

ACHAREI MOT



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



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1st aliya (Vayikra 16:1-17),

2nd aliya (16:18-24)

In these first two aliyot, Aharon is instructed to enter the Holy of Holies only through an elaborate process of offerings. He is to bring a private sin offering. And a communal sin offering of 2 identical goats, one as an offering, one sent to the wilderness, determined by lottery. The blood of both his offering and the communal shall be brought into the Holy of Holies, accompanied by incense. The smoke of the incense fills the Holy of Holies. The (scape) goat is sent to the wilderness. The people gain kapara, atonement.

Entry to the Holy of Holies requires an elaborate ceremony of unique offerings; including the scapegoat ceremony and the incense offered in the Holy of Holies. And it is all performed by the Kohen Gadol.

This continues the powerful and crucial theme of the entire section following Mount Sinai. In G-d's reach for man, His love of man, He has created a place of rendezvous; the Mishkan. However, it is rendezvous with care, with reservation, with humility. The building design is with great detail. The offerings are with great

detail; when they are brought, how they are brought, the Kohanim's role in bringing them. G-d says: You may approach Me, I want you to approach Me, but with care. Here, He invites man to rendezvous in the Holy of Holies – the inner, intimate chamber, with the Aron and the tablets, covered by angels. This intimate invitation requires a very elaborate procedure; unique offerings like the scapegoat and the incense, sin offerings, olah offerings. The closer, the more intimate; but also the more care and preparation required.

This is a powerful and crucial theme: G-d invites man, wants man, but demands man's understanding of his inadequacy and his human foibles (sin offerings). And while man is invited to the Holy of Holies it is with great limitation. Not every person, not every day; it is one person, the Kohen Gadol, only one time a year. G-d remains mysterious, ineffable, infinite, unknowable. This is the delicate balance the Torah is creating; G-d wants man. Man is noble, the invitee of G-d Himself. But with enormous deference, enormous humility of man's limited station. Nobility and humility; the majesty in being the invitee of G-d, hand in hand with the reality of our woeful inadequacy.



3rd aliya (16:25-34) This entire ceremony is done once a year on Yom Kippur, to gain atonement and purity.

Only at the end of the entire description of how one is to enter the Holy of Holies does the Torah tell us that this is to be done on Yom Kippur. As if to say: the goal of Yom Kippur is to enter the Holy of Holies. It is through man's approach to G-d that he gains atonement and purity.



4th aliya (17:1-7) Tell the entire people: all sacrifices are to be brought to the Mikdash. The Kohen is to offer them, so they are pleasing. We are to no longer offer sacrifices to spirits.

The centrality of the Mikdash is to emphasize monotheism: one place, one G-d.



5th aliya (17:8-8:5) Blood is not to be consumed, for the life is in the blood. I have given it to you to use for atonement on the altar, not to consume. The blood of an undomesticated animal or bird that is killed for consumption, that blood is to be covered with earth. Do not do what the Egyptians or Canaanites do. Do My commands; and live.

The prohibition of blood is related to the value we place on life. Our very life force is the essence of an offering; we offer our very selves, though through the offering.



6th aliya (18:6-21) Sexual relations with relatives are forbidden: including spouses of parents, half siblings, grandchildren, step-siblings, aunts, in-laws. In addition, marrying 2 women who are related. Or a married woman.

The listing of forbidden relationships changes the subject from the laws concerning the Mishkan. It is not the first such change of subject. The laws of Kashrut of Parshat Shemini were also a change of subject. Thus, the first 2 subjects of laws unrelated to our approach to G-d in the Mishkan are food and family. These are the first things said to the first man and woman on the 6th day of creation: be fruitful and multiply. And eat of the herbs. Family and food were said to Adam and Eve. Family

and food are the first laws to be outlined in detail to the Jewish people.



7th aliya (18:22-30) A man shall not lie with a man. Sexual relations with an animal are forbidden. These things (all the above) defile the Land: it will spit you out.

HAFTORAH AMOS 9

This week's *haftorah* describes the exiles and punishments that will befall the Jews because they strayed after the ways of the Gentiles — behavior that this week's Torah reading proscribes.

The prophet Amos delivers G-d's message, reminding the people of G-d's kindness to them — taking them out of Egypt and singling them out as His chosen nation. Nevertheless, because of their misdeeds, G-d will destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel; but will not completely destroy the house of Jacob. The Jews will be scattered amongst the nations, but eventually they will return to their Land — on the day of the redemption. G-d will then reinstall the House of David to its former glory and there shall be peace and abundance upon the Land.

The haftorah ends with G-d's promise: "And I will return the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall rebuild desolate cities and inhabit [them], and they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their produce. And I will plant them on their land, and they shall no longer be uprooted from upon their land, that I have given them, said the L-rd your G-d." ■