

יום

כִּיפּוּר
Yom Kippur

Vayikra / Leviticus 16, Isaiah 57:14-58:14

Victory over Sin in our Lives the Gospel Message and the Message of Torah?

In this week's Torah portion for Yom Kippur, we read the following, כ וכלה מכפר את-הקדש ואת-אהל מועד ואת-המזבח והקריב את- השעיר הקי: כא וסמך אהרן את-שתי ידו [ידין] על-ראש השעיר הקי והתודה עליו את-כל-עונת בני ישראל ואת-כל-פשעיהם לכל-חטאתם ונתן: *16:20 'When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. 16:21 'Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. (NASB)* What we find here is the concept of confessing our sins before God and the innocent life taking upon the sins of our confession so that we may receive atonement before God. Studying Judaism, the rabbis believe that human beings are not basically sinful. The idea is we enter into this world not carrying the burden of sin, we are not responsible for our ancestors sins, and we are not tainted by sin either. Sin (חטא) is the result of our human inclinations, the yetzer hara (evil inclination), this must be properly recognized and dealt with. Yet, in the

Scriptures we read of the people finding it necessary to confess before God the sins of their fathers. (*Jeremiah 14:20 We know our wickedness, O LORD, The iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against You. NASB*) Though we are born free from sin, at some point we become guilty of our own sins and the sins of our fathers. This is what is being taught in *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:40 'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me (NASB)* This speaks of our being honest with one another about the difficulties of life, how else would we know the sins of our fathers? Moshe speaks of the importance of remembering how our fathers were unfaithful and sinned before God. Maimonides understands this command as a requirement for the one who has sinned saying, “*to confess with one’s lips and state verbally those things [regret and repentance] which one has resolved in one’s heart.*” (*Mishneh Torah Laws of Repentance 2:2*) The “*Principle of Repentance*” is to “*forsake the sin*” (עֲזִיבַת-הַחַטָּא, azivat-hachet). After regretting what one has done (the sin), the penitent person must resolve never to repeat the sin. Note how regret speaks of having personally committed a sin, whereas, confessing the sin of our fathers does not seem to fall into this category. Judaism recognizes the process of repentance varies from person to person in the sense of one that is habitual as opposed to one who does not repeat his sins. Note how in the general sense, when one sins he seeks the Lord for forgiveness of his own sins. Yet we find the Torah command necessitating the need to confessing the sins of our fathers. These narratives establish the concept of the God of Israel as a God of mercy and forgiveness. In revealing His nature to Moshe, the Lord God described His forgiving nature in a very complete way (*Shemot / Exodus 34*). The Lord God emphasized mercy, “*bearing our sins,*” and extending His lovingkindness (grace, רַחֲמֵי) far beyond what we know is humanly possible. Moshe learned the fundamental essence of our Father in heaven is His mercy. This mercy of God provides us with absolute freedom. It is not surprising that the passage in which these attributes of God are detailed (*Shemot / Exodus 34:6-7*) have become the cornerstone of the liturgy of forgiveness during the High Holy Days of Yom Kippur. In rabbinic Judaism, these ideas evolved into the concept of the two attributes of God, the attribute of justice and the

attribute of mercy. Note how God's mercy become the primary activity over and above His justice due to the nature of His long-suffering for His people. In addition to this, God's attribute of mercy prevents the Lord from meting out His full punishment at once, but grants the sinner the opportunity to repent and turn from his sins. Within these concepts is the need to confess the sins of our fathers. This may be related to generational curses or the sins learned from our fathers that we are not meant to repeat but to be set free from. This confession and determination to turn from sin is to lead us to seek the Lord God in heaven, His Messiah Yeshua, and His holy and righteous ways for our lives. Looking back to our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, we can often trace our physical features, strengths, and weaknesses through the family line. In the same way, we can observe character traits and spiritual influences that span generations. A Godly heritage offers a sturdy foundation of virtue and faithfulness, but deeds such as anger, lust, and bitterness set destructive patterns that need to be recognized and overcome. This may be illustrated from the life of Abraham, and of the iniquity of deception that had gotten a stronghold in the lives of Jacob and his sons. (see *Bereshit / Genesis 12:10–20, 26:1–11, 27:1–40, 37:12–36*) The most significant aspect of *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:40* and confessing the sins of our fathers, is to understand how our lives are influenced by others (our forefathers). When we do this we are able to respond appropriately to that influence and then be set free in the Messiah Yeshua. These are the things we are being taught in both the Apostolic Writings and the Torah! As a result of these things, we acknowledge the iniquities of our forefathers, recognizing its influences in our own lives and repent of our own sins, and endeavor to overcome the tendencies toward specific sins that we have been committing. While we are not held responsible for the sins of our ancestors, we are susceptible to their areas of weakness and should be alert to these inclinations. In the Messiah Yeshua, we have been given victory over sin and a strength to live in faithfulness that brings Glory to our Father in heaven! Let's discuss these things further in this week's Torah portion.

