

## **Micah 6:3-9 + 7:18-20**

In the Torah readings, Jacob has a complaint against Laban. Here, God has complaint against his people.

The multitude of offerings Israel could offer are not what God wants.

**Micah 6:7** - "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

Samuel made a similar statement:

**Samuel 15:22 - 23** - "And Samuel said: Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams for rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is like idolatry and teraphim..."

And Hosea...

**Hosea 6:6** - "I desire kindness rather than sacrifices and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

Ritual is an abomination without inner integrity. God wants us to return to him. Micah sums up the 613 commandments at Sinai by reducing the requirements to the simplest essentials:

**Micah 6:8** - "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Targum Jonathan says, "Walk humbly in fear of God."

There is the well-known homily by Rabbi Simlai: "Six hundred and thirteen commandments were addressed to Moses — three hundred and sixty-five prohibitions corresponding to the days of the solar year, and two hundred and forty-eight positive commandments corresponding to the number of limbs in the human body. David came and reduced them to eleven principles, which are listed in Psalm 15. Isaiah came and reduced them to six as is said, 'He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppression, that shaketh his hands from holding bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil' (Is. 33:15). Micah came and reduced them to three, as it is written, 'What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God' (Micah 6:8). Isaiah subsequently reduced them to two, as it is said, 'Thus saith the Lord, keep ye justice and do righteousness' (Is. 56:1). Lastly came Habakkuk and reduced them to one, as it is said, 'The righteous shall live by his faith'" (Hab. 2:4). - Babylonian Talmud (Makkot 24a)

Of course, humanity has not been able to embody even this instruction, and these have only been perfectly displayed in Christ. But there is hope —

The haftarah ends with words of comfort, which also are read on Yom Kippur:

**Micah 7:18** - “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.”

He himself will subdue our iniquities, if we repent. (And it is only by his power we CAN repent):

**Micah 7:19** - “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

Finally, Jacob is remembered again here, as well as Abraham:

**Micah 7:20** - Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.