

Parashat Emor / פרשת אמר

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Our Responsibility and the problem of being Ignorant!

This Weeks Reading List:

Torah: Leviticus 21:1-24:23

Haftarah: Ezekiel 44:15-44:31

B'rit HaChadashah: 1 Peter 2:4-10

Reading through Parashat Emor in chapter 22 there is a strict warning about profaning the name of G-d in the things which the priests hallow unto the Lord in the temple service. (*Vayikra 22:2* דַּבֵּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בָּנָיו וַיִּנְּזְרוּ מִקֹּדְשֵׁי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא יִחַלְלוּ אֶת-שֵׁם קֹדְשִׁי אֲשֶׁר הֵם מִקְדָּשִׁים לִי אֲנִי יְהוָה: *22:2*) The strict warning to Aharon and his sons about becoming unclean is a big responsibility because G-d warns that anyone who approaches the holy things and is unclean will be cut off from before him. In fact, G-d warns that sin is communicable (contagious, infectious, or transmittable) in 22:4, a warning is made not to make contact with someone who has become unclean by touching a dead person. (*Vayikra 22:4* אִישׁ אִישׁ מִזֶּרַע אַהֲרֹן וְהוּא צָרוּעַ אֹו זָב בִּקְדָשִׁים לֹא יֵאָחַז בְּקַדְשֵׁי אֱלֹהִים: *22:4*) Before the giving of the Torah, who would have known that uncleanness would be communicable? In this case G-d is preventing any unknowing ignorance of Aharon and his sons by touching a person who is unclean. With the children of Israel being raised in pagan Egypt, I am certain there was a general unawareness of the importance of holy living before a Holy G-d and thus the reason for such commandments.

Leviticus 22:2-9

22:1 ADONAI said to Moshe, 22:2 "Tell Aharon and his sons to separate themselves from the holy things of the people of Isra'el which they set apart as holy for me, so that they will not profane my holy name; I am ADONAI. 22:3 Tell them, 'Any descendant of yours through all your generations who approaches the holy things that the people of Isra'el consecrate to ADONAI and is unclean will be cut off from before me; I am ADONAI. 22:4 "'Any descendant of Aharon with tzara'at or a discharge is not to eat the holy things until he is clean. Anyone who has touched a person made unclean by a dead body, or who has had a seminal emission, 22:5 or who has touched a reptile or insect that can make him unclean, or a man who is unclean for any reason and who can transmit to him his uncleanness - 22:6 the person who touches any of these will be unclean until evening and is not to eat the holy things unless he bathes his body in water. 22:7 After sunset he will be clean; and afterwards, he may eat the holy things; because they are his food. 22:8 But he is not to eat anything that dies naturally or is torn to death

by wild animals and thereby make himself unclean; I am ADONAI. 22:9 The cohanim must observe this charge of mine; otherwise, if they profane it, they will bear the consequences of their sin for doing so and die in it; I am ADONAI, who makes them holy.

Most dictionaries define the word ignorant in the following way:

Concise Oxford English Dictionary

ignorant

■ adjective

lacking knowledge or awareness in general. (often **ignorant of**) uninformed about or unaware of a specific subject or fact.

There are two short examples I would like to give on the topic of ignorance, (i) science and (ii) the Bible. The first example deals with science and understanding the distinction between experimental / operational and historical / origins sciences. Interestingly what some people call science are really outside of the realms of science. The difficulties in understanding the areas of conflict revolve around past events which are not open to experimental testing. This is where the general unawareness comes into play with the typical layman.

Another generality in unawareness is the definition of science; people are generally unaware that dictionaries give a root meaning, or etymology, of science similar to Webster's dictionary here:

“from Latin scientia, from scient-, sciens ‘having knowledge,’ from present participle of scire ‘to know.’”

Most dictionaries also give the following meaning of the word:

“the state of knowing: knowledge as distinguished from ignorance or misunderstanding.”

The very nature of science is to distinguish from ignorance or misunderstanding. This definition of ‘science’ has taunted philosophers of science in the 20th century. The earlier approach of Roger Bacon (*born c 1220, Ilchester, Somerset, or Bisley, Gloucester, Eng. died 1292, Oxford*), who is considered the founder of the scientific method, was pretty straightforward:

Scientific investigated sequence

1. Observation
2. Induction
3. Hypothesis
4. test hypothesis by experiment
5. proof/disproof
6. knowledge.

Of course this, and the whole approach to modern science, depends on two major assumptions: causality and induction. The philosopher Hume (*family name; David Hume (1711-*

1776), *Scottish historian and philosopher; born in New York state (USA)*) made it clear that these are believed by 'blind faith' (Bertrand Russell's words). Kant and Whitehead claimed to have solved the problem, but Russell recognized that Hume was right. Actually, these assumptions on the scientific method by Bacon arose from faith in the Creator-God of the Bible, as historians of science like Eiseley (*Loren Corey Eiseley (September 3, 1907–July 9, 1977) was a highly respected anthropologist, science writer, ecologist, and poet.*) have recognized. However, today many scientists are so philosophically and theologically ignorant that they don't even realize that they have these (and other) metaphysical assumptions. Scientists have **unknowingly** intertwined into their work a system of beliefs that is based on the philosophy and theology of theistic evolution, this is clearly a form of unknowing ignorance.

The next example of ignorance deals with a similar issue but is directly related to the ignorance of the Bible.

Why is there so much ignorance about the Bible?

I want you to think about something, concerning the topic of the bible and ignorance. Throughout my own experience coming in contact with a vast majority of believers, I have found the larger portion of believers today have been unexposed to topics ranging from (i) Biblical learning, (ii) historical-critical studies of the Bible, (iii) the content and structure of the doctrines in the Bible, (iv) 2000 years of classic works in Christian and Jewish literature and life, (v) basic disciplines of theology, and (vi) biblical languages and ethics? Have you ever wondered why lawyers, farmers, physicians, scientists, salespeople, and managers of all sorts of businesses as well as people who carry out all kinds of complicated tasks in their work and home remain at an elementary level in their Biblical understanding? Have you ever notice how children who are high school age and believers can so easily move into a complex world of computers, foreign languages; science and mathematics cannot even begin a historical-critical interpretation of a single line of scripture? How is it today in the church, believers can attend or even teach classes for decades on the bible but yet at the end of that lack even basic fundamental interpretative skills? This can be seen even of some who have attended introductory courses in the Bible at university or seminary.

Do you see the problem here that I am seeing?

Conclusion

Like Aharon and his sons, G-d needed to warn about the dangers of profaning the name of the Lord by becoming unclean and then entering into His presence. In that time, the priestly responsibility was a matter of life and death. The point is, these issues of the Torah are not esoteric matters with little relevance to the real world but in fact are highly relevant. Today we do not find ourselves in the situation in which if we would become unclean out of ignorance, we might possibly lose our life. Today there are many people who willingly choose to be ignorant because they refuse to study G-d's word reason being they are too busy. (Remember, studying is more than simply reading) Willing ignorance (*2 Peter 3:5-6 KJV*) is even found in the scriptures. Willing ignorance is usually the result of wanting so much to be right about

something the facts are overlooked. For example, like in the case of creationism versus evolution or; like the facts of Torah observance for the modern day believer in Yeshua the Messiah versus what has been passed down from the Catholic Church to the Protestant Church and taught for centuries that we are not under the law. (or in other words “we don’t need to be Torah observant”) If everyone today would try to apply even simple methods of causation and induction to scripture study could you imagine what would happen? The average believer would begin asking the tough questions that need to be asked and answered and we would see a more healthy body of believers as compared to what we see today.

Our responsibility is one of studying to show thyself approved unto G-d (*2 Timothy 2:15*) so that we can give an answer for the reason of the hope that we have (*1 Peter 3:15*) in our hearts. So now the question is “when are you going to start to take responsibility for your own spiritual growth and then how are you going to do it?” Ask yourself this: “Could your understanding of the Bible be a matter of life and death spiritually for you?”

Be Blessed in Yeshua 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