for our own pleasure rather than to cultivate and steward for our Bridegroom King our souls begin to hemorrhage. Uncleanness attaches itself to us, and we start longing for, coveting, loving, embracing feelings of entitlement concerning, developing unnatural affection for, collecting, connoisseur-ing, and alternately hoarding and wasting material things. We tend to appropriate and use material things for selfish purposes – i.e. to incorporate them in our identity, and to either venerate them as idols or throw them away as useless - when our assigned mission has always been and will always be to steward, nurture and bless them. What is this all about? Well, remember that after the Fall the Holy One announced to Adam:

Ha-adamah ba'avureicha
Cursed [is] the ground for your sake;
b'itzavon tocheleinah kol yemei chayeicha
In toil you will eat [of] it all the days of your life.

Vekotz v'dardar tatzmiach lach

Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,.

v'achalta et-esev ha-sadeh

And you will eat the herb of the field

Beze'at apeicha tochal lechem

In the sweat of your face you will eat bread

ad shuveicha el-ha-adamah

until you return to the ground

The second fundamental human need is to overcome the issues that arise from the curse that fell upon the *eretz*. Every human being born since the Fall needs to overcome that curse – a curse that came through the ingestion of a created substance that grew upon the earth that most definitely was not intended for human ingestion. We need our relationship with Creation – and all its substance - healed. The *Korban minchah* approach protocol is the Holy One's Divine piece of choreography designed to reverse that curse's negative effects.

Identifying and Dealing With Gaping Hole/Tumah Invasion Site #3

A third gaping hole in every human soul is the rupture that occurs every time we look at the other people the Holy One allows into our sphere of influence through the suspicious and deceptive eyes of our flesh rather than through the lens and heart of the Holy One. When we look at other people – family members, friends, potential mates, business acquaintances and even enemies – as being something to use, manipulate, conquer, and/or annihilate for our own purposes than as precious shipmates to cultivate and steward for our Bridegroom King our hearts begin to harden, clog, and shrink. Uncleanness attaches itself to us, and we start lusting after or raging against, coveting or taking for granted, embracing feelings of entitlement concerning or taking up offenses against, people we are supposed to learn to love, nurture, and bring the best out of.

The third fundamental human need since the Fall is thus to overcome the issues that arise in interpersonal relationships by reason of the introduction of self-will and the false lens of the knowledge of good and evil. I am talking about offense. I am talking about anger. I am talking about criticism and judgment. I am talking about unforgiveness. I am talking about narcissistic or obsessive-compulsive manipulation – *i.e. relational bullying*. I am talking about marginalization, negative labeling, virtue-signaling, soap-box moralizing, and dehumanization. Most of these issues arise out of insecurity, but the fall-out ranges from fear and intimidation to hatred to ambivalence to lust to jealousy to offense to manipulation to control to competition. We need all facets of our relationships with other human beings healed. The *korban shelem* approach protocol is the Holy One's choreographed methodology to assist human beings to overcome the issues that arise in interpersonal relationships by reason of the Fall.

Identifying and Dealing With Gaping Hole/Tumah Invasion Site #4

The fourth gaping hole in every human soul is the result of the distance that breaches of covenant have put between us and the Bridegroom-King. The distance is, of course, all on our side of the relationship. We just let Him go on without us. We covered up with whatever we could find. We tried to hide. He was too kind and patient to expose our folly for everyone to see. But ‘the distance’ is still there. Hence a fundamental need every human being has since the Fall is to find a real way to come out from behind the trees, strip off the fig leaves, run to our Creator, and set things ‘right’ with Him. He is full of longsuffering, mercy, and forgiveness, but we have to come to a place where we will accept and embrace those things. We have to overcome the Serpent’s lies about the Holy One’s intentions and emotions toward us. We have to have a protocol to follow in order to feel safe in finally facing and acknowledge the insufficiency of all the coverings we have made for ourselves. The *korban chata’t* approach protocols constitute the Holy One’s brilliant works of choreography for such purposes. Through these protocols He empowers human beings to bridge ‘the distance’ and overcome the insufficiency of all the fig-leaf garments we have fashioned and all the hiding places we have designed to try to cover our nakedness.

