

Parashat Terumah

פרשת תרומה

Shabbat Adar 2, 5772, February 25, 2012

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The Glory of God Reveals the Need for Blood Atonement

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 25:1-27:19

הפטרה: Isaiah 66:1-24

הברית: Mark 10-11

החדשה

Triennial cycle: Bereshit / Genesis 26:1-30

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This week's Parashah, Parashat Terumah (*Shemot / Exodus 25:1-27:19*) the Lord tells Moshe to tell the Sons of Yisrael to raise a contribution for the Lord (25:1, *דַבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבָבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמָתִי*), of gold, silver, and bronze, linen materials, goat hair, rams skins, and acacia wood.

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The word Terumah (*תְּרוּמָה*) is derived from the word *תרם* meaning "to donate or contribute." Terumat Hamaaser and Terumah Gedola (types of heave offerings)

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were the offerings that were the possession of the Cohanim (Priests) and could be eaten by themselves and their families. The Terumah obligatory offering that the Lord is asking here in this week's study is for the purpose of the construction of the Mishkhan (Tabernacle). It is within the Mishkhan that the various sacrifices (Korbanot, *קִרְבָּנוֹת*) are to be offered by the Cohanim consisting of animals such as sheep, bulls, goats, doves (for the poor), grain (Mincha), wine, and incense.

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The Lord then asks that a sanctuary (Mishkhan) be made so that He can dwell among them (25:8). The Lord shows Moshe the pattern of the tabernacle and the furniture for the tabernacle (25:9-27:19). The construction of the Ark of the Covenant is given in 25:10-22. It is interesting here that the Lord instructs

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Moshe to construct the mercy seat upon the *אֲרוֹן הַבְּרִית* (Ark of the Covenant) making the image of two Cherubim (*כְּרֻבִים*). Two Parshiot ago, in Parashat Yitro, in the giving of the Ten Commandments (*עֲשֵׂרֵת הַדְּבָרוֹת*) we find the command to make no graven images. However, in today's Parashah we find God instructing to construct two Cherubim to be placed upon the Mercy Seat the cover of the Ark of the Covenant. Is this a violation of His own mitzvah (command) or is there something special that the Lord is trying to show us concerning the Mercy Seat?

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פרשת תרומה ספר שמות פרק כה פסוק יט-כב

יט וַעֲשֵׂה פְרוּב אֶחָד מִקְצֵה מִזְבֵּחַ וּכְרוֹב-אֶחָד מִקְצֵה מִזְבֵּחַ מִזְבֵּחַ מִן-הַכֹּפֶּר רֵת תַעֲשֶׂה וְאֶת-הַכְּרֻבִים עַל-שְׁנֵי קְצוֹתָיו: כ וְהָיוּ הַכְּרֻבִים פְּרֹשֵׁי כַנָּפִים לְמַעַלָּה סְכָכִים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל-הַכֹּפֶּר רֵת וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל-

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אֶחָיו אֶל-הַכֹּפֶּר רֵת יִהְיוּ פְנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים: כא וְנָתַתְּ אֶת-הַכֹּפֶּר רֵת עַל-הָאָרֶץ מִלְּמַעַלָּה וְאֶל-הָאָרֶץ תַתָּן אֶת-הָעֵדֻת אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּן אֵלֶיךָ: כב וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לְךָ שֵׁם וְדַבַּרְתִּי אִתְּךָ מֵעַל הַכֹּפֶּר רֵת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים אֲשֶׁר עַל-אֲרוֹן הָעֵדֻת אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה אוֹתְךָ אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

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Shemot / Exodus 25:19-22
25:19 'Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. 25:20 'The cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat. 25:21 'You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you. 25:22 'There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel. (NASB)

