



**#26 Shemini Leviticus 9:1-11:47**  
**Torah Teaching and teaching, Be Wise**  
**By Moshe Schwab**

**Names**

Kefa – Peter  
Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ  
in the Greek means to be smudged  
Mishkan – Tent of Meeting in the desert  
Moshe – Moses  
Shaul – Paul  
Yeshua – Jesus' real name  
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)  
Yochanan – John

**Terms**

Haftarah – reading from the prophets  
Menorah – 7 candle Israelite lamp  
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible  
Mishkan – tent of meeting in the desert  
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible  
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the  
Torah  
Shemini – the 26th Torah portion  
(We also use transliterations from Hebrew)

I would like to begin talking today about the decisions people make. People do not realize that some of the decisions that they make will have an impact on their lives for years. Some of these decisions can be easily changed, but some require a lot of effort and years of commitment to change.

Sometimes simple things become challenges because we have not learned to apply ourselves well to them. For example, some people have trouble getting up in the morning. They may have allergy issues which makes them feel sleepy. These people need to get up and begin doing things and their sleepy feeling will leave them. Others may not go to bed at the proper time in order to feel rested. These people need to set their internal clock and go to bed at the same time every night so they can get up feeling rested in the morning. Some have no motivation to get up and start getting things done. They need to make plans and stick to them so they can accomplish things in life. If the farmer does not plant their crops, they will have no food.

I was a little tired before I began working on this teaching today, but once I started, I was able to get going on it with no problem. Find ways to overcome the issues you have in life or they will continue. The person who oversleeps everyday will have trouble accomplishing things in life. If they form the habit of oversleeping, they may need to make extra effort over an extended period of time to break their bad habit. If they have a job, they will probably lose it and they will have no money for food.

Just this one little application in life is a good example for other areas of life especially for our spirituality. Will we decide to apply ourselves well to areas of life so that we do not sin? Some accept sin into their lives only to realize they have developed terrible habits and patterns in their life. They will even make up excuses to keep on sinning because their sin has become so much a part of their lives. Almost any sin can end up being a very bad habit. Children are often warned about the severe consequences of forming sinful habits regarding sexual behaviors,

drugs, violence, anger, lying, and stealing. There are terrible consequences for accepting any of these evil sinful behaviors. These are to name a few. Anytime we accept any sin in our lives, we begin forming habits that incorporate that sin into our lives.

I have known several people who were addicted to abusing illegal or legal drugs. I needed a ride to work years ago and the only way for me to get there was to get a ride from someone who began drinking alcohol at 5:30 in the morning. He kept a bottle in his car at work to drink at break times and began drinking shortly after work ended and would then get drunk. What a waste of a life. There are many people who form their lives around sinful behaviors of all kinds, and they are slaves to their sin. When Israel was in Egypt, they saw how the Egyptians were slaves to their false gods. Exodus 15:26 NKJV says, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."

The Egyptians contracted diseases that were the result of not keeping some of the mandated food laws, sexual laws, and other self-care laws that God had given Israel. For example, in our time, many of those who contracted the deadly disease of AIDS got that disease from wrong sinful sexual practice. As of this writing over 40 million have died from AIDS. Those who continue in sexual sin perpetuate this terrible deadly disease.

Any sinful behavior that people are okay with cause them to be slaves to their sin and they often make up excuses to keep doing these things and brainwash themselves into thinking that these things are okay. Just like Israel needed to be set free in order to serve the true God, we need to be set free from sin or we will serve sin. People are dying earlier in life from their sin every day.

There is a right way to live and that is through God's commandments and it also involves the help of the Holy Spirit. We know that God has our best interests at heart and that His commandments are at the heart of living right. God's commandments give us wisdom and understanding according to Deuteronomy 4:6 and they are right and good according to Deuteronomy 6:17-18. We are told over and over in the Torah to keep God's commandments and we see the results of not keeping God's commandments in our modern times. Yet people continue to sin and bring pain and anguish on the world.

There is a need for people to follow God the way He says. In this portion, two of the sons of Aharon die because of what they did at the Mishkan. It should be a lesson to the world. Why do you think people do not listen to God? These are a few things to consider.

- \*Those who live in sin are brainwashed by the world.
- \*They want to do what they want to do instead of keeping God's commandments.
- \*We have talked about the influence of devil spirits. Devil spirits influence people and bring pain and destruction onto mankind and the world. (See Isaiah 14:12).
- \*People are led by their own desires.
- \*They do not believe in God and live in their own fairy tale world.

When the Messiah came, He gave believers in the Messiah the Holy Spirit. How can that help us? Devil spirits may tempt us to not believe in God or do something that is wrong, but the Holy Spirit can help us to make the right choice. The Holy Spirit may simply tell us there is a true God or tell us to do what is right. Then it is up to us to choose what is right. The Holy Spirit may even tell us in a vision that something is wrong. The Holy Spirit helps us to have love, joy, goodness and much more. Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

The Holy Spirit will help us with these things, but if we resist the Holy Spirit, we reject the help of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Again, Deuteronomy 6:17-18 tell us that God's commandments are "right and good." Goodness is not our interpretation of what is good, but the Holy Spirit helps us to do what is good, namely, keep God's commandments. Remember, the Jewish understanding of what is good is to keep God's commandments and God knows what is best because He is God, and we are not.

We can be a blessed and good people, but that requires the right direction in life. When you first tried to catch a ball, you found that it took repeated concentration in order to keep from dropping it. In the same way, we need to train our minds to do what is right and seek to do what is right. Many of the attributes we can receive from the Holy Spirit are required in every day life. As we apply kindness, gentleness, and other attributes in our lives, the Holy Spirit can speak into our life and help us with these areas. God delights in those who keep His commandments. Psalms 37:23 NKJV says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way." How can we do what is good? Our steps are ordered by God's commandments and the Holy Spirit.

Clean up our lives with what is right and good. We do not clean ourselves with dirty water and we cannot properly have pure and good lives without removing the dirt of sin from our lives. It just makes sense. The world exposes us to sinful ways, and we must resist them. We learn what is right and purify our lives with what is truly right and good. It is God's desire that we respect God for who He is and keep His commandments. Psalms 33:8-9 NKJV says, "Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." God is the creator and the world He created still stands. He knows what is best for us.

### **More to Consider**

God gave me a dream I thought God wanted me to share. A woman was talking about all the things she had to endure. She had a negative focus on life. I think the lesson from this dream was that instead, she should have bravely accepted the truths of the Bible concerning her attitude. We are commanded to have joy. Deuteronomy 26:11 NKJV says, "You shall rejoice in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you." We need to be in protective mode to life's situations. In this portion we are told to be a holy people (Leviticus 11:44). The word holy also means set apart. We are to live differently than other people and we need to guard our thoughts in order to be a holy set apart people.

Worldly people try to get others to follow them and their ideas. They don't think in terms of what is right or wrong. They may be leading people to do what is right at times, but not always. They may change their tactics to their own advantage at any time and lead people in the wrong direction.

Anytime we do what is wrong and sin, we are not following God, but our own ideas or desires. In society, people are punished for doing what is wrong, so why would that be different when standing before God. God is just, so He must also punish evildoers when they stand before Him at the time of judgment. In society, people are punished according to their crime. God is just and will judge justly. Deuteronomy 32:4 NKJV says about God, "All His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He." God does what is right; He is righteous.

The Bible does warn us that God will not put up with certain things at the time of judgment. We should not put God to the test. The penalty for living a life of sin is eternity in the lake of fire (see Revelation 21:8). So do not take chances with your life; do what is right and good (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18) and be committed to protect spiritually how you live; be a separate holy person.

Shaul said in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NKJV: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

We live in a visible world of flesh and blood, but we are not in battle against other people. We do not fight like worldly people fight and war, but we pull down mental thoughts in our minds that are against God's commandments. We make our every thought like those of the Messiah who did what was right and good. Some people say, "What would Jesus do?" I say, "We are to live like Yeshua and keep God's commandments and that begins with our thoughts."

What do we do with our lives?

\*First, always do what is right and good. Shaul said we are not to let our thoughts wander and allow any sin in our lives. He uses strong language; so, don't allow sin in your life!

