



#26 Shemini Leviticus 9:1-11:47
Torah Teaching
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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)

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.

God's word is powerful for life.

Some people believe that we must just accept that there is a God without experiencing God. As we can see, this portion tells us that the Israelites in the desert continued to experience God in amazing ways. God delivered them from oppression in Egypt, fed and gave the Israelites water in the desert, and a cloud appeared over the Mishkan (the Tent of Meeting) and fire by night over the Mishkan for about 39 years while the Israelites were in the desert. In this portion, fire came down from the sky and burned up the offering on the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan. Some believe that God is no longer involved with mankind and has left us to be on our own, but that has not been my experience.

We should understand that God has always been involved with mankind through His good commandments. God's good commandments are an act of grace for mankind. Genesis 26:5 NKJV which says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Before God had mankind write down His commandments, believers passed down God's commandments verbally. The Bible says that God's commandments are "right and good." This is a good scripture to memorize, Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good."

God had Moshe write down His good law at Mount Sinai so we would always have them. God's commandments are good and provide us with justice. Exodus 23:2 NKJV says, "You shall not

follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice." God wants what is good for mankind. Deuteronomy 32:4 NKJV says about God, "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He." Be thankful that we have a good God who cares about mankind. Over and over the Bible attests to God's goodness through His law. Psalms 33:5 NKJV says about God, "He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD." The earth is full of goodness only to the extent that we follow God's truths in the Bible. I should also point out that God created everything that is so that we would have what we need for life. He is a good and caring God. Also, teaching people to keep God's commandments is an act of love because we are helping them to do what is "right and good."

Sometimes people think of commandments in a negative way. Suppose that we decided to not have any laws in our land. Life would end up being filled with chaos, not to mention the terrible pain that can occur when laws are broken. People would murder others with no consequences and take what you own without any consequences. Since God is the creator, He knows what is best for mankind and has not left us to come up with our own ideas of goodness and justice. Isn't that wonderful!

Hitler thought he was right and killed anyone who did not agree with his ideas. It is estimated that he killed around 11 million people. He killed those who stood up for workers rights, he killed the religious because they did not ascribe to his values, he killed the disabled, and he killed 6 million Jews, and he also killed many Muslims. His policies are the result of mankind trying to do things on their own without God and His commandments.

So be thankful that God has given us His good commandments so that we could have a better life instead of through faulty man-made ideals and thinking. I sometimes talk about communism. Instead of believing in God, communism believes in the government and that we all exist for the government. That is how people in ancient times viewed life. The ancient pagans believed that their life was unimportant and that they only existed for the benefit of others.

Communism basically teaches the same thing. Communism is an ancient primitive idea. People exist only for the purpose of the government and therefore life is expendable. When a town in Russian was short on food, they went into the countryside and took their food and left the people in the countryside to starve. Stalin, the leader of communist Russian, is said to have put to death some 20 million people. Communist China put to death some 70 million people. Even to this day, someone who disagrees with the Chinese government is put in a reeducation camp, which is essentially a concentration camp. The people there are experimented on, and their body parts are used for spare parts for those who need them. They are also used as slaves to produce manufactured goods. Communist societies and autocratic countries often use force and murder to control their people.

We need to point out that values matter and if you have biblical values, you should be very thankful. Primitive pagan culture and communism diminish the value of life. All life is valuable according to the Bible. People are created in God's likeness, so we have the ability to think,

learn, decide, be creative, be caring and kind, and so forth. We are not God, but are created with some of His abilities, in His likeness. Genesis 1:26 NKJV says, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.'"

Not only are God's ways the best way for life, but God gives extra blessings to those who keep His commandments. It should be enough that we have received the grace of God through a value system from an all-knowing and good God. Deuteronomy 28:2 NKJV says, "All these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God." It then goes on to list some of the possible blessings that come from keeping God's commandments. In addition to that, my experience has been that God will at times answer prayers supernaturally for us, even if we just think it. Ephesians 3:20 NKJV says, "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."

The power that works in us refers to the Holy Spirit that is given to believers in the Messiah Yeshua. God can protect us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. God can protect those we care about and at times, God will answer our prayers. God does not answer all prayers but will answer some prayers. Do not forget to pray. Ephesians 6:18 NKJV says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints." Yeshua said that we should keep asking God and not give up (see Luke 18:1-8). I have been praying for some things for over 40 years and I will not give up.

God's commandments give life.

It should therefore be easy to understand that God's commandments are life giving. Since they are good, they help us to have a better life than if we tried to figure out things on our own. Deuteronomy 4:40 NKJV says, "You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days." Not only does doing things God's way go well with us, but with those we love. Doing things God's way can also prolong your life. God wants us to have a good life. Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV says, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!"

Also, the Holy Spirit through the Messiah gives life. The Holy Spirit woke me up in the middle of the night once because I had a fire in my house. By the time the fire fighters could get to my house (in 3 minutes time), the whole area where the fire started was completely filled with smoke and I could hardly make out anything that was in the area. I believe that if I did not wake up, I would have died. God extended my life by His mercy and goodness.