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The instruction to construct two Cherubim was representative of the image Moshe saw upon the mountain of Sinai. The Scriptures provide us with a mental picture of how the Ark was constructed; two Cherubim were made whose wings were directed towards the center of the Mercy Seat. The singular form Cherub (כְּרוּב) and plural כְּרֻבִים (Cherubim) is the name of these angelic beings which are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. The first occurrence of the Cherubim in the Scriptures is found in *Bereshit / Genesis 3:23-24* (כַּג וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּמִים מִגֶּן-עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹד אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִשָּׁם: כַּד וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁפֹּן מִקֶּדֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּמִים מִגֶּן-עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹד אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה וְאֶת-הַכְּרֻבִים וְאֶת-לַהֲט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לְשָׂמֹר אֶת-דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים: *therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 3:24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. (NASB)* The Targum Onkelos states וְתַרְיֵךְ יֵת אָדָם וְאֲשֶׁרֶיָּה מִלְּקַדְמֵיּוֹן מִמְּדַנְחָ "לְגִינְתָּא דְעֵדֶן יֵת כְּרוּבֵיא וְיֵת שְׁוֹן חֶרְבָּא דְמִתְהַפְכָּא לְמִיטְרָ יֵת אוֹרְחָ אֵילָן חַיִּיאֵדְדָּה: "and drove out man from the Garden of Eden and placed Cherub (כְּרוּבֵיא) with the edge of the sword to keep the way of the tree of life/salvation." The purpose was so that man would not reach out and take from the tree of life and save himself from death. These scriptures are the beginning point that directs our attention to the Lord God Almighty, He is the way through whom we are saved, we cannot save ourselves and God directs out attention here to the Angel, the Cherubim, protecting the way to everlasting life. The next reference to Cherubim is found here in this week's Parashah, *Shemot 25:17-20* and *26:1, 31*. God promises to speak to Moshe from between the Cherubim (*25:22, כַּב וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לְךָ שֵׁם וְדִבַרְתִּי אִתְּךָ מֵעַל הַכַּפַּי רֵת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים אֲשֶׁר* (עַל-אֲרוֹן הָעֵדֻת אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוְהָ אוֹתְךָ אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: פֶּט וּכְבֹּא מִשָּׁה אֶל-אֱלֹהֵי מוֹעֵד *Bamidbar / Numbers 7:89 לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶת-הַקּוֹל מִדִּבְרֵי אֱלֹהֵי מֵעַל הַכַּפַּי רֵת אֲשֶׁר עַל-אֲרוֹן הָעֵדֻת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי פֶט וּכְבֹּא מִשָּׁה אֶל-אֱלֹהֵי מוֹעֵד *7:89 Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him. (NASB) 1 Samuel 4:4 וַיִּשְׁלַח הָעָם שָׁלֹה וַיִּשְׂאוּ מִשָּׁם אֶת אֲרוֹן בְּרִית-יְהוָה וְהָ צְבָאוֹת יֹשֵׁב 4:4 So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts who sits above the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. (NASB). Yeshayahu / Isaiah 37:16 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים אֲתָהּ-הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים לְבַדְךָ לֹכֵל מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ אֲתָהּ 37:16 'O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. (NASB), Tehilim / Psalms 80:2 ב ר'עֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל | הָאֲזִינָה נ' הַג כַּצ' אֵן יוֹסֵף יֹשֵׁב 80:1 Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth! (NASB), 99:1 א 99:1 The Lord reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake! (NASB) In**

each of these cases, God is described as sitting between or above the two Cherubim (כְּרֻבִים) speaking to Moshe (*Bamidbar 7:89*), and is the location that is described as the presence of God. In *Ezekiel 10:1-2*, Ezekiel has a vision where

90 The Divine presence is written in this way וַיֵּרָם כְּבוֹד-יְהוָה מֵעַל הַכְּרוּב עַל מַפְתָּן דְּ:יְהוָה that the “glory of God” (וַיֵּרָם כְּבוֹד-יְהוָה) ascended from on the Cherub (מֵעַל הַכְּרוּב) from the threshold of

95 of God. It was from upon the Cherub that God’s glory preceded to the house (temple). This description by Ezekiel is consistent with the description of the Cherubim as the location or place where God speaks from above the Ark of the Covenant. The Cherubim guard the glory of God. *Hebrews 9:5* describes the

100 Cherubim on the Ark as “the Cherubim of glory” (ὑπεράνω δὲ αὐτῆς Χερουβὶν δόξης κατασκιάζοντα τὸ ἱλαστήριον: περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν νῦν λέγειν κατὰ μέρος, *9:5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail*).

