

שְׁמִינִי

SHEMINI/EIGHTH Vayikra/Leviticus 9:1-11:47

The name of our parasha this week is **Shemini (eighth)** and it is found in the first verse:

Vayikra 9:1 It came to pass on the eighth (Shemini - שְׁמִינִי) day that Moshe called Aharon and his sons and the elders of Israel.

The **commands** for the **eighth day** are **conspicuously absent** from the book of **Shemot** (Exodus) and all instructions in **Vayikra** until now. Through much effort, the nation has built this Tabernacle for יְהוָה. Last week, we read of the **seven days of consecration** during which the priests were made ready for their tasks. Now, unexpectedly, we are made aware of an **extra day**. What is the **explanation** for and the **significance** of the “**8th day**”?

The **sudden appearance** of the **8th day** seems to imply that this day, while a **continuation of the seven days** that preceded it, actually had a **significance of its own**. Therefore, it will begin its **own chapter** and its **own parasha**. Since there are **seven days** in the **creation week**, it follows that the number **seven** alludes to the **cycle of the natural world**. **Eight** would therefore point to that which is **beyond the world**...that which is **infinite, godly, and spiritual**.

Catch the **preview** here of **Yeshua**. **Man alone** is not able to **mix the earthly** (matter) and the **spiritual**. But this is **not a problem** for our **Creator**. Just as **He breathed life** (spiritual) into **Adam** (earthly), our **Heavenly Father** has His ways of **joining the two**. When a man follows יְהוָה's **commandments** to perform a particular task, we witness an **incredible fusion of the earthly with the spiritual**. The **613 commandments** are, in effect, **613 bridges between “seven” and “eight”**. Thus we can say that it is through the **observance of His commandments** that **His Spiritual Presence** will become **visible within this physical world**.

This gives even more **significant meaning** to the **description of Yeshua**:

John 1:14 And the Word (spiritual) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Through the **keeping of the commandments**, we also **enter into and reflect the spiritual realm**. This is why **Yeshua** pointed us in the **direction of obedience** as an expression of our love for Him:

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

On the **8th day**, the “**glory of Elohim**” appeared to all the people:

Vayikra 9:23 And Moshe and Aharon went into the Tabernacle of Meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of יְהוָה appeared to all the people,

We would expect then, that with other mentions of the number **eight** in Scripture, we would see a **spiritual connection**. Here are a few examples:

- *Bereshith/Genesis 17:12 "He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.¹³ "He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.*

- The **earthly picture of circumcision** on the **8th day** links a child to the **everlasting (spiritual) covenant**.
- **Shemot/Exodus 22:30** "Likewise you shall do with your oxen and your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the **eighth day you shall give it to Me**.
 - On the **8th day**, a firstborn animal was taken from its mother to be **given to יהוה**.
- **Vayikra 14:8** "He (**metzora**, loosely translated as leper) who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days....¹⁰ " And **on the eighth day** he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil....²³ "He shall bring them to the priest on the **eighth day for his cleansing**, to the door of the Tabernacle of Meeting, **before יהוה**.
 - After 7 days of counting his purity, on the **8th day** he is **able to be cleansed and come before the presence of יהוה**.
- **Vayikra 23:16** 'Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to יהוה'.
 - The **seven weeks of seven days** are to be regarded as a **parallel** on the same model as a **single counting of seven days**, but one which is done **seven times (7 x 7)**, followed by the **8th day** which we know to be **Shavuot** (Pentecost). It was on this **same day** that יהוה's **glory was revealed as a consuming fire** on **Mount Sinai** when He gave the children of Israel the Ten Words (Commandments). Centuries later the **appearance of His glory was repeated** on another **8th day Shavuot** (Acts 2:1-3).
- **Vayikra 23:33** Then יהוה spoke to Moshe, saying,³⁴ "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The **fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to יהוה**...³⁶ 'For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to יהוה'. **On the eighth day** you shall have a **holy convocation**, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to יהוה'. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.
 - The **8th day** following seven days of Sukkot is called "**Hashmini Atzeret (עֲזֵרֶת הַשְּׁמִינִי)**". Since we know that a **day** is likened to a **thousand years**, **Hashmini Atzeret** can be seen as a **picture of the eternity** that occurs **after man's 7,000 years on earth**. It is the **time of the New Heavens and the New Earth** that we read about in **Revelation 21 and 22**.

The **8th day** represents a **level of holiness** that **transcends normal time and space**. You could think of it as a time of becoming "**one with the Almighty**" versus being "**one with the world**". Isn't that what **Yeshua prayed** for in the garden before His crucifixion?

John 17:11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are...²³ "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

So now the big question...**which day of the week did Yeshua resurrect on?** Was it the **7th day (Sabbath)** or the **1st day of the week**, which could also be seen as the **8th day**? Remember that **seven** is a picture of the **creation week**...this represents the **earthly**. **Eight** brings us to a **connection with the spiritual**. Since we've "**been crucified with Messiah**", we have **crossed over with Him from the earthly into the spiritual**. We have become "**set apart**"...that is, "**holy**". Isn't it logical to think that **after Yeshua completed His final week of seven days which ended on Shabbat** (in the same way man will have **seven thousand years ending with the Shabbat Millennium**), that at the moment the **7th turned into the 8th day....RESURRECTION!!**

Now let's return to **Vayikra** and to the **priests** who have just spent **seven full days learning** every minute detail of יהוה's **Tabernacle** and their role in the rituals that will be performed there. It is a time of "**circumcision of the heart**" as they **put away every fleshly inclination** that will prevent them from properly performing their **spiritual duties**. As the **Tabernacle** is a picture of the **perfected body of Messiah**, the unity and the bonding that occurred there must have been incredible. They were prepared to be the **vessels used by יהוה** to **draw all of Israel nearer to the Kingdom**.

Let's draw one more **parallel** with a **past occurrence** and the **8th day**. On the **1st day** of the **creation week**, Elohim said:

*Bereshith/Genesis 1:3 ... "Let there be **light**"; and there was **light**.*

The **light** of the **1st day** is the **illumination** the **Almighty created**. The **light** of the **8th day** (a **1st day** in a second cycle) is the **illumination** that **He teaches US to make**. Our **oneness with the Messiah and with each other** creates a **Tabernacle** that **illuminates** and **gives light to the world!** Elohim began with **light**, and then He **created the earth** as a **dwelling for mankind**. Now the **Israelites** have **built the Tabernacle** as a **dwelling for יהוה**. Then, on the **8th day**, this **dwelling** will be **filled with light** and **with the Presence**, in the form of the **fire** that consumed the sacrifices, and the **light of the Menorah!**

The **most dramatic fire** will come, however, when the **enemies** of יהוה that surround Jerusalem will be **destroyed**. It will come at the **end of the 7th day** or the 7 thousand years, and it will **usher us into the 8th**:

*Revelation 20:7 Now when **the thousand years have expired**, Satan will be released from his prison⁸ and will go out to deceive **the nations** which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And **fire came down from Yah out of heaven and devoured them**.*

As we return to our parasha, a **single verse** brings our story to its climax:

*Vayikra 9:23 And Moshe and Aharon went into the Tabernacle of Meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then **the glory of יהוה** appeared to all the people,*

However, the **celebration** will soon turn to **tragedy**:

*Vayikra 10:1 Then Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aharon, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and **offered strange fire** (aish zarah - אֵשׁ זָרָה) before יהוה, which He had not commanded them.² So **fire went out from יהוה** and devoured them, and they died before יהוה.³ And Moshe said to Aharon, "This is what יהוה spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'" So Aharon held his peace.*

Throughout the ages, Torah commentators have wrestled with the **meaning** of this **unexpected and troubling incident**. We first met **Nadav and Avihu** in **Shemot** where they were invited to **ascend to worship before יהוה**:

Shemot 24:1 Now He said to Moshe, "Come up to יהוה, you and Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar...⁹ Then Moshe went up, also Aharon, Nadav, and Avihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,¹⁰ and they saw the Elohim of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.¹¹ But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw Elohim, and they ate and drank.

Vayikra 10:1 tells us that **Nadav and Avihu offered "strange fire" (אֵשׁ זָרָה)**, also translated as **"alien fire"**, **"unfitting fire"**, or **"profane fire"**. Simply put, this **fire** is something that is **outside the realm of what is permitted**...that is to say, they have **failed to observe a boundary**. To quote **Nehama Leibowitz**:

"These **two men**, who had been privileged to see God face to face, were perhaps so **dazzled by the Holy Presence** that **they thought** that they could once again approach the Holy One and **present an offering of their own**."

The sages offer **many explanations** for their **failures**:

1. They **drank too much wine**
2. They **entered the Holy of Holies**
3. They were **not wearing the proper clothing**
4. They **took fire from somewhere besides the Altar**
5. They **went outside of Torah commands**
6. They were **attempting to exalt themselves as leaders**

Chasidic thought explains that while they may have **drank wine**, their **desire** was **not for the wine per se** but rather, the **heightened spiritual awareness** that they thought could be **obtained through drinking wine**. So, not only did they **enter the Sanctuary** to be **close to the Almighty**, but they did so **under the influence of alcohol**, as they felt this would **help them to come even closer by heightening their spiritual sensitivity**.

However we interpret the phrase, **"strange fire" (אֵשׁ זָרָה)**, the point is that they have **improperly entered into the Presence of יהוה**. Consequently, in **measure for measure punishment**, they are **consumed**. It is no coincidence that the Torah utilizes the **same phrase** for **Elohim's "consumption"** of the **offering** upon the altar and the **"devouring"** of **Nadav and Avihu**:

Vayikra 9:24 and fire came out from before יהוה and consumed (וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְּפָנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל) the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

Vayikra 10:2 And fire went out from יהוה and devoured them (וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְּפָנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל), and they died before יהוה.

So in the **episode of Nadav and Avihu**, we have seen **fire** mentioned **three times**. The **first** is the **fire from heaven** that consumed the burnt offering and ushered in the Presence of **יהוה** (9:24). The **second** was the **"strange fire"** offered by the two sons (10:1). Then the **third** was the **counter-fire** from heaven (10:2). The

message is **simple and serious**. We have been **entrusted with the fire of the Almighty**. **Fire warms** and is a **light**, but it **also burns**. Our **Elohim**, who is the same yesterday, today and forever, is a **consuming fire!**

Devarim/Deuteronomy 4:23 "Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of אלהים your Elohim which He made with you...²⁴ "For אלהים your Elohim is a consuming fire, a jealous El.

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve Elohim acceptably with reverence and godly fear.²⁹ For our Elohim is a consuming fire.

The **question** still **remains**...were **Nadav and Avihu** rebellious to the extent of **disobeying an explicit command of יהוה**? This is **hard to imagine**, especially in light of their **background** and **function as priests**. So far we have dealt with the **possible reasons** for the **fire** being "**strange**". Now let's turn our attention to their **possible motives**.

The **Sifra** offers the following explanation:

“ ‘And Aharon's sons **Nadav and Avihu** each took his censer’ – They, in their **joy**, since **they saw a new fire (the heavenly fire)**, they came to add love to love.”

A further quote from **Rabbi Zvi Shimon**:

“**Nadav and Avihu** were so **overjoyed by God's acceptance of the sacrifices** that they **decided to add another offering**. Their **enthusiasm** and excitement led them to **instinctively perform deeds without contemplating** their desirability and taking the proper precautions. The **awesome love of God** that **Nadav and Avihu** possessed **overshadowed their fear of God**. This **imbalance, the overflowing of love unchecked** by the **restraining** influence of the **fear of God**, led to the **sin of Nadav and Avihu**. In contrast to the ecstatic frenzied states characteristic of modes of worship in Eastern religions, the worship of God, as prescribed by the **Torah**, **warns against a loss of control**. **Love must always be accompanied by the fear of God**. It is the **combination** of the two which creates the **desirable state of mind necessary for a close relationship with God**.”

I believe it is most likely that **Nadav and Avihu** **misunderstood** their task as **priests**. They were **searching for self-expression** and an **outlet for their creativity**. As a result, they became **absorbed** in their **own ideas**, as they sought to **continue their worship**. They did **not understand** that it was **יהוה**, and only **יהוה**, who **determines the framework** for His **worship**. The **Torah** describes for us in great detail all the **laws for worship**. When we **stray** from these forms of worship, we offer up "**strange fire**"...even when it is through **ignorance**.

Proximity to holiness demands utmost care. **Sins** committed by the **priests** (remember **you are priests** according to the order of **Melchizedek**) in the **Tabernacle** (unified body of Messiah) are **especially dreadful**:

Luke 12:48...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

With these thoughts in mind, we understand how it may have been **possible** that **Nadav and Avihu** may have **not had it in their hearts to intentionally sin** against **יהוה**. Still because of their **training** and the **holiness** that **they were to exemplify**, **mistakes could not be made**. When in the **Presence of the Almighty**, His **commands** must be **followed precisely**. There is **no room** for **human initiative, arising from human**

feelings. Elohim dealt with them sternly for an offence prompted by the love of and yearning for Him. Thus we learn the lesson that our Elohim is holy. Men tend to favor and excuse those near to them, but our Elohim increases His expectations of His chosen ones:

Amos 3:2 "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

Our very election as partners in the covenant puts us in a position of living out holiness:

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is Yah who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

1 Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of Elohim; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of Yah? ¹⁸ Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

1 Peter 1:16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." ¹⁷ And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

There is one more little detail concerning Nadav and Avihu that I'd like to mention:

Vayikra 10:5 So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moshe had said.

We are told that Nadav and Avihu were carried out "by their tunics". This little detail indicates that they were not completely consumed by the fire. It appears that their clothing was left intact. What type of clothing were the sons of Aharon wearing?

Shemot 28:39 "You shall skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen thread, you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work. ⁴⁰ " For Aharon's sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty.

*Vayikra 8:13 Then Moshe brought Aharon's sons and put tunics on them, girded them with sashes, and put hats on them, as **וְהָיָה** had commanded Moshe.*

The tunics of Nadav and Avihu were made of white linen. Now white linen would be an interesting topic to follow throughout the Scriptures, but for now let's consider this verse:

Revelation 19:8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

So...if the fine/white linen is a picture of the righteous acts of the saints, and the linen garments of Nadav and Avihu were not consumed by the fire, then their works survived the judgment! The good works that they had already done would not be forgotten by the Almighty Judge, despite the error they had made! Where have we heard about works being judged by fire?

1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of Elohim which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Yeshua the Messiah. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work

will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

As **believers in Yeshua**, our **faith has gained us forgiveness and acceptance by the Father**. However, there is still this matter of being **judged for our works**.

Matthew 16:27 "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

It is an **error to presume** that since we have **received grace and forgiveness of our sins**, the Father will **now overlook a sin** that is in **direct disobedience to His Torah**. Being a **servant of the Most High** is **exciting** and feels wonderful. However, **to go forward into self initiated ministry without the anointing of the Messiah** and according to the **truth**, is **treading in dangerous territory**. **Man's theology** and doctrines can also be a **hazard**. A **perilous phrase** we hear often in our day is... **"There is more than one way to approach God."**

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

In **Vayikra 9:12-21** we read of the **five animals** which were offered as a part of the **8th day sacrifices**. First let's take a look at each animal relating them to **other occurrences** in **Torah**:

- **Goat** – represents **atonement for the tribes' participation** in the **sale of Yosef** (whose coat was dipped in **goat's blood** - Bereshith 37:31)
- **Calf** – atones for the **sin of the golden calf**
- **Lamb** – serves as a **reminder** of the **Pesach (Passover) Lamb** which is a **rejection of Egyptian idolatry**

Peace offerings – meant to **thank the Almighty** for the **above-mentioned sins**

- **Ox** – **thanksgiving for atoning for selling Yosef**, since Moshe refers to **Yosef as an ox** (Devarim 33:17)
- **Ram** – signifies the act of **teshuvah** (repentance) to Elohim, symbolized by the **blowing of a shofar** (made of a ram's horn)

How do these **animal offerings** reveal the **"hidden mysteries"** of the **ultimate offering of Yeshua**? **Nick Amic** provides us with insights on each:

- **Goat** – **two identical goats** were offered every **Yom Kippur** (Vayikra 16:7-11) one for a **sin offering**, the other to **Azazel** (literally the **"goat that departs"**). This is akin to the Brit Chadasha's (New Testament's) mention of **two Adam's** – the **first Adam** that **"departed"**, and the **second Adam (Yeshua)** that served as a **sin offering (Romans 5:12-19)**.
- **Calf** – appears in the parable of the **prodigal's son** – where a **"fatted calf"** was slaughtered (Luke 15:23-30 discusses the **dispute** of the **older son [Judah]**, over the **killing of the calf for the unworthy son [Israel/nations]**)
- **Lamb** – represents the **Lamb of Yah** (John 1:29,36)
- **Ox** – reminds us of how **Yosef** is an **archetype of Yeshua**. Yosef was sold out by his own brothers (cf. Matthew 26:14-16), unjustly convicted of a crime he didn't commit, rose to power among the Gentiles, and is later revealed to his brothers who were originally blinded to him (Luke 2:30-32).

- **Ram** – alluded to in the **shofar blast, announcing the return of the Messiah** (1 Corinthians 15:52). It was **also Abraham's substitute sacrifice** instead of Isaac.

Moving on in our parasha, let's focus on these interesting verses:

Vayikra 10:16 Then Moshe made careful inquiry (שָׁרַף שָׁרַף) about the goat of the sin offering, and there it was -- burned up. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aharon who were left, saying,¹⁷ "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it is most holy, and Elohim has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before ה'?"¹⁸ "See! Its blood was not brought inside the holy place; indeed you should have eaten it in a holy place, as I commanded."¹⁹ And Aharon said to Moshe, "Look, this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before ה', and such things have befallen me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of ה'?"

Within the text, we find a **halakhic debate** as to **whether or not it would have been proper** for Aharon and his sons to **eat the sin offering** while they were in a **state of mourning**. **Moshe** insists that all of the **service must continue as prescribed**, not considering the personal circumstances of Aharon's deceased sons. **Aharon** argues that **all of the service prescribed for that particular day** of the Tabernacle's inauguration **must be followed**, but when it comes to the **sin offering of the goat for Rosh Chodesh** (1st day of the month) – which is **a fixed law for all generations** – there is **room to excuse them** from eating it in the prescribed manner.

In **Aharon's brief response**, he **sums up the events** that have just taken place:

...such things have befallen me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of ה'?"

Rashbam suggests that **Aharon** was saying that in the **midst of this great day** when the glory of יהוה was displayed, his **joy** had become **mixed with sorrow**. **Aharon** had been able to **accept Elohim's judgment** and not publically display his grief, yet his **heart** was **full of anguish and sorrow**. For the meat of the **sacrifices should properly be eaten with joy** and not with mourning. **Would יהוה really want Aharon to ignore completely the death of his two sons?** There certainly was **some significance to their deaths**, and **if Aharon would pay no attention to it, ignoring the event and its message, and go on to eat the sacrifice with a joyful heart, this would be a distortion that could not possibly be favorable in the Almighty's eyes.**

Rambam continues to teach that **when a disaster befalls the nation, it is important to understand the reason for it and to repent; not to ignore it**. This is the **same message that Aharon was trying to convey to Moshe** – despite the fact that the sacrificial service continued, **it cannot be that everything continues as usual**. The **death** of his sons was a **lesson**, and he had not yet **grasped the meaning**. In a moment of greatness, **Moshe displays the grace** found within the **Torah**:

Vayikra 10:20 So when Moshe heard that, he was content.

Take one more look at **Vayikra 10:16** for there you will see the **middle words** found in the **Torah** (שָׁרַף שָׁרַף). There is **not one middle word in the Torah**, since the total number of words in the Torah is **even**. The **center** of the **Torah** in terms of words **comes between the words Darosh Darash** (דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ) which literally, in context, would read **“and Moshe searchingly searched”**. **Darash** is the word from which we get **“midrash”**. Only by **searching diligently** (דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ) can we penetrate to the **real truth!**

The **middle letter** of the **Torah** is also found in this week's parasha. The **middle letter** is a **vav (ו)**, found in the word "**belly**". In the **ancient Torah scrolls**, this letter is actually **enlarged**:

Vayikra 11:42 'Whatever crawls on its **belly** (וִיִּרְמָה), whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth -- these you shall not eat, for they are an abomination.

The Hebrew thought about this is that it "**alludes to the humiliation of the serpent** who was cut down to size and made to **go on his belly** (Bereshith 3:14). Only by humiliating the serpent and **rejecting evil** is it possible to connect with G-d." It is interesting to me that this **letter** is found in the word for "**belly**" in the **midst of the food laws**.

Until now we have focused on the **Tabernacle**, and the **absolute necessity** of the **priesthood** to be **pure and holy** to **enable** the **Presence of יהוה** to **dwell within**. As we consider our **own bodies** as **Tabernacles** of the **Most High**, it seems logical that we should proceed to **chapter 11** to learn of the **foods** which we are allowed to bring into our **personal sanctuaries** to **achieve holiness** and **unity** with the **Spirit**.

The **first command** that Elohim gave the **first human** was a **dietary law** with a **restriction**:

Bereshith 2:16 And יהוה Elohim commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

We have been **commanded** from the **beginning** to **sanctify the activity of eating**. Chasidic thought explains that **unclean foods** are "**spiritual parasites**" that **target** specifically those areas which are **potential places of holiness**.

The **food laws** are about the **hallowing of every day**. They are about our **minds** and our **stomachs**. They **teach** us concerning the **curbing of our appetites**:

Philippians 3:19 ... whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame -- who set their mind on earthly things.

Avoiding unclean foods helps establish controls and **boundaries in our lives**. Not every appetite is worthy of being satiated. Controls and **boundaries** are **sadly lacking** in our **world**. We **gravitate towards comfort, convenience, and gratification**, but we **should be focused on covenant, community, and being set apart**.

2 Corinthians 6:16 ... For you are the sanctuary of the living Elohim. As Elohim has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their Elohim, And they shall be My people."¹⁷ Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says Adonai. Do not touch what is **unclean**, And I will receive you."

Many **explanations** have been given for the **dietary laws**. Some see them as **rules of hygiene**. Potentially disease-ridden animals should be avoided. The **greatest reason** for **keeping these commandments**, however, are **purely for the reason** that they were **given by the Almighty**:

Vayikra 11:44 'For I am יהוה your Elohim. You shall therefore **hallow** (kadash - קִדַּשׁ) yourselves, and you shall be **holy** (kadosh - קְדוֹשׁ) for I am **holy** (kadosh - קְדוֹשׁ)...⁴⁵ 'For I am יהוה who brings you

up out of the land of Egypt, to be your Elohim. You shall therefore be **holy** (kadosh - קָדוֹשׁ), for I am **holy** (kadosh - קָדוֹשׁ)...⁴⁷ 'to **distinguish** (le-havdil - לְהַבְדִּיל) between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.' "

We find similar verses later on in Vayikra:

Vayikra 20:24 I am אֱלֹהֵיךָ your Elohim, who has **separated** you (hivdalti - הִבְדַּלְתִּי) from the peoples.²⁵ 'You shall therefore **distinguish** (ve-hivdaltem - וְהִבְדַּלְתֶּם) between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have **separated** (hivdalti - הִבְדַּלְתִּי) from you as unclean.²⁶ 'And you shall be **holy** (kadosh - קָדוֹשׁ) to Me, for I אֱלֹהֵיךָ am **holy** (kadosh - קָדוֹשׁ), and have **separated** you (va-avdil - וְאַבְדַּלְתִּי) from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

Notice the repeated words in these verses – “**holy**” (kadosh/kadash - קָדוֹשׁ/ קִדְּשׁ) and “**distinguish/separate**” (various forms of badal - בָּדַל). To be **holy** is to be able to make **distinctions** and to **recognize and honor the boundaries** our Creator has given us. Our **interaction** with the **Almighty** is **full of boundaries** that must be **recognized**. Peter refers to us as a “**royal priesthood**” and Ezekiel gives us a **job description of priests**:

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Ezekiel 44:23 "And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."²⁴ "In controversy they shall stand as judges, and judge it according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed meetings, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.

To be **holy** is to be a **guardian of the boundaries** that אֱלֹהֵיךָ has set for us. Now let's finish with some interesting thoughts on **clean animals**:

Vayikra 11:3 'Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having split hooves and chewing the cud -- that you may eat.

These two aspects of a kosher land animal are not a means of **identifying** them as being kosher/clean. Rather, they are the **reason** for them being kosher. In other words, having **split hooves** and **regurgitating** its cud are **what makes the animal clean**. We can relate these characteristics to **our lives**. The **split hoof** could represent the **duality of life**. From the very beginning of existence, there has been a **duality** – **land/heavens, light/darkness, humanity/Almighty, Isaac/Ishmael, Jacob/Esau, Rachel/Leah, Moshe/Aharon, Israel/nations, Shabbat/workdays, holy/profane**. The **parted hoof** reminds us that there are **distinctions** in the **world**. By being able to **distinguish** between them, we can **maintain our holiness**.

How can we look at the **chewing of the cud**? Philo puts it this way:

“Just as a **cud-chewing animal** after biting through the food keeps it at rest in the gullet, **again** after a bit **draws it up and chews it** and **then passes it on to the belly**, so the **student**, after receiving from the teacher through his ears the principles and lore of wisdom, **prolongs the process of learning**, since he cannot at once comprehend and grasp them securely, until by **using memory to call up each thing that he has heard**...he stamps a firm impression of them on his soul.”

We could refer to this as **meditation**:

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the Torah of יהוה, And in His Torah he meditates day and night.

יהוה uses a variety of **pictures** to **make His ways known**. Isn't it amazing that even in the **animals** He has given us as **food** are the **characteristics** that **He hopes to reap in us**! Your **body** is the "**Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit**". Is not the thought of bringing a **pig** into your **Tabernacle** **repulsive** to you? It is to יהוה. This is what we find in the **context** of an **end-times section of Isaiah**:

Isaiah 66:17 "Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, To go to the gardens After an idol in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, Shall be consumed together," says יהוה.

Let's end with these verses from **Thessalonians**:

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For Yah did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.⁸ Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but Yah, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle