

Torah: Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:1 – 18:30
Haftarah: Yekhez'el (Ezekiel) 22:1-19
B'rit Hadashah: 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

	<i>Yr. 1 16:1-17:7</i>	<i>Yr. 2 17:1-18:30</i>	<i>Yr. 3 19:15-20:27</i>
1	16:1 – 6	17:1-7	19:15-18
2	16:7 – 11	17:8-12	19:19-22
3	16:12 – 17	17:13-16	19:23-32
4	16:18 – 24	18:1-5	19:33-37
5	16:25 – 30	18:6-21	20:1-7
6	16:31 – 34	18:22-25	20:8-22
7	17:1 – 7	18:26-30	20:23-27

<p>and HaShem spoke to Moshe saying / speak to Aharon and to his sons and to the sons of all Israel / and you shall say to them this word which HaShem has commanded saying</p>	<p><i>va'yedaber ADONÁI el-Moshé lemór daber el-Aharon ve'el-banayv ve'el kol-b'ney Yis'raél ve'amar'ta aleyhem zeh ha'davar ashér-tzivah ADONÁI le'mor</i></p>	<p>וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בְּנָיו וְאֶל כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:</p>
---	---	---

Chapters 17-26 are commonly known as “The Holiness Code,” a distinct section of Torah characterized by both theme and style in the emphatically repeated words, “You shall be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy.” This is directed at all of Israel, not just major leaders or the priesthood.

This haftarah speaks of a time when the people of Israel committed many of the sins described in this weeks portion. Their punishment is also described, but there is hope, as the reading ends with uplifting thoughts.

Aliyah Highlights

1. **Le. 17:1-7** The are the commands of HaShem, and they are to be expressed to all the people of Israel. The phrase (v. 3) “any man of the house of Israel” (*ish ish mi-beyt Yis'raél* – אִישׁ אִישׁ מִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) occurs only in this chapter and in Eze. 14:4, 7, specifying Israelites anytime, anywhere. Ox, lamb or goat (Le. 22:27) and the verb, to slaughter (*sha'khat* – שָׁחַט) infer with intent to sacrifice, not just for food (De. 12:15). This is an eternal statute (*khu-qat olam* – חֻקַּת עוֹלָם)
2. **Le. 17:8-12** Reiteration: sacrifice only at the Tabernacle altar. The “resident stranger” (*ha'ger asher yagur* – הַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר יָגוּר) is included. Eating blood is forbidden for Israelite and the resident stranger.
3. **Le. 17:13-16** **Blood represents life** – this is the foundation of the sacrificial system. Blood has no special properties itself. It is not to be eaten. Eating non-slaughtered animals causes uncleanness.
4. **Le. 18:1-5** The recurrent theme of The Holiness Code: the commands of HaShem expressed to all the people of Israel. They are to be lived, and, at the same time, life is found through them.
5. **Le. 18:6-21** This chapter contains a complete collection of laws that define *the family*. Distinction is made between family and clan. Immediate family is formed by a man who “takes” a woman initiating the process of procreation in patriarchy. Family consists of six blood relatives: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister. Child sacrifice is forbidden.
6. **Le. 18:22-25** Homosexuality is forbidden. Two biblical narratives refer to this theme in the context of xenophobia: re the men of S'dom (Ge. 19), and the Gibeah (Judg. 19). Sexual relations with animals is forbidden. The land is personified, expelling the disobedient; not just the gentiles, but Israel, too. This applies to any and all nations (see Ge. 15:16)
7. **Le. 18:26-30** Applies to citizen and sojourner.

Food for Thought

“It’s impossible to keep ALL these detailed laws!” Information (including biblical!) is doubling every two years, primarily due to digital technology (internet, social media, AI, IOT). This is commonly referred to as the “information explosion / overload / deluge.” The human brain has not grown in its capacity, but we have developed strategies to cope: selective attention, predictive modeling, dependence on digital devices, etc. But there are negative effects: decreased attention span, increased stress, etc. In this effort to cope, it is tempting to accept oversimplification: “the church has replaced Israel,” “Yeshua did away with the sacrificial system,” etc. But we must not sacrifice truth for the comfort of simplicity. God’s commands are life... and life to the fullest (Le. 18:5). They are not the goal, but the means to attain the goal. They are practices on the path to the summit.

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

1. (16:1) How have you respond to loss and severe trials? Do you turn towards or away from God? (Job 1:21, Eze 24:18, Gen 22:1, Jer 9:6, Zec 13:9, 1Co 10:13, 1Pe 4:12, 1Pe 5:7, Heb 12:7-13, Deu 8:1-6)
2. (16:18) Sometimes we are required to go outside our comfort zone to draw near to God. Are you willing to do this? (Mat 14:23, Luk 6:12-13)
3. (17:8) What is your relationship with the Israel? Are you loved and accepted - are you happy as a Jew or a Gentile? (Isa 56:3-8, Gal 3:28, Eph 4:11-16, Joh 3:16)
4. (17:9) Are you committed to doing things God’s way? Or is it your way or the highway? (1Ki 8:27-30, Joh 14:6, Joh 20:30-31, Act 4:11-12)
5. (18:22) Where do you stand on the issue of homosexuality? (Lev 20:13, Rom 1:27, 1Co 6:9-10, 1Ti 1:9-10, Eph 6:12, 2Co 5:11, 1Co 13:1-7, Phil 2:1-12)
6. (19:15) “Judges” in our culture are the cream of the crop and have studied law, cases, and precedent. How have you prepared to judge righteously? (Isa 11:3-4, Isa 53:7-9, Zep 3:12-13, Pro 10:23-25)
7. (19:35) No matter how small the issue, we are required to be honest in measure. How do you fare in the “little” things? (Amos 8:4-10, 1Pe 1:14-15, 1Pe 2:12, 1Joh 3:1-3)
8. (20:3) What kind of “seed” are you sowing? (Gen 38:9, Num 3:9, Num 8:16, Mic 6:7, Deu 18:10, Lev 20:4, Jer 32:26-35, 1Co 6:18-20)
9. (20:8) Scripture is clear that there are things God does in us that we cannot do, and there are things that he requires of us. What’s next on His “to-do” list for you? (1Co 6:9-11, Gal 5:19-24, Joh 5:24, Rom 8:1, Phil 2:12, 2Co 5:17, Joh 13:34, Eph 4:6, Mat 24:13, Phil 1:6, Jam 1:22-25, Heb 12:14)