Identifying and Dealing With Gaping Hole/Tumah Invasion Site #5

The fifth gaping hole in every human soul is the stress tears that result from carrying heavy loads of guilt, shame, dishonor, embarrassment, fear of exposure, and approbation. We all have a fundamental need to overcome the scarring of the human heart and psyche caused by carrying this burden. We need Divine Intervention and Choreography. We need a process to follow through which the load can be lifted from our shoulders and properly disposed of. The *korban asham approach protocol* is the Holy One’s choreography for this dance. Making *korban asham* is the antidote for the scarring of the human heart and psyche that result from carrying an unsustainable burden of negative emotions turned inward.

Seeing Shadows

Of course, these approach protocols in the *Mish’kan* were designed as earthly shadows of eternal Heavenly realities. They have tremendous efficacy in all ages. They represent the essential *starting* points for healing and restoration to wholeness. As described in Torah they are essential *teaching tools*. The Holy One is the Master. We are the apprentices. The *korbanot* protocols of Vayikra chapters 1-5 are the Master’s teaching. The sooner we understand the relationship of these earthly things to the Heavenly reality, the sooner we can put them to proper use and get free of the things that are keeping us earth-bound and making us and everyone around us miserable. So let’s dig a little deeper, shall we?

Welcome to the Parsha of Diamonds!

I like to call this week's parsha the '*parsha of diamonds*'. What does this parsha have to do with *precious jewels*? I am glad you asked. A diamond is just carbon that has crystallized in the context of [1] *extreme high temperature [900 to 1400 degrees Celsius]* and [2] *intense pressure*. Formed deep within the core of the earth, diamonds, along with the 'host rock' in which they are embedded, are propelled to or near the earth's surface by volcanic eruptions.

Diamonds do not look like much at first glance. When encountered in their natural state at or near the earth's surface, they are anything but shimmering, shining, glittering, or gleaming. They are usually hidden – often thoroughly encased in ordinary looking 'host rock'. Even when the host rock is broken open the diamond material hidden inside looks initially like unimpressive chunks of dull gray or yellowish glass. But there is both strength and brilliance in these nuggets - if one is willing to spend the time to work with them.

The Divine Words of this parsha are a lot like that. They do not look like much to the modern reader. But for those willing to spend a little time uncovering what the Master has placed in them, they constitute '*diamonds in the rough*'.

Seeing It All In Context

The Hebrew word *parsha*⁴ is usually translated into English as '*portion*' or, sometimes, in the context of a book, as '*chapter*'. It is therefore axiomatic that each *parsha* of Torah is *a part of and belongs to a larger whole* from which it derives its meaning. Keep that in mind this week. Parsha *Tzav* cannot be understood – much less appreciated - out of its context. To hear its *melody*, to touch and be touched by its *power*, to taste its *sweetness* and to see its *beauty*, you need to approach it in relation to the whole of Scripture.

I Hope You'll Dance

Some shy away from the detail provided in *Tzav* because as they see it the substance of the parsha is just *tedious prescriptions of ritual for a superseded priesthood*. I look at it a little differently. I will acknowledge that in the English translations one typically sees, the content of chapters 6-8 of *Vayikra* [i.e. Leviticus] does not make particularly entertaining reading. Lacking in the English translations are dramatic narrations of God-encounters and lilting poetry. But what *Tzav* does contain – even in the English translations - is line after line and page after page of glorious *Divine choreography*. Choreography is a very special form of creativity. It can be defined as *the art of designing sequences of movements*. It is therefore a form of creativity that is filled with energy that is more *potential* than *kinetic*.

⁴ *Parsha* is a noun form of the Hebrew verb root *parash, peh, resh shin*, meaning *to divide by cleaving or breaking up into sections or small pieces*.

Choreography is full of life, but *it must await a passionate dancer to flow in its beauty and express its meaning*. The context – and the willingness of the dancer to embrace and give expression to *the vision of the choreographer* - rather than just show off his or her own talent and personal style - always determines how much meaning is revealed in the dance. The steps of the dance are choreographed – but the essence of the dance comes from the coming together in unity and harmony of the hearts and souls of the dancer and the choreographer.

The Risen Messiah Is the Male Lead

Did you ever wonder just what exactly the risen, ascended and exalted Messiah is doing on a daily basis now that He has assumed His rightful position at the ‘right hand’ of God – the place of honor and authority reserved for Him? For those with ears to hear and eyes to see, a good part of the answer can be found in this week’s parsha. Every time the text of the parsha refers to a *kohen* [priest] look ‘through the glass darkly’ to Messiah. Picture Messiah doing *in Heaven* something mirroring what the *kohen* [priest] is told to do *on earth*.

As we discussed last week *Sefer Vayikra* [the Book of Leviticus] is about *the Divinely ordained protocol for drawing near to the Holy One*. In parsha *Vayikra* (last week’s parsha) the Holy One showed us the five basic “pathways to intimacy” with Him – the interconnecting highways by which those in covenant with Him are able to cross over from death to life. Through the essence (i.e. the spiritual implications inherent in the symbolic acts) of the *korban olah*, the *korban minchah*, the *korban shelem*, the *korban chata’t*, and the *korban asham*, the Holy One gave us avenues of approach to His Heavenly Throne. In *Tzav* the Holy One will significantly expand our understanding of this all-important subject. The *Tzav download* will make clear that each of the pathways to intimacy set out in parsha *Vayikra* *requires a mediator/guide*.

Why Do We Need a Kohen?

We need a *kohen* because the pathway to the Presence of the Holy One is guarded, and access is limited - by a cherub with a flaming sword. **Genesis 3:24**. Moreover, when the Redeemed Community encountered the flaming sword of the Holy One at Mt. Sinai [manifested with His words, which were seen by us as flames of fire, like lightning, flashing from the Cloud], we asked Moshe not to require us to hear and experience the transformative effect of the Voice of the Holy One directly. We sought of the Holy One *a mediator* – someone to relate to us in a *human voice* the words the Holy One would speak. Though it was not His best and highest plan for us, the Holy One graciously *gave us what we asked for*. A mediator we requested – a mediator we shall have!

1. He Steps Off His Throne to Meet Us Where We Are

Why in the world would the Creator of the Universe consent to settle [temporarily] for the kind of lower-level interactions with which we could be comfortable, you ask? First of all, He did it because He loved us so much that He was willing to *meet us where we were*. If we wanted to know His thoughts, His plans, His ways – He wanted to encourage us in finding them. But it was even more than that. He was willing to give us the mediator – and the structured ‘betrothal parlor’ type interactions - we requested because He fully intended to load those lower-level interactions with prophetic “visuals” depicting what He had ordained for the crucified, resurrected, ascended Messiah, as ultimate High Priest, to do for us in the Heavenly Antechamber of the Holy One after which the earthly *Mish’kan* was modeled.

Moshe was the person we as a fearful Betrothed Bride requested as our intermediary, so Moshe was the first individual to serve in this role as ‘stand-in’ for the Messiah. But Moshe was *mortal*; he could only function in the ‘stand-in’ capacity for a limited period of time. Hence *during the period of our immaturity* the Holy One members of Moshe’s earthly family - namely *Aharon and his sons* - to step in and play the role in place of Moshe of mediator/guides to illuminate the pathways to intimacy the Divine Bridegroom planned for us.

