

מִסְדֵּרֵי הַדְּרָשׁ – שְׁמִינִי



Torah: *Sh'mini* (Eighth), *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 9.1-11.47

Haftarah: *Shmuel Bet* (2 Samuel) 6.1-7.17

Suggested Messianic Writings: Hebrews 7.1-19

Shalom,

“וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי, *Viy'hee bayom ha-sh'mee-nee*, And it came to pass, on the eighth day....” Aharon (Aaron) and his sons have just spent the previous seven days undergoing their consecration for installation into the role of High Priesthood for Israel. Now *Moshe* (Moses) calls them forth to officially set them in place. The first duty was for Aharon to take a male calf, a young bull, for a sin offering. [Note: a *sin offering* was to cover any sins committed inadvertently; a *guilt offering* was for known sin.] Was there a significance to this for Aharon? The Hebrew word for “calf” is עֵגֶל *ey-gel*, which means a male calf a year old. (A mature bull was to be 3 yrs old). The use of עֵגֶל *ey-gel* here is unusual for *Vayikra/Leviticus*; most times a young bull is called a פֶּרֶן בֶּן בָּקָר *par ben kah-kahr*, “a young bullock son of the herd”. However, back at the incident of the golden calf (*Sh'mot/Exodus 32*), the term used for calf was עֵגֶל *ey-gel*. So the use of עֵגֶל *ey-gel* in this passage may indicate a restitution for Aharon.

The people of Israel, represented by various leaders, then brought a male goat for their sin offering. Why a young bull for the High Priest and a goat for the people, you may wonder? Simply because the sin of a Priest was of greater consequence, because of the position they were in. Offering a bull did not mean that the Priest had a greater sin; rather, he had a greater position. Position in HaShem's service is not to be taken lightly. But for the “common folk” (for lack of a better term), and contrary to some teachings, HaShem does classify sin, as well as sinners. Some sins are indeed worse than others. Thus a bull was to be a sacrifice for a greater sin, *or* for a person involved in a priestly position. Then it went on down the line to goats, sheep, birds, etc.

Now you might wander about Sha'ul's statement that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”. We know that only the shed blood of our Messiah is what truly saves us. The sacrificial offerings all were pointing to that fact. Yeshua's blood sacrifice has replaced all of the sin and guilt offerings we read about in the Tanakh. But Sha'ul was writing about mankind's *corrupted nature* and the inevitable result that no one – from the High Priest on down, can stand before the Creator on their own merit. Only Yeshua, the Perfect One, is able to do that. But the *nature* of man is different from the *behavior* of man. Sha'ul wrote of who we *are*, not what we *do*. Who we *are* is the same for every one of us, a human being carrying about a sin nature, separated from HaShem. What we *do* is another thing. The fact that sinful *behavior* can be more *or* less serious, more *or* less offensive to HaShem, and more *or* less dangerous to the community of Believers, remains.

Thus, there are levels of sin and levels of punishment throughout Scripture, which is an entire separate study that we cannot go into now. As an example, stealing is a sin, but murder is a greater sin – they are seen and judged differently by HaShem. Some sins are even called an “abomination” to HaShem. Do a concordance search on that word sometime; Torah will give you an understanding of what is what. We will note also that there are different levels of reward. Now understand, the use of bulls or birds was not so that one could compare the sins of another to his own, but rather the purpose was for all to see the multi-faceted nature of sin – how it can affect and infect, how serious and devastating it is, and that it is not such a simple and straightforward matter as “to G-d sin is sin”.

In *Vayikra 9.7*, Moshe told Aharon to “approach the altar”. Aharon is now officially the High Priest. In the previous chapter, during which Aharon & sons were ordained into the priesthood, Moshe performed all the initial sacrifices. And in verse 8, Aharon performs the sacrifice. The first sacrifice Aharon did was the עֵגֶל *ey-gel*, the sin offering for himself.

Aharon and sons then went through a series of sacrifices for themselves and then for the people of Israel. Aharon turned, raised his hands, blessed the people, and came down from the altar; Moshe & Aharon next entered the tent, then came back out and blessed the people; “then” the Glory of ADONI appeared. Fire came forth מִלְּפָנָי *meel-p'ney*, from the face, the presence, of Adoni. This same term is found in the Aaronic Blessing, “*Ya-ayr Ah-do-ni pa-nav* – ADONI make His face shine; *Ah-do-ni pa-nav* – ADONI turn His face....” Hebraic writing is not always consecutive, so very possibly the blessing Aharon

spoke here was the *Birkat Kohanim* (the High Priestly Blessing, the Aaronic Blessing) from *B'Midbar* (Numbers) 6.

In Vayikra 9.5, we are told that, as the High Priestly sacrifices began, “the whole community approached; or, the whole congregation drew near...” This probably referred to representatives, or more likely, the elders, *z'kaynim*, from 9.1, along with Aharon & sons. *עֵדָה* *ey-dah* is the Hebrew for congregation. Now in 9.24, when the fire came down, “All the people saw it,” and the term is *כָּל הָעָם* *kol ahm*. This was a huge event that millions of people were able to observe. We read of a similar event when *Shlomo/Solomon* dedicated the Temple, and some day soon, when Yeshua returns, *every eye* will see Him. When the glory came down, the people fell on their faces. When the glory of Yeshua returns, every knee will bow before Him, probably *after* they/we are able to bring them/ourselves back up off of their/our faces – some in fear and dread, others in reverence and love.

The purpose of all that we study in these chapters is summed up in the statement found in Vayikra 11.44, “be holy, for I am holy”. We may never understand all of the “why’s” during this life, and that is not the Creator’s intention. He is G-d, and we are not. He mainly desires a relationship with His created people, and offers that freely, although only one way, which is trust in and acceptance of Yeshua as Messiah. And there are restrictions within that relationship, just as there are restrictions within a marriage. Paganism abounded in the time of the Tabernacle, and it abounds to this day. Our Creator has devised a plan to show us how to live and escape the evils of the world while remaining in the world – in it, not of it. Never belittle the “Old Testament,” for it is all part of one Book which shows us how to live, love and obey. The whole Book is necessary for a fuller understanding of this walk with Yeshua.

שְׁאַלְוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)