

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 10

This chapter begins with the sin and punishment of two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, (^{<B100>}Leviticus 10:1-5) for whose death Aaron and his sons are commanded not to mourn, nor to depart from the tabernacle, (^{<B106>}Leviticus 10:6,7) and an order is given, prohibiting the priests from drinking wine when they went into it, (^{<B108>}Leviticus 10:8-11) the law of eating holy things, both those that were more, and those that were less holy, is enjoined, (^{<B102>}Leviticus 10:12-15) and the flesh of the sin offering not being eaten, but burnt, Aaron's sons are blamed for it, for which he makes an apology to the satisfaction of Moses, (^{<B106>}Leviticus 10:16-20).

Ver. 1. *And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron*, etc.] His two eldest sons, as seems from (^{<B123>}Exodus 6:23):

took either of them his censer; a vessel in which coals of fire were put, and incense upon them, and burnt it, and so it follows:

and put fire therein, and put incense thereon; which, as Aben Ezra says, was on the eighth day, that is, of their consecration, the day after their consecration was completely finished, and the same day that Aaron had offered the offerings for himself and for the people, (see ^{<B102>}Leviticus 9:1):

and offered strange fire before the Lord; upon the golden altar of incense, which stood in the holy place right against the vail, within which were the ark, mercy seat, and cherubim, the symbol and seat of the divine Majesty: this fire was not that which came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, as related at the end of the preceding chapter (^{<B102>}Leviticus 9:24), but common fire, and therefore called strange; it was not taken off of the altar of burnt offering, as it ought to have been, but, as the Targum of Jonathan, from under the trivets, skillets, or pots, such as the flesh of peace offerings were boiled in, in the tabernacle;

which he commanded not; yea, forbid, by sending fire from heaven, and ordering coals of fire for the incense to be taken off of the altar of burnt offering; and this, as Aben Ezra observes, they did of their own mind, and

not by order. It does not appear that they had any command to offer incense at all at present, this belonged to Aaron, and not to them as yet; but without any instruction and direction they rushed into the holy place with their censers, and offered incense, even both of them, when only one priest was to offer at a time, when it was to be offered, and this they also did with strange fire. This may be an emblem of dissembled love, when a man performs religious duties, prays to God, or praises him without any cordial affection to him, or obeys commands not from love, but selfish views; or of an ignorant, false, and misguided zeal, a zeal not according to knowledge, superstitious and hypocritical; or of false and strange doctrines, such as are not of God, nor agree with the voice of Christ, and are foreign to the Scriptures; or of human ordinances, and the inventions of men, and of everything that man brings of his own, in order to obtain eternal life and salvation.

Ver. 2. *And there went out fire from the Lord*, etc.] They sinned by fire, and they were punished by fire, either from heaven, or from the most holy place, where the Lord dwelt between the cherubim; this was of the nature of lightning, as appears by what follows:

and devoured them; not reduced them to ashes, for neither their bodies nor their clothes were burnt with this fire, as is clear from (^{GENE}Leviticus 10:4,5) but their lives were destroyed, they were lifeless, their souls were separated from their bodies by it, and they died; which is often the case by the lightning, that the clothes of those who are killed with it are untouched, and scarce any marks of violence on their bodies; and so the Targum of Jonathan says of these, their bodies were not burnt:

and they died before the Lord; upon the spot where they were offering incense, in the holy place, over against the most holy place. This was very awful, like the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and may seem severe: it was for the terror of others in the priesthood, or who should come after, to take care that they performed their office according to the divine precepts, and brought in no innovation into their service. And when it is considered that these were the sons of the high priest, newly invested with an high and honourable office, and just had the laws of the priesthood delivered unto them, and yet deviated from them as soon as in their office, and very probably, from what follows, went drunk into their service, their sin will appear aggravated, and the punishment less severe. This shows there is nothing in carnal descent, these were the sons of Aaron the high priest, that

acted this part, and came to this end; the proneness of men to transgress the laws of God as soon as given them; thus the people of Israel fell into idolatry as soon as the moral law was given; and here the priests, as soon as the ceremonial laws, relating to the priesthood, were delivered to them; and also that the law made sinful men priests, and that the Levitical priesthood was imperfect; and that no order of men are free from sin, or exempt from punishment: and the whole of the divine conduct in this affair may lead us to observe how jealous God is in matters of worship; how much he dislikes hypocrites, and formal professors; how severe he will be against such who bring in strange doctrines; what will be the fate of the contemners of Gospel doctrines and ordinances; and how much he resents those who trust in themselves, and their works, and bring in anything of their own in the business of salvation, which is strange fire, sparks of their own kindling, a burning incense to their own drag, and sacrificing to their own net.

Ver. 3. *And Moses said unto Aaron*, etc.] Upon this awful occasion, and in order to quiet and humble him under the mighty hand of God:

this [is it] that the Lord spoke, saying; but when he spoke it, and where it is said and recorded, is not so very clear; it might have been said, and yet not recorded, or the substance of it may be recorded, though not in the express words here delivered; it may refer, as some think, to (⁽¹²⁹²⁾Exodus 19:22) or else to (⁽¹²⁹³⁾Exodus 29:43) which seems to come nearest to what follows, so Jarchi:

I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me; in the priests that drew nigh to him, and offered sacrifice and burnt incense to him; by these he expected to be sanctified, not to be made holy, but to be declared to be so, and obeyed and worshipped as such; as he is, when his commands and ordinances are observed, as he would have them be, in faith and fear, which were not done by these sons of Aaron; and therefore the Lord, by the punishment he inflicted, showed himself to be an holy, righteous, and jealous God:

and before all the people I will be glorified; as he is when he is believed and trusted in; when his worship is carried on in his own house, according to his will; when his ordinances are kept as they were delivered, and when he is revered in the assembly of his saints; all which were wanting in this case. And this may also have respect to the glory of divine justice, in the public punishment of the sin of those men, that since he was not glorified

by them before the people in the way of their duty, he would glorify himself in their punishment:

and Aaron held his peace: was in a stupor, as the Septuagint, quite amazed, thunderstruck, as we say; he was silent, said not one word against what was done; murmured not at the providence, nor complained of any severity, but was patient under the hand of God, and resigned to his will; and since God was sanctified and glorified, he was contented.

Ver. 4. *And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron*, etc.] Uzziel was a son of Kohath, a brother of Amram, the father of Aaron, and so Aaron's uncle, as here; he had four sons, two of which are here mentioned as called by Moses; these were first cousins to Aaron, and second to his sons; (see ^{<1168>}Exodus 6:18,22):

and said unto them, come near; it is very probable they were in the court of the tabernacle, being Kohathites, of the tribe of Levi; but not being priests, had no right to go into the holy place, where the two sons of Aaron lay dead, without a special order for it, which they here had for this time, and upon this occasion:

carry your brethren from before the sanctuary, out of the camp; the sons of Aaron are called their brethren, though but cousins, it being usual to call any relations brethren, and even if only of the same tribe, yea, of the same nation. Now these were ordered to take the dead bodies of Aaron's sons out of the holy place, and out of the tabernacle, even from before it, which, as Aben Ezra says, was the court over against the camp; and they were to carry them out of the camp into some field, or place adjacent, and there bury them; it not being usual in those times to bury in cities and towns, and much less in places devoted to sacred worship, as the tabernacle was; and therefore they were carried from both the sanctuary and the camp: it is an observation of Aben Ezra, that

“some say the incense was before the altar of burnt offering, and the Levites entered there;”

but if by incense is meant the altar of incense, the place where these sons of Aaron offered theirs, that was in the holy place, and not in the court, where stood the altar of burnt offering: but they seem to mean as if their incense was offered in another place, and not on the altar, somewhere in the court, and before you come to the altar of burnt offering; and so the persons

Moses called could come in thither, and take up their bodies there fallen: but the same writer observes, that others say, that

“it was upon the altar of incense (i.e. that their incense was offered), and Moses brought them out of the tabernacle of the congregation,”

and then called these men to carry them from thence without the camp.

Ver. 5. *So they went near*, etc.] To the place where the bodies lay, having an order from Moses so to do, let them have been where they will;

and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said; or bid them do; they took them up in their clothes as they found them, and carried them in them; not that these men carried them in their own coats, but in the coats of the dead, as Jarchi expresses it; and had them without the camp, and there buried them, probably in their coats in which they had sinned, and in which they died: the Targum of Jonathan says, they carried them on iron hooks in their coats, and buried them without the camp.

Ver. 6. *And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons*, etc.] His two younger sons, which yet remained; and so the Septuagint version adds, as in (^{<1012>}Leviticus 10:12,16)

uncover not your heads; that is, do not take off your mitre, as the Septuagint version; or the bonnets which they wore in the time of their ministry; for the Jewish priests always had their mitres and bonnets on when they sacrificed; in imitation of which, the Heathens had their heads covered when they offered their sacrifices^{f201}: now it was the way, or custom of a mourner, as Ben Melech observes, to remove his mitre, bonnet, or tiara, from his head; but in this case, that no sign of mourning might be shown, Aaron and his sons are forbid to uncover the head: the Targum of Onkelos is,

“do not increase the hair,”

or nourish it, or suffer it to grow, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom interpret it: now in times of distress and mourning they used to let the hair grow, whether on the head or beard, (see ^{<1012>}2 Samuel 19:24) and in this the Jews were imitated by the Egyptians, contrary to other nations; the priests of the gods in other places, says Herodotus^{f202}, took care of their hair (or wore their hair), in Egypt they are shaved; with others the custom is, for the head

immediately to be shaved at funerals; but the Egyptians, at death, suffer their hair to grow in the parts before shaved; but this custom with the Jews, though at other times used, is here forbid Aaron and his sons:

neither rend your clothes, which was sometimes done at the report of the death of near relations, as children, in token of mourning, (^{<R01574>}Genesis 37:34 ^{<R001>}Job 1:20) but here it is forbid, that there might be no sign of it: it is a particular word that is here used: Ben Melech says, there is a difference between rending and tearing; tearing is in the body of a garment where there is no seam, but rending (which is what is here meant) where there is a seam: the priests rending their garments was after this manner, according to the Jewish canons ^{f203},

“an high priest rends below and a common priest above;”

that is, as one of their commentators ^{f204} interprets it, the former rends the extreme part of his garment next the feet, and the latter at the breast near the shoulder; but in this case no rent at all was to be made:

lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people; so very provoking to God would be any signs of mourning in Aaron and his sons, on this account:

but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled: though Aaron and his sons might not mourn on this occasion, the whole body of the people might, though not bewail so much the death of the persons, as the cause of it; and be concerned for the awful judgment of God, and for the wrath that was some forth, lest it should proceed and destroy others also, all being sinners.

Ver. 7. *And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die*, etc.] That is, they were not to relinquish the service of the sanctuary, on the account of the death of these relations of theirs, and through grief for it, but go on in it; not Aaron on account of his children, nor his sons on account of their brethren: from hence, says Ben Gersom, we learn, that whatsoever priest leaves his service, and goes out of the sanctuary, is guilty of death: some think the seven days of consecration were not quite over, during which time Aaron and his sons were obliged to continue there, on pain of death, (^{<R083>}Leviticus 8:33,35) but it is pretty plain those days were over, and that it was the day after the consecration was finished; (see ^{<R001>}Leviticus 9:1) and (see Gill on ^{<R002>}Leviticus 10:2”) wherefore this respects their continuance in the

tabernacle on the day the above affair happened, and they were obliged to continue in and go through the service of the day, notwithstanding that:

for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you; a learned man ^{f205} infers from hence, that this affair happened within the days of consecration, they being every day afresh anointed with oil, at least had it, with the blood of the sacrifices, sprinkled on them, on their garments, taking it in the strict sense, for the oil being still upon them; whereas it seems only to signify, that inasmuch as they were consecrated with oil to the priest's office, they were under obligation to continue and perform their service without being let or hindered by what had happened:

and they did according to the word of Moses; they showed no tokens of mourning on account of the dead, and did not offer to go out of the tabernacle and leave their service.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord spake unto Aaron*, etc.] Because he was a prophet, Aben Ezra says; but the reason rather seems to be, because he was the high priest, and now invested with his office, and in the execution of it, and therefore the following law respecting the priest's drinking of wine was given: some say, as the same writer observes, that God spake to him by Moses; but it rather seems that he spoke to Aaron immediately: according to Jarchi, this order was delivered to him as a reward for his silence, and to do honour to him on that account: saying; as follows.

Ver. 9. *Do not drink wine or strong drink*, etc.] This law following upon the affair of Nadab and Abihu has caused some to think, and not without some reason, that they were drunk with wine or strong drink, when they offered strange fire; and indeed it is hardly to be accounted for upon any other foot that they should do it; but having feasted that day upon the peace offerings, and drank freely, it being the first day of their entrance on their office, they were, it may be supposed, elated and merry, and drank more than they should; wherefore this law was given, to restrain from such a disorderly and scandalous practice; not only wine, which is inebriating, but strong drink also is forbidden, which, as Aben Ezra says, is made either of a sort of wheat, or honey, or dates: and so Kimchi ^{f206} and Ben Melech on the place after him observe, that this includes whatsoever inebriates, besides wine; and that their doctors say, whosoever drinks milk or honey (they must mean some strong liquor extracted from thence), if he enters into the tabernacle he is guilty:

thou nor thy sons with thee; the Targum of Jonathan adds, as did thy sons, who died by the burning of fire; that is, he and his sons were to avoid drinking wine or strong drink to excess, as his two sons had done, which led them to offer strange fire, for which they suffered death:

when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; they might drink wine at other times, in a moderate manner; but it seems by this they were not to drink any at all when they were about to go to service, or to enter into the tabernacle in order to do it: indeed, according to the Jewish canons, every priest that is fit for service, if he drinks wine, it is forbidden him to enter in (to the tabernacle, and so) from the altar (of burnt offering) and inward (into the holy place); and if he goes in and does his service it is profane (unlawful and rejected), and he is guilty of death by the hand of heaven; and he that drinks the fourth part (of a log) of wine at one time, of wine forty days old; but if he drinks less than a fourth part of wine, or drinks a fourth part and stops between, and mixes it with water, or drinks wine out of the press within forty days (i.e. not quite so many days old), though more than a fourth part, he is free, and does not profane his service; if he drinks more than a fourth part of wine, though it is mixed, and though he stops and drinks little by little, he is guilty of death, and his service is profane (or rejected); if he is drunk with the rest of liquors that make drunk, he is forbidden to go into the sanctuary; but if he goes in and serves, and he is drunk with the rest of liquors that make drunk, whether of milk or of figs (a strong liquor made of them), he is to be beaten, but his service is right; for they are not guilty of death but on account of wine in the hour of service; and it does not profane service, but being drunken with wine ^{f207}: in imitation of this, Heathen priests were forbid wine, and abstained from it, particularly the Egyptian priests; at whom it is said ^{f208}, some of them never drink any wine, and others taste but a little of it, because it is said to harm the nerves, to fill the head, or make it heavy, to hinder invention and excite to lust:

[it shall be] a statute for ever throughout all your generations: even to the coming of the Messiah; and now under the Gospel dispensation, though wine in moderation is allowed Gospel ministers, yet they are not to be given to it; it is a shame to any Christian man to be drunk with wine, and more especially a minister, and still more so when in his service; (see ^{<3421>}Ezekiel 44:21).

Ver. 10. *And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, etc.]* That being sober they might be able to distinguish between the one and the other; which a drunken man, having his mind and senses disturbed, is not capable of; as between holy and unholy persons, and between holy and unholy things; particularly, as Aben Ezra interprets it, between a sacred place and one that is common, and between a holy day and a common week day; the knowledge and memory of which may be lost through intemperance; and so that may be done in a place and on a day which ought not to be done, or that omitted on a day and in a place which ought to be done:

and between unclean and clean; between unclean men and women, beasts and fowls, and clean ones; and between unclean things in a ceremonial sense, and those that are clean, which a man in liquor may be no judge of: hence, as the above writer observes, after this section follow laws concerning fowls clean and unclean, the purification of a woman after childbirth, the leprosy in men, garments and houses, and concerning profluvious and menstruous persons; all which the priests were to be judges of, and therefore ought to be sober.

Ver. 11. *And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes, etc.]* Laws, precepts, ordinances, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which was the business of the priests to do, (^{<3117>}Malachi 2:7) but one inebriated with liquor would be incapable of giving instructions about any of those things:

which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses: particularly those delivered and recorded in (^{<2201>}Exodus 20:1-26 22:1-23:33) and as not the priests, so neither any other Israelite might instruct^{f209}, nor indeed would be capable of instructing others when in liquor; and therefore excessive drinking, as it should be carefully avoided by all men, so more especially by those who by their office are teachers of others; (see ^{<2804>}Proverbs 31:4,5).

Ver. 12. *And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, etc.]* Of the burning, as the Targum of Jonathan; who survived his other two sons that were burnt, who remained alive, not being concerned with them in their sin, and so shared not in their punishment:

take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire; for all but the handful that was burnt of that kind of offerings

belonged to the priests, (see ^{<OR64>}Leviticus 6:14-18) this meat offering, according to Jarchi, was the meat offering of the eighth day, that is, of the consecration, or the day after it was finished, on which the above awful case happened, (^{<OR97>}Leviticus 9:17) and also the meat offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah, who offered his offering first at the dedication of the altar, on the day the tabernacle was set up, which he supposes was on this day, (see ^{<OR10>}Numbers 7:1,10,13), now these meat offerings were not as yet eaten, and which may be true of the first of them, wherefore Aaron and his sons, notwithstanding their mourning, are bid to take it:

and eat it without leaven beside the altar: the altar of burnt offering in the court of the tabernacle, as directed (see Gill on "^{<OR66>}Leviticus 6:16"):

for it [is] most holy: and so might be eaten by none but holy persons, such as were devoted to sacred services, and only in the holy place, as follows; within hangings, where the most holy things were eaten, as Jarchi, that is, within the court of the tabernacle, which was made of hangings.