The Holy One knew all along of course that when our ancestors got to Sinai and heard His awesome Voice from Heaven they would in timidity opt for a *mediated covenant* rather than pursue direct communion with Him. He probably *planted that timidity in them with that very purpose in mind* – because He also knew that over the course of centuries He would progressively renew our minds and change our hearts within us by opening our eyes to His plan for an Ultimate Priesthood – that which He had ordained for Messiah. The Holy One’s plan in this regard involved *four stages*. First of all, He intended to release messages in our hearing through prophets such as *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah] and *Yechezkiel* [Ezekiel] pointing us to a more transcendent, more glorious priesthood than that we witnessed in the earthly *Mish’kan*.

2. He Is Nurturing Hunger in Us for Even More Intimate Fellowship With Him

Secondly, the Holy One had a plan to make our hearts burn with yearning for *unmediated intimacy* with Him through the inspired writings of and/or about prophetic leaders such as Sh’muel [Samuel], David, Sh’lomo, Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra, and Hadassah/Esther.

3. He is Introducing Us to the Priesthood of Mashiach and His Sh’ma-People

Thirdly, the Holy One planned to don human form and appear as Messiah in the flesh in order to model for us the Divine Truth behind each of the *korbanot*. He had a plan to follow up the revelation of Mashiach by sending His Manifest Presence in

greater measure in the form of *Ruach HaQodesh* [i.e. Holy Spirit]. As the Ruach infills those who respond to the message of the prophets, prophetic leaders, and follow Mashiach, He will ‘lead us into all truth’ – including the truth concerning the reality that, as we unite with Mashiach, we co-labor with Him in His ultimate priesthood.

The transition from one priesthood [that of Aharon and his sons] to the other [that of Yeshua, and His talmidim, after the order of Melchi-Tzedek] is what the book of Hebrews – and indeed much of the apostolic Scriptures - is all about. The truths set out for us in *Tzav* have not changed one iota. The only difference is that now we are clearly shown *the Heavenly reality* that cast its earthly shadow in the *Mish'kan*. The leading actors in the Divine Drama that the Holy One choreographed are now different – but *the story line is the same*. The key to understanding this is to begin to see the role of a *kohen* Hebraically instead of getting caught in the religious trap of our Western mindsets.

What is a Kohen?

To fully understand these truths it is important to start with an understanding that what the Hebrew Scripture describes Aharon and his sons as being is not a ‘priest’ but a ‘*kohen*’. So what is a *kohen*? Contrary to our modern Western mindset, the role of a *kohen* is not to preside over religious services. Nor is it to lead a congregation of any religion. A *kohen* is not a cleric; a *kohen* is instead an *ambassador of a kingdom*. A *kohen* is one who *stands-in for a king* – or of course the Holy One – *in weighty affairs of State*. A *kohen* is a trusted agent chosen, commissioned, and authorized by a king to *speak prophetic declarations* and *perform diplomatic functions* on that king’s behalf, in that king’s place and stead. A *kohen*’s function is not *preside over religious rites* – but is instead to *administrate and execute GOVERNMENTAL DECREES*. A *kohen* is also one who has a *diplomatic right of passage* into realms that ordinary citizens cannot go. And as long as we travel with the *kohen* we *share in and enjoy the benefits of His diplomatic right of passage*.

Are you beginning to *get it*? The guiding life-principle of a *kohen* of the Holy One is “*on earth as it is in Heaven*.”

Every Picture Tells A Story

The Hebraic word picture underlying the verb root *kahan* is wonderfully illustrative. The first letter of the word is the *kaf* [k sound]. This letter is a Hebraic picture of a winged creature in flight, descending with wings spread on an object or person. Keep in mind that the picture of a descending winged creature was not only the specific picture presented by the mercy seat on the ark but was also the image woven into the fabric of all the curtains - and the veil - of the *Mish'kan*. The

second letter of the word is a *hey* [h sound]. The *hey* is a Hebrew pictograph of the window, or opening in the wall, of a tent. Since a window, or opening, of a tent both lets in light and allows circulation of breezes, the pictograph of the *hey* is a symbolic representation of *revelation* and *inspiration*. The third letter of the verb *kahan* is a *nun sofit* [n sound], which is a Hebrew pictograph representing the ultimate Son or Heir – Messiah.

Now let's put all that together, in 'mural' form. We see a winged creature [*cherub?* *seraf?* dove?] descending and giving revelation and inspiration [*hey*] concerning the Messiah [*nun sofit*]. In other words, according to its underlying Hebraic word picture the function to be served by Aharon and his sons as *kohanim* was to *reveal Messiah according to a Divinely imparted message that was delivered by angels/cherubim/serafim*.

What Exactly Does the Holy One Empower His Kohanim to Do For Us?

What is the essence of the function of the *kohen* [i.e. *priest*] in connection with the pathways to intimacy we learned about last week in the course of reading parsha *Vayikra*? Remember that the relationship between the Holy One and His People is analogous to that of *Betrothed Bridegroom* and *Bride-to-be*. The Holy One stirs in the heart of every true son and daughter of the covenant a powerful hunger and thirst for communion with Him. Unfortunately, as we discovered recently in connection with the theophany at Sinai, although we as a *Betrothed Bride* have been *moved to passion* for our *Bridegroom* we are still *very, very immature, and emotionally and intellectually unprepared for direct face-to-Face contact* with Him. Hence as the Holy One appointed Moshe as the 'friend of the *Bridegroom*' the Holy One has appointed Aharon and his sons serve us as the 'friends of the *Bride*'. The role of the *kohanim* [priests] as friends of the *Bride* is to help the *Bride-to-be* channel her passion in productive ways. Through chaperoning the *Bride-to-be* as she participates in a variety of non-threatening, carefully scripted, and beautifully choreographed acts in the Divine 'passion play' which the Holy One has written and for which the *Mish'kan* serves as the stage the *kohanim* are to assist the *Bride-to-be* in the slow process of overcoming her immature fear of intimacy.

Through participating in the Divine passion play and immersing herself in its symbolism with the help of the *kohanim* the *Bride-to-be* actually gets to *practice being in the Presence of her Bridegroom* in an exciting – but non-threatening – way. It is, if you will forgive the unsanctimonious analogy, a bit like children *playing house* – under *close adult supervision*. The *kohen's* role in the process is to assist the *Bride-to-be* get acclimated to, and get more and more comfortable with, the presence of the Holy One.

To function as a *kohen* therefore is not to hold an honorary title or to fill an office. To be a *kohen* is to be a servant – one whose chief goal in life is not to experience the Holy One’s glory personally but is instead to guide others into – and then lovingly chaperone them through – the various kinds of God-encounters the Holy One has in store for them. *A kohen’s role* is to make sure that it is the Holy One – and Him alone – that is honored, sought after, praised, and glorified by the Bride-to-be. For a *kohen* all that matters is helping ordinary people who come with hunger for the Holy One’s Presence to experience, bask in, and respond appropriately to the transcendent majesty of the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Ya’akov. A *kohen* does this not by drawing attention to himself but by enabling true worshippers to see the One their soul loves as *awesome in power*, yet *altogether lovely, desirable, accessible, and approachable*.

The Hebrew Pictograph of the Verb Root Tzavah

The Hebrew word *Tzav* which introduces this week’s subject of study is derived from the verb root *tzavah* (*tzade, vav, hey*). This is the root word of the word *mitzvah*, which we have discussed previously. *Tzavah*, like all Hebrew verb roots, is a pictographic mural made up of *three images* (i.e. letters). The first image in this particular mural is the Hebrew letter *tzade* [which makes what we in English would think of as a *tz* sound]. This letter is a picture of a man prostrating himself in submission to the Holy One, and receiving, in consequence, the Holy One’s Hand of blessing upon and empowerment of his life. It is a picture of *imparted righteousness*. The right-standing this man enjoys, and which allows him to receive blessing and empowerment from the Holy One, is not inherent in the man, nor is it earned by deeds – it flows from the attitude of submission he exhibits as he prostrates himself, surrendering to the Holy One’s will and ways. The second image in the mural in question is that of the Hebrew letter *vav* [which, in this case, makes what we know in English as the *v* sound]. This letter is a picture of a *connecting device* – like a nail or a peg with which one connects one thing (a picture frame, for instance) to another (a wall, for instance). The final image of this pictographic mural is that of the Hebrew letter *hey* [which makes what we know in English as the *h* sound]. This letter is a picture of a *window in a tent* – the portal that allows two-way vision (that is, it allows something outside of an individual to be seen from inside, and it allows something inside an individual to be seen from the outside) and lets fresh air into the tent. The Hebrew word *Tzavah* is thus the promise of the Holy One that He will *impute righteousness* – which we know to be the righteousness of Messiah – to certain things. Yes, Dear Reader, you have just stumbled across one of those ‘diamonds in the rough’ I mentioned in the opening paragraph of this study.

