

Shemini (שְׁמִינִי - Eighth) **Vayikra (Leviticus) 9:1-11:47**

The **name** of our Torah reading this week is **Shemini**, and it is found in Vayikra 9:1:

Vayikra 9:1 It came to pass on the **eighth (shemini - שְׁמִינִי) day** that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel.

Every **number** in Hebrew is full of meaning and we will spend some time looking at the number **eight**. In Hebrew thought, **eight** represents a “**fresh start**” or a “**new beginning**”. The number **seven** represents a “**completed cycle**”; therefore, **eight** represents the “**beginning of another cycle**”. While it is true that Western thought is **linear** and Hebrew thought is **cyclical**, Hebrew concepts can also take you in a **cyclical pattern that spirals upwards**.

In much of what we do, we see the **pattern** of **seven**. The **7th** day is **Shabbat** and after that we begin another seven day cycle ending with another **Shabbat**. The Almighty gives us these **repeats** to **teach** us and hopefully move us in an **upward spiral** in our **knowledge, understanding, and obedience**. The **8th** day therefore, is actually a **repeat of the first day**. The picture of this can be seen in the **musical scale**. There are **7 notes in each octave**. The **8th note is like the first**, except it's a **higher octave**. Scripture even uses this concept. In the following verse the word “**Sheminith**” is the word “**eighth**” and you may even find it translated as “**octave**” in your version:

1 Chronicles 15:21 Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, to direct with harps on the **Sheminith**;

A couple of Psalms also use this musical term in their heading:

Psalms 6:1 To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. On an **eight (Sheminith)**-stringed harp.

We also see **eight** in the picture of יהוה's (Yahwey's) **feasts**. **Sukkot** is the **7th feast** and it **ends the yearly cycle**. The **next feast** would be the **8th**, and it begins a **new cycle**. Hopefully each year that you enter into the new cycle, you have **spiraled upward** a bit. Every year our congregation begins to repeat the Torah readings, we comment on how we are learning so much more than we learned the previous year. This **upward climb** is a picture of the “**8th**”.

The **8th letter** of the aleph-bet is **chet (ח)**. The **pictograph** for the letter is that of a **tent wall**. The **function** of the **tent wall** is **to separate the inside from the outside**. Also, it is the base consonant **letter** associated with two very important Hebrew concepts: **life (חַיִּים) and grace (חַנּוּן)**.

We read in Vayikra 8 that for **seven days** Aaron and his sons did not leave the Tabernacle and on the **8th day** they experienced the glory of יהוה. Can we find a pattern in the mention of the “**8th day**”?

Genesis 17:12 "He who is **eight days** old among you shall be **circumcised**, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.¹³ "He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be **circumcised**, and **My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant**.

Circumcision on the 8th day links a child to **the everlasting covenant**. It was an **earthly** picture associated with **loving יהוה** through our **obedience**:

Deuteronomy 10:12 " And now, Israel, what does יהוה your Elohim require of you, but to fear יהוה your Elohim, to walk in all His ways and **to love Him**, to serve יהוה your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul,¹³ **"and to keep the commandments** of יהוה and His statutes which I command you today for your good?.....¹⁶ "Therefore **circumcise the foreskin of your heart**, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Deuteronomy 10:16 indicates that the Israelites were **to circumcise their own hearts**; however in the **strength** of our **flesh**, we are not able to accomplish this. Therefore יהוה has promised that **HE** will complete this **circumcision of the heart after a future regathering**:

Deuteronomy 30:1 "Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where יהוה your Elohim drives you,² **"and you return to יהוה your Elohim and obey His voice**, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, **with all your heart and with all your soul**,³ "that יהוה your Elohim will **bring you back from captivity**, and have compassion on you, and **gather you again from all the nations** where יהוה your Elohim has scattered you.⁴ "If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there יהוה your Elohim will gather you, and from there He will bring you.⁵ "Then יהוה your Elohim will **bring you to the land which your fathers possessed**, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.⁶ "And יהוה your Elohim will **circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, **to love יהוה your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live**.

Oh, by the way...on what **day** do you think that יהוה our Elohim will circumcise our hearts?

Now consider this verse:

Galatians 5:6 For in Messiah Yeshua neither **circumcision** nor **uncircumcision** avails anything, but **faith working through love**.

Let's not twist the words of Scripture. Paul was not saying that **physical circumcision was not to be performed**. Likewise, as we consider the **sacrifices** some will return to the verse which says that "**obedience is better than sacrifice**." Yes, this is true...however, when they were **obedient**, they **DID sacrifice** and if we are **obedient** we **WILL circumcise**. The only difference lies in **WHY** we do these things. יהוה wanted the children of Israel to bring their offerings because of their true **love** for Him and desire to serve Him by **keeping His commandments**.

