

DOUBLE PORTION: #29 & #30

Parashah # 29

(Updated 5.02.09)

Acharei Mot ~ **אֲחֵרֵי מוֹת** ~ After The Death

Torah: Vayikra/Leviticus 16:1-18:30

Haftarah: Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 22:1-19

B'rit Hadashah: Romans 3:19-28; Romans 9:30~10:13;

1st Corinthians 5:1-13; 2nd Corinthians 2:1-11;

Galatians 3:10-14; Ivrim/Hebrews 7:23~10:25

CHAPTER 16

In **Vayikra/Leviticus 16** HaShem instructs Moshe to tell his brother, Aharon how, when and where he can come into the Holy Place. Holy means set apart. All of HaShem's appointed times are set apart to the L~rd. But the Day of Atonement is the holiest of all. Approximately five months from now, on the 10th of Tishrei, we will observe this Holiest of all Holy Days called (Yome Kip-poor) **Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement** (at-one-ment) and it is the day for drawing near to HaShem. It is a day for a personal one-on-one encounter with the Father, a day of confession and contrition. We are told that this day coincides with the day Moshe came down from Mt. Sinai with the second set of tablets bearing the **Decalogue/Ten Commandments**. According to the Sages, that day became ordained as Yom Kippur, the eternal day of forgiveness.

Aharon first brings two (kore-bah-note) **korbanot/offerings** for himself; a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering (**verses 3-4**). **On this day only**, he wears special vestments that are different from his normal vestments. They are holy and made of white linen:

- the tunic
- the shorts next to his bare flesh
- the sash wrapped around him
- and the turban.

He is to (mick-veh) **mikveh/bathe** before putting them on.

The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash says that “on Yom Kippur, whenever the (Koh-hen Gah-dole) **Kohen Gadol/High Priest** changed into his regular vestments or into his white ones – a total of five times – he immersed himself in a mikveh. In addition, before and after each change of garments, he washed his hands and feet with water from the Laver, which stood in the Sanctuary Courtyard.” As I count it, that means that he immersed himself five times and washed his hands and feet an additional ten times! Remember when your mother told you that cleanliness was next to G~dliness?????

In **verse 6**, (Ah-hah-rown) *Aharon/Aaron* provides atonement for himself and his household, which I understand included the other priests. I found the text of his confession, which follows:

“I beg of You, HaShem, I have acted wickedly, rebelled, and sinned before You, I and my household. I beg of You, HaShem, forgive now the wicked acts, rebellions, and sins, for I have acted wickedly, rebelled and sinned before You, I and my household, as it is written in the Torah of Your servant Moses (16:30): *For on this day he shall provide atonement for you . . .*” (Mishnah Yoma 3:8)

It is a well known fact that confession does not provide the atonement, there must be shedding of blood for the atonement. However, confession is a very essential part of repentance that leads to atonement.

There were three animals brought on behalf of (B'nay Yees-rah-ehl) *B'nei Yisrael/Children of Israel*, for two types of offerings. Two male goats were brought for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. It's interesting, to me, to examine to whom and how the two goats were offered. (**Verse 7-10**)

Both goats were brought before Adonai at the entrance of the tent of meeting. The decision as to which goat was to be presented as a sin offering before Adonai was made by casting lots. The other goat, known as the scapegoat, was for 'Az'azel, one carrying evil away, and was presented live before Adonai to be used for making atonement over it and sending it away into the desert for 'Az'azel. (**verses 20-22**)

It is said that the *Kohen Gadol/High Priest* would tie a red woolen strip to the head of the goat for 'Az'azel, and another strip around the neck of the sin-offering. When the goat for 'Az'azel was pushed over the precipice/cliff, the red wool would miraculously turn white, to symbolize that Israel's sins had been forgiven.

Concerning the ritual of the scapegoat, I like what Rabbi Hirsch had to say. “Two identical he-goats are used for this process to demonstrate that every person must choose between good and evil, and that no one has the luxury of being neutral. Those who do not choose to move toward holiness are inevitably pushing themselves toward a wasteland of spiritual destruction.”

It would be difficult not to see shadows of *Mashiach/Messiah* with regard to the scapegoat. Like Messiah, the goat takes upon himself the sin and iniquity of Israel. Like Messiah, the 'Az'azel goat is killed while bearing the sin of the people. These are certainly shadows of the Messiah. He is the One who bore away the sin and uncleanness of us all.

The Hebrew word used for atonement is (kah-pah-rah) *kaparah*, כפרה, and means much more than *forgiveness for sins*. It means *covering* or *protection* and it can also mean *ransom for one's life*. With regard to covering and protection, think about this. **Verses 14-20** talk about the sprinkling of the blood to make atonement, not only for *B'nei Yisra'el/Children of*

Israel, but atonement for the (Kah-**doe-sh** Keh-doe-sheem) *Kadosh Kedoshim/Holy of Holies*, atonement for the (meesh-**kahn**) *Mishkan/Tabernacle* and atonement for the (**meetz-bay-ahk**) *mitzbeahk/altar*. All of these things were continually in the presence of a holy G~d and without atonement they could not/would not remain.

