

#24 VaYikra – Leviticus 1:1 to 6:7 (5:26)

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Keep your focus on God; be attracted to the things of God.
- * Put good thoughts in your mind. Use the scriptures to focus your thoughts appropriately. Get control of your thoughts.
- * Be appropriate in what you understand to be true. Act reasonably.
- * God has put together His body of believers. He is the Head of His people. Have joy in being part of His body of believers.

VaYikra means “and He called.” VaYikra begins with God speaking to Moshe from the Tent of Meeting concerning various offerings the Israelites were to make. The animal offerings were to be animals without defect; the person making the offering was to lay hands on the head of the animal and it would be accepted on behalf of the person for their sins. The priest was to sprinkle the blood of the animal on them and then sacrifice it.

The Hebrew word for offering is korban. A person was to lay hands on the head of the animal an act called semichah. Then to complete the act of transference, they would say the viduy (וידוי) which is a confession of sin. They would say that they deserved to die instead of this innocent animal. Yehovah would accept their act and korban (sacrifice) based on their faith and teshuvah (turning away from sin with a commitment to not do it again). We should note that laying on of hands was also used to transfer blessings, healing, and anointing.

If they offer birds, they should be a dove or young pigeon. For the grain offerings, choice flour was to be used; no leaven or honey was to be used for a burnt offering; they were to make sure to use salt for all the offerings. If anyone sinned both in ignorance or not, they could be forgiven. A person can also sin by keeping silent when their testimony could exonerate someone. A person could sin in the treatment of holy things, or by being deceitful, by stealing, or by lying.

In this portion we see that sin in ignorance was still sin and a sacrifice had to be made for those sins. Also, we see in Leviticus Chapter 5, that sins not done in ignorance were forgiven too. After repentance, a sacrifice had to be made for sin. It has always been understood that forgiveness involves repentance whether the sin was done in ignorance or not. Repentance means true sorrow and the determination not to repeat the mistake (the sin) again.

Who hasn't sinned in ignorance and most people have sinned knowing that they were doing something wrong; so, we are all sinners. Rabbi Shaul (Paul) said that we have all sinned (Rom. 3:23) and so in a Hebraic sense, we all need to repent, make reparation (an act of compensation) to man, and make reparation to God. Notice that disobedience to God also requires reparation. With the coming of the Messiah, reparation to God is only possible through the Messiah. It is not enough to simply repent without coming before God for forgiveness. Yochanan (John) said God hears our heartfelt confession (see 1 John 1:7-9).

The ingredients or lack of ingredients in the offerings could point to spiritual things. Sometimes what God has believers do or what rituals God has believers do, conveys important spiritual pictures for us. Consider these spiritual pictures of the sacrificial system.

- *Animals without blemish and using choice flour – could be a spiritual picture of purity of life; or giving of best.
- *Adding salt (to be added to all offerings) – could also be construed as trusted fellowship.

*No honey (meal offerings) – could mean no spiritual gladness (perhaps because the Messiah Yeshua had not yet come)

*No leaven (in the meal offering) – could refer to no sin.

*Adding oil (in the meal offering) – could mean anointing; making holy or separate.

*Adding of frankincense (in meal offering) – could be a picture of spiritual goodness.

Thanks offerings are – the Minchah (is the meal offering), the Shelamim (is the peace offering); part of these offerings were to be eaten.

Sin Offerings are – the Olah (it is an ascending offering), Chatat (is a sin offering), the Asham (is a guilt offering); these offerings were to be burnt up completely.

The miracle of the fire that descended from heaven for the offering is recorded in The Talmud; in Yoma 1 it says, “The fire on the altar in the form of lion, it was extremely bright light the sun, it appeared to have matter, it produced no smoke, and it burned up anything, wet or dry.”

In our present Messianic age, Yeshua gave Himself for us and there is no longer necessary an animal sacrifice for sin, Yeshua is the final sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 10: 14 NKJV says, "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." We are in the process of becoming holy (set apart from sin, sanctified) through the Holy Spirit and through our obedience to God's commandments.

When we sin, we ask Yeshua (Jesus) for forgiveness. 1 John 1:7, 9 NKJV says, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Our confession of sin should be understood within a Jewish context. Remember, Yeshua was Jewish and so were all the early believers. Confession is an act of viduy (וידוי) where we confess that Yeshua has taken our place. He was innocent and without sin (Hebrews 4:15). By our faith and teshuvah (turning away from sin) we are forgiven.

In the same way, when we confess Yeshua as God (Romans 10:9), we are making this same association. We need to understand this in Jewish context. Our confession is a sort of viduy with the understanding that we know who Yeshua is and what He has done for us. Romans 10:10 NKJV tells us, "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." All the components for a Jewish confession which requires faith in God and in this case, a turning toward the Messiah Yeshua (teshuvah). We then establish our relationship with God because we do what is right through the Messiah and we are to escape (we are saved from) the ways of this world.¹

Yeshua the Messiah came from heaven in the form of a man to be an example for us, to bring us back to God (teshuvah), and to die for our sins. In Philippians 2:7-8 NKJV it says that Yeshua (Jesus), "Made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

The Haftarah for VaYikra is Isaiah 43:21 to 44:23. God had taken care of Israel, but Israel had not been faithful to the sacrificial system and had been a sinful people. So, God has allowed destruction and scorn to come upon them. Someday though God will pour out the Holy Spirit on them. The redeemer God and

¹ In Joel 2:32, the Hebrew word is malat which means to escape. We should understand that the Greek word in the New Testament portion often translated saved has this meaning. h4422. מָלַט mālat; "a primitive root; properly, to be smooth, i. e. (by implication) to escape."

Rock is the first and the last; there is no God, but Him. Also, it says that those that worship idols are deceived.

Here in Isaiah God refers to Himself as the first and last. In Revelation Chapter 1, we see God appearing as a man to Yochanan (John) and referring to Himself as the first and last; we find out that it is Yeshua who is speaking to Yochanan in Revelation. He is our redeemer.

Isaiah 44:6-8 CJB says,

"Thus says Adonai, Isra'el's King and Redeemer, Adonai-Tzva'ot: "I am the first, and I am the last; besides me there is no God. Who is like me? Let him speak out! Let him show me clearly what has been happening since I set up the eternal people; let him foretell future signs and events. Don't be frightened, don't be afraid — Didn't I tell you this long ago? I foretold it, and you are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? There is no other Rock — I know of none."

In order to avoid sin, we need to keep our focus on God and be attracted to the things of God. We should have a God centered life. This portion talks about various offerings, what they were for, and how they were to be done. We see Cain and Abel making offerings in Genesis, so after the fall of Adam and Eve, they must have been instructed by God to make offerings. In fact, offerings were made by Abel (Gen. 4), Noah (Gen. 7), Abraham (Gen. 12,13,22), Isaac (Gen.26), and Jacob (Gen. 33, 46). Contrary to some theological thought, Adam and Eve were close to God and their descendants who followed the true God were also close to God. Noah who did what was right was in communication with God and God had him build an ark to save mankind.

Over thousands of years, mankind has had the choice whether to be attracted to the things of God or to do things their own way. We live in a time of testing. How will we live; how will we react; what are the motivations for our plans? Will we pass the test? The Bible says God knows our thoughts. Psalm 139:2-3 NKJV says, "You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways." God knows all and He knows what motivates us.

People are in general more concerned about passing their tests at school or at work, or following man-made commandments that they think please their denomination instead of pleasing God and keeping His commandments. Every day our focus should be on doing what God says in the Bible and not doing things our own way. That's how we pass the test. Every day we need to be attracted to the things of God like a person who loves chocolate. Psalm 119:103-104 NKJV says, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."

The word hate can also mean sham.² Sham means false or misleading information that tricks us. Don't we all hate shams that try to deceive us. I remember ordering something through the mail that looked great in the ad, but when I got it, it was more toy like than what was depicted and it was worthless. I was fooled; I was shammed! God's commandments are good for us. Stay away from the false ideas and shams of mere mankind. The Bible says they are just shams and false information; they are often worthless or can even promote destructive ways to live.

Instead, put good and godly thoughts in your mind. Use the scriptures to focus your thoughts appropriately. I do that all the time. Get to know key scriptures that you can use to guide you. Isaiah 26:3

² Strong's Enhanced Dictionary.

NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." When I'm not at peace, this is one of several scriptures that comes to my mind. I trust in God and I give Him what is bothering me. This is one of the many scriptures I have memorized and apply to my life. I have some 9 pages of scriptures printed out that have been key to my walk with God.

That's how you get control of your thoughts. You replace the wrong thinking with right thoughts. Regardless of what others are thinking, we need to get our thoughts in the right place; so, get control of your thoughts.

Be appropriate in what you understand to be true. Act reasonably. We need to be a people who have a conscience. Does what I do please God; am I leading people to do what is right or what is wrong? I once knew a lawyer who worked for a law firm that was somewhat unscrupulous. He told his boss that he couldn't in conscience agree with their practice in regards to a particular issue and they fired him on the spot.

Because he got fired, he had trouble finding another job. God blessed him though and what he does now has impacted perhaps hundreds of thousands of people. It is truly amazing the impact he has had. He probably thought at the time, "How will I take care of my family," or "why is this happening to me." One person taking a stand has led to the blessing of thousands. So, stand and be faithful.

Will we look back on our lives and see the good we have done or the destruction we have left in our wake (left behind us). Deuteronomy 10:12-13 NKJV says, "What does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good." It says God's commandments are for our good!

I was watching a story about some guy who was supposed to be smart and educated. His idea of progress was to commit murder. I'm not kidding you. He is like another Hitler spreading his doctrine of getting rid of anyone he thought was a burden on society. He is the burden on society.

Fortunately for us, we have a better group of people that we belong to; we are a people who have a conscience and care about others. The thinking of the world and the thinking of mankind can be so much different than what God wants for us. Look at what it says in Romans 12.

Romans 12:10-19 NKJV:

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, " Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord."

The message from God and Yeshua (Jesus) is so much different than the world's message, isn't it. God tells us to be kind, have hope, be patient, pray (because God can answer prayers), help each other financially, rejoice, and don't think you are too smart to listen to others. Don't do evil, and we are to live peaceably. That's the message of our Messiah Yeshua. He is the Head of His people and we are part of his body of believers.

God has put together His body of believers. Shaul refers to believers in the Messiah as being part of a body of believers. Each part is necessary to be a functioning body. For example, our body needs its various parts like hands, feet, and head.

Shaul (Paul) said that Yeshua (Jesus' real name) is the head of the believers and not anyone or anything else and that Yeshua is at work in His people. Colossians 2:19 NKJV, "Holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God."

We hold fast to the Messiah and not to the shams and fake doctrines of man.

Ephesians 4:14-16 NKJV says,

"That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

Shaul says we are to each do our part and build up the body of believers. We are to no longer be deceived by everything we hear, but speak God's ways in a loving and caring way. He says that each part of the body is effective and helps the body of believers to function.

This is amazing, isn't it! We have something to celebrate and something wonderful to be part of. Have joy in being part of His body if believers. Shaul said in Philippians 4:4-7 NKJV, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 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."

We have so much to be thankful for. God has given us His commandments and the right way to live and it is a good way. Why not have joy! Why be anxious? Keep praying and allow God's peace to fill you up. Allow God to guard your mind through the Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus). God tells us to be thankful for what we have been given. Hebrews 13:15-16 NKJV says, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

God requires a sacrifice for our shortcomings (sin); and, God made a way for all to come to Him through the Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus). People are prone to sin and doing things their own way instead of doing what is right. We should have a God centered life. Don't be shammed or fooled by mankind's ideas. Instead, put godly (good) thoughts in your mind. Control your thoughts with the help of the scriptures. Have a proper understanding of things and act reasonably. We are part of a wonderful body of believers in the Messiah so be filled with joy and be thankful.