

MORDEKAI'S DRASH — *וַיִּקְרָא*



Torah: *Vayikra* (And He called), *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 1.1-5.26(6.7)
Haftorah: *Yesha'yahu* (Isaiah) 43.21-44.23
Suggested Messianic Writings: Hebrews 10.1-18

Shalom,

We begin the third book of Torah this week. The parashah deals with the various types of offerings that are to be made in the newly built Tabernacle. The first offering is called in most translations a “burnt offering”. The Hebrew is *עֹלָה olah*, which means, “a step, ascending; ascent, stairway, steps; a burnt offering, with the idea of the smoke rising from the burning.” The word *holocaust* comes from this root word, also the word *aliyah*, the term for Jewish people going up, that is, going home to Israel.

Artscroll translates the offering as an *elevation-offering*. Their commentary lists several understandings of *עֹלָה olah* by various historical Sages, all which can apply: 1) an offering that is completely burned, going up in flames to HaShem; 2) *עֹלָה olah* could refer to the sin for which one brings the offering, that is, the offering would atone for sinful ideas or thoughts that come up in a person's mind; 3) the offering's name reflects its purpose, which is to raise its owner from the status of sinner and bring him to a state of spiritual elevation; 4) *עֹלָה olah* is superior to all other offerings because it is voluntarily brought and offered on the Altar in its entirety, none is kept back for personal use. I feel that the term *elevation-offering*, looking at these definitions, thus gives a deeper meaning than simply *burnt offering*. Also, the offering that was brought was to be without defect. As Messianics, if we consider that the Altar represents Yeshua, then certainly this would mean that we are to bring our best to give to Him.

An interesting short command is given in *Vayikra* 2.13, “You are to season every grain offering of yours with salt – do not omit from your grain offering the salt of the covenant with your God, but offer salt with all your offerings.” This is the first mention of including salt with an offering, and it is at first here specific to the grain offering, but ends up as a commandment to include salt with all offerings. There are various understandings of the purpose of salt in the offerings. For one thing, it is important that we not offer something to HaShem that we would not give to another person. In other words, salt is a seasoning, and we would not serve fine food to others without the proper seasoning. This thought is seen as more of a matter of respect, as the salting is not dealing with dietary law. Another reason is that salt is a preservative, and this can allude to the offering's preservative influence upon the person's soul. The sacrifice was incomplete without salt, and full obedience is expected by the Creator. In other words, we are to “give of our best to the Master”.

One Jewish Sage noted in the commentary to this verse the basic knowledge that salt comes from salt water that is modified by fire, or heat. Although his teaching went a different direction, what stood out to me from that statement was a tie-in to a couple of statements that Yeshua made. The first is in *Mattityahu* (Matthew) 5.13, where Yeshua states that His followers are the salt of the earth. In *Yochanan* (John) 3.5, Yeshua declared that unless one is born again from water and the Spirit, he is not born again. So my connection is that just as there can be no useful salt unless there has been salt water that has been modified by heat, we as believers cannot truly be a useful salt of the earth unless we have been born from water modified by the fire, or heat, of the *Ruakh HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit. So when we give of our best to our Master, it must always include salt. This is “the salt of the covenant with your God”.

There is a spiritual connection between salt and the Spirit of HaShem. We are powerless in our spirit without The Spirit. Let's go back to *Mattityahu* 5:13, where Yeshua continued, “But if salt becomes tasteless, how can it be made salty again?” Looking at the passage in the Greek, we gain a deeper understanding (just as we do in looking at the Hebrew for Tanakh meanings) that Yeshua is not referring to salt on its own, for salt does not really lose its flavor. Here's the understanding: the Greek word for tasteless is *mo-rah'ee-no*, which means, “to make (passively act) as a simpleton: - become a fool, make foolish”. The Greek root word is *mo-ros*, and I think you can see where that is heading, for the definition is, “dull or stupid, that is, heedless, (morally) blockhead, (apparently) absurd”. We must always be sure that our salt remains salty, and the saltiness that we have comes only from Heavenly wisdom. Wisdom that is not from above can be bad news. *Ya'akov*/James 3.15 says, concerning ungodly wisdom, “This wisdom is not the kind that comes down from above; on the contrary, it is worldly, unspiritual, demonic.” It

is in relation to this idea that *Sha'ul* (Saul/Paul) wrote in Romans 1.21-22, concerning those who have turned from their Creator: "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their *foolish* hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became *fools*." To be truly wise, or *salty*, is to truly honor HaShem in all that we do and are.

Our Creator is on our side, He desires our love, our service, and our worship, and that's why He commands even seemingly unimportant things like adding salt to an offering. He wants us to give our best to Him. If we do that, He will increase our "saltiness".

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)