God is powerful and is able to do things for us. God even parted the Sea of Aqaba. He can do anything. That is where modern archeology has determined where Israel crossed the Sea. There were pillars put at the site by Solomon on each side of the Sea of Aqaba. That is an area where it would have been possible for the Israelites to cross, but it is still very deep. The Bible accurately describes what the Israelites saw as they crossed the Sea; they saw walls of water

on each side of them. Exodus 14:21-22 NKJV says, "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left."

God's commandments are meant to help us, and the Holy Spirit through the Messiah is meant to help us. John 14:15-17 NKJV says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth." The Holy Spirit manifests through different gifts (see Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, and Ephesians 4:11), and can help us with our attitudes (see Galatians 5:22-23).

The Holy Spirit is our helper to do what is right. Keeping God's commandments help us to do what is right. It is still up to us to do what is right and we must pursue following God the way we are supposed to. The Bible is very clear. Those who live in sin will not be in God's future kingdom. Sin is evil because an all-knowing God gave us His good commandments and they are what is best. They have been proven to help people for thousands of years.

Hebrews 10:28-31 NKJV says,

Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Again, Yeshua the Messiah said that those who do not keep the law, God's commandments Yeshua will reject.

Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV says,

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

We can give glory to God by how we live.

Since life can go better for those who keep God's commandments and who also receive the Holy Spirit through the Messiah Yeshua, we can show God honor. The word glorify can mean to be honorable according to Strong's Dictionary.

Those who fear God, who have a deep respect for God and keep His commandments will glorify God, will give honor to God. Psalms 22:23 NKJV says, "You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!" We can give honor to God when we acknowledge His help. Psalms 50:15 NKJV says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

Psalms 145:3-7 NKJV says,

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.

What God does for us is not always apparent. We have to apply ourselves spiritually in a number of ways. It is not automatic.

We can talk ourselves out of a spiritual understanding of life. I once told an atheist about a spectacular healing my one friend witnessed. My friend Larry is a registered medical professional. He was praying for a young man whose one leg was shorter than the other. While he was praying for the person and with his hand on his leg, the leg grew to the same length as the other almost instantly. The atheist I was talking to said there must be an explanation. The only explanation is that God healed him.

I had a personal experience with something like this. I was at a home meeting, and someone helped their wife into the meeting while she was hobbling on one leg. They requested that we pray for her, and I said we will after the meeting. A little bit of pressure on us, wasn't it. I had my hand on her knee as we prayed and I could feel something moving around in her knee and after we finished praying, she got up and walked. Also, I once heard of someone who was healed, lost their faith, and then when she believed again, she said that they she could not believe she had forgotten she was supernaturally healed at one time. It is good to remember what God has done for us.

Also, we do not automatically begin keeping God's commandments, but must learn them and then do them. Hebrews 5:14 NKJV says, "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." We learn how to keep God's commandments by doing them. Also, we learn how the Holy Spirit works by accepting the Holy Spirit and the associated gifts and pursuing them. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts." We can also oppose the associated attitudes that the Holy Spirit will help us with if we reject being kind, patient, or gentle, etcetera. God will not overstep our free will. We have to actually keep God's commandments and pursue the work of the Holy Spirit in our life.

Believers can experience God through His commandments and the works of the Holy Spirit. God has always been at work since the inception of time and has been trying to help mankind. Remember what God did for the Israelites – God delivered them from oppression, fed them, and supernaturally revealed Himself every day while they were in the desert. God can and will also do amazing things for us.

He is a good and caring God who can work powerfully for us. God does not need a vacation. He is always available to work on our behalf. Because God knows what is best for us, His commandments are intended to help us and so is the Holy Spirit. They are life giving and for every area of life. We must work at keeping God's commandments and desire the work of the

Holy Spirit. By pursuing God's ways and His help we can give honor to God. Our spiritual life does not automatically happen, but we must pursue it and not reject the things of God. Never forget God's goodness and stay positively focused on following God.

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 something 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 new virus that is still 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 refer to other things that 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.¹ God tells them not to make themselves unclean with them or defile themselves with the things God says are not good for us.²

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." Keep your thoughts clean. You have to do it.

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, for food, certain actions, 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 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.³ 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.

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

² 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.

³ 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.

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 (see 2 Samuel 6:13). Again, this reminds us that we are to do things God's way and not our own ways.

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 2nd 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."⁴ 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.)**

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

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. Excessive use of alcohol causes medical problems and also opens people's minds to the influence of devil spirits. That should also include the illicit use of intoxicating drugs because they also can also do the same. 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 could concern the issue of contaminating food. Also, people can contract disease from things they touch. Leviticus 11:34-40. Back in the time of Yeshua, people were saying that meat that was touched with unwashed hands was unclean. Yeshua said that all meats that God says are okay to eat are fit for eating. Yeshua is not saying that it is now okay to eat meat that God says not to eat. It makes sense that we should take care of our food, so we do not get sick. This is just using common sense.

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

It should be noted that common sense is good to do. Some might say these are extra laws, but God wants us to use our minds and think things through. That is part of using wisdom in life. Proverbs 14:15 NKJV says, "The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps." Use good judgment in all you do.

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:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ
 יְאֹר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנְנֶךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

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.