Do you remember several (pah-rah-**shoat**) Parashot back when there was mention about the *Cohen HaGadol/The High Priest's* garments with the bells around the bottom and the “folk tale” reasoning behind that was if they quit ringing then the assistants would know that he had dropped dead and needed to pull him out by a rope tied around his ankle? Remember that? First of all, we don't find anywhere in scripture that the high priest had a rope around his ankle. If we read **Vayikra/Leviticus 16:17**, we find the truth of the matter. “**No one is to be present in the tent of meeting . . .**” On top of that . . . the high priest could only go into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur AND he could only wear the four Holy white linen garments. Therefore, he didn't wear his robe with the bells on it! So much for that “folk tale” having any validity!!!

As we conclude this chapter, I would like to quote FFOZ (First Fruits of Zion) regarding the ritual for *Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement*. Those passages speak of an “intersection of three spheres of holiness.

- “On the holiest day of the year (the Day of Atonement),
- the holiest man in the world (the high priest of Israel),
- goes into the holiest place in the world (the Holy of Holies).”

CHAPTER 17

Verses 1-9 state that ALL offerings are to be made in the Sanctuary area. Furthermore, it was forbidden to slaughter any consecrated animals anywhere outside of the courtyard. Anyone guilty of not obeying these guidelines, was cut off from the people. Then in **verses 10-14** the importance is revealed, once again, concerning the fact that life of the flesh is in the blood. Because life is dependent upon the blood, it is not appropriate for it to be consumed. Again, the prohibition, should anyone consume any blood, they will be cut off from the people.

CHAPTER 18

In **verses 3-5**, HaShem is pretty clear about His requirements AND His promises. Batyah's translation:

- Don't do what the people did where you came from
- Don't do what the people do where you are going
- Don't obey any of their rules/laws.
- Do what I tell you to do; when I tell you to do it and I will give you life.
- I am your G~d!

I'm telling you, I can still hear my mom saying, "Just do what I tell you to do, when I tell you to do it and you won't be in trouble." I didn't realize she was quoting scripture. She probably didn't either. AND she also probably didn't know she was being so "Jewish"!

Then **verses 6-22** address every abominable, detestable, perverted sexual act that could be described. How dare anyone to say that homosexuality isn't addressed in the word of G~d! **Verse 22** clearly states "you shall not lie with a man as one lies with a woman, it is an abomination."

From time to time, you will recall, that I encourage each of us to "live Torah". I couldn't help but think of that very thing as I was reading **verses 28-29**. "Let not the Land disgorge you for having contaminated it, as it disgorged the nation that was before you. For if anyone commits any of these abominations, the people doing so will be cut off from among their people."

In 2007, at this time of the year and during this Parashah reading, the news coverage concerned the worldwide Gay Pride conference that was scheduled to take place in Jerusalem. Baruch HaShem!, it didn't receive the acceptance originally thought and was relegated to a small gathering at the Hebrew University, which was bad enough.

Acharei Mot ~ **אֲחֵרֵי מוֹת** ~ After The Death

Haftarah: Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 22:1-19

Oh my! As I read these verses, I couldn't help but think of all the corruption that took place within the Israeli government in the last few years. The daily news reports were rampant with the issues addressed in this Haftarah.

I believe this Haftarah shows us a good example of why Israel needed a national day of repentance and atonement. Here we find descriptions of the many sins that were being committed in the political and religious capital. In these verses we find the Holy City being called a City of Blood due to the shedding of innocent blood. *Yechezk'el/Ezekiel*, in **verses 4-12**, points out at least 20 different sins that were consistently part of the late First Temple period. Here is a listing of just a few . . .

| <u>Verse</u> | <u>The Sin</u> | <u>Torah Violated</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4 | Idolatry | Exodus 22:20 |
| 7 | Injustice to the fatherless & widows | Deuteronomy 27:19 |
| 7 | Slander | Leviticus 19:16 |

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 8 | Violation against holy things | Leviticus 5:15 |
| 8 | Violation of Shabbat | Exodus 20:8 |
| 10-11 | Committed sexual family sins | Leviticus 18:6-20 |
| 12 | Accepted bribes | Deuteronomy 10:17 |
| 12 | Took interest on loans | Leviticus 25:36 |
| 12 | Forgotten G~d | Deuteronomy 8:18 |

As we can see, these were not petty crimes and for that matter, according to **Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 22:6**, they were being committed by the **rulers** of Israel. Consequently, we learn in **verse 15** that HaShem will scatter Israel among the nations and furthermore consume their uncleanness from them.