This week we are looking at *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:14-34*, the scripture reading for the Yom Kippur festival.



Vayikra / Leviticus 16:14-34

16:14 'Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. 16:15 'Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. 16:16 'He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. 16:17 'When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel. 16:18 'Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. 16:19 'With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it. 16:20 'When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. 16:21 'Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. 16:22 'The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness. 16:23 'Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and

shall leave them there. 16:24 'He shall bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his clothes, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people. 16:25 'Then he shall offer up in smoke the fat of the sin offering on the altar. 16:26 'The one who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water; then afterward he shall come into the camp. 16:27 'But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire. 16:28 'Then the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water, then afterward he shall come into the camp. 16:29 'This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; 16:30 for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the Lord. 16:31 'It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute. 16:32 'So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place shall make atonement: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, 16:33 and make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 16:34 'Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year.' And just as the Lord had commanded Moses, so he did. (NASB)

In this week's Torah portion for Yom Kippur, these Scriptures speak

of the importance of confessing our sins before the Lord God Almighty in Heaven, כ וְכִלָּה מִכִּפָּר אֶת-הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהַקָּרִיב אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר הַחַי: כֹּא וְסָמַךְ אֶהְרֹן אֶת-שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו [יָדָיו] עַל-רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר הַחַי וְהִתְוֹדָה עָלָיו אֶת-כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת-כָּל-פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל-חַטָּאתָם וְנָתַן: 16:20 *‘When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. 16:21 ‘Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. (NASB)* When the Lord gave these commands to the nation of Israel, He included the descriptions of His character and His ways saying, “... *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments*” (*Shemot / Exodus 20:5-6*). The Lord repeats a warning about generational iniquities in *Shemot / Exodus 34:6-7, Bamidbar / Numbers 14:18, and Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:9-10*. These things speak to us that what we do matters to the next generation because children have the natural tendency to imitate their parents. This is the most significant aspect of *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:40* and confessing the sins of our fathers, which is to understand how our lives are influenced by our forefathers. When we set our hearts to recognize these things, we are able to respond appropriately to that influence. When parents do something that is wrong, their children will very likely justify the same actions, even destructive actions and attitudes, before men and God. The tendency then is the subsequent generations move beyond the wickedness of their parents entering into even greater levels of sin and wickedness. The fundamental principle of the influences of sin is understood even from the beginning as Paul pointed out, “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*” (*Romans 5:12*). This concept rests at the heart of our strengths and weaknesses because we physically inherit part of and are influenced by our ancestors, we are deeply influenced by their decisions and the patterns of their lives. What Paul is writing about is not the doctrine of “*original sin.*” This is

the example of ancestral influence as found in *Hebrews 7* which states, “... *Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him*” (*Hebrews 7:9-10*). Although Levi was not born until many years after Abraham and Melchizedek (מֶלְכִּי־צֶדֶק) met, this midrash from the book of Hebrews speaks of his being a physical part of Abraham when Abraham paid his tithes. These things are all related to the concept of confessing our sins before God and our acknowledging the iniquities of our forefathers, recognizing their influences in our lives and repent of our own sins, and endeavoring to overcome the tendencies toward specific sins that we have inherited. Again, while we are not held responsible for the sins of our ancestors, we are susceptible to their areas of weakness and should be alert to these inclinations.

The prophet Isaiah said the following in regards to the will of God and our repentance before Him.

Isaiah 54:14-58:2

57:14 And it will be said, 'Build up, build up, prepare the way, Remove every obstacle out of the way of My people.' 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite. 57:16 'For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath of those whom I have made. 57:17 'Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him; I hid My face and was angry, And he went on turning away, in the way of his heart. 57:18 'I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners, 57:19 Creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,' Says the Lord, 'and I will heal him.' 57:20 But the wicked are like the tossing sea, For it cannot be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud. 57:21 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked.' 58:1 'Cry

loudly, do not hold back; Raise your voice like a trumpet, And declare to My people their transgression And to the house of Jacob their sins. 58:2 'Yet they seek Me day by day and delight to know My ways, As a nation that has done righteousness And has not forsaken the ordinance of their God. They ask Me for just decisions, They delight in the nearness of God. (NASB)

Notice how the Lord speaks of the man who moves away from Him by the way of his heart. The Lord says that He will lead him, restore him, comfort him, and comfort his mourners. This speaks of lot of the sort of person in whom falls away in sin, and then turning back to the Lord. The wicked are those who have no remorse for their evils. The Lord dwells on a high and lofty place, and His Spirit dwells in the lowest place of His people who humble themselves before Him. The end result, the Lord is working to “*revive the heart of the contrite.*” (*Isaiah 57:15*) The Lord God of Israel brings peace to those who seek His righteousness, while for the wicked, there is no peace. Isaiah says, *58:1 'Cry loudly, do not hold back; Raise your voice like a trumpet, And declare to My people their transgression And to the house of Jacob their sins. 58:2 'Yet they seek Me day by day and delight to know My ways, As a nation that has done righteousness And has not forsaken the ordinance of their God. They ask Me for just decisions, They delight in the nearness of God. (NASB)* Notice the attitude of those who belong to the Lord. They seek the Lord day by day, they delight to know His ways (Torah), and they do not forsake the ordinance of their God. These things were coupled to the sharp rebuke, because though we may do these things, if we do not do them with diligence and intensity of spirit (the correct motivation), meaning with our whole hearts, minds, and souls, there is the chance of seeking ourselves, and the honor of men, rather than that of the Lord and His glory. We are to delight in God’s Words. Do you delight in God’s word? Remember, we are to be a nation that does righteousness, both outwardly and inwardly. We are not to have a form of godliness and be dead on the inside. The difference is having the presence of God within, which delights in the ways of the Lord as truly gracious souls that are assisted by God’s Spirit. The assistance of the Spirit of God is to lead us to admit (confess) our sins,

repent, and turn from sin. This is what the Torah is teaching us. This is what the prophets are expounding upon speaking of the commands of God. This is also what Yeshua and his disciples taught in the Apostolic Writings.

The rabbis have the following to say concerning *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:21*.

Chizkuni, Vayikra / Leviticus 16:21 Part 2

והתודה עליו, “and he will confess over him;” how precisely does he word his confession? He recites the following words: אָנָּא הַשֵּׁם חֲטָאוּ וְעוּ וּפְשָׁעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, “the Children of Israel committed inadvertent sins, deliberate sins as well as sins reflecting their obstinacy against the Lord;” the people in turn will respond by saying that this was all true, and that they now blessed the glory of the Lord G-d. Thus far they had only confessed sins that they knew they had been guilty of. How do we know that their confession included sinful acts committed against their will through circumstances beyond their control, as well as possible sins that they had not even been aware of? This is covered by the word: כָּל עֲוֹנוֹת, “all manner of sins.” The scapegoat that is thrown off the rock on the Day of Atonement results in atonement for sins committed by trespassing on holy grounds and abusing for personal use holy objects or foods reserved for consumption by the priests, etc.. It covers all manner of sins committed regardless of how severe the penalty for these sins if not repented. (Sifra)

Chizkuni commentary speaks of three types of sins, (i) inadvertent sins (חֲטָאוּ), (ii) deliberate sins (עוּ), and (iii) sins reflecting obstinacy against the Lord (פְּשָׁעוּ). These three categories covers all of the sins that are common to man that is determined by the motivation of heart. The commentary speaks of confessing only the sins that are known, and the importance of confessing even those we have no knowledge of, and of those sins where one was forced (beyond their control). The Torah speaks of the need for confession of our sins, and the need for an

atoning sacrifice.

The Apostle Paul wrote of presenting our bodies to God as a living and holy sacrifice in *Romans 12*.

Romans 11:29-12:3

11:29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 11:30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, 11:31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. 11:32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all. 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 11:34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 11:35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. 12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. (NASB)

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he speaks of the gifts, calling, and mercy of God that is connected to our presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice before God. He says that all things belong to God and urges the people to live for the Lord in every area of life! Now what is this referring to and how might this be accomplished? Paul is speaking

of the application of the Torah to our lives. The reason we know this is because Paul wrote of being a *“living”* sacrifice, where sacrifices usually resulted in the death of the animal. The Torah descriptions of the sacrifice was to lay on the altar the different parts of the animal and the priest was to eat a portion of the sacrifice to bear the iniquity of the people. In this same way, we are to offer to God the different parts of our bodies where Yeshua the Messiah bore our iniquities. In *Romans 6* (verses *13, 16, 19*) Paul speaks of presenting our bodies, our members, to God like this, and in every case it is so that our members (*our arms, legs, tongues, eyes, ears, and sexual organs*) would become instruments of righteousness. So the sacrifice is not only living, it is moving about and doing things in this world. This is the definition of applying God’s words to our lives. The sacrificial portion of obeying God’s Torah is to humble our lives before God according to His Word. Note how Paul writes, *“Present your bodies . . . holy and acceptable to God.”* He defines this saying, *“use your renewed mind to prove what is the will of God, what is good, acceptable and perfect.”* So there is a connection between offering your body to God as an acceptable sacrifice to God, and doing the acceptable will of God. We know what the will of God is. His will is laid out in the Scriptures, in the Torah, where all of the scriptures are a commentary upon the Torah!

Note also in these Scriptures (*Romans 12:1*) there is a negative and positive command. The negative command is not to be conformed to this world. The positive command is to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The renewing of the mind is achieved by studying God’s Word, and placing His word upon our hearts. To not be conformed but being transformed is devoting our lives to the Lord, to His Word, and to being changed. Most people of faith tend to *“coast along”* in their relationship with God and spiritual growth. We are called to be transformed, which is an on-going growth process, which involves Teshuvah and seeking the Lord daily. The occurrence of change in our lives is on a moral and ethical basis. Ethics and morality hold the highest place in Judaism. Therefore, when we seek to do the will of God, to live our lives for Him, we look at what the World is doing, and 9 times out of 10, it is related to moral and ethical living. Paul says, *“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”* The focus is upon being cleansed on the inside (Teshuvah) and being transformed, our

hearts motivating us to be transformed on the outside for all to see as a testimony to the Lord God in heaven.

All of these things are coupled to the purpose of drawing us near to the Lord God in heaven. Yom Kippur means “*Day of Atonement*” and is considered the most important holiday as the “*High Holy Days*” because of this concept of confession, repentance, and forgiveness from God. This is what the Torah teaches us! This is also what is being taught in the Apostolic Writings (the Gospel Message)! The confession and determination to turn from sin leads us to seek the Lord God in heaven in His Word, His Messiah the Anointed one of God, and His holy and righteous ways for our lives by turning from our own ways and humbling our lives in obedience to the commands. Looking back to our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, we confess what we do not know, and those things we do know. Just as we observe the character traits and spiritual influences that span generations, we are to approach the Lord God in heaven for deliverance from our past and the influences of unfaithfulness of others. The key is remaining faithful in our lives to the Lord. The most significant aspect of *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:40* and confessing the sins of our fathers, is to recognize our need for our Father in heaven, and to rest upon His Messiah Yeshua. When we do this we are able to respond appropriately to the influence of sin in our lives, repent of that sin, and then be set free in the Messiah Yeshua by the power of God to overcome sin in our lives! In the Messiah Yeshua, we have been given victory over sin and a strength to live in faithfulness that brings Glory to our Father in heaven!

