



ACHAREI MOT

Parasha: **ACHAREI MOT/AFTER THE DEATH***

Torah Portion: **VAYIKRA/LEVITICUS 16:1-18:30**

Tanak: **ISAIAH 60:15-22, 66:1-11 EZEKIEL 22:1-19,
AMOS 9:7-15**

Brit Hadasha: **JOHN 6:52-59, ROMANS 1:21-32, TITUS 3:4-7**

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*Most years, Acharei Mot is read as a double portion with Kedoshim.

WE NOW SEE AN ASPECT OF YESHUA in Aaron as he ministers to YHVH before the Mercy Seat of YHVH. The very essence of this week's reading, as a matter of fact, takes into account the necessity for the shedding of innocent blood to cover sin. Aaron is given directives to go into the Most Holy Place to make atonement for the impurities of the sons of Israel which was to atone for their transgressions and sins. The atonement that would take place, inside this most sacred of all places on earth, would also be for the Tent of Meeting was that situated amongst the sons of Israel.

Aaron took his life and placed it into YHVH's hands as he would do this priestly work for the Day of Atonement, the only time every year that Aaron would enter into the Most Holy Place. If we look more closely at the commands given in Vayikra 16, we will notice that Aaron did not wear the ephod while performing these rites. The importance of this is manifold.

First, Aaron did not wear the ephod with the bells on the hem. Many believe that these bells are what would have been heard by others while the High Priest ministered inside the Most Holy Place. This is simply not the case, as he was commanded in this narrative to only wear the breeches, tunic, the sash and the linen turban.

Second, Aaron did not have the tinkling of bells in his own ears as a reminder to why he was ministering inside the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place. Torah tells us in Shemot 28:35 that the bells would be heard when Aaron enters and exits the Tabernacle so that he

may not die. This was Aaron's reminder of his purpose for ministering. It would serve to keep him focused on the tasks at hand, while not allowing his mind to wonder. The absence of these bells would mean that the High Priest would need focused concentration on his own accord and that his own serious attitude would be mandated.

Moreover, Aaron was to be alone inside the entire Tent of Meeting. No one was allowed inside the Tabernacle with him. One might even wonder if this means that Aaron was supposed to be alone within the entire Tabernacle proper or if this was just the inside of the tent only. Either way, Aaron had to do the atonement work single-handedly.

These insights all add up to how Messiah ministers on our behalf. He, alone, has borne all our burdens, iniquities and diseases so that we might live and not die. Yeshua did not have bells on the hems of His robes either; He did not ever wear the holy garments of the Highest Priest on earth, but was stripped of all His garments. He walked into the Most Holy place of the Heavens as the Anointed Priest according to the order of Melchizedek with His focus on us as His motivation for the work of atonement.

This is important for us to realize as we sometimes feel that we are alone. We have such a High Priest who never slumbers nor sleeps. He bears our every burden. He called us back into the Tabernacle of His love the moment His work was finished on the tree of sacrifice. Now, Messiah bears the Ephod and all the Priestly adornment as He presents us as living sacrifices in Him, so that we are called the sons of YHVH.

Shavu Halacha/Weekly Walking:

As we read this week's portion, we see a common thread of what we are to be, how we are to act; and we are made aware of the disclosure that takes place through acts of disobedience. All in all, we see that we must be atoned for and that the impurities that we have due to our transgressions must be cleansed through the shed blood of the innocent so that our sins are covered. Yeshua is that covering for us. We need not go any further than the blood that takes away the sin of the world and places us in proper relationship with YHVH through Him. Messiah carried every aspect of the offering for atonement for us, with His own intercession for man as the soothing aroma that was kindled upon the heavenly Altar of incense and burns strong to this day. In your walk, do not forget this Priestly role that Messiah fulfills for us. Moreover, He daily bears our burdens so that we do not have to lug them around with us through this wilderness. Even as the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they had only bread that was unleavened that was soon replaced with manna. They did not have meat so YHVH rained down quail. The sons of Israel brought out the booty from the Egyptians and even that was to be given over to YHVH for use in the Tabernacle. What it boils down to is this: All of what we are and what we possess belongs to YHVH. He bore all our anxiety and burdens that are associated with all that we are involved in. Why shouldn't we be like Aaron and individually approach the presence of YHVH presenting our hearts to Him as we offer Him our most acceptable offering? Remember; cast your cares and burdens upon Yeshua, He cares for you!