Unfortunately, some serious mistakes have been made at this point from many, many pulpits. Most have assumed that because Israel was scattered from the Land that HaShem dissolved His covenant relationship with them. I don't find that to be true at all, according to the Tanakh. Many other translations are different; however, in the Tanakh, **verse 16** says that Israel will “re-inherit yourself in the sight of the nations, and you shall know that I am HaShem.”

We see that very thing coming to pass. Out of the fiery furnaces of the Holocaust the modern State of Israel was born. More and more Jewish people are returning to their homeland, Israel. Truly, they are “re-inheriting themselves in the sight of the nations.”

Acharei Mot ~ אַחֲרֵי מוֹת ~ After The Death
B'rit Hadashah: Romans 3:19-28; Romans 9:30~10:13;
1st Corinthians 5:1-13; 2nd Corinthians 2:1-11;
Galatians 3:10-14; Ivrim/Hebrews 7:23~10:25

Romans 3:19-28 I find it amazing that these 10 verses commanded nine pages of commentary and there is no way to cover **all** of that in our allotted time period. One of the things I did learn, however, is that these verses are a midrash on **Psalm 143**. The Psalmist is aware that no one's works suffice to earn him being declared righteous by HaShem. Being familiar with the Torah and Tanakh, (Shah-ool) **Sha'ul/Paul** would have known this midrash. Consequently, I believe his understanding of “righteousness” is all about “doing it right”! Not because we have to but because we want to. It's not a legalistic issue . . . it's a heart issue.

Romans 9:30~10:13

The Torah, the Mosaic Law, is a covenant based not on “works” but on trusting G~d. Most commentators present these verses as if *Sha’ul/Paul* were contrasting two paths to righteousness authorized by HaShem, the Mosaic Law and the New Covenant, showing the advantages of the latter over the former. However, there is only **one** path. The Torah of Moses requires faith and offers righteousness by faith, just like the (B’reet Hah-dah-shah) *B’rit Hadashah/the Renewed Covenant*. Any interpretation which tries to sell the Law of Moses short is not only anti-Semitic but insulting to HaShem the Giver of the “Torah of righteousness”.

1st Corinthians 5:1-13

In these verses, *Sha’ul/Paul* speaks about judgment against sexual immorality. In **verse 1**, we learn that even pagans condemned a man living (having sexual relations) with his stepmother. **Verses 6-8** address the (hah-mehtz) *hametz*, Hebrew for *leaven*, which is generally associated with *sin* in our lives with Sha’ul encouraging us to walk in purity and truth. The instructions are quite clear in the remaining verses. Primarily, Sha’ul is saying that we are not to associate with those within the community (i.e. synagogue, church) who . . .

- Engages in sexual immorality
- Is greedy
- Worships idols
- Is abusive
- Gets drunk
- Steals

“With such a person you shouldn’t even eat!” But we should eat with those who are inquiring about Yeshua (**Acts 10:1-11:18**) and with fellow-believers in good standing. (**Galatians 2:11-16**)

2nd Corinthians 2:1-11

These verses are pretty straight forward, in my opinion. We are to walk in forgiveness toward anyone and everyone. To do otherwise would leave the door open to (Hah-Sah-tahn) HaSatan and his schemes. If we are following Torah, specifically, **Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18**, to “love your neighbor as yourself”, this should be a “no-brainer”. And by the way, did you notice that this commandment was in *Vayikra/Leviticus* **WAY** before it was ever recorded in (Mah-teet-yah-hoo) *Mattit’yahu/Matthew*, Mark, Luke, Romans, Galatians and (Yah-ah-kove) *Ya’akov/James*

Galatians 3:10-14

According to David Stern’s Jewish New Testament Commentary, the key to these verses is and I quote: “in sorting out when the Greek word “nomos” means God’s Torah and when it means legalistic perversion of it.” In Stern’s judgment, most translations fail to make this very important distinction and are NOT “rightly dividing the word of truth”. There is no way that man is capable of keeping all the commands of Torah. In fact, the Torah itself (HaShem, Himself) anticipated that people would fall short of complete obedience and consequently fall out of fellowship with HaShem. Torah even commands what must be done in order to restore such fellowship – they must repent and sometimes they must bring a prescribed sacrifice. *Melekh Dah-veed/King David* is a prime example. Obviously David was less than perfectly obedient to all of Torah’s commands – he committed adultery and murder. However, HaShem forgave him after he repented (2nd Samuel 11:1-12:25; Psalms 32 and 51). Not only does Torah expect disobedience but it makes explicit

provision for it by mentioning sin offerings in 20 chapters of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers in addition to some 120 times in the rest of the Tanakh. Sha'ul even took it a step further . . . he proves that legalists in particular, simply by being legalists, violate at least one of the Torah's commands. Therefore, on the basis of **Deuteronomy 27:26** and the other verses cited, they . . .

1. Do not attain life
2. Are not righteous
3. Come under a curse

Ivrim/Hebrews 7:23~10:25 Just as our Torah portion tells us how, when and where Aharon can come into the Holy Place, here we have a comparison showing how Yeshua is our **Cohen Gadol/High Priest**. Chapter 8 addresses the “true Tent of Meeting” not just a copy and shadow as we have had with the Tabernacle and the Temple.

This is a rather lengthy Brit Hadashah portion. In fact, there were 25 pages of commentary by David Stern. It is in these chapters and verses that much replacement theology comes from which makes it very difficult for me to read. If there is one thing that I know and will support until the day I die it is this . . . Israel, the Jewish people, are HaShem's Chosen People. They are the apple of His eye and no one, absolutely no nation, no peoples, no organizations, none have replaced them. His word is very clear on that subject.

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 26

Parashah #30

(Updated 5.02.09)

Kedoshim ~ קדושים ~ Holy Ones

Torah: Vayikra/Leviticus 19:1~20:27

Haftarah: Amos 9:7-15; Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 20:2-20

B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 5:33-37 & 43-48;

Mattityahu/Matthew 15:1-11; Mattityahu/Matthew 19:16-30;

Mattityahu/Matthew 22:33-40; Mark 7:1-23; Mark 12:28-34;

Luke 10:25-39; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13-26;

Ya'akov/James 2:1-9; Kefa Alef/1st Peter 1:13-21

On Tuesday, April 21st, Jews around the world observed (Yome Hah-show-ah) **Yom HaShoah / Holocaust Remembrance Day**. Israel's (Yome Hah-zeek-kahr-own) **Yom Hazikaron / Memorial Day** was observed on Tuesday, April 28th and (Yom Hah-Ahtz-mah-oot) **Yom Ha'Atzmaut/Israel Independence Day** was observed on Wednesday, April 29th. These holidays are somewhat unique to the Jewish calendar, as they contain no specific religious significance or ritual observance.

At this point, I would like to insert some words from my friend, Cindy Hemenway, who used live in Jerusalem. A few years ago, she wrote the following . . . “*Israel celebrates Yom*

Ha'Atzmaut (Israeli Independence Day). The day is marked with singing and dancing in the streets; fireworks; barbeques; the youth armed with silly string and shaving cream (what a mess!); and flags flying from most every residence and car, as well as draped over the shoulders of many of the people. Perhaps the celebrations seem more animated and lively due to the fact that the day previous to Yom Ha'Atzmaut the country observes Yom Hazikaron, which honors the memory of the Israeli soldiers that have fallen. It is a very somber day, with many ceremonies being held throughout the land, including a two minute siren that is heard all over the country. During the siren, everyone immediately stops, as if frozen in time, and all vehicles stop on the road, drivers and passengers emerging to stand in respect and to remember those who gave their lives for their freedom. Yom Ha'Atzmaut begins the minute Yom Hazikaron ends, and the change in atmosphere is sudden and very evident. As the sun sets between the two days, they literally go from mourning to joy!" (Thanks for sharing with us, Cindy!)

While the Jewish people and others try to commemorate and teach others about the horrors of the Holocaust all year, on **Yom HaShoah/Holocaust Remembrance Day**, a special effort to focus thoughts on remembering those that suffered, fought, and died at the hands of the Nazis. Holocaust Remembrance Day has traditionally been observed with candle lighting (often six candles are lit to represent the six million lives lost), speakers, poems, prayers, and singing.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut/Israel Independence Day is celebrated annually on the anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. (On the Hebrew calendar the date is the 5th of Iyar, which coincided with April 29th this year. The world acknowledges May 14, 1948 as the establishment of the State of Israel.). The day preceding this celebration, **Yom HaZikaron**, is devoted to the memory of those who gave their lives for the achievement of the country's independence and its continued existence. Joining these two days together conveys a simple message: Israelis and Jews everywhere owe the independence and very existence of the Jewish state to the soldiers who have sacrificed their lives for it and to HaShem who has set them apart.

My prayer is that as you read these comments, you will have already read the scriptures involved (listed above), or at the very least have your Bible open to the selected readings so you can follow along with the scriptures.

One more time!!!! Way too much material to cover in two hours, way too much!!! Essentially, we have a random repetition of the **Decalogue/Ten Commandments**. Each verse deserves commentary but for the sake of time and space I will address only a few this week.

CHAPTER 19

As we begin studying this chapter we need to remember that **HaShem is speaking during this entire chapter**. **Verse 1** states, "Adonai said to Moshe, "Speak to the **ENTIRE** community of Israel . . ." The Chumash tells us that the procedure of transmitting the instructions of HaShem to ***B'nei Yisrael/Children of Israel*** was that Moshe would teach them privately to Aharon; then

Aharon/Aaron's sons would join them and Moshe would repeat the teaching; the Elders would enter and Moshe would repeat it again. Then, finally, he would teach it to the entire nation. However, in this passage, the order changed; Moshe assembled the entire nation and taught the instruction in this chapter to everyone simultaneously, because the majority of the Torah's basic instructions are contained here. These essential instructions cover . . .