\*Enjoy life. Perhaps that is not always easy. Shaul tells us to pray and cast your cares on God and think good things in Philippians 4:6-8 NKJV:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Stop your negative thinking, stop thinking you are a victim, know what God says, and do not make up who He is.

\*Use our free time to do things we enjoy. Sometimes we use up all our free time and never take time to enjoy life. Life is not supposed to be all work. This next scripture takes place on the feast of Rosh Hashanah, a commanded feast and day of rest.

Nehemiah 8:9-10 NKJV:

This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Joy is important in life, so release yourself from the anxieties of life in a reasonable way. The joy of Yēhōvāh is our strength.

\*Enjoy your creativity and your accomplishments. There is a lot we can do during the six days of the week. Also, there are a lot of things we can do on Shabbat, but we should be careful not to work on Shabbat. Some things may be enjoyable, but they are more like work; use good judgment and don't make excuses to work on a Shabbat. Extra commandments were enacted because people made up excuses to work on a Shabbat. You will have to answer to God.

Find godly things to get involved with. Shaul has some suggestions for us in Ephesians 5:18-20 NKJV: "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always." Here are some things I do.

\*I will just enjoy my surroundings at times.

\*I enjoy the things my wife and family does and accomplishes.

\*I enjoy what I accomplish.

\*I make it a point to value prayer, my relationship with God, and friends and family.

Engage your mind in lighthearted and fun ways.

\*What helps you to relax; find relaxing and fun ways to relax.

\*I will play games with my family or just spend time with them.

\*I spend time praying and speaking in tongues which gives me great relaxation. Shaul talks about speaking in tongues and quotes Isaiah 28:11-12 NKJV, "For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom He said, 'This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest, and, 'This is the refreshing.'" I have heard many testimonies about how speaking in tongues gives a person rest and peace. It's a Messianic gift for us so use it.

God is limitless, but we are not; we need to get filled up spiritually on a regular basis. Zechariah 4:6 NKJV says, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit.'" Have a relationship with God. Even Noah had a relationship with God and God told him to build an ark. What about us in this Messianic age? In Romans 8 it tells us to be led by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Desire spiritual gifts."

I share this for a reason. I was an engineer. It allowed me to work in upper levels of manufacturing, product development, and to use my expertise in different relevant

technologies. I had to work very hard at studying and developing the areas that I performed my services in. School was just the basics I needed to be productive. I had to continue studying and working hard so I could serve others well. I also have an undergrad degree, a Master's Degree, and some work towards a Doctorate in biblical studies. I have worked my whole life to better myself.

It is the same way spiritually. We must first learn how to live how God tells us to live. Then we continue to develop our abilities to keep God's commandments and also use the Messianic spiritual gifts. Some say we are only to love others. That is an over simplistic view of life. God is big enough to define how we are to love others. Yochanan tells us to keep God's commandments and love others. 1 John 5:2-3 NKJV says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.** And His commandments are not burdensome."

This scripture is contradicted by some people. Some say God's commandments are burdensome or done away with. Yochanan says we love others when we keep God's commandments, and they are not a burden. So, the people who are contradicting God are not telling the truth. The Bible says God is love and we are to imitate God. Leviticus 11:44 NKJV says, "You shall be holy; for I am holy." God does what is right and so we should do what is right, holy, and good.

We can see the obvious connection between love and keeping God's commandments also in Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always." How do we love God? It says we love God by respecting and honoring what God says. How do we love others? By doing what God tells us to do. He is God and knows how we should live.

If we do not respect someone or we do not think they know what they are talking about, we will not listen to what they have to say. Therefore, not following God's instructions is disrespecting God. It is only when we respect God and listen to Him that we can begin developing our ability to follow His commandments. Knowing God's commandments though is not the same as learning how to keep His commands. For example, the first time we got irritated, how did we respond. We learn how to do things right.

When I became committed to following what God teaches, my life changed when I started keeping God's commandments. Also, I think some people have the idea that keeping God's commandments is just following a bunch of rules. That is not true. God helps those who respect Him. We are following and developing our ability to keep God's commandments and when we are keeping God's commandments, the Bible says God will give us blessings. Things naturally go better when we do what is right because they are right; but God will also work in our lives to help us and give us amazing blessings at times.

He even woke me up one night in the middle of the night when I had a fire in my house and saved my life! He saved Noah's life because Noah was willing to do what is right. The Bible says Noah was righteous; righteousness means he did what was right and kept God's commandments. Also, it is not true there was an evolution in relationship with God as some

teach. Adam was originally close to God. He passed on how to live right; Seth was a believer and so was Noah. The Jewish writings say that Noah taught God's commandments.

God can reach out to us and empower us. He can even give our life the spark it needs to get us going. When I was in engineering school learning the basics, God helped me with my studies. Sometimes I needed a push and I believe God inspired me to keep working hard so I could succeed.

*God gave us another helper, the Holy Spirit.*

God gives us the Holy Spirit through the Messiah Yeshua; and God then helps us through the Holy Spirit. The Messiah Yeshua said He would give us another helper. John 14:16 NKJV says, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper." The first helper He gave us were God's commandments and the Holy Spirit is another helper.

Don't live a fake worldly life; only seeking baubles and thrills. Many people live only for worldly things. I would not be alive to enjoy anything if I had died in that fire. Unknown to many people is a satisfying relationship with God. God can help us like nothing else or no one else can. We can have a supernatural relationship with God. How amazing is that! Work on keeping God's commandments and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit. Shaul said, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us;" Ephesians 3:20 NKJV. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are powerful; do not ignore them.

### **Torah Study**

Shemini means "eighth." Aaron and his sons had just been ordained and spent seven days at the entrance of the Mishkan (the Tent of Meeting, the Tabernacle in the desert). Shemini begins with the sacrifices on the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan. After Aaron and his sons blessed the people and came out of the Mishkan, fire came down from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the people shouted and they fell on their faces. What an amazing experience.

After that, two of Aaron's sons offered alien fire which the Lord had not asked them to do, and fire came down from the Lord and they died. People can be very liberal with their relationship with God. This should teach us to be more thoughtful about keeping God's commandments and do what God tells us to do. Because it is called an "alien" offering, we can probably assume that it was something that the pagans (aliens) did in Egypt, and it was not how God told them to make the offerings. As we know, Israel was not to do what the pagans did. Some think they had been drinking alcohol because of the context. We know for sure they were not doing what they were supposed to do. Their deaths are a difficult reminder to do things God's way. Mankind has brought tremendous pain on itself because of a lack of adherence to the Bible and God's commandments.

Also, in this portion, the Lord ordered the priests not to drink wine or any other intoxicated drink when they came into the Mishkan. Some meat was only to be eaten at the Mishkan and others could be eaten in a clean place. The Lord tells the people which animals, fish, birds, and

insects they can eat and gives them other related laws. People are often interested in eating right and being healthy. There are perhaps hundreds of ideas that people have on the best way to eat. Why not start out by listening to God! He is the creator and knows what we should and should not eat. If God says it was **not good** to eat back in Old Testament times, it is still not good to eat! Why would that change? I just do not understand people's false reasoning sometimes.

*If God said something is not good for us to eat, why would that change? Doesn't God know what is best for us?*

Animals that we are allowed to eat are those that have cloven hoofs and also chew the cud. They were not to touch the carcasses of unclean animals. Only Fish that have both fins and scales are clean. Birds like Eagles, herons, storks, owls, hawks, bats, and scavenger birds are **not** okay to eat. A good example of this is the recent virus that is spreading that they say comes from bats. These animals that God says not to eat can have bad things in them. Why are people doing things with these creatures they should not be doing. Doing things God's way can protect us. You can find lists of acceptable things to eat online. Also, eating kosher means to eat what is fit. Because the word kosher means fit it can also mean other things are fit as in a kosher home. Do not confuse being kosher with the made-up man-made laws of kashrut where people have two sets of dishes and two refrigerators so that they do not have meat and dairy together. Use good sense and not made-up nonsense.

