

Notes: September 26, 2015

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush
11. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: How Do We Start The New Year Off On The Right Foot?

You heard Jeri's drash today regarding the mitzvot being the infinite and eternal nature of Adonai, our creator.

We have just concluded a period of 40 days in seeking Adonai, through self introspection as guided by the Ruach ha Kodesh, culminating with Yom Kippur.

We are a day a way from Sukkot, a time where we are commanded to be joyous, a time when fasting is actually prohibited because it goes against the intent behind being joyous.

Deu 16:13 "You are to keep the festival of Sukkot for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing-floor and winepress.

Deu 16:14 Rejoice at your festival - you, your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, the L'vi'im, and the foreigners, orphans and widows living among you.

Deu 16:15 Seven days you are to keep the festival for Adonai your God in the place Adonai your God will choose, because Adonai your God will bless you in all your crops and in all your work, so you are to be full of joy!

We are to be full of joy because Adonai will bless us.

In being full of joy, we are more apt to do good, to do what Adonai is directing us to do...

So, I want to lay a foundation for this upcoming year so that you will start off on the right foot and that your year will

be a blessing to those you come in contact with and to Adonai.

When we look at Proverbs 10:2

Pro 10:2 No good comes from ill-gotten wealth, but righteousness rescues from death.

The word for righteousness is *Tzedaka*

Meaning rightness (abstractly), subjectively (*rectitude*), objectively (*justice*), morally (*virtue*) or figuratively (*prosperity*): - justice, moderately, right (-eous) (act, -ly, -ness).

In commenting on Proverbs 10:2, Joseph Gikatilla, a colleague of Moshe de Leon, author of the [kabbalistic text, the] *Zohar*, connected the words

tzedek (justice/righteousness),
tzadik (righteous one),
tzedaka (righteous giving):

"This is the mystery of the verse 'Tzedaka saves from death.' What a treasure *tzedaka* is! A person who does *tzedaka* brings forth the 'righteous one' (*tzadik*) with 'righteousness' (*tzedek*), thereby bringing life to the world and saving it from death. If you save the world from death, how much more is it true that you save your own self!

This is a concept that Yeshua conveyed many times...

Joh 12:7 Yeshua said, "Leave her alone! She kept this for the day of my burial.

Joh 12:8 You always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

While Yeshua's point is to call the attention of his *talmidim* to the importance of his brief remaining time on earth, some, noting the stress Judaism puts on charity, have regarded his remark as callous and selfish. It is not, for two reasons:

- (1) Miryam's timely act of love toward the Messiah is valued by God precisely for its *unselfishness*, and
- (2) The marginal significance of the resources here withheld from the poor is negligible compared both with their need and with the opportunities available to potential givers.

Jas 1:27 The religious observance that God the Father considers pure and faultless is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being contaminated by the world.

This verse, apparently based on Isaiah 1:15-17 and quoted by Ya'akov in 4:8 -

Isa 1:15 "When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; no matter how much you pray, I won't be listening; because your hands are covered with blood.

Isa 1:16 "Wash yourselves clean! Get your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing evil,

Isa 1:17 learn to do good! Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, defend orphans, plead for the widow.

Sums up the burden of all the Prophets, who zealously insisted that true religion must consist not in mere external observances but in good deeds flowing from a sound spiritual condition. In reducing the *Torah* to two commandments-the one enjoining a practical expression of self-giving love toward those who can offer little or nothing in return, the other concerning the inward spiritual and outward ethical purity prerequisite to right action-Ya'akov entered a time-honored Jewish tradition of epitomizing the *Torah*, as is seen from the well-known Talmud passage, Makkot 23b-24a,

quoted in Galatians 5:14 - 15

Gal 5:14 For the whole of the Torah is summed up in this one sentence: "Love your neighbor as yourself";

Gal 5:15 but if you go on snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, watch out, or you will be destroyed by each other!

This verse, like the book of Galatians, is a warning to believers who become enamored of specific observances at the expense of "the weightier matters of the *Torah*-justice, mercy, trust"

https://www.templealiyah.com/sites/default/files/uploaded_documents/makkot_23b_text.pdf

Reduction does not always mean elimination, but can also convey summation. Whereby as Yeshua has conveyed a similar view...

Mat 22:36 "Rabbi, which of the mitzvot in the Torah is the most important?"

Mat 22:37 He told him, " 'You are to love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.'

Mat 22:38 This is the greatest and most important mitzvah.

Mat 22:39 And a second is similar to it, 'You are to love your neighbor as yourself.'

Mat 22:40 All of the Torah and the Prophets are dependent on these two mitzvot."

Even at the moadim, everyone is to be joyful

Deu 16:11 You are to rejoice in the presence of Adonai your God - you, your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, the L'vi'im living in your towns, and the foreigners, orphans and widows living among you - in the place where Adonai your God will choose to have his name live.

How does one give?

It could be in a number of ways...

Time

Means

Of and from your heart

If you remember one of the aspects of T'shuvah, was going to people whom you may have offended or had a disagreement with to make amends.

This in essence is what I would call preventative care, whereby in understanding this concept...righteousness rescues from death when connecting these words together, paints a picture of Yeshua and His teachings.