The same is true for **circumcision**. **Circumcision** of the **flesh** should be **reflective** of the **circumcision** of the **heart**. And by the way, a theology that **spiritualizes** everything is not a replacement for actual **obedience**!

There were other **8th days** in the lives of the Israelites. On the **8th day** a firstborn animal was taken from its mother to be given to יִהְיֶה:

Exodus 22:30 "Likewise you shall do with your oxen *and* your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the **eighth day** you shall give it to Me.

Lepers were cleansed on the **8th day**:

Vayikra 14:23 "He shall bring them to the priest on the **eighth day** for his cleansing, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, before יִהְיֶה.

The **8th day** following seven days of Sukkot is called "**Shemini (eighth) Atzeret**". We know that **a day is likened to a thousand years**, so Shemini Atzeret is a picture of the **eternity** that happens after man's **7,000 years** on earth. It is the time of the New Heavens and the New Earth that we read about in Revelation 21 and 22. It is a time when we will be **participants** with Yeshua in His glorious and **everlasting kingdom**! This **8th day** is truly a day of **new beginnings**!

The **8th day** represents a level of **holiness** that transcends normal time and space. You could think of it as a time of becoming "**one with Messiah**" rather than being "**one with the world**". Isn't that what Yeshua prayed in the garden before his crucifixion?

John 17:11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, **that they may be one as We are....**²³ **I in them, and You in Me**; that they may be made **perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

So here's the question....what day did Yeshua resurrect; the **Sabbath (7th)** or the **1st day** of the week (which is also the **8th day**)? To answer this, we must take a look at what Yeshua accomplished. Since we've "**been crucified with Messiah**", we **crossed over with Him** from the **earthly** into the **spiritual**. We are now "**set apart**"....that is "**holy**". According to the pattern, something pertaining to the **Kingdom** happens on the "**8th day**". Is it logical to think that after **Yeshua** completed His final **week** of **seven days** which ended on **Shabbat** (in the same way man will have **seven thousand years** ending with the **Shabbat Millennium**), that as **the 7th turned into the 8th day resurrection!**

Now, for centuries believers have tried to eliminate the **7th day**, the **Sabbath** from the Father's plans. But the **7th day Sabbath** is still a picture of that **7th millennium** that we will spend with **Yeshua in the land** when He returns. Yes, the **8th day** and the **8th millennium** is an important day and a time to definitely look forward to; however, it is still over **1,000 years away!** We can no more do away with the **Sabbath**, then we can do away with the **7th millennium** (Revelation 20)! And why would we want to?

Isaiah 56:2 Blessed is the man *who* does this, And the son of man *who* lays hold on it; **Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath**, And keeps his hand from doing any evil.”.....⁴ For thus says יהוה: "To the eunuchs **who keep My Sabbaths**, And **choose what pleases Me**, And **hold fast My covenant**,⁵ Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.⁶ " **Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to יהוה, to serve Him**, And to love the name of יהוה, to be His servants -- **Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant --⁷ Even them I will bring to My holy mountain**, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *Will be* accepted on My altar; For **My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.**"

Now, let's return to Vayikra and to the **priests** who have just spent **7 full days** learning every minute detail of יהוה's tabernacle and their role in the rituals that will be performed there. It is a time of "**circumcision of the heart**" for them as they put away every **fleshly inclination** that will prevent them from properly performing their duties. As the tabernacle is a picture of the **perfected** body of Messiah, the unity and the bonding that occurred there must have been incredible. They would be the **vessels** used by יהוה **to draw all of Israel near to the Kingdom.**

On the **8th day** we read of Aaron and his sons preparing the offerings before יהוה. Moses has told them that **this is the day** that יהוה will **appear** to them:

Vayikra 9:6 Then Moses said, "This is the thing which יהוה commanded you to do, and **the glory of יהוה will appear** to you."

After their **absolute obedience**, this is what we read:

Vayikra 9:23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. **Then the glory of יהוה appeared to all the people,²⁴ and fire came out from before יהוה and consumed** the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw *it*, they shouted and fell on their faces.

