

אַחֲרֵי מוֹת

Acharei Mot/After the Death Vayikra 16:1-18:30

The first verse of our Torah reading takes us **back five chapters** to the **death of the two sons** of Aaron:

Vayikra 16:1 Now יְהוָה (Yahwey) spoke to Moses **after the death of the two sons of Aaron**, in their **drawing near** before יְהוָה, and they died;

The deaths of Aaron's sons came about as a result of "**drawing near**" to יְהוָה. The last five chapters have given every detail necessary for safely "**drawing near**." We do not know the exact reason for why Nadav and Avihu were not accepted when they "**drew near**". We can only deduce that it is very important for us to "**draw near**" to Him for worship on **His terms, not by how we determine** worship should be.

For the last few weeks we have been discussing **attitude**, not only towards the Almighty, but also towards others. Yeshua spoke at great length on the **condition of the heart**. Although our heart condition can be **hidden** (at least for a time) from our fellow man, it is **always exposed to the Father**. The way we can be aware of what is in our own heart is through the **Word of Elohim**:

Hebrews 4:12 For the **Word of Elohim** *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a **discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**.¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but **all things are naked and opened** unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Yeshua did make it possible for us to now **approach (draw near) the throne of grace**. But the verses up above which focus on **the thought and intents of the heart** are the context of the following verse:

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore **come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So we will continue to search His Word for the proper way to **approach** our **Holy Elohim**. The Word tells us to be careful to do things **His way** and that we can trust that what He has told us in the beginning is **still relevant to us today**:

Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, **nor are your ways My ways**," says יְהוָה.

Hebrews 13:8 Yeshua the Messiah *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Chapter 16 gives us many of the details of the **Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur**. The very essence of this day is about the **necessity for the shedding of innocent blood to cover sin**. The **primary** objective was **to maintain a pure sanctuary** so that יְהוָה **would not withdraw His Presence from the Israelite community**. The **people also must be purified**, beginning with the **High Priest, the entire Priesthood and all of Israel**.

After the destruction of the Temple, it was no longer possible for the Jews to perform these rituals. **Atonement for the sins of the people** eventually replaced the **purification of the sanctuary** as the **primary objective** of **Yom Kippur**. Without a temple, they began to find other ways to keep the Day holy and the result has been “**tradition**.”

As Aaron, the High Priest, came into the Holy of Holies, there were several pictures of **Yeshua** that were painted:

1. The ritual that Aaron performed had to be done **alone**. No one else was allowed into the tabernacle:
Vayikra 16:17 "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy *Place*, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.
2. Aaron was **representative of all of Israel** as he transferred their **sins** onto the **scapegoat**. Likewise, **Yeshua** has taken on **our sin**:
2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him **who knew no sin to be sin for us**, that we might become the righteousness of Elohim in Him.
3. The High Priest **took off all of all his holy garments**
John 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Yeshua, **took His garments** and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic.
4. The High Priest **brought the blood of the offering into the Most Holy Place** for the atonement of the people.
Hebrews 9:24 For **Messiah** has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but **into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of יהוה for us**; ²⁵ not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another -- ²⁶ He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so **Messiah was offered once to bear the sins of many**. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Atonement is based upon **one life being offered for another**. These animals gave up their lives to atone for **the tabernacle and the people**. Since **life is dependent upon blood**, an **animal's life/blood** on the Altar is **representative of the ultimate atonement – Yeshua's life for ours**.

Vayikra 17:11 'For **the life of the flesh is in the blood**, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it **is the blood that makes atonement for the soul**.'

Since Genesis, we have been told that **life is in the blood**:

Genesis 9:4 "But you shall not eat flesh with its **life, that is, its blood**."

So **blood is life** and blood is the element that יהוה has chosen for the purpose of **atonement**. Again....**His blood for our blood....His life for our lives**. This is the reason for the prohibition

against ingesting blood. Blood cannot be **misused**. Even those dwelling with the Israelites who had not yet joined themselves to the community were **prohibited from blood**:

Vayikra 17:10 ' And whatever man of the house of Israel, **or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood**, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ 'For **the life of the flesh is in the blood**, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.*' ¹² "Therefore I said to the children of Israel, '**No one among you shall eat blood**, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.'

Blood is life and **all life belongs to יהוה**. Because of this command, many satanic rituals include the drinking of blood. **To ingest blood is to despise life.** According to the Jerusalem Council, there were three priority commands given to a **new believer in Messiah**. The rest of Torah could be learned as they continued to hear of it each Sabbath:

Acts 15:19 "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to Elohim, ²⁰ "but that we write to them to **abstain** from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, **and from blood.** ²¹"For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Now I would like to give you several quotes from Batya Wootten's book "Who is Israel" concerning the importance of **the blood of Yeshua**:

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Messiah's blood must be unique. For Him to be our Redeemer, His blood *cannot be like* the blood of any other "man." Seeing this truth reveals another aspect of our Israel question. For the Word declares that: "No man can redeem the life of another to give to God a ransom for him....But Elohim will redeem my life from the grave" (Psalm 49:7, 15).

Yeshua is our "Redeemer", and only Elohim (God) can redeem us from the grave. A mere mortal man, an eesh (אִישׁ), an individual male person, cannot eternally redeem the life of another. Such redemption can only come from "God." (We can and should, be "redeemers" in earthly situations, but we cannot redeem another from death.)

Only Elohim can pay the high price of *eternal* redemption, and the price of that redemption is *sinless* blood.

In his book, *The Chemistry of the Blood*, the late M.R. DeHann, M.D., states that mortal man cannot pay the price of redemption because mankind suffers from a universal "blood poisoning." He explains that man's blood cleanses his body from impurities, and this process relates to the way Messiah's blood cleanses us (His body) from sin. DeHann further clarifies by noting that when the Father made Adam's body from the ground he was not a living being until our Creator breathed the *breath of life* into him:

Genesis 2:7 And יהוה God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the *breath of life*; and man became a living soul.

DeHaan says that the “life” יְהוָה breathed into Adam had to do with “blood” because it was “life”, and the *life/soul* of the flesh is *in the blood* (Lev. 17:14).

The Father warned Adam not to eat of the tree: “For in the day that you eat from it you shall surely *die*” (Gen 2:17). Adam bit anyway, and the poison in that bite condemned mankind to death. Since we are all descended from Adam, we all suffer from his “blood disorder,” because יְהוָה “made from one (blood), every nation of mankind to live on all the...earth” (Acts 17:26).

Without exception, every one of us is destined to die. Everyone, Jew, Gentile, bond, or free—all are corrupted by the blood of Adam. Everyone, that is, except Yeshua.

Yeshua is the one exception to the corruption of Adam because He does not have Adam’s blood flowing in His veins. Instead, He has the undefiled blood of His Heavenly Father.

THE ORIGINS OF THE BLOOD

DeHaan says, during pregnancy, the woman “contributes no blood at all” to her fetus. God created woman this way so that one day He would cause her to bring forth a new “Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45).

He writes: “The blood which flows in an unborn babe’s arteries and veins is not derived from the mother’s but is produced within the body of the fetus. Yet it is only after the sperm has entered the ovum and a fetus begins to develop that blood appears. As a ...simple illustration.... think of an egg of a hen. An unfertilized egg is simply an ovum on a much larger scale than a human ovum. You may incubate this unfertilized hen’s egg, but it will never develop. It will dry up completely but no chick will result. But let that egg be fertilized by the...male sperm and incubation will bring to light the presence of life in an embryo. After a few hours it visibly develops. In a little while red streaks occur, denoting the presence of blood. And life is in the blood.”

In her Parade magazine column, Marilyn Vos Savant was asked: Is there any interexchange of blood between a mother and her fetus?” Her answer: “Actual blood cells and bacteria are too big to pass through the placenta...(Parade, 2/16/92).

The Precious Blood of Yeshua: The blood of mankind is tainted, so mortal man cannot redeem us, but Messiah Yeshua’s blood is different...

- ◆ The blood of Messiah was offered to the Lord on our behalf (Heb. 9:14)
- ◆ Yeshua sanctified us “*through His own blood*” (Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 13:12)
- ◆ He is our *Redeemer*, (Luke 24:21; Gal. 3:13, 4:5).
- ◆ He gave “Himself for us to redeem us...to purify for Himself a people for His own possession” (Titus 2:14).
- ◆ We are “not redeemed with perishable things...but with the precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Messiah*” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

We know Yeshua would not and did not, break Scripture. However, as a “God-man” He did “share” in humanity (Hebrews 2:14). Yeshua “took part” of humanity, but He did not “partake” of Adam’s sin-filled blood: He partook of *flesh*, but not of *blood*. His blood came from His Heavenly Father.

Last week in the Metzora commentary, we talked about how becoming **one with the Messiah** makes us part of **His flesh, His body**. This week we see the focus is on **blood for atonement**. Wine is symbolic of **blood**, and now I think it will be quite clear to see the meaning of Yeshua's words at His **final Passover** with His disciples:

John 6:53 Then Yeshua said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you **eat the flesh** of the Son of Man and **drink His blood**, you have no **life** in you.

יהוה promises **atonement** for sin and **cleansing by the blood of a guiltless substitute**. We are reconciled to the Father by the death of His Son, and we shall be saved by His **life**:

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were **reconciled to Elohim through the death of His Son**, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be **saved by His life**.

Okay, since many commentaries are written about the two goats of Yom Kippur, I would like to skip over to chapter 18 to see if we can find some relevance in the many commandments concerning **unlawful sexual relations**. This is how the chapter is introduced:

Vayikra 18:1 Then יהוה spoke to Moses, saying,² "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: **'I am יהוה your Elohim.**³ 'According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, **you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.**⁴ 'You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: **I am יהוה your Elohim.**⁵ 'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which **if a man does, he shall live by them: I am יהוה**."

יהוה wants it made known to the children of Israel that there is to be a **distinction between their behavior and the behavior of those in Egypt** (where they came from) **and Canaan** (where they are going). It has only been a little over a year since they left Egypt, and the **Egyptian culture** is all they would have ever known. Did the Israelites see the immorality of Egypt as disgusting? יהוה did. It is hard to believe that their culture could have been any worse than ours. Do we **separate ourselves** from those things which יהוה defines as **wicked and disgusting**?

Did you notice that in the above verses of Chapter 18, the phrase **"I am יהוה"** was repeated three times? It will also be repeated **over 50 times** from this point in Chapter 18 to the end of the book of Vayikra. Almost every time a new topic will be introduced, you will see this phrase. This is so amazing because it has only been mentioned once in the first 17 chapters of Vayikra! Why? I'm not sure, other than the last half of Vayikra contains mostly commandments which pertain to **everyday living**, whereas the first half revolves around the **tabernacle**. Perhaps He wants it made known that He is to be a part of our **every day life, not just our worship in the tabernacle**.

There is another often repeated phrase in this chapter. We find it first in verse 6:

Vayikra 18:6 'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to **uncover his nakedness: I am יהוה**."

To “**uncover the nakedness** of” seems to simply imply **forbidden sexual relationships** between relatives. We are tempted to read this chapter through quickly and see no relevance for us today. The **literal meaning** of the text is clear to see, but we know that Scripture has several layers of meaning. To check this out, we will have to return to Genesis to the first time the word “**naked**” is mentioned:

Genesis 2:25 And they were both **naked**, the man and his wife, and were **not ashamed**.

Adam and Eve started out **without sin** in the garden. Some believe that **they were covered with the light of the Almighty’s righteousness**. They did not know what **shame** even was. After they sinned, they lost this **covering of light** and their **nakedness** brought about **humiliation and shame**.

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and **they knew that they were naked**; and they sewed fig leaves together and **made themselves coverings**.

There is more than just an **awareness** of their **physical nakedness** here. They were also aware of their **guilt towards Elohim**. Their **relationship** with Him was **impaired**, which also upset their relationship with each other. Elohim, however, had **mercy** on His creation. **He covered their nakedness with the skins of an animal (lamb?)**.

Genesis 3:21 Also for Adam and his wife יְהוָה Elohim made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

So besides nudity, **nakedness** can also mean **exposure, a lack of concealment, or a vulnerability that comes about through intimate relationships**. With that thought in mind, let’s take a look at 18:7:

Vayikra 18:7 “The **nakedness of your father** or the **nakedness of your mother** you shall not **uncover**. She *is* your mother; **you shall not uncover her nakedness**.”

We are **most vulnerable** within our families. Who knows us better than our own family? Who knows our **past**? Who knows our **failings**, the times we’ve **stumbled**, and the **mistakes** we’ve made along the way? If you choose to “**uncover the nakedness**” of your mother or father by **exposing their mistakes to the public eye**, you are **shaming and humiliating them**....that is, “**uncovering their nakedness**”. If we are to understand intimacy with יְהוָה, then we are to treat those closest to us in our lives with **honor and respect**. One has never felt so **naked** as when his trust in someone near to him has been removed by such a **betrayal of confidence**.

Uncovered, naked, and full of guilt and shame, we are able to come before יְהוָה, just Adam did. When we accept the **blood sacrifice** (as Adam did), **we receive His covering** (as Adam did). To not accept Messiah is to leave ourselves **exposed and naked**.

After Adam and Eve sinned, the Hebrew concept of “**nakedness**” has come to describe those who are **not covered by the righteousness of Elohim**. This **righteousness** is a necessary part of **our bridal garments**.

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in יהוה, my soul shall be joyful in my Elohim; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me **with the robe of righteousness**, as a **bridegroom** decks *himself* with ornaments, And as a **bride** adorns *herself* with her jewels.

Matthew 22:12 "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a **wedding garment**?' And he was speechless.

Let's take just a moment to attempt to define "**righteousness**". "The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament" says that **righteousness refers to an ethical, moral standard** and of course that standard is **the nature and the will of Elohim**.

Psalms 145:17 יהוה *is* **righteous in all His ways**, gracious in all His works.

Therefore, **the righteous man is one who serves the Almighty according to His standard:**

Malachi 3:18 Then you shall again discern between the **righteous** and the wicked, between **one who serves Elohim** and one who does not serve Him.

Job describes the **righteous man** as one **who delivers the poor, the orphan, and the widow**. This was the "**righteous clothing**" of Job's life:

Job 29:12 Because I delivered the poor who cried out, the fatherless and *the one who* had no helper.¹³ The blessing of a perishing *man* came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.¹⁴ **I put on righteousness, and it clothed me**; my justice *was* like a robe and a turban.¹⁵ *I was* eyes to the blind, and *I was* feet to the lame.

Righteousness implies relationship. Abraham's faith brought about his **righteousness**:

Genesis 15:6 And he believed in יהוה, and **He accounted it to him for righteousness**.

Continued obedience keeps us **clothed in His righteousness**:

Deuteronomy 6:25 'Then it will be **righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments** before יהוה our Elohim, as He has commanded us.'

As members of a **holy priesthood** (1 Peter 2:5), we can find meaning in these verses:

Psalms 132:9 Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Your saints shout for joy.

2 Chronicles 6:41Let Your priests, O יהוה Elohim, be **clothed with salvation** (Yeshua - ישוע), And let Your saints rejoice in goodness.

Yeshua gave us our priorities:

Matthew 6:33 "But **seek first the kingdom of Elohim and His righteousness**, and all these things shall be added to you.

Yeshua was referencing the **prophets**. The context was **restoration**:

Isaiah 51:1 "Listen to Me, **you who follow after righteousness, You who seek יהוה**: Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug.² Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah *who* bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him."³ **For יהוה will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of יהוה**; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.⁴ " Listen to Me, My people; And give ear to Me, O My nation: For Torah will proceed from Me, And I will make My justice rest **As a light of the peoples**.⁵ **My righteousness is near**, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait upon Me, And on My arm they will trust.

Righteousness will become our heavenly attire:

2 Corinthians 5:2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,³ if indeed, **having been clothed, we shall not be found naked**.⁴ For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but **further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life**.

Righteousness unto salvation does not come through the **keeping of Torah, but** our **obedience to Torah DOES lead to righteousness** without which we will be found **naked** when we stand before our **judge**:

Philippians 3:8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Messiah Yeshua my Adonai, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, **that I may gain Messiah⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Messiah, the righteousness which is from Yah by faith;**

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or **of obedience *leading* to righteousness?**

Revelation 3:14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,¹⁵ "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.¹⁶ "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.¹⁷ "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and **naked** --¹⁸ "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and **white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed**; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and **not be ashamed before Him at His coming**.²⁹ If you know that **He is righteous**, you know that **everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him**.

Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and **keeps his garments, lest he walk naked** and they see his **shame**."

יהוה's **righteousness** will bring about the **restoration of Israel**. Meanwhile, He is looking for us to be seeking and **to be clothed with His righteousness**:

Isaiah 46:12 " Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, **who are far from righteousness**:¹³ **I bring My righteousness near**, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. **And I will place salvation (Yeshua - ישוע) in Zion, For Israel My glory.**

One final thought as I try to connect this back to Vayikra 18. Instead of “**uncovering the nakedness**” of those in our inner circle, we are to **seek to clothe them**. I really do believe that Yeshua was alluding to more than just **physical garments** as He voiced these words:

Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:³⁵ 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;³⁶ **'I was naked and you clothed Me**; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'³⁷ "Then **the righteous will answer Him**, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink?³⁸ **'When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*?'³⁹ 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'⁴⁰ "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, **inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.**'**

Shabbat Shalom!

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