Days 1-2

PARASHA:
LEV. 16:1-34

TORAH STUDY

PRAYER LEAVES

Midrash Point:

YHVH says that the life is in the blood; and, He demonstrates this point in verse 3. YHVH instructs Aaron that he is to only enter the Holy place to appear before the Mercy Seat with the bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. We know that Aaron did not go into the Holy Place with the entire animal, dead or alive, but he would go in with the blood of these animals to minister before the Mercy Seat after placing incense on the Golden Altar.

This bit of information gives insight as to how YHVH sees us being carried into His Throne Room by the blood of Messiah. His blood was shed so that He, as our High Priest, would then carry it into the Most Holy Place of Heaven and make atonement for us at the Mercy Seat: the Throne of YHVH.

How do you see yourself represented by Yeshua's blood and His atonement taking place at the Throne?

1. Many people believe that the bells on the ephod were placed on the hems of the High Priest's garments to warn others that the High Priest was dead inside the Holy of Holies, if they no longer heard the tingling of the bells. We have discussed what these bells were used for back in Shemot, however, now we see more clearly that the ephod was not even worn at this time. Aaron was to only wear the linen breeches, the tunic, the sash and the linen turban. Why would YHVH want Aaron not to wear the ephod on the Day of Atonement when he would enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement?

2. In Verse 17 the command is given that nobody else was to be in the Tent of Meeting until Aaron came out. One could argue that this refers only to the actual Tent structure and not the court around the Tent. However, the entire Tabernacle compound was one unit with the stations beginning outside of the main veil/screen with the Altar of Burnt offering and the Laver. First, discuss who and where the other priests would have been permitted to be at the time when Aaron was to make atonement.

Second, which veil would YHVH be talking about when Aaron was to go through to burn incense as commanded in verse 12? Give other Torah accounts as to which veil is which to defend your answer.

Finally, was Aaron to use the fire-pan to burn the incense or was he to use the Altar of Incense? Remember that there were only four columns so that smoke could rise above the veil into the Holy of Holies and make a cloud before the Mercy Seat.

3. Aaron was told to take two male goats for a sin offering. One was to be slain for the sin offering and the other was appointed as the scapegoat. The scapegoat was presented alive before YHVH to make atonement upon it and then sent into the wilderness. Lots were to be cast to decide which goat was which. What would have been used as lots for this purpose? Here again, remember that Aaron was not wearing the ephod.

4. When Yeshua was hanging on the tree, He was aware of the soldiers casting lots for His garments. How does this fit into the fulfillment of Torah in regards to the lots being cast for the scapegoat and sin offering?

How does Yeshua fulfill the command for the goat that was the sin offering?

How do we fulfill the commandment of the scapegoat which was atoned for and sent out into the wilderness?

5. Today we who are believers in Messiah are sojourning through the wilderness going towards the Promised Land. As we are nearing the very last days upon earth we are admonished to overcome through the great tribulation. Those among us who are still alive will be sent into the wilderness where YHVH will have a place prepared for us.¹ Give detailed similarities comparing Israel, the woman in the Revelation, to the scapegoat that was driven into the wilderness by a man in waiting.

6. Throughout all of the commands of the Day of Atonement, Aaron was to minister alone and present himself in the Holy of Holies without the “higher” vestments of his service, namely the ephod and the golden miter. We can see this as a foreshadowing of Messiah, the perfect sacrifice that was stripped completely and executed for our sin. This gives a practical application of how we are all to walk out our own salvation with fear and trembling. No one could die for Messiah, He did it for us. Nobody could help Aaron carry all that had to be brought into the veil, or remind him of all he was supposed to do. Compare these two scenarios and describe their relationship to each other and to us as we present our lives to YHVH as His vessels.

7. While inside the Most Holy Place, Aaron had created a cloud with incense that would cover the Mercy Seat, lest he die. Moreover, verse two states that YHVH would appear in the cloud over the Mercy Seat. These two clouds would have intermingled, creating a larger area for YHVH to inhabit and come closer to meet with Aaron. It is like Aaron enlarging YHVH’s borders through the intercession that the incense represents. Later, we are told that YHVH inhabits the praises of Israel.² In this, we have the insight as to how YHVH comes to us. Discuss this process and how we are to practice it ourselves.

Sandals Worshipping in Truth

The end of chapter 16 tells us that the Day of Atonement is a Sabbath of solemn rest, that we are to humble our souls and that it is a permanent statute. This would give rise to the understanding that Yeshua fulfilled this for us, but that we are still to observe this day since it is a permanent statute, once a year as an everlasting memorial as to what Yeshua accomplished on the Tree of sacrifice for us.

While we do not have a temple or tabernacle to complete the entire set of commands for this Feast day, we are the living tabernacles meeting with YHVH through the Spirit with an ongoing communication of prayer and supplication. Moreover, as we completely rest on the Day of Atonement, afflict our souls with fasting so that we enter into the sufferings of Messiah in remembrance of Him becoming our sin offering. Obviously, we are more aptly to identify with the scapegoat that was sent into the wilderness. This obedience brings about the soothing aroma of the incense coming before YHVH. It also reminds Him as to who He will be providing a prepared place for in the wilderness for the one thousand, two hundred and sixty days.¹

¹Revelation 12:6
²Psalms 22:3

Days 3-4

PARASHA:
LEV. 17:1-16

TORAH STUDY

PRAYER LEAVES

1. We are commanded not to make sacrifices in or outside the camp. Instead we are to bring our offerings to the doorway of the tent of meeting and present them to YHVH. This goes for all the offerings so that the people will no longer sacrifice to the demons. Discuss why it would be so important to YHVH to make a place of sacrifice in contrast to only giving instructions as to where, how and when.

2. It is implied that the children of Israel had been making sacrifices in the open field to the goat-demons in verse seven. The Hebrew word used for goat-demons is *sa'ier* meaning hair, he-goat. It is where we get the word *satyr* used in Greek mythology for man/animal creatures that were associated with male sexuality. There are obvious implications as to why YHVH would not want His people to make sacrifices to such aspects of debasement. Yet, we are still commanded not to make sacrifices to them, today, even if we do not have a Tabernacle or Temple to sacrifice. In what ways are we guilty of making offerings to goat-demons and, thus, diverting our attention from YHVH and our love for Messiah?

3. We are told that we are to love others and that all we need to do is love so that others will see the love of Yeshua in us and come to Him. There are certainly some truths to this, however, we see in verse eight that the man from the house of Israel and the aliens who sojourn among them have the same rule about where to sacrifice. We all have friends who are not believers, either in Messiah, or who are not Covenant keepers. These friends may even be outstanding believers who attend remarkable churches, but have not entered into that Covenant lifestyle with YHVH and His community. Verse eight says that these would be cut off as well as the man from Israel if they sacrificed wrongly. When those around us are joined to us or we are joined to them through Yeshua we are held accountable to the Truth that YHVH places before us. We, collectively, do not impose YHVH's teachings and instructions; however, it is up to us to earnestly contend for the faith which has been handed down to us from our forefathers through Torah.¹ How should this be done with the sojourner that does not see the harm in offering himself to other forms of idolatry rather than YHVH?

Discuss other ways that this passage could be applied to us and our sojourners that have not committed themselves to YHVH in Covenant relationship. How would we recognize spiritual harlotry in those around us?

¹Juede 3

4. YHVH makes a distinction between that which is to be offered at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting and the animal that is killed while hunting. That blood, too, is to be poured out and buried. Can man eat of other animals, i.e. sheep, goats, cattle, which are not purposed for an offering? Give other Torah passages that confirm your answers.

5. YHVH declared that the the life of the flesh is in the blood. The Hebrew word for this is *nephesh*. We saw this word at the beginning of Torah when YHVH brought forth the birds of the air; the sea creatures, the cattle and the creeping things, then He breathed it into the nostrils of Adam. Thus, Adam became a living soul, with the Hebrew word for soul being *nephesh*, as well. We talk about our souls having an eternal dwelling place in Yeshua if we are truly found in Him. Yet, YHVH tells us that the life (*nephesh* or soul) of all flesh is in the blood, which is why we should not eat it. How is our blood the life of us; and, why is it something that is important to YHVH to preserve?

6. We are told not to eat the blood, both we as the sons of Israel and the sojourner. If we do, YHVH says that we shall be cut off. First, how does this apply to us today? What other spiritual application does this have in our lives?

Second, what were the children of Israel cut off from and how would they be cut off? How does this apply to us today? What are we cut off from and how are we cut off from that which we were adjoined?

7. The command given for eating an animal that dies or is torn by beasts is to wash one's clothes and bathe in water. After evening, the person would be clean again. This shows the mercy of YHVH in that the command found in Vayikra 7:26-27. Compare these two passages and give a reason to why they would be different. How does this demonstrate YHVH's mercy?

Days 5-6

PARASHA:
LEV. 18:1-30

TORAH STUDY

PRAYER LEAVES

1. One would think that most of the laws concerning immoral relations would be common sense for most instances. Yet, clearly we see that in our society, there is nothing sacred, nor are immoral actions given a second thought by a vast number of the world's population. Neither are these immoral acts unusual as YHVH reminded Israel that they would not do what was done in the land of Canaan, where they were going, or the land of Egypt, from whence they came. Moreover, these laws concerning immorality are to be kept because they are YHVH's judgments and statutes, by which we may live if we do them. This is the same lifestyle that was going to be incurred if Adam and Eve were to eat of the Tree of Life. How is it that we find life in the commands of YHVH?

Does this, and if so how, differ from the Life found in Messiah?

2. The concept of uncovering a relative's nakedness need go any farther than just shaming them, and yourself, by seeing their nudity. Yet, to consciously uncover their nakedness would be something thought about or planned. Therefore, evil intent is implied by this lewd action. Discuss the ways in which one might inadvertently uncover a relative's nakedness in contrast to how that may be done with evil desires.

3. Yeshua told us that we should not have evil in our hearts because that is just as sinful as acting on those intents that are found within our hearts. We do not have to actually shame a dad or a sister to be guilty of these immoral sins. In what ways do you see that we are guilty of transgressing aspects of Vayikra 18 without actually acting upon our impulses?

4. Uncovering the nakedness of others is, obviously, wrong. YHVH shows us how He even covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve, after they sinned. It is a concept that we refer to as lifting someone's skirt in order to bring humiliation or shame upon them. It is also the act of trying to trick someone or make others the brunt of persecution or jokes by announcing aspects of their personal lives that belongs to them and YHVH alone. We all have these secrets that we want to hide from the public eye. Whether it is how much we weigh or how we snore while we are sleeping. Lifting the skirt of a relative could be joking about their physical features or talking about their shortcomings. When YHVH

covered Adam and Eve, He made a sacrifice and covered them with animal skin while showing them how to make atonement to cover themselves with the blood of the animal that was slain. It is not a coincidence that the last chapter we read is about the blood, and the one prior to that was about atonement.

Discuss how Adam and Eve uncovered YHVH's nakedness by sinning against Him.

How do we lift other's skirts when we gossip or joke about other people?

What should our actions be in regard to other's private lives of which we are given discretionary knowledge?

5. Verse 18 teaches us that we are not to marry sisters while both are alive. This makes them rivals to each other and uncovers both of their nakedness. Yet, we see that Ya'akov did just this exact thing. Moreover, Abraham gave evidence that Sarah was his half sister. While these actions were committed prior to the entire revelation of Torah to Moshe, YHVH's does not change. Why did YHVH allow our patriarchs to get away with such wrong actions?

6. The idea of sexuality, in our culture and around the world, has become, and maintained to be, much less personal and convicting as YHVH commands it to be for His nation. The practice of intercourse with relatives, men's intimacy with women during niddah, homosexual practices and bestiality are all widely tolerated in much of the world. Yet, YHVH ends Vayikra 18 with the command to keep His charge and not practice the abominable customs of the nations or be defiled with them. He is YHVH our Elohim. In what ways do you see the nations around us being judged for their immoral attitudes on sexuality and practice?

Shabbat

PARASHA:

LEV. 16:1-18:30

RESTORATORY—
MIDRASH

PRAYER LEAVES

YHVH has given us the reading/telling of Torah in His specific order. It is not just a coincidence that the passages regarding sexual immorality follow immediately behind the passages regarding our atonement with innocent blood shed for our impurities. Only the blood can remiss our guilt and transgressions and cover sin.

Interestingly enough, it is through sin that our eyes are opened wider to what is wrong. For example, when we watch an act of violence, our minds begin to dwell on what would happen if, or what if this did not happen, but the other person fought back. It is a downward spiral that must be put in check with the proper borders of life that was first breathed into the nostrils of Adam which quickens our hearts so that we turn our backs on the death of this world. The same is true for most any perversion of YHVH's world. When we allow ungodly thoughts to slither into our minds, they begin to migrate to our hearts. If not cast down or brought into submission, it does not take long until those thoughts begin to consume us and wrong actions start to emanate from our beings. When that happens, the seeds of wrong thinking begin to grow and wraps around our hearts, minds and bodies and ultimately becomes an entanglement to those around us.

It is just like the spoken word. HaSatan does not need to continually plant suggestion into our minds or be the evil advocate that he is who we blame all of our woes. HaSatan saw the power of the spoken Word of YHVH take form in the creation of the universe and all that is within it. The adversary took notes as to how he would sabotage YHVH's creation of man and knows that all he has to do is plant a few lies wrapped with reason for debased man to act impulsively upon; and thus, his evil seed is spread to more and more people. HaSatan did not have to plant the concepts of a sexually suggestive billboard, or put the words into the mouth of the DJ on the disgusting morning radio talk show. Our flesh does this work for him. All that was needed was the well placed perversion of truth with a lie to lead someone down a road to an unclean action. Moreover, like after Adam and Eve's sin, we want to hide ourselves from the One Who cleanses us. We take cover with what we have around us, even if it is unclean and unfit to use and pretend that nothing ever happened. Many times victims, who fall prey to the enemy's lies, will continue to go back to the initial defilement of their spirit to seek relief from their guilt. This is the dangerous place where the realm of clean is left behind and we enter the heavily populated inhabitants of the unclean realm.

When we sin, we must assume responsibility to repent. YHVH sent His Son so that we have a hope in repentance. He even leads us to the still waters to find that contrition. However, it is up to us to actually walk out our remorse. We must choose life or death, clean or unclean, good or evil. YHVH called out to Adam and Eve. It was Adam's choice to answer back to YHVH's call and show himself to YHVH. We, also, have that choice to present ourselves, in all of our guilt and blemishes to YHVH. When we do, His blood sacrifice speaks on our behalf. Then, He gives commands as to what we are to do and what the consequences are for our actions. We know that our choice is to die in Messiah so that we may live forever in Him. We know that the consequences of not choosing Messiah are eternal separation from YHVH.

YHVH has given us the Day of Atonement as the example of how and when we are to have atonement made for us. He purchased our souls on the execution stake and redeemed us from our sins purchasing our lives with the blood He shed as the Messiah. The Day of Atonement did not just abruptly end after the crucifixion. YHVH said it was perpetual to all generations. That being the case, there is still great significance to this feast day. We have seen the Messiah as the sin offering that was sacrificed for our iniquities. The scapegoat is then to be sent out into the wilderness. We are the scapegoat that has been loosed. We wonder from place to place looking for water, food, others to communicate with and, maybe, find our way back to green pastures. The interesting aspect to the scapegoat is spoken about in Vayikra 16:10 that says, "But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat." The atonement is made upon this goat as it is driven into the wilderness and wonders around. After years and years of sending goats out, (prior to when the sages determined to kill them once they were in the wilderness) these goats would meet up with each other and form a community of goats. It would only take a few wild she goats to form a vast flock of wild goats from these scapegoats.

The picture should seem familiar, as we are sent out into the world and told to make disciples of all nations. YHVH brings us helpmates and sends us to other communities to work with and worship with so that His nation is built. He is providing for His people now and will continue to do so into the future. Most importantly, He provided His own son as the sin offering that was appropriated for our atonement. It is this distinguishing mark, His seal

that we have so as to separate us from the goats of the world that do not believe in YHVH.

This is of importance as we look forward to future fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. While we have Messiah as our blood covering, we are still wondering around making disciples and becoming stronger disciples, as well. However, the day will come when we will experience stronger persecution as the world will no longer tolerate us, and will continue to choose to tolerate the immoral actions which uncover everyone's nakedness and makes allowances for every immoral act to take place, without judgment. When that happens, Yeshua will send us farther into the wilderness. We will be *'aza'zel*, the scapegoat, which will be driven into the wilderness by the hand of a man. Most importantly, even as Yeshua bore all things for us so that we are redeemed from the curse of the law of sin and death, we will find His prepared place for us in the wilderness. It will be just like the children of Israel leaving Egypt. They did not have water, so YHVH made the rocks flow with water. They did not have bread, so YHVH sent manna with the dew every morning. We cannot say with any certainty how YHVH will prepare for us this place of refuge for close to three-and-a-half years, but we must have faith in Him to do this work for us. All the saving of canned goods, the keeping of water and beans will not be able to be carried into the wilderness where He will keep us safe from the enemy. Nor will they be needed there. YHVH wants us to trust Him for these needs so that we do not lose sight of Him or the atoning work that Yeshua did for us.

Vayikra 18 follows these ordinances concerning the Day of Atonement with the statutes of where sacrifices were to be made. This is significant due to the fact that the Tent of Meeting was the place where man came to present his offering to YHVH and to partake of those peace offerings as feasts to enjoy. It was the banqueting table that was always setup and ready to enjoy. It was the designated place to trust YHVH and bring the sacrifices. YHVH wants us to trust Him, and, to walk in obedience to Torah, as well. Many of us are looking for the banqueting table right now. We are searching around every corner hoping to find that place of provision and rest. The gut wrenching truth may be that we will not find that place until we are called to sojourn in the wilderness. If YHVH said it was a place that will be prepared for us, then we must trust that it will have, not only food, water and shelter, but it will also be a place of rest and peace. The Ruach of YHVH revealed this to David as he

said, "He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies."¹

YHVH is teaching us a mind set and a lifestyle through His commandments. They are not just dos and don'ts, but are way of life to us. When we walk in obedience to His Torah, we find rest, we find peace, we find provision and we find Life. Likewise, as shown to us in Vayikra 18, when we choose the carnal way of procreation or perverted fulfillment, we find isolation and death.

In the coming days ahead we must find it in ourselves to stay connected to what YHVH is speaking to us by way of His Son's words, lifestyle and examples. We must stay true to what the Ruach HaKodesh is telling us by keeping ourselves separate and spotless in a world that wants nothing more than to taint us to ease their conscience. Torah was given to us by man's decision to walk in disobedience. The choice that Adam made to eat the forbidden fruit made the choice for all of us. It was Adam and Eve's responsibility to accept all of YHVH's commandments and instructions and know that they are given to us to teach us the difference between good and evil, while still in the Garden. Yet, the choice to sin allowed YHVH to show all of mankind Truth that was already established. Man made the choice to have to know all of that Truth instead of being protected by the Glory of YHVH as Adam and Eve had been when they were naked and not ashamed.

The goodness of YHVH teaches us the way of atonement and how the blood of the innocent is used to cover the blood of the guilty. We are instructed to abstain from consuming the blood of animals which keeps us from being defiled. When we consume the wine at the table of Adonai we, thus, are able to discern His holy blood which was spilled for us. It is a constant reminder of what He did for us and the intercession that continually goes up from His scarred body as He ever intercedes for us at the Throne of Grace. These precepts in Torah are guiding us ever closer to the monumental day of His return. We will be as one people in Him if we choose to abide by His Covenant that was established through our patriarchs. "For there is one YHVH, and one mediator also between YHVH and men, the man Messiah Yeshua."²

As we are established in Messiah, our mediator, we become the kings and priests, fellow heirs with Him, to do His will as His hands and feet. We become the Sons of Righteousness³ that He establishes for the work that is about to be accomplished on the earth for the end of the age and into the new age to come.

¹Psalm 23

²1 Timothy 2:5

³Ezekiel 44