Baruch HaShem, יהוה! יהוה's **glory** is revealed as a "**consuming fire**" on the **8th day**! Picture that fire coming out from between the cherubim above the ark, where His glory had rested! There is a **pattern** of **fires** occurring on the **8th day**. **Shavuot (Pentecost)** occurs after seven weeks or "**seven seven's**"and then the **8th day** (Day 50). This was the day יהוה gave the children of Israel the Ten Commandments:

Exodus 19:18 Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because יהוה descended upon it **in fire**. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly....**20:1** And Elohim spoke all these words, saying:² " I *am* יהוה your Elohim..., who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Centuries later, on another **8th day**, we have a repeat:

Acts 2:1 When the Day of **Shavuot (Pentecost)** had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of **fire**, and *one* sat upon each of them.

The most **dramatic fire** will come, however, when the **enemies** of יהוה that surround Jerusalem will be **destroyed**. It will come at **the end of the 7th day or the 7 thousand years** and will usher us into the **8th**:

Revelation 20:7 Now when **the thousand years have expired**, Satan will be released from his prison⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And **fire came down from יהוה** out of heaven and **devoured** them.

Okay, now back to Vayikra....in the midst of the joy and the exhilaration that the Israelites must have been feeling when the **glory** of יהוה was shown to them, there came a very dark and sad moment. This **same fire** that had consumed the offerings and had been a sign of יהוה's **approval** now became the **consuming fire of death**:

Vayikra 10:1 Then Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put **fire** in it, put incense on it, and offered **strange fire** before יהוה, which He had not commanded them.² So **fire went out from יהוה** and **devoured them**, and **they died** before יהוה.

Now we do not know for sure what this “**strange fire**” was, although there are many credible theories. Perhaps it is not important to know the exact reason. Perhaps the intended lesson to be learned is that it matters **how** we come before יהוה in worship. **His ways are not our ways** and we cannot just do things as we please. If your goal is to “**draw near**” to the Almighty, then it would be to your advantage **to understand His Holiness**. Do not forget that **even after the resurrection**, Ananias and Sapphira were struck down for a sin committed while **bringing an offering!**

I do not believe that either Nadav or Avihu had it in their hearts to **intentionally sin** against יהוה. Still because of their training and the **holiness that they were to exemplify**, mistakes could not be made:

Luke 12:48 For everyone to **whom much is given, from him much will be required**; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Now there is a little detail concerning Nadav and Avihu that is worth noting:

Vayikra 10:5 So they went near and carried them **by their tunics** out of the camp, as Moses had said.

We are told that Nadav and Avihu were carried out “**by their tunics**”. This little detail indicates that they were **not completely consumed by the fire**. It appears that their **clothing** was left **intact**. What type of **clothing** were the sons of Aaron **wearing**?

Exodus 28:39 "You shall skillfully weave the **tunic of fine linen thread**, you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work.⁴⁰ " **For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics**, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty.

Vayikra 8:13 Then Moses **brought Aaron's sons and put tunics on them**, girded them with sashes, and put hats on them, as יהוה had commanded Moses.

The **tunics** of Nadav and Avihu were made of **white linen**. Now **white linen** would be an interesting topic to follow throughout the Scriptures, but for now let's consider this verse:

Revelation 19:8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in **fine linen**, clean and bright, for the **fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints**.

Let's think about this for a moment. If the **fine/white linen is a picture of the righteous acts of the saints**, and the **linen garments of Nadav and Avihu were not consumed by the fire**, then **their works survived the judgment!** The **good works** that they had already done would not be **forgotten** by the Almighty, despite the **error** they had made! Where have we heard about **works** being judged by **fire**?

1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.¹¹ For no other **foundation** can anyone lay than that which is laid, which **is Messiah Yeshua**.¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because **it will be revealed by fire**; and the **fire will test each one's work**, of what sort it is.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the **judgment seat of Messiah**, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

As **believers in Yeshua**, our **faith** has gained us **forgiveness and acceptance** by the Father. **HOWEVER**, there is still this matter of being **judged** for our **works**. So what is the **standard** that we are judged by? Yeshua said:

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

He also told us what **the most important commandment** was:

Mark 12:29 Yeshua answered him, "**The first of all the commandments is**: 'Hear, O Israel, יהוה our Elohim, יהוה is one.'³⁰ 'And you shall love יהוה your Elohim with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is* the first commandment.