The description of the Χερουβὶν δόξης “Cherubim of glory” is described as such as a result of the cloud of glory that rests upon them. As is indicated in

105 Ezekiel’s vision, the כְּבוֹד (glory) of God rose up from the Cherub to the Temple. The Cherubim are placed at each end of the Mercy Seat with their wings and faces pointed upward and towards each other directing our attention to the center place. This is the place which is anointed with oil, and the blood of the covenant is placed once a year for atonement from sin. God’s presence and His Glory that

110 resides in the very place our atonement is made speaks to us that it is God who saves, He is the one who delivers us, He is the one who gives us forgiveness of sins, and it is by the blood of the covenant that atonement is brought and payment is made for our sins. As it was in the Garden of Eden, the Cherubim guard the way protecting the way so man could not take from the tree of life and save himself, we must rely upon the Lord God for our salvation, the Cherubim guard the way on the Ark of the Covenant to salvation and forgiveness of sins. This reliance upon God for our salvation is consistent with the Lord bringing His Messiah into this world for the forgiveness of our sins, it is the Lord’s doing, and by doing this the Lord is glorified.

120 The Cherubim are mentioned in several places throughout the Tanach, we just studied a few of these scripture references in *1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Ezekiel, Isaiah* as well as in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) in Sefer *Hitgalut / Revelation*. Studying the Cherubim, these angelic beings appear to be the bearers of God’s glory and thus are in very close proximity to the throne of God. These angelic beings attend to the Lord and praise Him continually according to the Apostle John in *Hitgalut / Revelation*. The Cherubim guarding the way to the tree of life in *Bereshit / Genesis 3:24*, following man’s fall into sin and disobedience suggests these creatures are the guardians of God’s glory. The two golden Cherubim described in this week’s

130 portion are mounted to the cover of the ark whose wings stretch over its top are symbolic of keeping the Glory of God and is the place God meets with man. The placement of the Cherubim on the Mercy Seat indicates that the way to God is

protected and it is only in the blood of Yeshua that we can approach the Most High God.

