

Parshas Achrei – 5782

Maamarei Mordechai

Sometime after the death of Aharon's sons, HaShem provides instruction to prevent a kohen bringing a "foreign offering" from suffering.

**וְהִיְתָה-זֹאת לָכֶם לְתִקּוּת עוֹלָם לְכַפֵּר עַל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל-חַטָּאתָם אַחַת בְּשָׁנָה וַיַּעַשׂ
כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה:**

"And this shall be for you an eternal statute to atone for all of the Bnei Yisroel from all their sins, once a year. And it was done as HaShem commanded Moshe." (Vayikra 16:34).

This passuk seems to teach that the laws of Yom Kippur (Ibid 16:2) are to be a statute going forward in perpetuity, and that it will be done, after so commanded to Moshe. The Torah already taught that Yom Kippur will arrive yearly. (Ibid 16:29). What is this passuk adding on? And, is the final part of the passuk "Moshe did as HaShem commanded" or "and he did" or "it was done" "as HaShem commanded Moshe?" If not done by Moshe, who did it and when?

Gemara Chullin 24a and Kedushin 14a both state *a kol v'chomer is not learned when the Torah says "this is the eternal statute."* An exception is our passuk (Vayikra 16:34) where it says an eternal statute, and previously it gave the rule about the two lottery goats. (Ibid 16:9). Accordingly, the latter passuk teaches that the entire section is for all time.

Gemara Yoma 42b learns our passuk teaches that just as the entire Yom Kippur service is done by Aharon (Kohen Gadol) so, too, the service in Bamidbar 19:2 (Parah Aduma) can be done only by the Kohen Gadol, according to one opinion.

Both of these Gemaras, however, could have learned these rules from the earlier passuk, 29, where it also says *eternal statute*.

Midrash says Aharon is the one our passuk is referring to that did all that was commanded to Moshe. It is to Aharon's credit as he did it only to atone for the people, and because he was commanded. Not because he wanted his own atonement. (Torahs Kohanim).

Rashi learns "and it shall be done" means the next 10th day of the Seventh month. As the death of Nadav and Avihu took place in Nissan, so it refers to the future in seven months.

Ibin Ezra says *our passuk repeats "eternal statute" because it adds the language "once a year." Our passuk means that it was Aharon that did it.*

Ramban and Rashbam also learn *it was Aharon that fulfilled these instructions in the upcoming years.*

Sforno learns *the day itself, without any service, has the power to convey atonement.*

Ohr HaChaim says *the previous passuk refers to the Yom Kippur service, generally. This passuk teaches that it is an eternal statute for the Kohen Gadol himself. Aharon is the one that did all that HaShem commanded Moshe, and it was to his credit.*

When reading the entire chapter carefully, the Torah trifurcates its instruction. The Torah first said when introducing these Laws, "This is only how Aharon shall enter the Kodesh [Kedoshim]; with a bull of the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering." (Ibid 16:3). The Torah introduces it by saying, "HaShem said to Moshe: Tell your brother Aharon that he is not to come *at will* into the Kodesh Kedoshim (behind the curtain), in front of the cover that is upon the ark, lest he die; for I appear in the cloud over the cover." (Ibid 16:2). HaShem was being clear: Aharon's sons died because they brought a foreign offering. (Ibid 10:1). They became the offering and the fire consumed them. (Ibid 10:2). HaShem wanted to give safe passage to Aharon and any future Kohen Gadol to enter the Kodesh Kedoshim. From passuk 3 to 28 is the instruction of the ceremony that the Kohen Gadol must do in order to enter the Kodesh Kedoshim (Holy of Holies, innermost sanctuary). This can be at any time, although in practice, it was only on Yom Kippur.

Then the Torah clarified that this same service shall be done, forever, on the 10th day of the Seventh Month. (Ibid 16:29). From Passuk 29 through 33, the Torah teaches a new instruction: the 10th day of the Seventh Month shall be a holiday, a day of no work, of restriction oneself / self-denial, and a day of atonement, and this service shall be conducted on it.

Then the Torah teaches a third article about this service and this day. There is one special day of the year that *the day itself* gives atonement to the entire Bnei Yisroel. From this year (the second Year in the desert) and forward, the day will be a Day of

Atonement. From that day forward the 10th day of the Seventh year will be a day that atones for all of Bnei Yisroel by itself, without a required service. The Torah still commands that the entire preceding service shall be done on that day, to help effectuate the most out of that day, and that is how the Day of Atonement is celebrated.

Our passuk talks in the future tense because it was not until the next Yom Kippur that the special rules of the day would be established. It was not always a Day of Atonement. It became one at this time. This instruction was given in or around the First Month of the second year in the desert. It gives instructions about what will take place seven months hence. Also, it was not Aharon or Moshe that did as commanded. It was HaShem that did it.

“And this shall be for you an eternal statute to atone for all of the Bnei Yisroel from all their sins, once a year.” Once a year there is this special day that will give automatic atonement. “And it was done as HaShem commanded Moshe.” HaShem did this as He commanded Moshe. HaShem effectuated the atonement in all future years. HaShem continues to effectuate the atonement. Thus, our passuk does not refer to the Yom Kippur service. That is passuk 29. Our passuk merely teaches that this new eternal statute is that the day *itself* is atonement and HaShem *himself* effectuates the atonement.