Imputed Righteousness – Torah Roots Revealed!

We previously learned that the Holy One has said He will impute righteousness to

the garments He told Moshe to make for Aharon. Apart from those garments Aharon was after all neither sinless nor even particularly ‘righteous’. Hence he could only enter the holy place of the Holy One *because he was given special covenant coverings – garments for ‘beauty and for honor’ – garments like unto those of Messiah.*

As a part of the covenant the Holy One has promised to *look beyond* the special garments that He directed be worn by Aharon and to see *the Messiah and His righteousness* instead of *Aharon* and his *sin*. Similarly the Holy One has promised that He would look upon the special covering of anointing oil placed on Aharon and his sons and upon everything in the *mish’kan* and see instead of mere men and earthly materials the *ultimate recipient of the anointing* – the Messiah [anointed One] – and the Heavenly realities after which the *mish’kan* and its furnishings were patterned.

Transitioning From Tzavah to Tzav

Now that we are beginning to understand the verb root *tzavah* Hebraically [the English translation “command” or “direct” or “charge” turns out to be pretty lame, doesn’t it] we can move on to try to uncover the Hebraic message in the derivative word *Tzav* – the name of this week’s parsha. Obviously what is missing from *tzavah* in the word *tzav* is the *hey* (*h* sound) at the end. Since the *hey* represented the window of revelation we discussed the outward actions that demonstrate an internal state of submission to the Holy One, whatever comes next in the sentence under study (i.e. the next word in the sentence) must replace that window. In other words all we have (until the next word) is the picture of a man submitting to the Holy One, connected to – nothing (yet). So whatever comes next in the sentence takes place of the window. In our sentence the next words in the text are *et-Aharon v’et b’nav* (to Aharon and to his sons).

Tzav means much more than ‘command’ or ‘charge’. It means ‘*call the recipient to receive the impartation of Messiah’s righteousness*’ through whatever covenant symbol or deed follows the word *tzav* in the text of Torah. Torah thereby makes the supernatural connection between the Heavenly *Mish’kan* and the *mish’kan* on earth. Whatever instruction follows the word *tzav* in the text is a special covenant portal – a window – upon which angels ascend and descend the way they ascend and descend upon Messiah.

The Two-Way Window

As we read this parsha therefore we should always keep in mind that what is happening is that *righteousness is being imparted by the Holy One*. It is not, we will discover, being imparted because of what men do in bringing animals as surrogates to the *mish’kan*; it is instead being imparted solely *because as part of*

His covenant with our forefathers the Holy One has promised to impute righteousness to all actions Aharon and his sons perform in the manner Torah directs. The actions the Holy One is going to call forth from Aharon and his sons pertaining to the *korbanot* are destined to become for every worshipper *a two-way window for revelation*. On the one hand, through participation in the Divinely choreographed passion play in total submission to the Holy One the worshipper is *being enabled to enter into the Holy One's Presence and see spiritual reality clearly*. Meanwhile, through observing the tangible, visible actions that the priests perform (sprinkling the blood, removing the ashes, etc.) the world is being enabled to see clearly *the beauty of the transformation which submission to the Holy One has effectuated in each individual worshipper's life*. So as we read of the duties of Aharon and his sons this week I challenge you to resist the temptation to regard what we read as irrelevant to you – mere “laws of the Levites”. Instead I exhort you to regard the things the Holy One tells Aharon and his sons to do in relation to our approaching of the Holy One as a *two-way window of revelation* – reflecting spiritual realities that occur in our lives as the result of the encounter with the Holy One – and giving us the Holy One's perspective.

The Kohen's Job Description Is, After All, Destined to Be Ours As Well

The words we read in this week's aliyah may appear at first glance to relate only to “Aharon and his sons”. But they contain eternal realities that apply to all of us. Why? Because Messiah is a priest, and because we who are “in Him”, and do what He does, *are also priests* - whether we like it or not. Keep in mind however as you read and meditate on these passages that we who have responded to the calling-out of Yeshua of Natzret are a ‘*kingdom of priests*’. I Peter 2:4, 9 says:

*You also, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house,
to be a **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual korbanot,
acceptable to God through Yeshua the Messiah.*

*you are a chosen race, a **royal priesthood**,
a holy nation, a people for God's own possession,
that you may show forth the excellencies of him
who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:*

Revelation 1:6 confirms that this truth has not changed – and will never change:

*Yeshua the Messiah ... washed us from our sins by his blood;
and he made us to be a kingdom of **Kohanim** [set apart] **to his God and Father ...***

Revelation 5:9-10 also says regarding Yeshua and of the effect of our engrafting into Israel through Him:

*You are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals:
For you were killed, and bought us for the Holy One with your blood,
Out of every tribe, language, people, and nation,*

And made them a kingdom of Kohanim to our God, and they reign on eretz.

So the words we read in this week's parsha of Torah can clearly be seen to contain eternal realities that apply to **all of us**. Because Messiah is a priest, and because we are "in Him" and do what He does, *we are also priests* - whether we like it or not. In the lives of all those who know us we cannot help but function as *kohanim*. Our lives – our speech, our actions, our stewardship of the "fire" of the Holy One, how we deal with people's 'ashes' and 'messes' - even our manner of dress and what we eat and do not eat - constitute a picture of spiritual things to all who see us. The only question is will we be *kohanim* for *the Holy One* - or for some other kingdom?

Choosing Which Kingdom You Will Represent

What kind of 'window' are you for those who know you? Does your life reveal spiritual reality *clearly* – or do you *cloud* spiritual reality like a smudged windows covered with soot? Do people who look at your life thereby "connect" with what it means to see a man submitted to the Holy One? Or do they just see you, doing it "your way"? Do they see the Holy One's glory – or do they see your wood, hay, and stubble? Do they smell the aroma of Messiah - or do they smell the pungent scent of your burning flesh?

Haftarah Tzav

Jeremiah 7:21 – 9:23

This Haftarah for the week of *Tzav* contains a prophetic call for us to stop what we are doing and carefully evaluate our culture and its ideals in light of the covenant we have with the Holy One. The prophet making this call on the Holy One's behalf is *Yirmayahu* [Jeremiah], who is, of course, a *kohen*. The Haftarah begins by reminding us that our highest calling is not to construct or perpetuate an impressive religious system – but is instead *to be a responsive covenant partner*. Yirmayahu says on the Holy One's behalf:

***... when I freed your fathers from the land of Egypt,
I did not speak to them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifice.
But this is what I enjoined them:***

shim'u v'koli

Sh'ma My Voice

v'hayiti lachem l'Elohim

and I will be your God

v'atem tiheyu-li l'am

and you will be My people;

v'halachtem b'chol-ha-derech asher atzaveh etchem

You are to walk only in the way that I lay out for you

L'ma'an yitav lachem
that it may be well with you.
[Jeremiah 7:21-23]

Yirmayahu then makes it clear that the Holy One will never accept passionless, mechanical ritual. The *Mish'kan* [later the Temple] and its service was never intended to be anything more than a 'passion play' – a dramatic production emphasizing the goodness of the Holy One testifying of the atonement He provided for us before the foundation of the world.

Yirmayahu reminds us that *korbanot* presentations at the altar of the Mish'kan or Temple were never intended to the *goal* of our covenant walk. They were given to us by the Holy One as a precious betrothal gift. At their essence they were designed to serve as *a series of closely chaperoned and carefully choreographed betrothal-period interactions whose primary purpose was to teach an immature Bride-to-be how to enrich - and learn to become more mature in the relationship with - the Bridegroom from Whose Voice she had shrunk back in timidity when He betrothed Himself to her.*

If it is only our *knowledge/doctrines* [i.e. what we profess to believe] *and* our *rituals* [i.e. what we call 'worship' and 'service'] that define our spirituality, you see, no matter how 'blessed' we are, we are not true sons and daughters of the covenant the Holy One made with Avraham. Nor for that matter can we be true *talmidim* of Messiah. As Yirmayahu's prophetic voice declares:

***Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; let not the strong man glory in his strength;
Let not the rich man glory in his riches.
But only in this should one glory: that he knows and is known by Me;
For I, the Holy One, act with *chesed*. *mish'pat*, *utzedakah*
[i.e., with covenant faithfulness, with wisdom tailored for the situation, and with charity]
in the world; for in these things I delight.***
[Jeremiah 9:22-23]

Our purpose on earth is not to be 'know-it-all's' or to lose ourselves in a show of piety. Our purpose, our calling, and our destiny is *to, through sh'ma-ing His Voice, become more and more like our Bridegroom.* Then and only then we can following His lead create on earth a community of *k'doshim* [holy ones] that will reflect the most cherished values of our Bridegroom: *justice, kindness and equity.*

Heed the prophet's call, Dear Reader. A glorious destiny awaits you. He sees you as nothing short of a diamond in the rough.

Some Brit Chadasha Readings Associated With Parsha Tzav
Hebrews 8:1 – 9:15

In the readings I have selected for this week from the apostolic Scriptures we will

find the writer of the book of Hebrews extolling the *priesthood* [translate that 'kingdom diplomacy'] of Yeshua in glorious prose. The writer reminds us once again that the *Mish'kan* built on earth of earthly materials was only a finite representation of the infinite *Mish'kan* in Heaven. As man was made by the Creator *b'tzelem Elohim* [in the image (or shadow) of God] so the earthly sanctuary was made by man *b'tzelem Mish'kan* - in the image (or shadow) of the true *Mish'kan*.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us of the obvious – that the sanctuary in which Yeshua serves as High Priest – the one in Heaven – is superior in every way to the sanctuary in which Aharon and his descendants served as priests. Why is the Heavenly *Mish'kan* superior? First of all it is superior because of its *location* – in Heaven rather than on earth. Secondly, it is superior because of its *substance* – infinite and Heavenly rather than finite and earthly. And most importantly it is superior because of its *priesthood* – of the sinless, willingly submissive, resurrected, ascended, glorified seed of woman, rather than the sinful, oft-times stiff-necked, mortal, earthbound descendants of Aharon.

*May the fire of the altar in your heart burn morning and evening,
in this world and in the world to come.*

The Rabbi's son

Amidah Prayer Focus for the Week

The Gevurot, Part III

Somech nof'lim v'rofei cholim

It is You Who lifts up the fallen, and heals the sick

u'matir asurim

And It is You Who sets captives free

u'm'kayam emunoto li-sheneh afar

and it is You Who is faithful even when we fall asleep in the dust

Mi chamocha ba-al g'vurot

Who is like You, Master of Miracles?

Melech maymis u'm'chai'ah

O King, Who causes death, then restores life

u'm'tz'miach y'shuah

and Who causes Yeshua to burst forth like a sprout

v'ne-aman atah l'hachai'ot maysim

and Who can be trusted to resurrect the dead

Baruch Atah Adonai

Blessed are You, O Holy One

m'chai'yah ha-maysim
In You the Dead have life