**Where is Our Passion?**

In 2007 Rob Reiner directed a movie called, The Bucket List, staring, amongst others, Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. The movie told the story of two men, played by Nicholson and Freeman, who checked out of a hospital for the terminally ill and travelled across North America, experiencing adventures they had always wanted but had not taken the opportunity. They had a list of 45 things to do, before they kicked-the-bucket, a euphemism for dying.

This week’s message focuses on a similar issue, through the question, before you die, what would you want to do, in full passion, for Adonai’s Kingdom here on earth?

**Pray for open hearts and ears, for Adonai’s passion to flood us and convict us, through His message to us.**

As part of this week’s Scripture Reading, found in John 12, comes the following statement from Adonai Yeshua, While you have the light, put your trust in the light, so that you may become people of light. (John 12:36) At the surface, this passage speaks to Adonai Yeshua being the Light of the World, such that, if we wish to be people of the Light, e.g. disciples of Adonai Yeshua and children of Adonai Elohim, the Living God, we must put our trust in Him. In other words have faith. When we look at this passage from another perspective, that is a perspective of passion for Him, we may read it as, while you have this passion for Adonai, put your trust in Him, so that you may become people of passion for Him. That is what Adonai Tzivaot wants from us, to be people of passion for Him. What does this mean?

First, what is passion? The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines passion as a barely controllable excitement of and enthusiasm for an idea or a person; to have passion means every fibre of your body is driven in a direction that appears to be beyond the control of the person feeling this strong emotion. Using this definition, if your passion is to a loved one, then throughout every waking moment of every day, your desire is to be with that person; likewise, if your passion is for an idea, throughout every moment of your life, your thoughts are focused on that idea and bringing it to fruition. It is this degree of passion which drives medical breakthroughs and discovers scientific marvels. Is this not the passion Adonai Elohim wants of us for Him?

However, the Hebrew word for passion, נָ֫פֶשׁ, nephesh, as I have shared with you, also means the human soul, a living being, an appetite, to cite only three. Does this not deepen the concept of passion – it is the soul, the living spirit of each living person. What does this mean – our passion is our soul, the human spirit living within all of us. We don’t need to develop passion, dear friends, our passion is an intricate part of our very being. The implications of this are enormous – if my passion is squelched, so is my spirit, my soul. A strong passion is an indicator of a strong and healthy person. The lack of passion indicates an unhealthy human soul, an unhealthy human spirit. Please take a moment and imagine the relationship between Ruach HaKadosh, the Holy Spirit of God, and a soul which has lost its passion, its life. This is an appropriate time, then, to ask all of us, are our souls health, are our spirits strong? Do we have passion for our relationship with the Ruler of the Universe and Lover of our souls?

In our long forgotten past, a well-known actor was approached by a pastor, lamenting his seeming inability to draw crowds to his sermons. The pastor asked the actor how it was possible he drew enormous crowds night-after-night to his performances, whereas the pastor had difficulty filling the pews once a week. The actor responded almost immediately, “Having attended your services, Pastor, I can understand the difference. You see, I share my fiction as if it was the truth; you, however, share your truth as if it was fiction.” What a condemnation. Here is my plea to you, if you perceive my sharing the truth of Adonai’s word with you as a piece of fiction, please tell me. I would rather hear this from you than from an outsider, someone to whom you have shared your concerns or dislikes.

Passion for Adonai is to be found throughout Scripture. For example, in the Psalms we find the passion of Asaph in Psalm 73: Whom do I have in heaven but you? And with you, I lack nothing on earth. My mind and body may fail; but God is the rock for my mind and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:25,26) and, then in Psalm 42, the sons of Korah write, Just as a deer longs for running streams, God, I long for you. I am thirsty for God, for the living God! When can I come and appear before God? (Psalm 42:1,2) Adonai’s passion for His people comes through clearly, in Isaiah 54: For your husband is your Maker, *Adonai*-*Tzva’ot* is his name. The Holy One of Isra’el is your Goël, your Redeemer. He will be called the God of all the earth. (Isaiah 54:5) and in Hosea 2 we read, On that day,” says *Adonai* “you will call me *Ishi* [My Husband]; you will no longer call me *Ba‘ali* [My Master]. (Hosea 2:18)

We also discover passion within the Apostolic Scriptures, for example Colossians 3: Whatever work you do, put yourself into it, as those who are serving not merely other people, but the Lord. (Colossians 3:23) and 1 Corinthians 10, Rav Sha’ul again shares with us: whatever you do, whether it’s eating or drinking or anything else, do it all so as to bring glory to God. (1 Corinthians 10:31) and God’s love for us is most clearly shown in John 3: For God so loved the world that he gave his only and unique Son, so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life, instead of being utterly destroyed. (John 3:16)

Do we have that degree of love for Adonai Elohim Tzivaot/Adonai Yeshua that we have a burning passion for Him which will not subside? Can each one of us honestly, to ourselves if no one else, claim to have that desire to be with Him totally? I must admit, that’s a tall order for most, if not all of us. Life seems to often get in the way of most of our passions. Do we have examples of those who kept their passion for Adonai Elohim front and centre, irrespective of what was happening around them?

Passion has often been compared to a raging fire. During the American invasion of Iraq, in 2003, many of the oil wells were set alight by Iraqi soldiers. Nothing, it seems, could put these fires out, neither water nor powders. One enterprising fire-fighter planted dynamite next to the fires and watched as the exploding dynamite extinguished the raging oil fires by drawing all the oxygen away from the flames. Is there a message here for us? Is it possible that the only thing to extinguish our passion for Adonai Elohim Tzivaot, is another, equally powerful passion?

David, despite his sinful nature, had an enduring passion for Adonai; his writings are filled with the fire which burned in his heart. This may be seen in Psalm 63 - O God, you are my God; I will seek you eagerly. My heart thirsts for you, my body longs for you in a land parched and exhausted, where no water can be found. (Psalm 63:1) Notice the almost erotic language used in David’s cry of passion. King Solomon did not attempt to hide his erotic passion, when he wrote about the love His bride has for Adonai Yeshua, in Song of Songs 1: Let him smother me with kisses from his mouth, for your love is better than wine. Your anointing oils have a wonderful fragrance; your name is like anointing oil poured out. This is why young women love you -- “Take me with you. We will run after you.” The king has brought me into his rooms. (Song-of-Songs 1:2-4) Now doesn’t that send chills down your spine? Is this the depth of passion Adonai Elohim wishes from us, in our soul relationship with Him?

We find this depth of passion also in the Apostolic Scriptures. When Stephen was facing death by stone, did his heart waver? Listen to his joyous cry of passion, when about to be taken to be with Adonai Yeshua, “Look!” he exclaimed, “I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing **at the right hand of God!** . . . . Adonai Yeshua! Receive my spirit! “ (Acts 7:56,59) Rav Sha’ul also showed us his passion for Messiah, when he wrote, as recorded in Romans 1: therefore I am eager to proclaim the Good News also to you who live in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God’s powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile. For in it is revealed how God makes people righteous in his sight; and from beginning to end it is through trust -- as the *Tanakh* puts it, **“But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust.** “ (Romans 1:16,17) Imagine once more, what we could accomplish for Him, aiming our efforts towards building His Kingdom on earth, if our collective passion was greater than the fear of any consequences of our actions.

Where does our passion for Adonai Elohim Tzivaot originate? Adonai Yeshua shares with us in Luke 12, I have come to set fire to the earth! And how I wish it were already kindled! (Luke 12:49) The fire, about which Adonai Yeshua speaks, I believe, is the fire of passion for Adonai Elohim, a fire long extinguished in His time on earth. When we have a love relationship with the Ruler of the universe and the Lover of our souls, He gives us passion, which Jeremiah says, is akin to fire in our bones. Listen to Jeremiah’s expounding on his passions: it seems as though a fire is burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I wear myself out trying to hold it in, but I just can’t do it. (Jeremiah 20:9) Do you believe we could create that depth of passion on our own? I hardly think so – human beings are not capable of this depth of emotion without it being implanted into our hearts by Adonai Tzivaot.

But once within our hearts, what do we do with this passion? In this week’s newspaper, the Free Press, I read of a young boy, Avery Skog, of Morris Manitoba, to whom Adonai gave a passion for young people in the developing world who were not able to attend school, because none existed. On his own initiative, obviously driven by Ruach HaKadosh, the Holy Spirit, this passionate young man, all of ten years old, set out to raise enough money to fund the building of a school, through a charity known as ‘Free the Children’. Avery began with selling his bike. Imagine that, a country boy selling his bicycle, his only means of rapid transit, to begin the fund-raising process. He held a bake sale, generously assisted by his mother, and a garage sale. Then he donated his allowance – no more comic books, chewing gum or whatever 10 year old boys spend their money on. In doing this, Avery began his Brick-by-Brick Campaign, a campaign which took off towards his goal of raising $10,000, the minimum cost of building schools today in Africa. Avery’s passion to raise what for him was an outrageous sum of money propelled him to share the idea with his family and school friends; over the year, he raised not $10,000 but $12,000. He is now working towards building a second school, Brick-by-Brick.

What separates Avery and people like him from the rest of us? Passion. Look back into your heart’s desires and explore what caused you to be passionate. Was it an unbridled, uncontrollable love for and of Adonai Elohim or was it for and of something else, something of the world? Was it a person, money, an addiction? At any point in your life, have you had the degree of passion that seemed like, a fire burning in your heart, imprisoned in your bones? If that passion isn’t part of your life today, where is it? What has happened to the passion which used to exist within the Body of Messiah? Listen to Adonai Yeshua’s condemnation of not only the fellowships of the 1st and 2nd Centuries but also of fellowships today, as we read in Revelation 2 and 3. First the community of Ephesus: you have lost the love you had at first. Therefore, remember where you were before you fell, turn from this sin, and do what you used to do before. (Revelation 2:4,5) and to the Fellowship of Sardis -- you have a reputation for being alive, but in fact you are dead! Wake up, and strengthen what remains, before it dies too! (Revelation 3:1,2) and, finally, Laodicea: because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth. (Revelation 3:16) Are we, a Messianic Fellowship within the Body of Messiah, slated to a similar fate because of our lack of passion for Adonai Elohim? Have I got your attention, yet? Where is our passion? What are we doing, as a fellowship, to show our beloved ABBA, the Sovereign of the Universe to the world around us? How are we working towards the betterment of our fellow human beings? I realize I may be offending some of you with this sharp message and for this I do not apologize. Adonai Elohim has put this into my heart – we need to regain that spark of passion that was once here and now appears to have dimmed. Why are we not reaching out into our community to help others? Oh, I know there are individuals amongst us who are doing this but they are keeping this a well-guarded secret, almost as if they do not want their passion to be public knowledge. Why not?!? Passion is infectious – it is addictive – it is contagious. The passion we feel for Adonai Elohim and for the works he wants from us must be shared with others! If you believe this kind of passion only exists within the hearts of leadership, please think again.

Each one of us is a leader, within our own sphere of influence. We have been given a commission by our Leader, Adonai Yeshua, to show His love throughout the world, no matter how large or how small our world may be. How are we doing this?

What project has been lying dormant in the recesses of your heart? Why have you lost your passion to begin or rekindle that project? To whom have you shared your desire to help make a change within your community, within your city, within your world?

Beloved, please consider this plea seriously; there is little time left and so much needs to be done right here, within Kehilah, let alone within the outside world. So, I ask you this question again, what do you want to do, before you die, in full passion for Adonai’s Kingdom on earth, right now? This is your opportunity to make a difference – share your passion with us. Let us know how we, Kehilah Haverim Mashiach can assist you? Lead us through the passion given to you by Adonai Elohim to make a difference today, tomorrow and for all the days we have left.

**Pray for Adonai’s leadership, as we crave the passion held by King David, the Prophet Jeremiah, Rav Sha’ul and others throughout time for our Beloved ABBA.**