

## #26 Shemini Leviticus 9:1-11:47

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- \* Be logical; don't try to overdo things.
- \* Keep your form of goodness; stay focused. Keep your mind and thoughts.
- \* Be thoughtful and use your time and money well.
- \* Don't allow yourself to slip into unwise thinking. Use your ability to think things through well. God is there; fellowship with Him.

Shemini means "eighth." Aaron and his sons had just been ordained and spent seven days at the entrance of the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting, 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 (screamed) and 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.

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 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 it was **not good** to eat what God says not to eat back in Old Testament times, it is still not good to eat! Why would that change?

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 comes from bats. These animals that God says not to eat can have bad things in them. Doing things God's way can protect us.

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. They were to be holy even as God is holy. They were to distinguish between those things that were to be eaten and those that were not.

Shortly after Aaron and his sons are ordained, two of his sons die as a result of an alien offering. Because it is called an "alien" offering, we can probably assume that it was something that the pagans (aliens) did and it wasn't how God told them to make offerings. As we know, Israel was not to do what the pagans did and this is a difficult reminder of that. There are different ideas about why they died. 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. Also, the death of Aaron's sons should also remind us to be careful about what we allow and do. Unbelievers talk about and do abominable acts and we should never think that their actions are okay.

---

<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.

Recently, I talked to someone who thought it was okay to fully support those living in sin. We are not to hate these people or act inappropriately towards them. Even though they may hate us and hate God, and they don't want to do what is right, we are **not to go along with what they do**. Also, don't 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.

Unbelievers will act like unbelievers though 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 particular thing 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.

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 Sam. 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 it is called 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. The maidens strike the lyre, the angels praise, the prophets speak; the sound of music issues forth, they run and pursue the jubilant band; those that are called make haste, eagerly desiring to receive the Father."<sup>2</sup>

Let's read 2 Samuel 6:14-15CJB, "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."

Perhaps David was a little zealous, but why not have great joy over having a relationship with the God of the universe. Be logical though; don't try to overdo things. Some people are going to extremes during this

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-exhortation.html>

time while we wait for our health care system to come up with a vaccine, testing, and hospital equipment for the recent virus.

Some people are going into the woods and staying away from society. Are they going to do this for the rest of their lives? Others are blatantly refusing to be conscientious about others and are doing whatever they want. I feel bad for them. They are exposing themselves to possible dire consequences. I heard a story about a pastor in Virginia who refused to stop meeting and he was dead within a week. How sad. He only cared about his own thinking and was being unreasonable. How can people be so uncaring and put people at risk? 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. This person who lacked a conscience did evil. God will hold him accountable. There is a balance. Care about others, be protective, but don't be obsessive.

Putting people in danger is against the Torah. 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. Also, this scripture does not give us a license to do whatever we want on Shabbat (as some use it for).

Anytime is a good time to keep the goodness that you've developed in life by keeping God's commandments. Don't let your mind stray from thinking right and staying focused spiritually. Keep your mind and thoughts. 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'm 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, be my guest. Yeshua said that those who keep misapplied man-made laws are worshipping God inappropriately and in vain (Matthew 15:9). Back to the point, "Diligently keep yourself."

How you do that is up to you, but you can't 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>3</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 teaching, I think about teaching what is right and godly. I don't 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 wrong doing. Think about that pastor who died; he not only brought destruction on himself, but on others because of his thoughtless behavior.

We should also be thoughtful and use our time and money well. Don't throw caution to the wind and think that when things get better, we'll 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, you may not be able to get by in the future.

---

<sup>3</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.

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, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses;" Luke 12:15 NKJV. Cravings and yearnings for things doesn't 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. "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;" 1 Timothy 5:8 NKJV.

We should also use our spiritual gifts (charisma in the text).  
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 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 (his real name) 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 don't just think about ourselves, but others as well. It also says to not engage in the desires and sinful acts of the worldly. So, don't do it! Yeshua said, "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;" Mark 7:21-23 NKJV.

Don't 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." Be wise. If you are wondering what to do, do what the Bible says ("In all your ways acknowledge Him;" Proverbs 3:6 NKJV). 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 this portion, 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; don't 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.