

## Parashat Acharei Mot / פרשת אחרי מות

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### Do Heavenly things require sacrifice?

#### **This Weeks Reading List:**

Torah: Leviticus 16:1-18:30

Haftarah: Ezekiel 22:1-22:19

B'rit HaChadashah: Hebrews 9:11-28

Reading through this week's parsha, Parashat Acharei Mot, there is two types of animals mentioned which are used for purification and sin offerings. The goat and the bull, appear to have different functions when comparing it with the sin offering. It appears the goat atones for on behalf of the people and the bull atones for on behalf of the Kohanim. Furthermore, the blood of the goat also atones for sins involving impurity of the sanctuary shown in the following verses:

#### ***Leviticus 16:5-16***

*16:5 "He is to take from the community of the people of Isra'el two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. 16:6 Aharon is to present the bull for the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and his household. 16:7 He is to take the two goats and place them before ADONAI at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 16:8 Then Aharon is to cast lots for the two goats, one lot for ADONAI and the other for 'Az'azel. 16:9 Aharon is to present the goat whose lot fell to ADONAI and offer it as a sin offering. 16:10 But the goat whose lot fell to 'Az'azel is to be presented alive to ADONAI to be used for making atonement over it by sending it away into the desert for 'Az'azel. 16:11 "Aharon is to present the bull of the sin offering for himself; he will make atonement for himself and his household; he is to slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. 16:12 He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before ADONAI and, with his hands full of ground, fragrant incense, bring it inside the curtain. 16:13 He is to put the incense on the fire before ADONAI, so that the cloud from the incense will cover the ark-cover which is over the testimony, in order that he not die. 16:14 He is to take some of the bull's blood and sprinkle it with his finger on the ark-cover toward the east; and in front of the ark-cover he is to sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. 16:15 "Next, he is to slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, bring its blood inside the curtain and do with its blood as he did with the bull's blood, sprinkling it on the ark-cover and in front of the ark-cover. 16:16 He will make atonement for the Holy Place because of the uncleannesses of the people of Isra'el and because of their transgressions - all their sins; and he is to do the same for the tent of meeting which is there with them right in the middle of their uncleannesses.*

There are times when it is hard to grasp the implications of what is written in the scriptures. The tabernacle was exactly as HaShem had designed it, because every detail of His design has significance. In *Leviticus 16:16*, atonement is to be made for the impurity of the Tent of Meeting (Ohel Moed) and at the same time make atonement for the people. Sin appeared to move/migrate from the person to the holy articles. So the blood appeared to cover the sin of the people while at the same time sanctifying the articles/instruments of the sanctuary. Something to note is the person bringing the blood atonement were not saved. The animals did not provide any kind of salvation. There was no cleansing of the heart or the spirit. Bringing the person to the goal of being saved did not occur with the animal sacrificial system. What the sacrifice did was it cleansed the body and the physical items in the Mishkhan (tabernacle) so that one could draw near to HaShem. In fact, the sacrificial system pointed to the goal of what Yeshua was going to do in his blood. The animal sacrifice however did not bring the person to the point of salvation. We see this in Hebrews chapter 9:

***Hebrews 9:20-24***

*9:20 and he said, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has ordained for you." 9:21 Likewise, he sprinkled with the blood both the Tent and all the things used in its ceremonies. 9:22 In fact, according to the Torah, almost everything is purified with blood; indeed, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. 9:23 Now this is how the copies of the heavenly things had to be purified, but the heavenly things themselves require better sacrifices than these. 9:24 For the Messiah has entered a Holiest Place which is not man-made and merely a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, in order to appear now on our behalf in the very presence of God. (CJB)*

Have you ever wondered why heavenly things require sacrifices at all? In *Hebrews 9:23*, it says the copies here on earth had to be purified, but the heavenly things require better sacrifices than these which asks the question whether heavenly things require sacrifices for purification?

## **Why do heavenly things require ... sacrifices at all?**

The shadow or copies point to the spiritual reality but never does away with it. It relates to each of us HaShem's plan of salvation for all mankind and further enables us to understand the plan of salvation and the reason for Yeshua's death and resurrection.

### **Conclusion**

Surely the heavenly copies are not defiled as the copies are here on earth such as the Tent and its implements. Hugh Montefiore, a Jewish Anglican writes on this verse:

*"What our author meant was this: the purification of men's consciences, made by means of the heavenly cultus, needed a better sacrifice to make it effective than [the sacrifices] which sufficed for the earthly cultus, which was a mere copy of the heavenly." (The Epistle to The Hebrews, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964, ad loc.)*

The Messiah's blood made it possible for undefiled heavenly things to purify defiled sinners. For external cleansing, external sacrifices suffice (see *Hebrews 9:9-10*); but for spiritual cleansing, spiritual ones are needed. This is the pinnacle of the atonement made by Yeshua; the atonement made on our behalf in heaven made possible the cleansing of our hearts and our spirit and thus enables us to truly draw near to HaShem.

## **Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!**

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**הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:**

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever