

Parashah # 29

(Updated for 4.16.11)

Acharei Mot ~ אַחֲרֵי מוֹת ~ After The Death

Torah: Vayikra/Leviticus 16:1-18:30

Haftarah: Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 22:1-19

B'rit Hadashah: Romans 3:19-28; Romans 9:30~10:13; 1st Corinthians 5:1-13;
2nd Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 3:10-14; Ivrim/Hebrews 7:23~10:25

CHAPTER 16

In **Vayikra/Leviticus 16** HaShem instructs Moshe to tell his brother, Aharon, how, when and where he can come into the Holy Place. **Holy** means **set apart**. All of HaShem's appointed times are set apart to the L~rd. But the Day of Atonement is the holiest of all. Approximately five months from now, on the 10th of Tishrei, we will observe this Holiest of all Holy Days called (Yome Kip-**poor**) *Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement* (at-one-ment). It is the day for drawing near to HaShem. It is a day for a personal one-on-one encounter with the Father. It is a day of confession and contrition. We are told this day coincides with the day Moshe came down from Mt. Sinai with the second set of tablets bearing the *Decalogue/Ten Commandments*. According to the Sages, that day became ordained as Yom Kippur, the eternal day of forgiveness.

Aharon first brings two (kore-bah-**note**) *korbanot/offerings* for himself; a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering (**verses 3-4**). **On this day only**, he wears special vestments, different from his normal garments. They are holy and made of white linen:

- the tunic
- the shorts next to his bare flesh
- the sash wrapped around him
- and the turban.

He is to (mick-veh) *mikveh/bathe* before putting them on.

The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash says "on Yom Kippur, whenever the (Koh-hen Gah-**dole**) *Kohen Gadol/High Priest* changed into his regular vestments or into his white ones – a total of five times – he immersed himself in a mikveh. In addition, before and after each change of garments, he washed his hands and feet with water from the Laver, which stood in the Sanctuary Courtyard." As I count it, this means he immersed himself five times and washed his hands and feet an additional ten times! Remember when your mother told you cleanliness was next to G~dliness????

In **verse 6**, (Ah-hah-**rown**) *Aharon/Aaron* provides atonement for himself and his household, which I understand included the other priests. I found the text of his confession, which follows:

“I beg of You, HaShem, I have acted wickedly, rebelled, and sinned before You, I and my household. I beg of You, HaShem, forgive now the wicked acts, rebellions, and sins, for I have acted wickedly, rebelled and sinned before You, I and my household, as it is written in the Torah of Your servant Moses (16:30): *For on this day he shall provide atonement for you . . .*” (Mishnah Yoma 3:8)

It is a well known fact confession does not provide the atonement. There must be shedding of blood for the atonement. However, confession is a very essential part of repentance which leads to atonement.

There were three animals brought on behalf of (B'nay Yees-rah-ehl) ***B'nei Yisrael/Children of Israel***, for two types of offerings. Two male goats were brought for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. It's interesting to examine to whom and how the two goats were offered. (Verse 7-10)

Both goats were brought before Adonai at the entrance of the tent of meeting. The decision as to which goat was to be presented as a sin offering before Adonai was made by casting lots. The other goat, known as the scapegoat, was for (Ahz-ah-zehl) 'Az'azel. It carried evil away and was presented live before Adonai. Used for atonement it was sent away into the desert for 'Az'azel. (verses 20-22)

It is said the ***Kohen Gadol/High Priest*** would tie a red woolen strip to the head of the goat for 'Az'azel, and another strip around the neck of the sin-offering. When the goat for 'Az'azel was pushed over the precipice/cliff, the red wool would miraculously turn white, to symbolize Israel's sins had been forgiven.

Concerning the ritual of the scapegoat, Rabbi Hirsch said: “Two identical he-goats are used for this process to demonstrate that every person must choose between good and evil, and that no one has the luxury of being neutral. Those who do not choose to move toward holiness are inevitably pushing themselves toward a wasteland of spiritual destruction.”

It would be difficult not to see shadows of ***Mashiach/Messiah*** in the scapegoat.

- Like Messiah, the goat takes upon himself the sin and iniquity of the people.
- Like Messiah, the 'Az'azel goat is killed while bearing the sin of the people.

These are certainly shadows of the Messiah. He is the One who bore away the uncleanness and sin of us all.

The Hebrew word used for atonement is (kah-pah-rah) ***kaparah***, כפרה, and means much more than ***forgiveness for sins***. It means ***covering*** or ***protection*** and it can also mean ***ransom for one's life***. With regard to covering and protection, think about this: **Verses 14-20** talk about the sprinkling of the blood to make atonement, not only for ***B'nei Yisra'el/Children of***

Israel, but atonement for the (Kah-doe-sh Keh-doe-sheem) *Kadosh Kedoshim/Holy of Holies*, atonement for the (meesh-kahn) *Mishkan/Tabernacle* and atonement for the (*meetz-bay-ahk*) *mitzbeahk/altar*. All of these things were continually in the presence of a holy G~d and without atonement they could not/would not remain. I never thought of inanimate objects as needing atonement!

Do you remember several (pah-rah-shoat) Parashot back when there was mention about the *Cohen HaGadol/The High Priest's* garments with the bells around the bottom and the “folk tale” reasoning behind it? If they quit ringing then the assistants would know the priest had dropped dead and needed to be pulled out by a rope tied around his ankle. Remember that? First of all, we don't find anywhere in scripture where the high priest had a rope around his ankle. If we read **Vayikra/Leviticus 16:17**, we find the truth of the matter. “**No one is to be present in the tent of meeting . . .**” On top of that . . . the high priest could only go into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur AND he could only wear the four Holy white linen garments. Therefore, he didn't wear his robe with the bells on it! So much for **that** “folk tale” having any validity!!!

One commentary regarding the ritual for *Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement* speaks of an “intersection of three spheres of holiness.

- “On the holiest day of the year (the Day of Atonement),
- the holiest man in the world (the high priest of Israel),
- goes into the holiest place in the world (the Holy of Holies).”

CHAPTER 17

Verses 1-9 state ALL offerings are to be made in the Sanctuary area. Furthermore, it was forbidden to slaughter any consecrated animals anywhere outside of the courtyard. Anyone guilty of not obeying these guidelines, was cut off from the people. Then in **verses 10-14** the importance is revealed. Once again, the life of the flesh is in the blood. Because life is dependent upon the blood, it is not appropriate for it to be consumed. Again, the prohibition, should anyone consume any blood, they will be cut off from the people.

Furthermore, our friend, Orthodox Rabbi, Ya'akov Youlus reminds us the Torah's description thousands of years ago about the importance of blood and its connection with life has been proven through modern medical science. We now understand most diseases can be detected by analyzing a person's blood. During the days of the Temple when a person who sinned wanted to repent, he would bring his sacrifice to the Temple and sprinkle the blood of the animal. In doing these two things, his sins were forgiven. The sinner knew he must come with the proper attitude of contrition. Without proper repentance, the sacrifice and the sprinkling of its blood had no effect. Later, in the Tanach, many of the prophets criticized the people for bringing their sacrifices without the intention of not repeating their sin.

CHAPTER 18

In **verses 3-5**, HaShem is pretty clear about His requirements AND His promises. Batyah's translation:

- Don't do what the people did where you came from
- Don't do what the people do where you are going
- Don't obey any of their rules/laws.
- Do what I tell you to do; when I tell you to do it and I will give you life.
- I am your G~d!

I'm telling you, I can still hear my mom saying, "Just do what I tell you to do, when I tell you to do it and you won't be in trouble." I didn't realize she was quoting scripture!!!

"You are to obey my rulings and laws and live accordingly; I am Adonai your G~d." (**verse 4**)
"You are to observe my laws and rulings; if a person does them, he will have life through them." (**verse 5**) HaShem is about to instruct B'nei Israel/Children of Israel about personal relationships. After exhorting them to avoid the corrupt behavior of the Canaanites and the Egyptians, He reminded them of the importance of obeying His two categories of Divine Instruction: rulings and laws. So what's the difference?

The commandments/laws are practices which would be dictated by reason, even without the Torah's commands. Rulings are those commandments which are incomprehensible to human intelligence, the ones for which there are no "logical" explanations. Obedience to the "rulings" is never motivated by understanding why, but by undivided devotion to our Abba Father. We know Torah never repeats anything unnecessarily, so why does it repeat the commandment to obey and observe the rulings and laws?

Laws of interpersonal respect and order, which common sense dictates are essential for a functional society, require our commitment to their fulfillment. However, their obvious necessity should not require the additional warning of observing! Anyone who maintains proper ethical direction and conscious of HaShem should automatically keep himself from violation of these laws.

However, human experience stands witness to the fact, too many too often fail to control their urges and choose themselves at the expense of others. Their internal desire to act contrary to HaShem's will, takes precedence over their will to live obediently. It is the internal tug-of-war which pulls us to do what we know we should not. Consequently, verse 5 emphasizes the need for observance for both rulings and laws. We cannot rely on our own motivations to keep us vigilant in protecting the laws. Sometimes, *we need a Divine push!* The period between (Paysock) *Pesach/Passover* and (Shah-voo-oat) *Shavu'ot/Feast of Weeks/Pentecost* is a time to reflect on the great gift we have been given. It is time to truly be thankful, to re-accept Torah and commit to living according to it with love and devotion toward HaShem.

Then **verses 6-22** address every abominable, detestable, perverted sexual act describable. How dare anyone say homosexuality isn't addressed in the word of G~d! **Verse 22** clearly states "you shall not lie with a man as one lies with a woman, it is an abomination." Furthermore, **Revelation 22:15** gives a list of those who will not be allowed to enter the gates of the new Jerusalem. The VERY FIRST ONE on the list is homosexuals!!!! In the King James Version, translators changed the homosexual reference to the word "dogs". Commentaries indicate this was done to avoid offending the King who was a homosexual.

From time to time, you will recall, I encourage each of us to "live Torah". I thought of that very thing as I was reading **verses 28-29**. "Let not the Land disgorge you for having contaminated it, as it disgorged the nation before you. For if anyone commits any of these abominations, the people doing so will be cut off from among their people."

In 2007, at this time of the year and during this Parashah reading, the news coverage concerned the worldwide Gay Pride conference scheduled to take place in Jerusalem. Baruch HaShem!, it didn't receive much acceptance and ended up as a small gathering at the Hebrew University. That was still bad enough!

Acharei Mot ~ אַחֲרֵי מוֹת ~ After The Death
Haftarah: Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 22:1-19

Oh my! As I read these verses, I thought of all the corruption currently taking place within both the Israeli and the U.S. governments. The daily news reports are rampant with the issues addressed in this Haftarah.

I believe this Haftarah shows us an example of why Israel needed a national day of repentance and atonement. Here we find descriptions of the many sins being committed in the political and religious capital. In these verses the Holy City is called a City of Blood due to the shedding of innocent blood. *Yechezk'el/Ezekiel*, in **verses 4-12**, points out at least 20 different sins which were consistently part of the late First Temple period. Here is a listing of just a few . . .

<u>Verse</u>	<u>The Sin</u>	<u>Torah Violated</u>
4	Idolatry	Exodus 22:20
7	Injustice to orphans and widows	Deuteronomy 27:19
7	Slander	Leviticus 19:16
8	Violation of holy	

	things	Leviticus 5:15
8	Violation of Shabbat	Exodus 20:8
10-11	Committed sexual family sins	Leviticus 18:6-20
12	Accepted bribes	Deuteronomy 10:17
12	Took interest on loans	Leviticus 25:36
12	Forgotten G~d	Deuteronomy 8:18

As we can see, these were not petty crimes. According to **Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 22:6**, they were being committed by the **rulers** of Israel. Consequently, we learn in **verse 15** HaShem will scatter Israel among the nations and furthermore consume their uncleanness from them.

Unfortunately, serious mistakes have been made concerning this point. Many of these mistakes come from the pulpits. Some have assumed because Israel was driven and scattered from the Land HaShem had dissolved His covenant relationship with them. According to the Tanakh, this is NOT true at all. Other translations may be different but in the Tanakh, **verse 16** says Israel will “re-inherit yourself in the sight of the nations, and you shall know that I am HaShem.”

We see this very thing coming to pass. Out of the fiery furnaces of the Holocaust the modern State of Israel was born. More and more people of Hebrew lineage are returning to their homeland, Israel. Truly, they are “re-inheriting themselves in the sight of the nations.”

Acharei Mot ~ אַחֲרֵי מוֹת ~ After The Death
B'rit Hadashah: Romans 3:19-28; Romans 9:30~10:13;
1st Corinthians 5:1-13; 2nd Corinthians 2:1-11;
Galatians 3:10-14; Ivrim/Hebrews 7:23~10:25

Romans 3:19-28 I find it amazing these 10 verses commanded nine pages of commentary and there is no way to cover **all**. Interestingly, these verses are a midrash on **Psalm 143**. The Psalmist is aware no one's works can earn righteousness by HaShem. Being thoroughly trained in the Torah and Tanakh, (Rahv) **Rav/Rabbi** (Shah-ool) **Sha'ul/Paul** would have known this midrash. Consequently, I believe his understanding of “righteousness” is all about “doing it right”! Not because we have to but because we want to. It's not a legalistic issue . . . it's a heart issue!!!

Verse 27 is also the recognition there are (and were) two Torahs. One is the Law of Works (the Oral Torah) and two is the Law of Faith (the Written Torah). This distinction is necessary to understand which law was condemned and done away with. Yeshua called it the traditions of men (Mark 7:7-13)

Romans 9:30~10:13 The Torah, the Mosaic Law, is a covenant based not on “works” but on trusting G~d. Most commentators present these verses as if *Sha’ul/Paul* were contrasting two paths to righteousness authorized by HaShem, the Mosaic Law and the New Covenant, showing the advantages of the latter over the former. However, there is only one path. The Torah of Moses requires faith and offers righteousness by faith, just like the (B’reet Hah-dah-shah) *B’rit Hadashah/the Renewed Covenant*. Any interpretation which tries to sell the Law of Moses short is not only anti-Semitic but insulting to HaShem the Giver of the “Torah of righteousness”. Here again, in verse 32 is the contrast between the oral Torah and the written (faith) Torah.

To recap above, there are TWO Torahs . . . The Written (Mosaic) and The Oral (Rabbinic). *Sha’ul/Paul* teaches the Mosaic Covenant is from G~d and has NOT been done away with, agreeing with Yeshua. It is The Oral Torah, Rav Sha’ul has problems with. Notice, too, in both of the Romans passages, Paul distinctly tells us to have the faith OF Yeshua not IN Yeshua!

1st Corinthians 5:1-13 In these verses, *Sha’ul/Paul* speaks about judgment against sexual immorality. In verse 1, we learn even pagans condemned a man living (having sexual relations) with his stepmother. Verses 6-8 address (hah-mehtz) *hametz*, Hebrew for *leaven*, which is generally associated with *sin* in our lives. Here, Sha’ul encourages us to walk in purity and truth. The instructions are quite clear in the remaining verses. Primarily, Sha’ul is saying we are not to associate with those within the community (i.e. synagogue, church) who . . .

- Engages in sexual immorality
- Is greedy
- Worships idols
- Is abusive
- Gets drunk
- Steals

“With such a person you shouldn’t even eat!” When we eat with another, we go into a covenant relationship with them. But we should eat with those who are inquiring about Yeshua (Acts 10:1-11:18) and with fellow-believers in good standing. (Galatians 2:11-16)

2nd Corinthians 2:1-11 These verses are pretty straight forward, in my opinion. We are to walk in forgiveness toward anyone and everyone. To do otherwise would leave the door open to (Hah-Sah-tahn) HaSatan and his schemes. If we are following Torah, specifically, Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18, to “love your neighbor as yourself”, this should be a “no-brainer”. And by the way, did you notice this commandment was in (Vah-yee-krah) *Vayikra/Leviticus*

WAY before it was ever recorded in (Mah-teet-yah-hoo) *Mattit'yahu/Matthew*, Mark, Luke, Romans, Galatians and (Yah-ah-kove) *Ya'akov/James*?

Galatians 3:10-14

According to David Stern's Jewish New Testament Commentary, the key to these verses is: "**in sorting out when the Greek word "nomos" means God's Torah and when it means legalistic perversion of it.**" In Stern's judgment, most translations fail to make this very important distinction and are NOT "rightly dividing the word of truth". There is no way man is capable of keeping all the commands of Torah. In fact, the Torah itself (HaShem, Himself) anticipated people would fall short of complete obedience and consequently fall out of fellowship with Him. Torah even commands what must be done in order to restore such fellowship – they must repent and sometimes they must bring a prescribed sacrifice. *Melekh Dah-veed/King David* is a prime example. Obviously David was less than perfectly obedient to all of Torah's commands – he committed adultery and murder. However, HaShem forgave him after he repented (2nd Samuel 11:1-12:25; Psalm 32 and Psalm 51). Not only does Torah anticipate disobedience but it makes explicit provision for it by mentioning sin offerings in 20 chapters of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers in addition to some 120 times in the rest of the Tanakh. Sha'ul even took it a step further . . . he proves legalists, in particular, simply by being legalists, violate at least one of the Torah's commands. Therefore, on the basis of Deuteronomy 27:26 and the other verses cited, they . . .

1. Do not attain life
2. Are not righteous
3. Come under a curse

Ivrim/Hebrews 7:23~10:25 Just as our Torah portion tells us how, when and where Aharon can come into the Holy Place, here we have a comparison showing how Yeshua is our *Cohen Gadol/High Priest*. Chapter 8 addresses the "true Tent of Meeting" not just a copy and shadow as we have had with the Tabernacle and the Temple.

In Chapter 8:7, with the added word "covenant", the topic of the priesthood suddenly changes to covenant. The confusion continues in verse 8 when it refers to "them" . . . priests or covenants???? Verse 13 is back to covenants with the addition of the word "covenant". Then 9:1 finds the translators adding "covenant" again. In verse 10:25, the translators change the references to the Feasts and Sabbath and call it "the assembling of ourselves together".

This is a rather lengthy Brit Hadashah portion. In fact, there were 25 pages of commentary by David Stern. It is in these chapters and verses which much replacement theology comes from. If there is one thing I know and will support until the day I die it is this . . . Israel and the Hebrew people, are HaShem's Chosen. They are the apple of His eye and no one, absolutely no nation, no peoples, no organizations, none have replaced them. His word is very clear!!!

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 26

**Next week: Parashah #30
Kedoshim ~ Holy People
Torah: Vayikra/Leviticus 19:1~20:27
Haftarah: Amos 9:7-15; Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 20'2-20
B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 5:33-37 & 43-48;
Mattityahu/Matthew 15:1-11; Mattityahu/Matthew 19:16-30;
Mattityahu/Matthew 22:33-40; Mark 7:1-23; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-39;
Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13-26; Ya'akov/James 2:1-9; Kefa Alef/1st Peter 1:13-21**

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim

**Organize yourselves into classes for the study of Torah,
since it can best be acquired in association with others.**

Talmud: Berkot 63b

Shavuah tov (have a good week)!!!