

# LAMBSKINS

by Rivka Yehoshua

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Tonight, as my two boys, Zavdi and Yoel, and I arrived home, I was startled by a huge wasp that had taken control of my kitchen. As I stood there trying to decide how best to kill it, and (furiously) praying for God to help me not to be scared, I began to think for the first time what the worst outcome could be. What was I really afraid of?

I figured that it could maybe sting me once or twice if I missed and got it really angry at me. In any case, I'd be hurt, so I was defending myself against the possible pain that an inch long wasp could inflict upon me. I was scared because he had the power to hurt me.

You know, I don't like being vulnerable. VULNERABLE. I don't think I even like the word. It ranks right up there with HELPLESS. My mind then races ahead to 'exposed' and then right on to (and this isn't funny anymore), sinful. My three year old son Zavdi asked me about sin the other day. We were talking about Adam and Eve and that awful tree, and I just wonder what you would have told him about sin.

Sin isn't a very popular subject anymore, except among people who point fingers at televangelists. But for most of us, sin is something someone else does, someone who's a sinner. It used to at least be someone who committed murder or adultery, but now even those lines are getting fuzzy, so maybe now it's someone who was cruel to us, or to children, or to animals. I don't know, just ask yourself what sin is.

When I think of sin, I usually feel a knot in my stomach marked 'CONDEMNATION.' I don't like that word either. It's a relative of guilt and that's something our mothers inspired within us. At least mine did. She wasn't always right (now I know that some of the things she taught me not to do are right; and some of the things she thought were OK, like 'little white lies' and eating pork, are not), but she was effective. At least until recently.

She was effective because I gave her the position of God in my life. I believe mankind has an innate fear of someone or something we call God. Whether it's the Holy One of Israel or not, is a matter of training. God is the one we surrender control of our lives to. It could be the Holy One, if we know Him and thus love Him; or money or approval, etc.

Well, I had sold her my soul and taken her yoke, and it left me full of condemnation and guilt because I'm rebellious and disobedient to the core. Such words. I could never live up to her expectations. Ever try to make enough money? Or get your wardrobe coordinated? And her laws were rigid and far above me, unlike the Torah of Moses:

'Surely this Teaching which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond your reach. It is not in the Heavens that you should say, 'Who among us can go up to the Heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who among us

can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?' No, the thing is very close to you in your mouth, and in your heart to observe it.' (Deut. 30:11-14)

Actually, I see now that the problem wasn't with the laws, it was with me. Because they wouldn't have been far above me if I had submitted to them in love. Not in deed, because I obeyed my mother for years and kept inching toward death by strangulation. And I could have submitted to her without taking her yoke.

You see, I've found in every situation that people and things, are very cruel taskmasters. They always leave me feeling that I haven't done enough, that I haven't made the grade. That's because I haven't. God knew that and that's why he brought it down to us. Can you imagine re-writing Exodus 19:9f. like this:

'And speak to the Sons of Israel saying, 'Purify yourselves and then all of you come up the Mountain and when you get to the top, I'll give you My Torah so you can learn how to be holy. But remember, anyone that is not holy who touches the Mountain must be put to death.'

No! He said, 'Wait there where you are because to touch the Mountain would mean your death. So, I'll come down and speak to you so that you can learn to be holy for Me.' Yeshua said,

'Come to Me, all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder My Yoke and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. (Matthew 11:28-29)

All the yokes I've ever borne have left me heavy laden. And all the taskmasters I've ever been enslaved to, have left me feeling helpless and vulnerable under their yoke. I've lived a lifetime of guilt and frustration and finally, bitterness and depression. The tension left me with no place to turn and I wanted death's yoke, just to be free of all the others. Until recently.

There was one yoke I hadn't tried yet. I knew it was there staring me in the face all my life and that was the one yoke I would never take. If I sold my soul to God, He's REALLY BIG, and I'd be helpless and I'd get stung...So, what was I really afraid of? I had kept God at arm's length to defend myself from the hurt I'd feel if He stung me, with His Wrath, which I knew I deserved. I defended myself from the pain I'd experience if He asked me to be good and I wouldn't be good enough for Him, as I knew I couldn't.

I was scared because He was my last hope, my ace in the hole, and what if I played my card, gave Him all of me, and...and...and...I got stung?! Everyone else had stung me, could the King of the Universe do worse? But could He do better? Could He work for me? Could He be the answer? If I cashed it all in on Him, would He really come through for me?

Later tonight, a friend came over and killed the wasp. But, as the story was related to me, the wasp's wings were already burned from getting too close to a lamp. And it still took several tries until it was dead, and I was safe and unhurt. And now it couldn't sting me anymore. And I was moved with compassion and love, for this wasp that I had previously feared.

Yeshua came and suffered a cruel trial, mocking and scourging, a crown of thorns, and being stripped by Gentiles, and died a cruel and agonizing death upon a stake. He hadn't done anything wrong, and He hadn't stung anyone because He didn't come to judge anyone or to condemn them.

He came to bring life. And now, because He lived in perfect fulfillment of Torah and died, died only because of WHO HE WAS, now death cannot sting me, and I'm safe and He's not gong to hurt me or let me down, and I am moved with compassion and love for the One who has brought me life. For having risen from the dead by the Power of God, He has conquered death, and lives, and so do I. And I've chosen to take His Yoke of Life. Recently.

## **A Living Light**

**by Avram Yehoshua**

Working for the Exxon gas station in Tampa, Florida went on for nine months. I was 25 years old when the owner came to me one day and told me he'd have to lay me off. He didn't want to, but it was not within his power to keep me. Business had fallen off and he couldn't pay his quarterly taxes. As there were only the three of us, the owner, the mechanic and me, I was the one to go.

I couldn't understand why this was happening. I had been praying that his business would prosper. Having read about Joseph in Egypt, that whatever he turned his hand to prospered, I was confused as to why the opposite had just happed to me.

Looking back on it 11 years later (1988), I see the Hand of Almighty God moving me from one place to another, just as Joseph was moved from the pit to Potiphar's house, then to prison (which was no promotion), and finally to second in command to Pharaoh. Every place where God wanted Joseph he went, so that his character would be forged and his knowledge of God increased. Then he'd be ready to not only administer for Egypt, but also be able to say to his brothers, 'You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.'

God moved me next 'to church.' Please keep in mind that I wouldn't hear of Messianic Judaism for the next seven years, and so, I'd be in church. Messianic Judaism would expose the deception that once a Jew accepts Jesus as Messiah, they're no longer Jewish but Christian, right? But how can the acceptance of the Jewish Messiah make a Jew not Jewish anymore? (By 2005 I would see that Messianic Judaism was filled with much error and would embark on a journey without them.)

Anyway, because of my hours at the gas station, I couldn't go to church that first year. But God had been teaching me as I had spent 10 to 12 hours a day in His Word.

My first church was Baptist. They were nice people, even to a Jewish boy who had given his heart to Jesus. They may have been culturally different, but inside they were the same. Some

wanted to study and learn and devote their lives to God and to the community. Others liked to come just to find out the latest gossip, talk about business, or socialize, their hearts being far from God.

I was raised as an assimilated Jew. One who has a life goal that parallels the American Dream. Beautiful house on top of a hill, three cars in the garage and plenty of money. Nothing wrong with that if God is the center of one's life, but it He's not, and He wasn't for me, then there's nothing right with it.

My mother was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home in Brooklyn and rebelled against her parents and their belief system. And so, even though I had an Orthodox bar mitzva at 13 years old, God and the understanding of His Word were not the desire of my heart.

After a year in the Baptist church, of hearing just how great God was in sending His Son to die for us, I noticed a certain theme that was missing. It had to do with God manifesting Himself today. I would read about the life of Jesus, how He not only spoke of the Kingdom of God but also healed people of every disease, from blindness to leprosy, as signs that He was sent from God. Now, I'm not talking about faith healing, just about every religion has that. I'm talking about diving healing in the Name of Yeshua. Well, this subject was never approached in that Baptist church.

Moving on as the Lord was leading, I found myself in a different congregation that spoke of the Baptism or Immersion in the Holy Spirit. The very first time I went there, the pastor spoke to my heart. It was powerful. He spoke of the unity we have with God, and one another, in the Holy Spirit. I went forward at the end of the second service to have them pray for me, that I might be immersed in the Holy Spirit. I expected lightning bolts and nothing happened! I was very disappointed.

With my eyes being opened to the existence of such a reality though, I began to seek God for this immersion. During this time, the Lord moved me again, this time to another congregation in St. Petersburg, Florida that believed that God still performed miracles today.

I was in sales and one night couldn't find the address of the home I was to go to. I stopped at a house to use their phone, to locate my appointment. Before I left, I found out that the house was that of a psychic. God was leading me as He had Joseph. She invited me back when she would be teaching her followers how to get in touch with their higher powers. She also said that she believed in Jesus. I was new to religion and didn't realize that psychics and Yeshua don't mix. After three sessions with her and her followers though, I confronted her as to her 'belief' in Jesus.

Central to true belief in Jesus is His Death and what that means to us. By His Death, the Sacrifices of Moses find their ultimate meaning. Did you ever wonder why God required the life (blood) of the animal? Yahveh says in Leviticus 17:11,

'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the Altar, to make atonement for your souls.'

It pointed to the time when God would offer His Son as a Sacrifice that would not only cleanse us from sin and guilt, as did the sacrifices of Torah (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 13, 18; 6:7, etc.), but the Nature of Yeshua would be created within us. This is the New Creation.

This psychic didn't understand that. She thought that Jesus was just another good man whose death didn't mean anything to us, but that we could attain to the same God consciousness as Jesus had attained to. I told her differently. We parted and later that night I was immersed in the Spirit of the Living God. It would be the end of my search for the immersion and the beginning of my life walking in the Spirit of the Holy One.

I went to bed about 10 PM that evening and as I fell asleep, I heard a voice say to me, 'You can speak to anyone you want to,' implying that all I had to do was request someone. Now that was very interesting because that very evening, before I had left the psychic's house, she had taught the group that all of us had 'an Indian guide.' And that whenever we needed to know anything, we could call on him and he'd answer us. And if he didn't know, he'd go through that great spiritual door in the sky and get a more powerful Indian chief who did.

As I lay there, my first thought was to call upon that Indian guide. As soon as I thought that though I said, 'No!, I want to speak with Jesus.' And instantly, I saw a milky, white substance begin to filter its way through my body, starting at my feet. I had been in bed all this time and had just drifted off to sleep, so what I saw was more like a vision. I was lying on my back in bed, watching the white substance flow toward my stomach. And then I awoke, excited that Yeshua has 'spoken' to me like that. The incredible reality of God's Presence, by His Spirit, was concretely brought home to me.

Since that time I have spoken in tongues and witnessed a number of instantaneous, miraculous healings, as well as other manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the Name of Yeshua. After this I knew that the Messiah of Israel was more than just a belief system or philosophy, but an ever present help in my times of need, and that He could and would, intervene in my life. Every time I turn to Him, I feel His Presence all over me.