So...if you “love Him with all your heart”, then you are “keeping His commandments”...and if you “keep His commandments”, then you are “loving Him with all your heart”. **His commandments are the standard for our works.** You can’t get around the **standard** by doing **what YOU think is the right way to show love for Him.** Perhaps Nadav and Avihu thought they could **continue** הַהָרִיב’s show of **glory** by **burning incense.** Bad idea. He **demand**s obedience of His people. As we try to remove **foreign influences** from our **worship**, this is no time to introduce **new elements to our worship**...even if it does seem harmless to us. We cannot **contradict His commandments.** Though there is **forgiveness**, there is also **judgment:**

1 Peter 4:17 For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of Adonai; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of Adonai? ¹⁸ Now “**If the righteous one is scarcely saved**, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of Adonai commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

I’ll finish with some interesting thoughts about a few of the **clean and unclean animals** that are listed in chapter 11. I’d like to remind you of the things **Yeshua taught** His disciples after His resurrection:

Luke 24:27 and having begun **from Moses**, and **from all the prophets**, he was expounding to them **in all the Writings the things about himself.**

Now how my friends, are **the food laws** a picture of **Yeshua** or of the **body** (that’s **us**) of **Yeshua**? Let’s consider some of the characteristics of the **clean animals**:

- **Divided hoof** – makes the animal very **sure footed.** Sheep and goats can actually run on narrow paths on sheer mountain cliffs. The type of “**feet**” determines the **walk.** See how the following verses connect “**feet**” with both the **keeping of the feasts** and the **proclamation of the Gospel**:
 - **Exodus 23:14** " Three **times** (רֵגֶל) - regel – word for **feet**) you shall **keep a feast** to Me in the year
 - **Isaiah 52:7** How beautiful upon the mountains Are the **feet** of him **who brings good news**, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good *things*, Who proclaims salvation (Yeshua), Who says to Zion, "Your Elohim reigns!"
- **Chews the cud** – literally this means “brings up the cud”. Rashi (Jewish sage) explains this as follows: “The animal brings up and regurgitates its food from its intestines back into its mouth, to fragmatize and grind it.” This describes a class of animals known as ruminants, whose stomach has **four compartments.** Isn’t this a perfect picture of **meditating on the Word**? And could the four compartments easily be seen as the four levels of understanding – **Pashat, Remez, Drash, and Sod**?

With those characteristics in mind, let’s take a look at a couple of **unclean animals**:

- **Camel** – it chews the cud, but does not have the divided hoof. Inwardly this animal is a picture of one who may **meditate** and have much **knowledge**, but **does not have the proper “walk”.**

- **Pig** – it has the divided hoof, however **where you walk is determined by what's in your mouth (chewing the cud)**. If **feet** are connected with the **festivals**, then **pigs' feet** could represent celebrating **pagan festivals**. Pigs also have no **discernment** about what they **eat**. They are full of **garbage** and **harmful impurities**.

This is kind of fun, don't you think? Let's look at just a few more creatures:

- **Unclean fish** – many are not only **bottom feeders that eat of waste and death**, but they also are **basically loners...only gathering** when there is a feeding frenzy – for example sharks.
 - **Hebrews 10:24** and may we consider one another to provoke to **love** and to **good works**,²⁵ **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as a custom of certain *is*, but exhorting, and so much the more as ye see the day coming nigh.
- **Unclean birds** – many of these birds are hard to identify, however most share the characteristic of being **birds of prey**. Instead we are to be about **life!**
 - **Proverbs 12:28** In the path of righteousness *is* life, and in the way of *that* path *is* no death!
- **Edible insects** – many of these are the “**music-makers**”, i.e.... those which **praise**.
- **Chameleon** – **blends in** with what's around him as opposed to being **set-apart and holy**.

יהוה uses a variety of pictures to make His ways known. Isn't it amazing that even in the animals that He has given us as food are the **characteristics** that He hopes to reap in **us!** We are told to “**be holy**”. Your **body** is the “**temple of the Holy Spirit**”. Is not the thought of bringing a **pig** into **your temple repulsive** to you? It is to יהוה. This is what we find in the context of an end times section of Isaiah:

Isaiah 66:17 "Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, *To go* to the gardens After an *idol* in the midst, **Eating swine's flesh** and the abomination and the mouse, Shall be **consumed** together," says יהוה.

As a **Kingdom of Priests** and a **holy nation** (1 Peter 2:9), we must keep in mind the position of the **priest**. יהוה tells us how He feels about those who **disregard His Torah** and give no thought to the **difference between holy and unholy, clean and unclean**:

Ezekiel 22:26 "Her **priests have violated My Torah** and **profaned My holy things**; they have **not distinguished between the holy and unholy**, nor have they made known *the difference between the unclean and the clean*; and they have **hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths**, so that I am profaned among them.

With this we shall end:

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For יהוה did not call us to **uncleanness**, but in **holiness**.⁸ Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but יהוה, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle