

## Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat April 28, 2007/Iyar 10, 5767

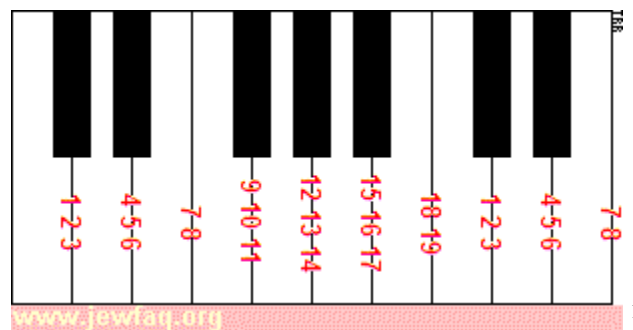
**Parashah #29: *Akharei Mot* (After the death), *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 16:1-18:30  
& #30: *K'doshim* (Holy people), *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 19:1-20:27**

**Haftarah: *Amos* 9:7-15; *Yekhezkel* (Ezekiel) 20:2-20**

**Suggested *Messianic Writings* reading: *1 Kefa* (1 Peter) 1:13-16**

Shalom,

Two Parashot are read together again this week; as we mentioned last week we are in a non-leap year, and from time to time two portions must be read together. A Hebrew year is lunar-based, and an extra month is added 7 times in a 19-year cycle, as developed in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE by Hillel II, to make up for lost days. Interestingly enough, if we think of HaShem as the Creator and Lover of music, and life as a choreographed dance, the 7/19 cycle lines up exactly with a piano keyboard, beginning on note C: for each whole step of white keys [white-black-white] there are two regular years and a leap year; for each half-step of white keys [white-white] there is one regular year and a leap year. The 19-year-cycle that we are currently in began in Jewish year 5758 (the year that began October 2, 1997).



Now on to our first Parashah. The original “Temple” *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) service is described in Vayikra 16. The word “atonement” is used at least 15 times in Vayikra 16 alone. The Hebrew root is *kaphar*, and the basic meaning is, “to cover, to hide.” This verb comes from the noun *kippurim*, which means, “to be reconciled.” Translated into English, “atonement”, according to Zhodiat, comes from Middle English, and means, “to be ‘at one’”. Atonement is “the condition which results when one makes amends.”

So the question is: what is it that needs to be covered, or hidden; what is it that needs to be reconciled, or amended? Very obviously, the answer is “sin!” Well, what exactly is “sin?” The Hebrew word for “sin” is *kha-taht*. The definition is, “to miss the mark, to make a false step, to err from the path of duty and right; an offense”. Yeshua is called a “rock of offense” (Romans 9:33 and 1 Kefa 2:8, both quoting Isaiah 28:16), because those who do not develop a rock solid faith foundation in Him are easily offended, having a faith[less] foundation made of shifting sand. The first appearance of the word *kha-taht* (sin) is in *B’resheet* (Genesis) 4:7. *Hevel* (Abel) had just given from the first of his flock to HaShem, while his brother *Kayin* (Cain) simply “brought an offering.” HaShem did not accept Kayin’s offering, and we don’t know the whole story here, but Kayin became angry, and “his countenance fell”. HaShem came to Kayin and asked, “Why are you angry? Why so downcast? If you are doing what is good, shouldn’t you hold your head high? And if you don’t do what is good, sin is crouching at the door – it wants you, but you can rule over it.” Sadly, we know that sometime after that, Kayin killed his brother Hevel. Kayin did not rule over sin, so sin ruled over Kayin. Sha’ul expands on this concept to a great degree in Romans 6-8: “You are a slave to whom you serve... Do not let sin rule in your mortal bodies, so that it makes you obey its desires.”

Point being that Kayin understood the word *kha-taht*, for he did not question the meaning of HaShem’s statement. Yes, from the beginning man has understood the meaning of the word “sin.” In our own day and age, unsaved mankind understands the meaning of the word “sin;” on one hand mocking the term,

thinking that sin is enjoyable and okay, and whoever disputes something as wrong is labeled a “prude,” or worse. On the other hand, many people feel that they are morally good and therefore are not sinners in need of a Redeemer.

Because of our fallen state, in the presence of the Holy G-d the holiest man on earth is “sin.” Whenever any man in Scripture came in contact with the radiant glory of G-d, he instantly fell to his face, knowing how unworthy He was. HaShem, who was designated to be the “light of the world,” had to institute for Israel an annual day in which sin could be atoned for. As believers in Yeshua, we know that He who is the sinless One – fully G-d, yet fully a Jewish man – became sin on our behalf, or as the CJB words it, Yeshua “became a sin-offering on our behalf” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Sha’ul did not write with chapter breaks, and he went on (6:1) to say, “we urge you not to receive his grace and do nothing with it.”

Messianic believers are sometimes questioned by non-Messianic believers for observing *Yom Kippur* – since Yeshua died once for all time for sin and through that we have forgiveness, why do we need an annual set-apart day to seek atonement and forgiveness? For a couple of reasons, at least; one, to simply say “Thank You;” to Yeshua for being the *kap-pa-rah* (covering) for our sin (1 *Yochanan* / John 2:2) and for reconciling us to our Creator; and two, it seems that our flesh-man constantly struggles with sin, so we do need to seek forgiveness often, and Yom Kippur is a good time to consider our standing with our Creator. I believe it is in error to declare that once a person has received *yeshu-ah* (salvation), that is all one ever has to do again. If that were the case, there would not be a need for any commandment regarding righteous and holy living – and many of those commandments came directly from Yeshua Himself through the Gospels, as well as from Sha’ul and the rest of the *Messianic Writings* writers, not to mention the commandments of Torah and the rest of the Tanakh<sup>2</sup>. Once again we are reminded of the theme of the book of Vayikra, “Be holy, for I Am Holy.”

Here is a mystery: Only the *Kohen HaGadol* (the High Priest) could ever enter the Holy of Holies, and that was once a year on Yom Kippur. Following the sacrificial death and resurrection of Yeshua, and the giving of the *Ruakh HaKodesh* (the Holy Spirit), we are told in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 that we believers are now the temple of the living G-d. The Greek word for temple is *naos*, which actually means “Holy of Holies.” Yet through prayer and worship there seems to be a place we go that our flesh cannot comprehend, for Hebrews 10:19-22 says that through Yeshua we may now enter the Most Holy Place, and this does not refer to ourselves. There are scriptures that picture a heavenly Tabernacle and a heavenly Temple, so who knows where our spirits soar in prayer and worship. And this does not mean some weird new age out-of-body experience. Fleshly and/or religious paradigms tend to disbelieve, disregard, or belittle such spiritual concepts, but we *know* the Messiah is the key to worship, as opposed to *knowing about* the Messiah. As Sha’ul said in Philippians 3:8, “I count all things to be loss in view of *the surpassing value of knowing Messiah Yeshua my L-rd*, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Messiah” (emphasis mine).

In Vayikra 17, HaShem commands that all animal sacrifices are to be made at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting only, i.e., no sacrifice was to be done anywhere else in the Land of Israel. This was such a great penalty that such a person would be cut off – *kah-raht*, which could mean “to be killed,” or at the very least, “to be excommunicated” – from the people of Israel. Most certainly sacrifices *to* animals, or animal images, was disobedience. For example, in 17:7, sacrifices to “goat-demons” were to be discontinued. The Hebrew of “goat-demon” is *sah-eer*, meaning “a hairy goat demon,” and the term satyr comes from this word. This is probably where the image of the devil as a pitch-fork carrying horned being comes from. A Sah-eer was one of the gods of Egypt, and apparently some of the Israelites brought this worship with them. The demonic realm has great power, and is not to be trifled with, worshipped, or trivialized.

The bulk of the rest of the first Parashah, and the second Parashah, concern proper sexual conduct as well as proper conduct for living life in general. I believe that a commandment against the modern day murderous crime of abortion can be found in 18:21 and 20:1-5, which declares that no children are to be sacrificed to the false god Molekh. Then follow commandments regarding such things as: honesty in business dealings; treating the handicapped and poor with kindness; proper speech; not being involved in witchcraft or fortune-telling; and the rules regarding fruit trees. Twice in the chapter we are told to keep Shabbat; revere our parents; show respect for the aged; treat the foreigner properly; and distinguish

between the clean and the unclean, so that the Land itself will not vomit you out. If obedience to these things means being “tied down to the Law,” then so be it.

Rounding off the hair at the temples basically means pulling out any sideburn hair, giving the hair a “bowl-cut” shape. This, as well as shaving off the entire beard, cutting gashes in the skin and being “tattooed” were all forbidden to Israel because they were customs connected with heathen worship of the dead. Although you seldom see anyone in western culture outside of the loony bin actually gashing their skin these days, the other two items are basically “gray” areas today, I would have to say, Most believing men in our culture shave their beards to one degree or another, from totally shaven to the fuzzy “Miami Vice” look, or maybe mustaches and/or goatees. Tattoos, though becoming more popular, are generally frowned upon in our culture, often by clean-shaven men. The English translation “tattoo” is actually a little misleading, as are versions that say, “do not print any marks,” for the Hebrew for “mark” is *kah-ahk-ah*, which means, “an incision or gash.” The idea is more so of what we might see in some pagan cultures, where a design is actually cut into the skin, ripping the flesh, again being done in some form of worship of a false deity. Therefore, I would have to believe that a tattooed person living under the blood of Yeshua has just as much assurance of salvation as does a man living under the blood of Yeshua, yet who shaves his face.

After again being told to distinguish between the clean and the unclean, and to “be holy, for I Am Holy,” the Parashah ends with the commandment to rid the Land of those involved in witchcraft. For starters, I would highly recommend leaving the horoscopes and Harry Potter stuff alone. I don’t believe that such things are covered under “grace – the power to do the right thing;” rather, ask for the Spirit of Holiness and Discernment to direct your thinking.

The Haftarah of Amos predicts the restoration of the fallen *sukkah* of David, which is when Israel will be restored to her former glory, and will rule what is left of the nations, and this is more than likely during the millennial kingdom under the authority of Messiah Yeshua.

*Kefa* (Peter) echoes the theme of Vayikra in his first letter (1:13-16), written to Messianic Jews in the diaspora, “...do not let yourselves be shaped by the evil desires you used to have when you were ignorant [without knowledge of the Holy]... become holy yourselves in your entire way of life... ‘You are to be holy because I Am Holy.’”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jewfaq.org/calendar.htm>

<sup>2</sup> We must remember that when Yeshua said to “obey all that I have commanded,” He was referring to the commands of Torah, as well as what He spoke while on earth.

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

**Mordekhi (Marc) & Yisraela Carmela (Teresa)**

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)