Yet Yeshua's teachings are not new but are established in Torah.

The author of Torah is in essence conveying this principle through His own text.

Is *tzedaka* primarily a restorative act that reestablishes justice?

“Personal acts of *tzedaka* hardly have the power to rearrange society. While acts of *tzedaka* are described as benefiting both donor and recipient, we might make a good case that the impact of these acts is greater on the one who gives than on the one who receives. If we want to see a significant social transformation, diminishing the sense of entitlement and the imperative of acquisition may be more significant in the pursuit of justice than the direct impact of *tzedaka*. Personal, rather than social transformation may be one goal of *tzedaka* – to help us question just how much we “need.” – Richard Hirsh

Through personal transformation, we can impact to social transformation. Yet it takes a village to raise a child. Unified in one mind and with one heart, ultimately the heart and mind of Messiah.

Through prayer and contemplative practices, we notice the truth of the world. We notice that nothing is static. Everything is in flux. When we know this deeply, we are more likely to realize that nothing belongs to us. Everything, including all our wealth and our very selves, is just “passing through.” The joy of life is in feeling and expressing our connection to the whole, not in holding tight to any particular part. – Sheila Peltz Weinberg

When we realize that we are stewards of what Adonai has entrusted us with, it is not ours but His. Yeshua conveyed this principle through His parable of the “talents” Matthew 25:14 - 30

Mat 25:14 "For it will be like a man about to leave home for awhile, who entrusted his possessions to his servants.

The parable conveys the aspect of responsibility placed upon people who have been entrusted with something that isn't their own and to not only take care of it, but to also expand upon what was given.

Mat 25:29 For everyone who has something will be given more, so that he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has nothing, even what he does have will be taken away.

Mat 25:30 As for this worthless servant, throw him out in the dark, where people will wail and grind their teeth!

Ultimately it comes down to what are you doing with what you have been entrusted with?

In rabbinic literature, beggars are quoted as saying, “merit through me,” *not* “give to me!” This alludes to the traditional belief that a person gains life in the world-to-come through the act of giving *tzedaka*. The rabbis seem to be teaching that *tzedaka* is neither an act of altruism nor just an obligation, but a profoundly self-affirming act. It is in one’s own interest to give, which the rabbis phrased in terms of gaining a portion of eternal life. We can reconstruct this otherworldly notion to affirm the many spiritual benefits of *tzedaka*. These include: the cultivation of an open and generous heart; not becoming too attached to our own material possessions; and experiencing real connection to others who are sometimes similar, sometimes quite different from ourselves. – Toba Spitzer

We see this aspect also conveyed by Yeshua...

Mat 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.

Mat 25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you made me your guest,

Mat 25:36 I needed clothes and you provided them, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Mat 25:37 Then the people who have done what God wants will reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,

or thirsty and give you something to drink?

Mat 25:38 When did we see you a stranger and make you our guest, or needing clothes and provide them?

Mat 25:39 When did we see you sick or in prison, and visit you?'

Mat 25:40 The King will say to them, 'Yes! I tell you that whenever you did these things for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did them for me!'

Then you have the people on the left...

Mat 25:41 "Then he will also speak to those on his left, saying, 'Get away from me, you who are cursed! Go off into the fire prepared for the Adversary and his angels!

Mat 25:42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,

Mat 25:43 a stranger and you did not welcome me, needing clothes and you did not give them to me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

Mat 25:44 Then they too will reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, needing clothes, sick or in prison, and not take care of you?'

Mat 25:45 And he will answer them, 'Yes! I tell you that whenever you refused to do it for the least important of these people, you refused to do it for me!'

Mat 25:46 They will go off to eternal punishment, but those who have done what God wants will go to eternal life."

It isn't a question of quantity, but of quality.

We are reminded of this by Yeshua...

Mar 12:41 Then Yeshua sat down opposite the Temple treasury and watched the crowd as they put money into the offering-boxes. Many rich people put in large sums,

Mar 12:42 but a poor widow came and put in two small coins.

Mar 12:43 He called his talmidim to him and said to them, "Yes! I tell you, this poor widow has put more in the offering-box than all the others making donations.

Mar 12:44 For all of them, out of their wealth, have contributed money they can easily spare; but she, out of her poverty, has given everything she had to live on."

Remember Proverbs 10:2...

Pro 10:2 No good comes from ill-gotten wealth, but righteousness rescues from death.

Tzedakah is an act of submitting ourselves to God, in that we accept our connection with others and our responsibility to them. Frequent giving gradually opens our hearts and helps us move beyond our own self-centeredness. It leads to a metamorphosis of the spirit. – Mordechai Liebling

The central intention and process of all spiritual and religious practices and traditions is acknowledging God's ownership, which allows us to let go of our separate and small self. *Tsedaka* is a core practice that habituates us to letting go of that small self. – Sheila Peltz Weinberg

This wasn't a tithing message but a message addressing the other six days of the week.

How will you utilize what you have been given?

There is a connection between tzedakah (righteous giving), tzedek (justice and righteousness) and tzadik (the righteous one - Yeshua)

In giving, you are actually submitting to Adonai.

In giving you are actually giving to Him.

This is how you will start the new year on the right foot.

Keep this in mind, so long as you do so throughout the year.