Swarming creatures on four legs are detestable except if they have jointed legs and are able to jump. Animals with paws are unclean. Weasels, Lizards, mice, geckos, and the like, and crocodiles are unclean. Whatever swarms on the ground or crawls on the ground is unclean. Unclean things can make utensils and pots unclean, so we need to wash our pots and utensils.<sup>1</sup> God tells them not to make themselves unclean with them or defile themselves with the things God says are not good for us.<sup>2</sup>

The people were to be holy even as God is holy. One of the ways we are to be holy is by what we eat. They were to distinguish between those things that were to be eaten and those that were not. We are to be holy inside and out. Perhaps being holy by how we eat speaks to the idea we are to also be holy in our thoughts. Proverbs 4:23 NKJV says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."

The word describing what is not fit to eat or unclean is the Hebrew word *tamay*. In the Bible it is used for people who do not keep God's commandments (see Isaiah 52:1) or for animals, food, actions, people for various reasons (like coming in contact with a carcass), and other things. Shaul says the unclean will not be allowed in the future kingdom of God. Those who are unclean in this case are those who do not keep God's commandments. Ephesians 5:5 NKJV says, "No fornicator, **unclean person**, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any

<sup>1</sup> We no longer need to put our pots and utensils in boiling water (kasher) because we have soap now that can disinfect them.

<sup>2</sup> Kosher means ritually right; I like to think of it as okay to eat. Man-made ritual is not commanded by God. Kashrut are the Jewish dietary laws; some are man-made laws. We do not have to follow senseless man-made commandments, but we are to most definitely follow God's commandments.



inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Not eating meat with dairy is an extra man-made commandment that we do not have to keep.<sup>3</sup> It is made-up and not in the Bible.

According to this portion, we need to be a discerning people in the things that we eat. The foods that the Bible says we not to eat in this portion are called an abomination; they are bad for us. Unbelievers talk about and do many various abominable acts and we should never think that their actions are okay.

I talked to someone once who thought it was okay to fully support those living in sin. That is not right. We are not to hate these people and we should act appropriately towards them. We are **to never go along with what they do**. They may hate us and hate God, and they obviously do not want to do what is right. Do not pretend to go along with their destructive sinful behaviors. That's right, sin brings with it pain, ruin, loss, and havoc. God says we are to hate their actions; these are strong words, and it is wrong to have a permissive attitude or accept their behaviors. Proverbs 97:10 NKJV says, "You who love the Lord, hate evil!" They are doing evil and hurting others; stand up for what is right. Use wisdom in how you do this. Notice that it does not say to hate the people; it says to hate sin.

*Use wisdom in how you engage with others who sin. Shaul tells us to be gentle towards others who are sinning (Galatians 6:1).*

Unbelievers will act like unbelievers and we should expect that. In contrast to their actions, we should be different. We should know what is right and wrong and do what is right. One of the things mentioned in this portion is not to drink an intoxicating beverage at the Mishkan (at the holy tent of meeting). We also should be careful in our own lives with intoxicating beverages and not to overindulge, especially when we come together. In 1 Corinthians 11, Rabbi Shaul reproves the believers in Yeshua for overindulging in intoxicating liquor when they came together and tells them to eat and drink at home. We can properly apply commandments to other life situations.

The Haftarah for Shemini is 2 Samuel 6:1-7:17. In this Haftarah portion, as they were bringing the Ark of God to Jerusalem, Uzah put out his hand to steady the Ark and he died as a result. David was then afraid to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem, but God favored the house of Oved-Edom where they had left the Ark. They then brought the Ark to Jerusalem with great celebration. Mikhal was not happy with David for his shameless dancing. Natan the prophet hears from God, and he tells David that his son will build a place for the Ark.

David was supposed to have the Levites carry the Ark, so when Uzah reached out his hand to steady the Ark, he ended up dying. When David does it the right way, the Ark returns with no incident (2 Samuel 6:13). Again, this reminds us that we are to do things God's way and not our own ways.

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<sup>3</sup> Since not boiling a kid in its mother's milk is mentioned 2 times in the Torah, the rabbis say this means God also intended something else. That is not true; it was just a fertility ritual the pagans did. They were not to do what the pagans did.

There is a great celebration in this portion because the Ark has returned. As King David dances with great joy, we could possibly see that as a picture of the returning Messiah Yeshua who will someday again enter Jerusalem as a victorious King. The circle dancing that is done in Israel and Messianic circle dancing originated while Israel was in the desert. Messianic dancing gets its name from the dancing that David did as they brought the Ark back to Jerusalem and they call it Davidic Dance.

There is historical evidence that early believers in the Messiah engaged in circle dancing. Clement of Alexandria writes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (probably the late 100s), "The daughters of God, the fair lambs, who celebrate the holy rites of the Word, raising a sober choral dance. The righteous are the chorus; the music is a hymn of the King of the universe."<sup>4</sup> Let's read 2 Samuel 6:14-15 CJB, "Then David danced and spun around with abandon before ADONAI, wearing a linen ritual vest. So David and all the house of Isra'el brought up the ark of ADONAI with shouting and the sound of the shofar."

**Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts.  
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)**

The priests were not to have long hair or torn clothes or leave the Tent of Meeting while they were serving. These sound like safety laws. Long hair and torn clothing could catch fire. Safety laws are a good thing. Leviticus 10:6-7; Leviticus 21:12.

The priests were not to drink alcohol before or during serving. Again, this is also a safety issue and also an issue of respect for God's holy place. Also, work is not the place for drinking alcohol. There are more appropriate times for drinking alcohol. It is never proper to get drunk and that includes Purim because it is not good for our bodies. Leviticus 10:9-11.

The people are to only eat kosher animals, fish, and birds. Leviticus 11:2-19.

The people were to eat only kosher insects and crawling things. Leviticus 11:21-33.

Care is to be take what food comes in contact with. People who touch a carcass are unclean. This seems to be an issue of contaminating food. Also, people can contract disease from things they touch. Leviticus 11:34-40.

We are not to eat swarming creatures. Leviticus 11:42-44.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-exhortation.html>

**Be Wise**  
**(An accompanying teaching for this Torah Portion)**  
**by Moshe Schwab**

Be logical and do not try to overdo things.

In today's Haftarah, perhaps David was a little zealous, but why not have great joy over having a relationship with the God of the universe. Some people went to extremes during the time we waited for our health care system to come up with a vaccine, testing, and hospital equipment for the COVID virus. Some people went into the woods away from society. Were they going to do this for the rest of their lives? We can look back on their actions now and see how unreasonable some people were. Be wise in how you do things.

Others were blatantly refusing to be conscientious about others and were doing whatever they wanted. I feel bad for them. They were exposing themselves to possible dire consequences. I heard a story about a pastor in Virginia who had the virus, was spreading the virus, and then died. How sad. Remember, we are to be a good people. Yeshua said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil;" Luke 6:45 NKJV. There is a balance in all we do. Care about others, be protective, but do not be obsessive.

Also, this is a good time to remind us that the Torah teaches us to be considerate of life and that includes taking care of ourselves. Yeshua referred to the Old Testament portion and said, "To them he said, 'Which of you, if a son or an ox falls into a well, will hesitate to haul him out on Shabbat?'" Luke 14:5 CJB. Saving a life supersedes the Torah. Deuteronomy 22:4 NKJV says, "You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again." We are to save lives. We are created in the image of God (see Genesis 1:26). Yeshua is Jewish and that is also what Judaism teaches. Also, the scripture in Deuteronomy 22:4 does not give us a license to do whatever we want on Shabbat .

Yeshua is using the Old Testament portion to show that we are to be considerate of life. Shaul (Paul) also taught from the Old Testament portion and used it to establish doctrine. If the Old Testament had been done away as some say, he would not have used it as a reference for doctrine.

Keep your mind and thoughts.

Anytime is a good time to keep the goodness that you have developed in life by keeping God's commandments. Do not let your mind stray from thinking right and staying focused spiritually. It says in Deuteronomy 4:9 NKJV, "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren."

It says to "diligently keep yourself." How many of us put that into practice? I am not talking about keeping a bunch of mindless ritual. If you want to get up and to say ritualistic prayers every day at 5 AM like some do, be my guest. Yeshua said that those who keep misapplied

man-made laws are worshipping God inappropriately and in vain (see Matthew 15:9, also see Isaiah 29:13). Back to the point, "Diligently keep yourself."