- The Shabbats
- Reverence for parents
- The prohibitions against . . .
 - stealing
 - taking revenge
 - bearing grudges
- The instruction to love one's fellows.

In (Kay-fah Ah-lehf) **Kefa Alef/1st Peter 1:16** we find (Kay-fah) **Kefa/Peter** exhorting the Believers to “Be holy”. As a matter of fact, it is a commandment to “be holy” and it is found in **Vayikra/Leviticus 19:2**, “You people are to be holy because I, Adonai your G~d, am holy.” There are some who believe that this was only for the first dispensation. However, in **Kefa Alef/1st Peter 1:16**, the believers were being encouraged by **Kefa/Peter** to remember that it was written “Be ye holy; for I am holy”. We are called to be set apart as a holy people. The worldly things we listened to, said and did, in the past need to be set aside! If that means being different than my neighbor, then so be it!

Sh'mot/Exodus 20:12 commands us to honor our father and our mother; yet **Vayikra/Leviticus 19:3** says each one of us is to revere/honor our mother and father. So what's with the change in the order of the wording? Eight out of nine translations bear this change. Search as I could, I was unable to find any information concerning this matter until the last minute. The Sages tell us that the normal nature of a child is to fear his father more and honor his mother more. The Torah commands us to raise ourselves above our normal tendencies and treat both parents equally. In addition, we are to honor and revere our parents as we do our heavenly Father because all three are “partners” in a person's existence. One of my thoughts concerning this matter is the fact that the mother is the one who taught the children about the preparation(s) for Shabbat; taught them about candle lighting and such. It was incumbent on the father to take the son(s) to synagogue when he was of age but other than that the spiritual training was relegated to the mother. Unfortunately in many cases, not all, but many, it is still the same today. Mothers play a major role in the spiritual upbringing of their children.

“. . . and you are to keep my Shabbats” is still part of **verse 3**. According to the commentaries in the Chumash, the exhortation here is if a parent commands a child to desecrate or profane the Shabbat or do anything else in violation of the Torah, the order must not be obeyed. The intent of the verse is as follows: You are to revere your parents, but My commandments take

precedence over the wishes of your parents, because I am Adonai and all people – you and your parents alike – are required to respect Me.

On another note, since “Shabbats” or “Sabbaths” is used in the plural, I’m inclined to believe that HaShem was referring to all of His (moe-eh-deem) *moedim/appointed times*. I could find nothing to substantiate this nor refute it; so as emphatically as my Father has impressed this upon me, I’m gonna go for it!!!

Verses 5-8 encourage us to make our peace offering in a way for it to be accepted. This could entail the kosher slaughtering of the animal as well as the correct heart of the one presenting the peace offering. What I found interesting was the prohibition against eating “leftovers” if it is more than two days old. (Now I know why some people, men in particular, don’t like leftovers. They’re probably Jewish and don’t even know it!!!!) On the third day, if any remains, it will become a disgusting thing; it is to be burned up completely and will not be accepted. The person who eats it will profane something that is holy and will be cut off from his people. That’s pretty serious stuff! Again, a prohibition from our Father to keep us healthy; with no refrigeration in those days, anything three days old was bound to be rancid!

Verses 9-10 speak of the harvest and how the corners are to be left for the poor and the foreigner. Remember the story of Ruth and how she gleaned the corners of the fields of Boaz? It is good for us to remember that Israel was an agrarian society and their mitzvah was (pay-ah) *peah*. *Peah* means *corner* in Hebrew. According to Jewish belief, charity isn’t simply a matter of generosity and kindness. It is an obligation. By not giving to the poor, one is not merely lacking in generosity – one is stealing from them. The Hebrew word for *charity* is (tzeh-dah-kah) *tzedaka* and comes from the root-word (tzeh-dehk) *tzedek* which means *justice*. The foundation of Jewish charity is duty but empathy is a necessary ingredient.

In **verse 18** we find the admonition to “love your neighbor as yourself”. I can remember when I thought that came from a verse in the *B’rit Hadashah/Renewed Covenant*, didn’t you? You probably thought that Yeshua spoke that, which He did BUT it was first spoken in **Vayikra / Leviticus 19:18**. Also, in **Yochanan/John 10:30**, Yeshua said, “I and the Father are (ay-kahd) *echad/one*. We would do well to remember, when we read the following passages, that they were recorded **first** in **Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18**.

- Mattityahu/Matthew 5:43
- Mattityahu/Matthew 19:19
- Mattityahu/Matthew 22:39
- Mark 12:31 & 33
- Luke 10:27
- Romans 13:9 & 10
- Galatians 5:14
- Ya’akov/James 2:8

Verses 11-15 address honest dealings with others. According to Rabbi Hirsch, people may look for ways . . .

- To deceive others in business
- To deny obligations that cannot be proven

- To invoke G~d's name to convince others that lies are true
- To underpay laborers
- To seek personal gain through dishonest flattery

Such conduct is wrong, even though the courts may not be able to deal with it. HaShem wants us to look to His general standards of honesty and upright conduct.

HaShem revealed a deeper understanding of **verse 14** with regard to “do not speak a curse against a deaf person or place an obstacle in the way of a blind person”. In both instances neither would be aware of what was being done to them or by whom, which is why it is such an abomination to the Father.

HaShem implores us to keep our livestock, our fields and our clothing free from defilement. In other words, our animals should only be bred to like animals; our fields should have the same seed sown for the entirety of the field and our clothing shouldn't have mixed threads. (**Verse 19**)

I found the prohibition in **verse 23** concerning the fruit of the newly planted tree to be interesting. I can understand the fruit not being mature enough to be an offering to HaShem but what did they do with the fruit those first three years? I couldn't find any commentary that addressed the issue. Being Jewish, I tend to be frugal, so . . . I'm wantin' to know what happened with the fruit! Perhaps they used the seeds to plant more trees . . . that would make sense!

I love the way HaShem gives object lessons to me. **Verse 31** came alive to me a few years ago. An individual, who was recently saved, called the office where I worked, at that time, and asked what I thought about hypnotism as a way to quit smoking and drinking. Having already read our portion for the week, it was easy to address this issue and tell this person that hypnotism is a form of witchcraft and that our Father wants us to rely on Him and Him alone to remove habits from our lives that are not pleasing to Him.

Then in **verse 32** we learn about the respect for the elderly that the Jewish people have. As a matter of fact, the United States and Russia are the only nations I'm aware of that are less than kind to their elderly. As I mature I like this verse more and more!!! “Stand up in the presence of a person with gray hair, show respect for the old . . .”

CHAPTER 20

In **verses 1-5**, we are given very strong instructions against sacrificing our children. All I am going to say at this time about those verses is “Woe be unto the United States, may we, as a nation repent and turn from our wicked ways of Roe vs. Wade.” On an up-note, Baruch HaShem!, our federal government passed a bill to ban partial birth abortions, in April of 2007. At last, a step in the right direction!!!

Verses 10-21 are all about sex, sex, sex!!! I remember attending a service and hearing someone say that Yeshua had never spoken against homosexuality. I'm telling you, a spirit of indignation rose up so great in me, I thought I was going to pop wide open!!! Yeshua made it clear in **Mattityahu/Matthew 5:17** that He came to set the Torah/Law/Rules/Instructions straight!!! That is to fulfill them. We just read in **Vayikra/Leviticus 18:22** that such activity is an abomination to HaShem and here in **verse 13** there is a death sentence against anyone who goes to bed with someone of the same gender. Actually it says "if a man goes to bed with a man". There are some who interpret this that a woman walks in greater holiness than man and she would not do such a thing but we know in today's society that this isn't true. I believe in this verse, that "man" is used with reference to mankind!!!

Every time I read **verse 10**, I am reminded of the story in **Yochanan/John 8:1-11** about the woman caught in adultery. According to **verse 10**, both the woman and the man she was caught with were to be stoned. I've often wondered what Yeshua was writing in the dust when He bent down. Do you suppose He was writing **Vayikra/Leviticus 20:10**? And then, do you suppose He started writing down names of those who had been with her? Would that be the reason that the accusers started leaving one by one? I wonder . . .

Over and over again we hear and we read "you are to observe all my regulations and rulings and **ACT** on them" (**verse 22**). It is very clear that we are to be holy because He, Adonai, is holy. The phrase "I am Adonai" or its equivalent "I am Adonai your G~d" appears **sixteen times in Chapter 19 and four more times in Chapter 20**. Adonai alone has the authority and power to set the standard of holiness, for He alone is the fullness of holiness. HaShem is our deliverer from the unholy and He sent His Son, Yeshua, to set the standard for us. We are holy because Yeshua has made us holy! Amen

One of HaShem's final admonitions was "do not live by the regulations of the nation which I am expelling ahead of you; because they did all these things, which is why I detested them. But to you I have said, you will inherit their land' I will give it to you as a possession, a land flowing with milk and honey." (**verses 23-24**)

Kedoshim ~ קדושים ~ Holy Ones

Haftarah: Amos 9:7-15; Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 20:2-20

According to the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, HaShem took the prophet Amos from his flock and sent him to chastise the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He criticized them for persecuting the poor and helpless and for indulging themselves in the pursuit of luxuries. In keeping with the final theme of our Parashah, the Haftarah stresses that sinfulness results in expulsion from the land.

However, there is a section about restoration and at least four different but related kinds of restoration are taught in these verses.

- First we see a restoration of HaShem’s words of assurance. Initially Adonai tells Israel that He will destroy them but finally at the end of **verse 8** He relents and says that He won’t destroy ALL of Israel. Although Israel was the chosen nation, that did not exempt them from obeying HaShem’s instructions. Secondly, HaShem tells Israel that He has the right to destroy them as a nation but He promised that He would not destroy them as a nation. The only way to explain this is to understand the grace of HaShem. (It’s amazing that so many people believe that grace and mercy is only in the ***B’rit Hadashah/Renewed Covenant!***)
- Amos predicts a second restoration. In **verses 11-12** he speaks of the L~rd erecting David’s fallen ***sukkah*** (סככה)/***booth***. Here we find the prediction of the re-establishment of the house of David.
- The next prediction of restoration occurs in **verse 13** concerning the Land which will be restored to a place of productivity and fruitfulness. Here we are told the grain harvest will be SO great that the plowman will meet the reaper and the grapes will be so abundant that it will seem like the mountains are dripping with the juice!
- Lastly, mentioned in **verses 14-15**, is the restoration of the People to the Land. The wording is beautiful. I encourage you to read it for yourselves. These things are happening, even now! Surely HaShem is returning the captives of Israel back to their Land. History shows that there was a steady trickle of HaShem’s people returning to the Land in the late 1800’s. Then, in 1948, when Israel was declared a modern state, that trickle became a stream. Since then, the stream has become more and more flowing until it has become a powerful river of people returning to the Land from all over the earth.

Kedoshim ~ קדושים ~ Holy Ones

**B’rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 5:33-37 & 43-48;
 Mattityahu/Matthew 15:1-11; Mattityahu/Matthew 19:16-30;
 Mattityahu/Matthew 22:33-40; Mark 7:1-23; Mark 12:28-34;
 Luke 10:25-39; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13-26;
 Ya’akov/James 2:1-9; Kefa Alef/1st Peter 1:13-21**

Mattityahu/Matthew 5:33-37 & 43-48 **Verses 33-37** address oaths and vows and parallels ***Vayikra/Leviticus 19:12***. Additionally, Yeshua exhorts us to simply let our yes be yes and our no be no. **Verses 43-48** parallels ***Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18*** “love your neighbor as yourself”.

Mattityahu/Matthew 15:1-11 These verses address (n-tee-laht yah-dah-yeem) ***n’tilat-yadayim/ceremonial hand washing***; honoring your father and mother and the issue of uncleanness which is demonstrated by what comes **out** of one’s mouth.

Mattityahu/Matthew 19:16-30 The 5th through the 9th commandments of the Big 10 are addressed in **verses 16-19** and deal with interpersonal relationships as well as “love your neighbor as yourself”, which actually encompasses all the others. For those who have been taught that **verse 24** has to do with a camel, one of the “largest” animals, going through the “smallest” gate in a walled city, it isn’t true. Those stories were used to tone down the stark contrasting image Yeshua was making. **Verse 30** has always intrigued me. I can’t help but wonder, with so many of our Jewish brothers and sisters receiving Yeshua as their Messiah in these last days, will they, perhaps, be first in the kingdom of Heaven? Just wondering . . .

Mattityahu/Matthew 22:33-40 These verses primarily parallel **Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18** and the Shema (**D’varim/Deuteronomy 6:4-5**) when Yeshua was asked what is the greatest mitzvot in the Torah.

Mark 7:1-23 **Verses 2-4** deal with the Traditions of the Elders and ceremonial hand washing. Yeshua addresses the Pharisees placing their human/man-made traditions above HaShem’s commands in **verses 5-13** with regard to the (kore-bahn) *korban/a gift to G~d* and honor your father and your mother. **Verse 19** is the verse everybody jumps on when they want to do their own thing rather than obey the directions of our Heavenly Father with regard to kosher eating. Yeshua says it is the wicked things that come from within a person, from their heart, that makes them unclean. Those things are . . .

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------|
| • Wicked thoughts | • Adultery | • Envy |
| • Sexual immorality | • Greed | • Slander |
| • Theft | • Malice | • Arrogance |
| • Murder | • Deceit | • Foolishness |
| | • Indecency | |

Mark 12:28-34 Which is the most important mitzvah? was the question posed to Yeshua by one of the Torah-teachers. Mark’s rendering quotes **Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18** and the Shema. In the Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern, there is a quote from the Talmud, with regard to this matter, which I thought was interesting. *“Rabbi Simlai said, ‘Six hundred thirteen commandments were given to Moses – 365 negative, equaling the number of days in the year, and 248 positive, equaling the number of a man’s members. David came and reduced them to eleven (Psalm 15). Then Isaiah reduced them to six (Isaiah 33:15-16), Micah to three (Micah 6:8), and Isaiah again to two, as it is said, “Keep judgment and do righteous” (Isaiah 66:1). Then Amos reduced them to one, “Seek me and live” (Amos 5:4). Or one could say Habakkuk: “The righteous shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:40).’” (Makkot 23b-24a abridged)*

Additional commentary addresses the triune nature of HaShem. Nowhere in the B’rit Hadashah does it say that G~d is three, but it does say that G~d is one, unique, the only G~d there is. Also, in the Tanakh it gives a hint in several places that the “inner structure” of the one true G~d involves Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Yeshu’yahu/Isaiah 48:16** uses three different terms

“. . . from the time that it was, there am I; and now Adonai G~d and his Spirit has sent me.” At **B’resheet/Genesis 1:26** G~d uses the plural to speak of himself: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . .” The rabbinic explanation that this means G~d and the angels, has no contextual support and there is no reason for a “plural of majesty” as this point. Also, in **D’varim/Deuteronomy 6:4&5**, in the *Shema* there is the triple reference to G~d and the use of the Hebrew word (ay-kahd) *echad* which often means a multiple unity, such as “one” cluster of grapes or ‘one” bundle of sticks instead of the Hebrew word (yah-keed) *yachid* which most generally excludes multiple oneness.

Luke 10:25-39 The main thing I would like to cover in these verses has to do with what we have learned as the parable of the “Good Samaritan”. Many of us were never taught that there had been animosity for centuries between the Jews and the Samaritans. As a matter of fact, the Jews had a very, very low opinion of those from *Shomron/Samaria*. We also miss important information when we are not knowledgeable of the “lay of the land”. **Verse 30**: A man was “going down” from *Yerushalayim/Jerusalem* to *Yericho/Jericho*. Literally, he was going down because Jericho does lay not only South of Jerusalem but much closer to sea level as well. The interesting part comes in **verse 31** when it speaks of a *cohen/priest*, who was going down that same road. Given his occupation, I would guess that this Cohen had served his two week course at the Temple and was on his way home. Notice that he chose to pass by on the other side. The same was true of the Levi as well. Both of these were “religious” men who were well versed in Torah. What happened to **Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18** . . . “love your neighbor as yourself”?

Then the Samaritan came by and he was the only one who “did” Torah! Oil and wine in those days were considered medicine. Furthermore, he took the injured man to an inn, took out two days wages; gave it to the Inn Keeper with the promise that if it cost more, he would pay it upon return. Could this be a fore shadow of the Messiah? Was the Samaritan planning on returning on the third day? There are some awesome implications here but there just isn’t enough time and space to go into this at this time.

Romans 13:8-10 Yeshua said that the Torah and the Prophets could be summed up in two commandments – loving G~d, as commanded in the Shema (**D’varim/Deuteronomy 6:4-5**) and loving one’s neighbor as oneself (**Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18**). *Sha’ul/Paul* quotes four of the five commandments in the “Second Tablet” of the Law, which have to do with behavior toward other people and Yeshua did too!

Galatians 5:13-26 Prior to these verses, *Rav Sha’ul/Paul* has been preaching freedom but here he warns his readers/listeners that freedom doesn’t give license to do whatever one pleases whenever one pleases. Again, we learn that all of Torah is summed up in one sentence . . . “love your neighbor as yourself”. **Verses 19-21** certainly put a stop to the “once-saved-always-saved” theology. In fact, Sha’ul says that if we continue to walk in our old nature of . . .

- Sexual immorality
- Impurity
- Indecency

- Idol-worship
- Misuse of drugs
- Feuding
- Fighting
- Jealousy
- Anger
- Selfish ambition
- Factionalism
- Intrigue
- Envy

“Those who do those things will have no share in the Kingdom of G~d!” (verse 21)
 Immediately after that he encourages us to walk in the “fruit of the Spirit” which is . . .

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Humility
- Self control

“Nothing in the Torah stands against such things.” (verse 23)

Ya’akov/James 2:1-9 As I understand these verses, they are concerned with how believers, specifically Messianic Jews, are to treat non-Messianic Jews inquiring about New Covenant faith. Here we are encouraged, again, not to show favoritism but to “love your neighbor as yourself”. If one shows favoritism then those actions constitute sin and are not upholding Torah.

Kefa Alef/1st Peter 1:13-21 These words from **Kefa/Peter** exhort us to “get your minds ready for work”. In other words, be mentally prepared for . . .

- Opposition
- Distractions
- Temptations
- Unexpected set backs.

By being prepared, we won’t fall into the old patterns or habits from our former lives, which is what the enemy would love for us to do. We are to “be holy as I am holy” says HaShem. In so doing, we will carry out Torah.

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 15

Next week’s portion

Parashah #31

Emor ~ אָמַר ~ Speak

Torah: Vayikra/Leviticus 21:1~24:23

Haftarah: Yechezk’el/Ezekiel 44:15-31

B’rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 5:38-42; Galatians 3:26-29

Shavuah tov (Have a good week)!!!