135 The holiest place, the Kodesh HaKedoshim (קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים) is the location the Ark of the Covenant is to be placed and is described first here in Parashat Terumah (*Shemot / Exodus 25:10-22*). The Scriptures describe the Ark of the Covenant along with the golden jar containing a sample of the manna on which the Yisraelites lived for 40 years in the wilderness (*Shemot / Exodus 16:33*), Aharon's rod, the dry almond branch that sprouted overnight as a sign to Korach and his rebels that Moshe and Aharon were the Lord's authorized representatives (*Bamidbar / Numbers 17:25*), and the second set of stone Tablets of the Covenant that Moshe brought down from mount Sinai (*Shemot / Exodus 34:1-4, 28-29; Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:1-5*). According to the Scriptures, the Ark contained only the stone tablets in Solomon's Temple according to *2 Chronicles 5:10*. *Shemot / Exodus 16:33-34* describes that the manna is to be placed before the Testimony. The Hebrew text however does not specifically state that the Manna and Aharon's rod are to be placed "inside of" the Ark of the Covenant. The Scriptures always appear to say to set them "before" the testimony. In *Shemot 150 25:22* it says "אָרוֹן הָעֵדוּת" the "Ark of the testimony," so the testimony is the two stone tablets that Moshe brought back from the Mountain of Sinai. *Shemot / Exodus 16:33-34* לֵךְ וְיִאֱמַר מִיָּשָׁה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח צִנְצֻנֹת אַחַת וְתֵן-שָׁמָּה מִלֵּא-הָעֵמֶר מִן מִן וְהָיָה אֵל-מִיָּשָׁה וַיַּיְחִיחוּ אַהֲרֹן וְהָיָה אֵת לְפָנַי יְהוָה לְמִשְׁמַרְתָּ לְדֹר וָדֹר תִּיכַם: לֵךְ וְיִאֱמַר מִיָּשָׁה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח צִנְצֻנֹת אַחַת וְתֵן-שָׁמָּה מִלֵּא-הָעֵמֶר מִן מִן וְהָיָה אֵת לְפָנַי יְהוָה לְמִשְ�מַרְתָּ: *16:33 Moses said to Aaron, 'Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations.'* *6:34 As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept. (NASB) Shemot / Exodus 25:16* טַז וְנָתַתָּ אֶל-הָאָרֹן אֶת הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ: *25:16 'You shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you. (NASB)* Here in *Shemot 25:16* the Hebrew text states that "you are to give unto the ark the testimony that I gave unto you." Again the testimony here is referring to the two stone tablets (10 commandments) and the giving unto is translated in our English bible as the "putting into the Ark." *Shemot / Exodus 25:21* כֹּא וְנָתַתָּ אֶת-כַּף הַרַחֲמִים עַל-הָאָרֹן מִלְּמַעְלָה וְאֶל-הָאָרֹן תָּתַתָּ אֶת-הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ: *25:21 'You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you. (NASB)* In *Shemot 25:21* appears to be a reiteration of the command in *Shemot 25:16* to place the testimony inside of the Ark of the Covenant. *Shemot / Exodus 40:20* כֹּ וַיִּקַּח וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הָעֵדוּת אֶל-הָאָרֹן וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת-כַּף הַרַחֲמִים עַל-הָאָרֹן וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הַכֹּפֶּתֶת עַל-הָאָרֹן מִלְּמַעְלָה: *40:20 Then he took the testimony and put it into the ark, and attached the poles to the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. (NASB)* In *Shemot 40:20* we read that Moshe places the testimony (commandments) into the Ark, attached the poles and placed the Mercy Seat on top closing the Ark. *Bamidbar / Numbers 17:10-11* י הָרָמוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדוּת הַזֹּאת וְאָכְלָהּ אֲתָם פָּרְגַע וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם: יֵא וְיִאֱמַר מִיָּשָׁה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח אֶת-הַמַּחֲתָה וְתֵן-עָלֶיהָ אֵשׁ מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשִׂים קֶטֶר וְהוֹלֵךְ מִהֲרָה אֶל-הָעֵדוּת וְכִפַּר עָלֵיהֶם כִּי-יֵצֵא הַקֶּצֶף מִלְּפָנַי: *17:10 But the Lord said to Moses, 'Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they will not die.'* *17:11 Thus Moses did; just as the Lord had commanded him, so he did. (NASB)* In *Bamidbar 17:10-*

180 11 we read that the Lord commands Moshe to place the rod of Aharon before the testimony. The question arises to the length of the rod, was Aharon's rod short enough to actually be placed inside of the Ark? The first and second Chronicles say *Aleph Melechim / 1 Kings 8:9* ט אין בַּאֲרוֹן רק שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הָאֲבָנִים אֲשֶׁר הִנִּחַ מֹשֶׁה 8:9 *There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. (NASB) Bet Divrei Hayyamim / 2 Chronicles 5:10* י אין בַּאֲרוֹן רק שְׁנֵי הַלְּחוֹת אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן מֹשֶׁה בְּחֹרֵב אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה עִם-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּצֵאתָם מִמִּצְרָיִם: 5:10 *There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of Egypt. (NASB)* At this point in time it appears that the Jar of Manna and Aharon's rod had disappeared from the Ark of the Testimony.

