

## **Lesson Eleven**

### **Tzedekah / Righteousness**

- 1) “Righteousness” and “righteous,” appear 542 times in 512 verses of the Bible. In contrast, “faith,” “faithfulness” and “faithful” are only used 348 times in 328 verses. This means that there are 1.5 times as many scriptures about righteousness as there are about faith. Therefore, we can rightly conclude that righteousness is important. The Hebrew word for righteousness is “tzedekah.” Biblical tzedekah or righteousness has a pair of separate, yet intertwined meanings that beautifully describe man’s relationship with YHWH and with fellow mankind. According to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance the word “tzedek” literally means, “right, moral or legal, just, right in a moral sense, cleanse, justice, turn to, righteous, to give freely.” In Jewish thought today, tzedekah is considered charity or giving as an expression of a right relationship with the Almighty. Modern Judaism teaches that tzedekah has more to do with Israel’s ministry of charity and benevolence to fellow man than a spiritual state of being.**

**The root of tzedekah is from the Hebrew tzade-dalet-qof, meaning justice, fairness, and righteousness. The modern Jewish thought that tzedekah is about giving isn’t that far off base. Biblical tzedekah is a gift from YHWH to man, that man is to share towards other people. Tzedekah is an actual attribute of YHWH, one of the ten sefirot, that express who YHWH fully is. “O YHWH, Elohim of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant,” Ezra 9:15. When YHWH grants man His righteousness, He is actually giving or revealing part of Himself because YHWH is righteous. “YHWH is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him,” Psalm 92:15.**

Matthew 5:6

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blest because they will be satisfied.

Romans 7:7-9

I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet....For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

Romans 5:18

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Romans 5:18

- 2) **YHWH gives His righteousness to man as a reward/gift for faith and trust exhibited through Torah obedience. “And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the YHWH our Elohim, as he hath commanded us,” Deuteronomy 6:25. Romans 2:13 makes this point very clearly, “it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.”**

Romans 10:10

It is this belief in your heart that makes you righteous, but it’s your mouth, when it confesses this, that brings salvation.

Proverbs 4:18

But the path of the tzedek is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day

- 3) **The Holman Bible Dictionary, a Baptist publication, says “rather than being a ladder that Israel climbed to get to YHWH, the Torah was understood to be a divine program of the maintenance of a healthy relationship between Israel and Elohim (Leviticus 16.) YHWH expected Israel to keep the Torah not to earn merit but to maintain the status Elohim had already given the nation. As Israel kept the covenant, the nation was righteous. Thus human righteousness in relation to Elohim was understood as faithful adherence to the Torah (Leviticus 19.)” – sacred names added. Notice that tzedekah is done as a nation and as individuals.**

**Right standing and fairness with YHWH is granted as a GIFT when a person walks in accordance with the mitzvah of the Bible, “a righteous man does what is lawful and right,” Ezekiel 18:5. Man cannot and has never merited himself spiritual righteousness. “For there is not a righteous man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not,” Ecclesiastes 7:20. According to the Bible tzedekah simply cannot be earned. Tzedekah must be given by YHWH to repentful and faithful man, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness,” 1 John 1:9. Because of sin man does not deserve tzedekah but YHWH gives it when man turns from the path of wickedness and returns to Yah. Romans 5:19, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Breaking or not obeying the Torah is sin which leads to unrighteousness. “All unrighteousness is sin,” 1 Yochannan (John) 5:17.**

Romans 6:12-14

As the result, don’t allow sin to rule your mortal bodies and don’t obey its desires. Nor should you offer your body parts as unrighteous weapons of sin. Rather, offer yourselves to YHWH as someone who has been raised from the dead, and [offer] your body parts to YHWH as weapons of righteousness. So, sin must not be your master, because you aren’t under Law, but under kindness.

- 4) It was because of Avraham's faithful obedience he was considered a righteous person or a tzadik in YHWH's eyes. "Avraham (Abraham) believed Elohim, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, Galatians 3:6. Avraham's belief and faithful trusting led him to follow the instructions of the Almighty, thus making Avraham a tzadik.**

**In as much as tzedekah is a gift it is also a deed carried out by faithful man. In some of today's Jewish society if you mention the word tzedekah, most will recognize that this is a term used for giving aid, charity, or assistance to the poor. This is simply part of tzedekah. This understanding sheds more light on the true meaning of the word. Tzedekah, or fairness and justice, is a gift from YHWH that is to be passed on towards fellow mankind. This teaching is based on Proverbs 29:7, "The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it."**

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled

Matthew 25:37-40

Then the righteous will ask, lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison, and come to you? And the king will say to them, I tell you the truth, when you did it for one of the least of these my brothers, you did it for me.

Matthew 6:33

If you put the Kingdom and righteousness in first place, then all these [other] things will be given to you.

- 5) Tzedekah in YHWH's sight is given by trusting obedience to Torah commands while tzedekah in man's sight is given by how a believer treats other individuals. Rabbi Hillel said in 100BC that all of Torah could be summed up by loving your neighbor as yourself. Torah obedience always leads to life. "The labour of the righteous tendeth to life," Proverbs 10:16. Biblical righteousness shows others a life of Torah submission. "But the path of the tzedek is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Proverbs 4:18. Or to paraphrase "The works, actions, and words of a tzedek is a shining light to the world, pointing to the day of the full restoration of tzedekah."**

**"The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him, Proverbs 20:7. Again, tzedekah is received from YHWH and is performed towards man. Trusting faith produces actions of righteousness and therefore, the**

**righteous are ultimately defined as those who walk in the covenant of YHWH of the Torah as found in Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:25.**

**It takes both actions and trust for a person to be considered righteous. In other words true tzedekah is not just about faith or works, true tzedekah is a balance of both. When it comes to fully comprehending biblical righteousness, balance is definitely the key.**

James 2:23-26

And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed Elohim, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called Elohim's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Matthew 25:46.

And the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal

Isaiah 28:17

I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place.

- 6) Rebbe Y'shua the Messiah also noticed a lack of balance concerning tzedekah. Y'shua warned his followers and the religious teachers when he said, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven," Mattityahu 5:20. It would be hard to believe that Y'shua was saying that His followers had to know and keep Torah better than the spiritual leaders of their day. Conceivably Y'shua was rebuking the teachers NOT because of their tzedekah towards YHWH, perhaps Y'shua's rebuke was concerning how they treated the poor and afflicted. Perhaps Y'shua was telling his talmidim that they had to treat people with more love, respect, concern, and compassion than the Pharisees did. Many of Messiah's parables, like the Great Samaritan, deal with this issue. Y'shua even equated a believer's love and actions towards fellow man with that of YHWH Himself. "Y'shua replied: "Love the YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments," Mattityahu 22:37-40.**

James 1:27

Religion that Elohim our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Romans 12:13

Share with Elohim's people who are in need. Practice hospitality

- 7) Throughout the Torah, Writings, Prophets, and Ketuvim Netzerim are countless stories of righteous individuals who walked in holiness before YHWH and man. "This is the account of Noach. Noach was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with Elohim," Beresheet (Genesis) 6:9. Noach's righteousness was reflective of the duality of tzedekah. Noach was "blameless among the people of his time and he walked with Elohim." Noach was a tzadik and Noach had balance!**

**In the Hebrew language a righteous person is called a "tzadik." A tzadik is a person totally rooted and grounded in YHWH and the Torah. The Encyclopedia Judaica clearly and impressively defines exactly what a tzadik is. The encyclopedia says that a genuine tzadik is one who, "carries out his obligation to Elohim and to man by obeying the precepts of the Torah." And Proverbs 21:15 teaches that acting justly is a tzadik's greatest reward. This does not mean that a tzadik is perfect or sinless. To the contrary, perhaps the greatest difference between the tzadik and the evildoer is that when the righteous fall down, they get back up again. "Though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity," Proverbs 24:16.**

Luke 2:52

Y'shua grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with Elohim and men

Luke 1:6

And they were both righteous before Elohim, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of YHWH blameless.

Proverbs 24:16

Though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.

