



#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
Vayikra – the 24th Torah portion
(We also use transliterations from Hebrew)

God is limitless, but we are not; we need to get filled up spiritually on a regular basis. 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.

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. Some say we are only to love others. God is big enough to define how we are to do that. 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 don't respect someone or we don't 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.

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.

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. 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 offerings. As we know, Israel was not to do what the pagans did. This is 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. There are different ideas about why they died.

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 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? 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.

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

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 commandment, but we are to most definitely follow God's commandments.

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. Not eating meat with dairy is an extra man-made commandment that we do not have to keep.³

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 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. We are not to hate these people or act inappropriately towards them. Even though they may hate us and hate God, and they do not want to do what is right, we are **not to go along with what they do**. Also, 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 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. 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

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.

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 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."

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

Be logical and do not try to overdo things.

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 recent virus. Some people went into the woods to 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. Also, this

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

scripture does not give us a license to do whatever we want on Shabbat (as some use it for). Yeshua is using the Old Testament portion to establish a commandment to be considerate of life. Shaul (Paul) also used the Old Testament portion to establish 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 (Matthew 15:9). 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.⁵ 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 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 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, 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, "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 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?

⁵ 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.

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 is the word "gifts" 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, 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, "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.

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." 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; 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. Over 2,363 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
 יְאֵר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֶלֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנֶּךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֶלֶיךָ, 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.