The scriptures seem to indicate that "the testimony" is placed "inside of" the Ark of the Covenant. The only reference that can be found that states the Testimony (tablets), manna, and Aharon's rod are within the Ark of the Covenant is found in the first century witness who wrote *Hebrews 9:4*. Looking at the various translations on *Hebrews 9:4* ὑπεράνω δὲ αὐτῆς Χερουβὶν δόξης κατασκιάζοντα τὸ ἱλαστήριον: περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν νῦν λέγειν κατὰ μέρος, The New American Standard Translation states *9:4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; (NASB)* Young's Literal Translation states *9:4 having a golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid all roundabout with gold, in which [is] the golden pot having the manna, and the rod of Aaron that budded, and the tables of the covenant, (YLT)* and the Complete Jewish Bible states *9:4 which had the golden altar for burning incense and the Ark of the Covenant, entirely covered with gold. In the Ark were the gold jar containing the man, Aharon's rod that sprouted and the stone Tablets of the Covenant; (CJB)* Looking at the various Greek manuscripts, there are no textual variants on *Hebrews 9:4* that show the rod and jar of manna are not within the Ark. Since the Hebrew text states that these were placed "before" the testimony, it has been interpreted that these were placed inside of the Ark of the Covenant. It does seem odd that in these various places in the Tanach that the Ark of the Covenant was actually opened and checked. The ability for the Ark to be checked bears questioning with regard to the holiness of the Ark as it is described in *2 Samuel 6:3-8* "when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, ... And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him" Uzzah was killed having touched the Ark (note that this is reiterated in *Aleph Divrei Hayyamim / 1 Chronicles 13:10*). One would think that the holiness of the Ark would prevent people from opening the Ark to look inside. I suspect that the one who is capable of opening the Ark would have been the Cohen HaGadol (High Priest). In addition to this, in Parashat Chukot, Moshe uses the rod to strike the rock for water. This being the case, what we find in the scriptures in *Bamidbar / Numbers 17*, Moshe tells Aharon to place the rod before the testimony, and a little later in *Bamidbar / Numbers 19-22*, Moshe is using the rod. Does this indicate that Moshe went into the Kedosh Kedoshim (Holy of

Holies), opened the Ark of the Covenant, and brought the rod out to be used? Or, was the rod placed somewhere within in the Mishkhan (Tabernacle) in the holiest place as a witness, that was considered to be "before the testimony?" It is difficult to reconcile that Moshe would have been going in and out of the Kedosh Kedoshim and opening the Ark in a somewhat frequent manner to get the rod for use especially on the holiness of the Ark itself where the glory of God dwells. The use of Aharon's rod would seem to be consistent with the places in the Tanach that state the only thing remaining within the Ark was the Testimony (Tablets). However, according to *Hebrews 9:4* the scriptures are explicitly clear, the Jar of manna and Aharon's rod were placed inside of the Ark. *Hebrews 9:4* is a First Century witness that these items were believed to be located inside of the Ark. So, what happened to the Jar of Manna and Aharon's rod? Scripture is not clear. Throughout the Tanach, there are various instances in the scriptures where the Ark was captured by Yisrael's enemies. Could it be that these things were taken out of the Ark sometime during these times? A golden jar would be valuable. The budded rod, by the time someone saw it, it may have been a very dried out piece of wood and discarded? One thing that is certain, the Jar of Manna and Aharon's Rod were witnesses of the mercy God had on the Children of Yisrael during their journey through the wilderness. The two stone tablets remaining in the Ark of the Covenant is an indication that God's Torah is and does remain valid for each and every one of us today as it remained in the Ark, and remained valid for each person in Yisrael in those days.

So, what can we learn from the Cherubim? The Lid of the Ark written in our English translations is known as the "Mercy Seat" and in Hebrew is called "Kapporet" (כַּפֹּרֶת). The Kapporet is the physical place where Adonai met with the Cohen Hagadol on Yom Kippur (See *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:2*). Here the Lord is describing the mercy seat upon the Ark of the Covenant: *Shemot / Exodus 26:34* 'You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the holy of holies. (NASB) The phrase "Mercy Seat" is not a translation of the Hebrew text which reads as "kapporet" (כַּפֹּרֶת) in the Masoretic text or of the Greek term "hilasterion" (ἐξιλάσιον) from the Septuagint (LXX), rather, "Mercy Seat" is a translation by *William Tyndale* from the German translation "gnadenstuhl." The translation of "gnadenstuhl" literally means "Seat of Grace," signifying the location of God's grace. The word kapporet (כַּפֹּרֶת) etymologically is derived from the root kaphar (כָּפַר) which means to cover, atone, or to be atoned. Similarly, hilasterion means atonement (expiation), which is a term denoting the place where appeasement or satisfaction is made in the blood of the sacrifice. Note that the Latin Vulgate translates hilasterion as "propitiatorium" which is a noun meaning atonement and most likely the source for our English translation in the KJV of "propitiation;" a means of reconciliation before God. The Mercy Seat is the place God resides and forgiveness is obtained which directs our attention to God as the source of our salvation and of life. The two Cherubim casting their shadow on the mercy seat show us that way to everlasting life. The way is guarded by the Cherubim for the purpose of illustration that man must follow in the prescribed manner in which God desires for obtaining life and salvation, just as the Lord had guarded the place in Garden of Eden (*Bereshit / Genesis 3:24*). The Scriptures say that the Lord spoke to Moshe "from between the Cherubim" (*Shemot / Exodus 25:22, Bamidbar / Numbers 7:89*), the Tanach speaks often of

275 Lord's presence in association to the Cherubim(*1 Samuel 4:4, Isaiah 37:16, Ezekiel 10:1-22, and Psalms 80:1, 99:1*) therefore the presence of the Cherubim is synonymous with the place of God's residence.

280 Studying the Torah on the construction of the Ark of the Covenant, the various references of the Cherubim guarding the tree of life, the two Cherubim on the Kapporet (Mercy Seat), Ezekiel's vision of the glory of God proceeding from off of the Cherubim, the need for atonement in blood is for certain an everlasting mitzvah (command). We cannot and must not approach the Lord by our own design and making. In the Torat Cohanim (law of the priests) nearly half of the 613 commandments found in the Torah are located in sefer Vayikra (the book of Leviticus) and are associated with the rules and regulations pertaining to the 285 sacrificial system for blood atonement. Here in the construction of the ארון הברית (Ark of the Covenant) the Lord is exemplifying the importance of blood atonement by the use of the Cherubim to protect the mercy seat. The angelic beings in this representation indicate the need for atonement through blood in the way God requires (His sacrificial system). In our growing understanding of the 290 Torah, from the perspective on the use of the Cherubim, blood atonement is a very important aspect of our faith before God.

295 The last couple weeks, we have been looking at the restructuring of Judaism that was the result of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. The rabbinical reinterpretation of the Torah for a non-Temple based society was headed by Yochanan ben Zakkai. Yochanan ben Zakkai was one of the 300 tannaim, an important Jewish sage in the era of the Second Temple, and a primary contributor to the core text of Rabbinical Judaism the Mishnah. He is widely regarded as one of the most important Jewish figures of his time. Upon the destruction of Jerusalem, Yochanan converted his school at Jamnia into the Jewish religious centre, insisting that certain privileges, given by Jewish law uniquely to Jerusalem, should be transferred to Jamnia. (*Talmud Bavli Rosh Ha Shanah 4:1-3*) Yochanan's school functioned as a re-establishment of the Sanhedrin, and he soon established the Council of Jamnia in 70-90 CE. The purpose was so Judaism could decide how to deal with the loss of the sacrificial 305 altars of the temple in Jerusalem, and other pertinent questions. Referring to a passage in sefer *Hosea 6:6* which states "*I desired mercy, and not sacrifice,*" Yochanan helped persuade the council to replace animal sacrifice with prayer, (*Rabbi Nathan, Avot 4*) a practice that continues in today's worship services. Rabbinic Judaism thus emerged from the council of Jamnia conclusions.

310 *Raban Yochanan ben Zakkai once was walking with his disciple Rabbi Joshua near Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple. Rabbi Joshua looked at the temple ruins and said: "Alas for us! The place which atoned for the sins of the people Yisrael through the ritual of animal sacrifice lies in ruins!" Then Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai spoke to him these words of comfort: "Be not grieved, by son. There is another way of gaining atonement even though the Temple is destroyed. We must now gain atonement through deeds of loving kindness." For it is written, "Lovingkindness I desire, not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). (Rabbi Nathan, Avot 4)*

Tannaim

A group of Jewish sages/teachers who were active between 70 to 200 CE and their main literary product is the Mishnah wherein their views are recorded.

As a result of the destruction of the Temple, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai essentially bypassed nearly half of the mitzvot (commandments) given in sefer Vayikra by God to Moshe while simultaneously establishing rabbinic Judaism as the interpretive authority of the Torah for all Jews throughout the Diaspora. This is definitely an interesting part of history in the history of Yisrael.

As we have studied in the Torah, in the Garden of Eden the Lord guarded the tree of life with the Cherubim and a flaming sword and the Ark of the Covenant, in similar fashion, was constructed with the Cherubim protecting the mercy seat where atonement was to be made in blood. These are essential elements of our faith since without the blood we cannot have atonement for sins before God. In Parashat Yitro the Lord said *וְאִם-מִזְבֵּחַ אֲבָנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה-לִּי לֹא-תִבְנֶה* *'If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it.* (NASB) This mitzvah prevented man from forming an altar after the imagination of his heart. The possibility of changing/modifying what God has established for our salvation is a temptation and the result is profaning (וַתְּחַלְלֶנָּה) the way of atonement before God. In rabbinic tradition, at the hands of Yochanan ben Zakkai, Judaism was established in such a way that did not require the presence of an earthly Temple, and the Torah became a matter of prayer and good deeds substituting for the actual blood atonement services.

Followers of Yeshua today understand the New Covenant as prophesied in *Jeremiah 31:31-33* as being fulfilled and yet awaits complete eschatological fulfillment when Yeshua returns as Mashiach ben David (מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן-דָּוִד) the conquering King to establish his kingdom in Jerusalem. The Torah command (mitzvah) to love Lord, to live our lives for Him in obedience, and to love one another by the indwelling power of the Ruach Hakodesh (the Holy Spirit) becomes the guiding principle of a life of faith for a believer in Yeshua. The new covenant does not change the way for obtaining justification and righteousness before the Lord. Salvation (יְשׁוּעָה), Righteousness (צְדָקָה), and Justification (הַצְדָּקָה) has always been through faith in blood before God and by His great mercy. In the new covenant we have a more perfect sacrifice; the Son of God has made kapporah (atonement) for sin. This does not change the meaning of the Torah. The word Torah itself means “instruction” or “direction” about how to live a holy life before God and so it should not be surprising to see the connection here in relation to the covenants God has established with mankind and Yisrael. The New Covenant is based upon God’s sacrificial love and provision for us in the forgiveness of sins in the blood of His son, Yeshua the Messiah. Within this principle (requirement) of blood there is continuity throughout the scriptures from the *Bereshit / Genesis* to *Hitgalut / Revelation*; the forgiveness of sins requires blood atonement by faith.

Tradition is defined as custom, practice, or convention, a teaching that may be written, spoken, or handed down from generation to generation. In light of this week’s study on the Cherubim and the importance of blood atonement we know that it is possible for tradition to nullify the Word of God, and therefore we must be aware of this as we study God’s Word and extra biblical texts.

Atonement, the Ark of the Covenant, and repentance hold great significance throughout the Scriptures and therefore while studying the scriptures

415 ἐπιτελοῦντες, εἰς δὲ τὴν δευτέραν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ μόνος ὁ
 ἀρχιερεὺς, οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος, ὃ προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ
 λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων, τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, μήπω
 πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης
 420 καὶ θυσίαι προσφέρονται μὴ δυνάμεναι κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν
 λατρεύοντα, μόνον ἐπὶ βρώμασιν καὶ πόμασιν καὶ διαφόροις
 βαπτισμοῖς, δικαιώματα σαρκὸς μέχρι καιροῦ διορθώσεως ἐπικείμενα.
 Χριστὸς δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν γενομένων ἀγαθῶν διὰ τῆς
 μείζονος καὶ τελειότερας σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν οὐ
 425 ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως, οὐδὲ δι' αἵματος τράγων καὶ μόσχων διὰ δὲ τοῦ
 ἰδίου αἵματος, εἰσηλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια, αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν
 εὐράμενος. εἰ γὰρ τὸ αἶμα τράγων καὶ ταύρων καὶ σποδὸς δαμάλεως
 ῥαντίζουσα τοὺς κεκοινωμένους ἁγιάζει πρὸς τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς
 καθαρότητα, πόσω μᾶλλον τὸ αἶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος
 430 αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ, καθαριεῖ τὴν
 συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων εἰς τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι. Καὶ
 διὰ τοῦτο διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἐστίν, ὅπως θανάτου γενομένου εἰς
 ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ παραβάσεων τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν
 λάβωσιν οἱ κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας. ὅπου γὰρ διαθήκη,
 435 θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου:

The Portion of Scripture for this week, the construction of the Mishkhan
 (tabernacle), the Ark of the covenant, the use of the Cherubim imagery, the
 presence of God, the way for salvation, atonement in blood, and the importance of
 440 the sacrifice that God brings in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings)
 demonstrate the internal consistency of the Bible. The Apostolic Writings have a
 single and consistent theological focus upon redemption and salvation that is
 connected to atonement made in the blood of the covenant that God provides
 (note parallelisms in the Akedah) in Yeshua the Messiah. *Hebrews 9:15* states
 445 ὅπου γὰρ διαθήκη, θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου: *For
 where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.
 (NASB)* Yeshua the mediator of the new covenant achieves our redemption and
 forgiveness as a result of His death. Without the blood of the covenant that God
 has made as Moshe said in sefer Shemot (מִן־דָּמַתְךָ לְדַם־הַבְּרִית־הַזֶּה תִּשְׁלַח־הַכֹּהֵן
 450 according to the Torah, the offering for sin that will be required of you will be
 made at the expense of your own life (by your own blood). This form of
 atonement forfeits your soul. In the gospel of Matthew, Yeshua spoke of the
 priceless value of one's soul when he said "*What does it profit a man if he gains
 the whole world and loses his own soul?*" (*Matthew 16:26*, τί γὰρ
 455 ὠφεληθήσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐὰν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον κερδήσῃ τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν
 αὐτοῦ ζημιωθῇ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ;).
 Therefore, we are faced with a fundamental choice, a decision that must be made
 regarding our soul, this world, and Yeshua the Messiah. Yeshua laid His life

460 down so that we could take up our lives and live life to its fullest extent, in the
greatest blessing of all having fellowship with the Lord God Almighty. Placing
our faith in Yeshua believing that His blood was shed for the forgiveness of our
sins, we have most assuredly satisfied the blood requirement and God is glorified.
Kaporet (Atonement) for our sins has been made; payment for our transgressions
465 is complete. In as much as we acknowledge and believe the work Yeshua did on
our behalf, we are saved without a shadow of a doubt. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

470 I believe throughout the Scriptures You have shown me without the blood
of the covenant I will not be saved. Lord I realize the importance of Glorifying
Your Name and giving You all the glory, honor, and praise in all that I do. Your
bringing atonement in the blood of Your Son, Yeshua the Messiah was for the
explicit purpose of glorifying Your Name and demonstrating the importance of
475 following Your way for salvation, the purpose of which centers our focus and
attention upon You. Thank You Lord for helping me to know and understand
Your purpose for sending Your Son Yeshua to die for my sins. Thank You for
Your great love. I place my faith in Yeshua the Messiah and I place my faith in
Your Holy Words believing that His blood was shed for my sins. Please forgive
480 me of my sins and have mercy on me Lord. Use me Lord for Your purposes; help
me to live my life free from sin and live in holiness, righteousness, and justice.
Thank You for forgiving me and redeeming me from my sins. Help me to serve
You Lord by faith and help me to regard Your truth in my heart. Thank You Lord
485 for all that You have done; I give You all of the glory, the honor, and the praise
forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name I pray! Amen!

What to pray:

- 490 • *Ask the Lord to help you recognize the importance of having brought the
sacrifice of the covenant He has made with us.*
- *Ask the Lord to help you to grow in the knowledge and wisdom of His
Word.*
- 495 • *Thank the Lord for lifting the burden of sin and revealing His truth in your
heart and life.*

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever