

## SOUL FOOD

### THE MEANING OF "NEPESH"

by John Weston

The word for "Soul" in the Hebrew language is "Nepesh" spelled with the Hebraic letters Nun-Peh-Shin. This word is identified in our Strongs concordance as Strongs #5315.

In many translations the word "Nepesh" is rendered as "Life" which has a more general meaning than "Soul". The general word for "life" in Hebrew is "Chay" or "Chayah" and has a guttural sound at the beginning of the word. When we say "L'Chayim" in Hebrew it means "To Life!".

Another word for "Life" in Hebrew is "Basar" spelled with the Hebraic letters bet-sin-resh. 75 times it refers to flesh, 64 times to meat, and 21 times to body. This is Strongs #1320.

These other words rendered as "Life" in most translations differ in meaning from the word "Nepesh" which is the word for "Soul".

In the JPS Hebrew-English TaNaKh, we find the word "Nepesh" in the following scriptures:

Genesis 1:30 "And to all the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to everything that creeps on earth in which there is the breath of life [Nepesh/Soul] I give all the green plants for food.

Genesis 2:7 "The LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life [Nepesh/Soul].

Leviticus 24:18 "One who kills a beast shall make restitution for it: Life for Life [Nepesh/Soul] for [Nepesh/Soul].

Deuteronomy 19:21 "Nor must you show pity: Life for Life [Nepesh/Soul] eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Is Genesis 1:30 telling us that animals, birds and insects have Souls? And that this is the same "Nepesh"(Soul) that God blew into Adam's nostrils? It is an interesting question. In the book of Leviticus we are told what part of our bodies contain our Soul:

Leviticus 17:11 "For the life [Nepesh/Soul] of the flesh is in the blood, and I have assigned it to you for making expiation for your lives upon the altar; it is the blood, as life [Nepesh/Soul] that effects expiation."

Leviticus 17:14 "For the Life [Nepesh/Soul] of all flesh -its blood is its Life [Nepesh/Soul]. Therefore I say to the

Israelite people: you shall not partake of the blood of any flesh, for the Life [Nepesh/Soul] of all flesh is its blood. Anyone who partakes of it shall be cut-off."

Yes, he was saying this to the Israelite people but look at verse 17:12 which states: "Therefore I say to the Israelite people: No person among you shall partake of the blood, nor shall the stranger who resides among you."

I am no great scholar or theologian, but I understand when I'm told that the Soul of all flesh is its blood. For myself this gives a whole new light to the statement God said to Cain "Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground" (Gen 4:10). This says that Abel's blood, Soul, Essence of being, cried out from the ground. We know that the Spirit returns to God who gave it (Eccl 12:7), but the Soul is contained in the blood. The blood returns to the ground, in fact scripture tells us that when an animal is caught that may be eaten we are to drain out the blood and cover it with dust (Lev 17:13). The scriptures are plentiful that tell us not to eat the blood (Lev 7:26, 17:10, 12, 14; 19:26; Dt 12:16, 23, 24, 15:23,).

To atone for the sins of the people it was not the meat of the animals that was important for the sacrifices, it was the blood, the soul, just as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins was the blood of the lamb of God our Savior the Messiah-or Christ if you prefer.

The blood of the animals was to be sprinkled upon the Altar of the Sacrifice. The Blood containing the Nepesh, the Soul. Soul for soul was the lesson and the Messiah's Soul containing Blood atoned for our lost souls. He came to save that which was lost and man was indeed lost, but now we're found.

In Genesis 9:4-5 we read: "But you must not eat meat that has its Lifblood still in it. And for your lifblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life [Nepesh/Soul] of his fellow man". To me this says that we are accountable for every drop of Soul containing blood in our bodies. You'll not find this author at the blood bank selling his soul er...uh..blood. But let each man be convinced in his own mind.

Shalom.