How you do that is up to you, but you cannot spend an hour a week listening to someone teach and think you will automatically do what is right. Every day I think about praying and I keep track every day that I prayed to hold myself accountable.<sup>5</sup> Every day I think about doing what is right and think about how I can do that in everything I do. When I put together my teachings, I think about teaching what is right and godly. I do not just try to tickle your ears with lots of sayings and good advice.

Tell people to keep God's commandments. Aaron's sons died because they did things the wrong way. We bring pain and destruction into our lives and the lives of others by our example and wrongdoing. People often want to do things their own way instead of God's way. God knows your motives, and you are going to have to stand before Him and give an account for yourself and not to me.

We should also be thoughtful and use our time and money well.

Do not throw caution to the wind and think that when things get better in life, we will be able to catch up. Do the best you can with what you have now. Luke 14:28 NKJV says, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it." If you overspend now, you may not be able to get by in the future.

It is good biblical advice to live within your means. When I went to minister in the jungle, the people there had very little, but were happy with what they had. One stilt house I was in, only had a battery clock on the wall with no battery in it. Perhaps they were proud of that clock. They managed to get by, and they had no furniture. Yeshua said in Luke 12:15 NKJV, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Cravings and yearnings for things does not always bring satisfaction. How many of us have bought something only to have remorse? Often, after we get one thing, we start thinking about the next thing we want. Do we need it; is it within our means?

Of course, how we use our time is important too. Do we spend time thinking about how we can do what is right? 1 Corinthians 10:31 NKJV says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Do we spend time using our spiritual gifts and abilities for the kingdom of God? Sure, we need to take care of ourselves; that is part of doing what is right. 1 Timothy 5:8 NKJV says, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

We should also use our spiritual gifts (***charisma*** is the Greek word for "gifts" in the text). Spiritual gifts are not natural gifts and they are empowered by God.

Romans 12:4-8 NKJV

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then **gifts** differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use

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<sup>5</sup> I simply write the date in my journal and put a "p" next to the date after I finished my prayer. You don't have to make it hard.

them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

Ya'akov is James' real name. Ya'akov said in James 1:27 NKJV, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." We are to not just think about ourselves, but others as well, especially other believers who are in need. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:10 NKJV.

It also said to not engage in the desires and sinful acts of the worldly; "To keep oneself unspotted from the world." Yeshua said in Mark 7:21-23 NKJV, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." Defile in this case means to make unclean or pollute according to Strong's Dictionary, and the Bible says that those who are unclean will not be in God's future kingdom (see Ephesians 5:5).

Do not allow yourself to slip into unwise thinking. Use your ability to think things through well. Proverbs 13:10 NKJV says, "With the well-advised is wisdom." Proverbs 18:32 NKJV says, "A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart." There are people out there who callously follow and teach their own opinions instead of being "thought full." Some teach it is okay to commit sexual sin. They will go to hell. Do not go there with them.

Be wise. If you are wondering what to do, do what the Bible teaches us. Proverbs 3:6 NKJV says, "In all your ways acknowledge Him." Take your thoughts to God and fellowship with Him. I do that every day and you should be doing that too. Psalm 34:4 NKJV says, "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Philippians 4:6 NKJV says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

In the portion Shemini, fire came out of the sky and consumed the burnt offering; we should remember to do what God says; He is God, and we are not. We should do what is right, so we bring blessing into the world and not sin and destruction. Think about what you are doing and be reasonable. Keep doing the good you learned from the scriptures. Use your time and money well; do not throw caution to the wind. Be wise and stay wise. God gave us a brain so use it. Teach and do what is right, and give your anxieties to God.

### **The Aaronic Blessing**

ADONAI or LORD in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God which is pronounced Yě-hō-váh. Yě-hō-váh is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name.

According to Exodus 3:15, Yě-hō-váh is God's true name forever. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yě-hō-váh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah. Yě-hō-váh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. I want to honor God's name.

The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) is God's name. 2,363 different manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yě-hō-váh, once as Yě-hō-věh, never as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה). Numbers 6:27 says we are to put God's name on His people.

Let's say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

יְבָרֶכֶּךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ  
 יְאָר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֶלְיָךְ, וַיַּחַנְךָ  
 יֵשָׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֶלְיָךְ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.