Daniel 12:3

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

- 8) Tzedekah is seen clearly when a believer walks in the Spirit through Torah observance. This holy, set apart, and blessed lifestyle is the goal of all believers**

**and is THE way of life that leads to salvation in the hereafter. “And the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal,” Mattitياهو 25:46.**

**Titus 1:8 says all followers of the Scriptures are to be a “lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, righteous, holy, and temperate.” Don’t be mistaken; the life of a righteous person is not some mystical existence full of only heavenly highs. As Y’shua said, “our Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,” Mattitياهو 5:45. The way of life and routine of the tzadik is special because the tzadik functions as the mirror between man and YHWH, reflecting YHWH’s character to man.**

Hosea 10:12

Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek YHWH, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

- 9) The restoration of righteousness is prophesied in the scriptures as one of the ways that YHWH is reuniting His kingdom of Isra’el. ““The days are coming,” declares the YHWH, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: YHWH Tzdakenu. “So then, the days are coming,” declares YHWH, “when people will no longer say, ‘As surely as the YHWH lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,’ but they will say, ‘As surely as YHWH lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ Then they will live in their own land,” Yermi’yahu (Jeremiah) 23:5-8. In Yesha’yahu (Isaiah) 60:21 & 22 it is said said, “Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoots I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor.” YHWH is reuniting His people by restoring true tzedekah to Israel.**

1 Peter 3:10-12

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of YHWH are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

- 10) According to the Bible a righteous person:**

## **Emet Yeshiva: the school of truth**

- Receives everlasting life, Mattitياهو 25:46
- Prayers avail much, Ya'akov 5:6
- Has no fellowship with the wicked, 2 Corinthians 6:14
- Live by faith, Hebrews 10:38
- Walks in integrity, Proverbs 20:7
- Is wise and understanding, Hose 14:9
- Has full access to Elohim, Yesha'yahu 12:6
- Is blessed by YHWH, Proverbs 3:35
- Does what is lawful, Ezekiel 18:5
- Studies the Torah to answer any question, Proverbs 15:28
- Thoughts are based on the Torah and life, Proverbs 12:5

Lesson Ten

**Study and Discussion Questions**

- 1) Define the term “righteousness.” What does it mean to “righteous?”
  
- 2) How was Abraham considered righteous? What part does faith and works play into Biblical righteousness?
  
- 3) What does the term “tzedekah” mean? What two aspects of tzedekah must be considered?
  
- 4) Choose one person from the Scriptures whom you believe was righteous. How did they live? What did they do? What did they not do?
  
- 5) Read Philippians 3:1-8. What does this portion of Scripture teach about tzedekah?
  
- 6) Consider these verses on “tzedekah.” What did you learn from these passages? Genesis 15:6, Deuteronomy 6:24, Isaiah 42:6,7 & Psalm 4:1-3
  
- 7) Paraphrase Deuteronomy 32:3-4. What does this phrase mean to you? Explain the tzedekah of YHWH.

- 8) Read Psalm 72:24. What does it mean that YHWH will judge in “righteousness” and with “justice?”
  
- 9) Study Deuteronomy 6:25, Romans 10:5, Luke 1:6 and Psalm 1:2. What is the pattern in these verses? How does the Torah help us walk in tzedekah?
  
- 10) Mathew 5:20 is a verse that speaks about self-righteousness. What is self righteous? How does self righteousness hinder the work of the Spirit in our lives?
  
- 11) What specifically did you learn from this lesson? How can you apply this lesson to your life?
  
- 12) How would you respond if someone were to ask you about the subject of tzedekah?

## The Letter Yod / Kaf



This is the Hebrew letter “kaf.” It was once a picture of a crown or open palm. The modern word “kaf” literally means “palm.”



The “kaf” can be written with a dot or “dagesh” in the middle of the letter. When the dagesh is present then the letter should be pronounced with a gluttural chhhh sound.



This is the eleventh Hebrew letter and the number “20.” When the “kaf” appears at the end of a sentence or word it is written differently. As a final letter, the “kaf” resembles an extended dalet.



A few words that begin with a “kaf are:

**Kadosh** - Set-Apart

**Ken** - Yes

**Kadosh HaKedoshim** - Most Set-Apart Place, Or The Holy of Holies

**Kesay** - Throne, Or Seat Of Authority

**Kadosh Le YHWH** - Set-Apart To YHWH

**Keter** - crown

**Kahal** - Congregation, Or Assembly

**Kidushim** - Saints

**Kahal Gadol** - Large, Or Great Congregation, Or Assembly

**Klalot** - Curses

**Kal Va Chomer** - Interpretation That Seeks The Greater, Or weightier Issue

**Kodesh** - Set-Apart

**Kala** - Bride, Or Finished, As In “It Is Done”

**Kohanim** - Priests From The Tribe Of Levi

**Kohen** - Priest

**Kashrut** - Kosher Laws Of YHWH

**Kohen HaGadol** - The High Priest

**Katuv** -A Single Verse Of Scripture

**Kavod** - Esteem, Honor