



Prohibition against “Passing through the Fire,” Deut 18:10-13: Sorcery: “Kashaph” & “Pharmakeia: Drug Abuse Condemned; Solomon’s KER

אֵשׁ עֵבֶר *abar esh* - “pass through the fire”

This phrase is descriptive of what *Molech* actually represents: children offered as a burnt offering to the false gods. We see this detestable act listed among several cultic practices condemned by the Lord in:

Deuteronomy 18:10 - “There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire [**אֵשׁ עֵבֶר *abar esh***], one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

v. 11 - or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

v. 12 - “For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you.”

Several lust patters of the sinful nature are prohibited here. The first on the list is child sacrifice which is the expression of complete disorientation to the undiminished love of God. That God would be allayed, appeased, or assuaged, by the murder of children is unthinkable. The rest is a roster of demonically empowered methods of allegedly predicting or controlling the future. Sorcery, by the way, combines one or more of these schemes with the ingestion and inhalation of drugs. The Hebrew word for sorcery is:

קַשָּׁף *kashaph* - “sorcerer” It is a part of the magic arts that is designed to manipulate the future for the sorcerer or one employed by him. Analysis of the word is provided by four sources:

Orr, James (ed.). *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 3:1964:

Kashaph (**קַשָּׁף**), from a root denoting “to have a dark appearance,” to look gloomy, to be distressed, then to seek relief by magical means.

Botterwick, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry (eds.). *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by David E. Green. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 7:362:

קַשָּׁף *kashaph*. LXX (Septuagint: 3d century B.C. translation of the Old Testament). *Kashaph* (is) represented by *pharmakeúein*, *phármakos*, and *pharmakeía*.

Unger, Merrill F. *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*. 3d ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 683:

Sorcery (Hebrew, *kashaph*; Greek, *pharmakeia*). This art was practiced in connection with pharmacy, the mixing of drugs and medical compounds.

Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 1917:

φάρμακῶν, *pharmakōn*, to suffer from the effect of drugs or charms; the use of drugs, potions, or spells; poisoning or witchcraft; to use enchantments; a stupefying drug.



The Bible is clearly opposed to any form of divination. Those who are so inclined are setting themselves up for the most degenerative of habits and despicable practices of which the human species is capable. Human sacrifice will always emerge among the worshipers of idols. And along the way they will indulge in drug abuse.

The human soul is not designed by God to approve or tolerate such behaviors and thus their abuse causes the development of a gloomy disposition filled with distress. A cure is sought through drugs.

The *pharmakaō* word group also includes definitions that define the legitimate use of drugs in medicine. Among these are words for “druggist; apothecary; the preparation of drugs, one who prescribes drugs, and one who administers drugs.”

God has provided certain combinations of ingredients among those things He has created to treat illnesses and diseases. The legitimate use of these concoctions is advisable and is indeed a blessing for many. However, it is clear from the context of Deuteronomy 18:10-12 that to engage in the illicit use of drugs is considered by God to be detestable. Why? Because it is part of a destructive pattern of behavior that causes injury and death to many innocent people and brings divine discipline to those who practice it.

The New Testament prohibition is found in the listing of sins associated with the works of the flesh in:

Galatians 5:19 - Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

v. 20a - idolatry, sorcery [*φαρμακεία, pharmakeia*], ...

v. 21b - ... and things like these which I forewarn you just as I forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Those who practice such things do not lose their salvation but rather their inheritance. These practices, habits, and blasphemies are the works of the reversionist and take place in the void of carnality and degeneracy. No one who is habitually involved in such things could ever advance spiritually and therefore forfeits any chance he might have to receive the conveyance of escrow blessings in time and eternity.

Drug abuse may not have resulted in human sacrifice in this country but it has been linked with those who while so intoxicated have carried out animal sacrifices as part of cultic rituals. The Israelites were also slow to engage in the sacrifice of humans but it did occur and it warranted the interdiction of divine discipline. Several passages reveal its practice and the divine response to those who caused their children to “pass through the fire” of *Molech*: the burnt offering.

1 Kings 11:6 - Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not follow the Lord fully, as David his father had done.



v. 7 - Then Solomon [**under the influence of some of his idolatrous wives**] built a high place for Chemosh [כְּמוֹשׁ *lkē' mosh*: **the national deity of the Moabites to whom they offered child sacrifices**] the detestable idol [שִׁקּוּץ *shiqqus*: **singular**] of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol [שִׁקּוּץ *shiqqus*: **plural**] of the sons of Ammon.

The word “idol” appears twice in this verse, first in the singular and then in the plural. The Hebrew word is שִׁקּוּץ *shiqqus*: a “detestable idol” or a “detestable thing.” The singular refers to the “detestable idol” of the Moabite god, Chemosh, while the plural refers to the “detestable things” associated with the Ammonite practice of *Molech*, offering children as a burnt offering.

1 Kings 11: 8 - Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

There is no indication that Solomon actually allowed the practice of child sacrifice but this compromise of the first and second commandments caused him to receive the negative KER:

1 Kings 11:11 -So the Lord said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant.

v. 12 - “Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son [**Rehoboam**].

v. 13 - However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”