Ver. 13. *And ye shall eat it in the holy place*, etc.] Not in that which was properly so called, but in the court of the tabernacle; at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, as Aben Ezra, in some apartment there; for it was not to be carried out of the sanctuary, and eaten in their own houses or tents, as others might, after mentioned:

because it [is] thy due, and thy sons' due, of the offerings of the Lord made by fire; and not any others; neither his wife nor his daughters, nor any other related to him, or whom he might invite, as in other cases, might eat of it; this none but he and his sons might eat of, and nowhere else but in the sanctuary:

for so I am commanded; to make known and declare this as the will of God.

Ver. 14. *And the wave breast and heave shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place*, etc.] The breast of the peace offerings that was waved, and the shoulder of them that was heaved before the Lord; these were given by him to the priests, towards the maintenance of their families, (^{<OR74>}Leviticus 7:34) and they might be eaten anywhere, provided the place was clean from all ceremonial pollution, and in which there were no polluted persons, as leprous ones; they were to be eaten within the camp, as Jarchi observes, where lepers came not: for, as he adds, the light holy things, such as these

were, might be eaten in every city; and so it is said in the Misnah ^{f210}, and by the commentators on it:

thou and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee; these were not restrained to him and his sons only, as the meat offerings, and the flesh of the sin offerings were, but were common to the whole family:

for [they be] thy due, and thy sons' due; for their service of the sanctuary, and by the appointment and direction of the Lord:

[which] are given out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel: of which (see ^{<R10>}Leviticus 7:1-38) these are said to be “given out” of them, for the whole was not given, only the breast and shoulder; and after the fat was burnt, the rest belonged to the owners, with which they kept a feast of joy and thankfulness.

Ver. 15. *The heave shoulder and wave breast shall they bring*, etc.] Not the priests, but the owners to the priests, (^{<R12>}Leviticus 7:29,30):

with the offerings made by fire of the fat: upon the inwards, kidneys, and caul of the liver, which was all burnt:

to wave [it] for a wave offering before the Lord, the shoulder was lifted up, and the breast waved to and fro before the Lord of the whole earth, and towards the several parts of it, to show and own his right to all they had, and then they were given to the priests as a token of it:

and it shall be thine, and thy sons with thee; both the shoulder and the breast:

by a statute for ever, to be observed as long as the ceremonial law and Levitical priesthood lasted, even to the end of the Jewish age and economy, and the coming of the Messiah:

as the Lord hath commanded; (^{<R13>}Leviticus 7:33,34).

Ver. 16. *And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin [offering]*, etc.] The Targum of Jonathan says,

“three goats were offered on that day, the goat of the new moon, of the sin offering for the people, and of the sin offering, which Nahshon the son of Amminadab offered at the dedication of the altar; Aaron and his sons, it adds, went and burnt these three, Moses came and sought, etc.”

Jarchi also speaks of three goats offered, but says that only one was burnt, the goat of the new moon; and so Ben Gersom, who gives this reason for the diligent search after it, because it was always to be offered up, and was not a temporary affair, as the others were: but it rather seems to be the goat of the sin offering for the people, for it is not certain that the other goats were offered on this day, but this was, (see ^{<RB15>}Leviticus 9:15) now according to the law, the flesh of this goat was not to be burnt, but to be eaten by the priests in the holy place, (see ^{<RB25>}Leviticus 6:25,26). Moses now suspecting that Aaron and his sons, through their grief for the death of Nadab and Abihu, had neglected the eating of it, sought diligently after it, and so it proved:

and, behold, it was burnt: as they had no appetite to it themselves, they burnt it, that it might not be eaten by any others, for none but they might eat it, and that it might not corrupt:

and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, [which were] left alive; when their two elder brothers were killed with lightning for doing what was not commanded, which should have made them more observant of the laws of God, to do that which was commanded them: and though they were spared, and survived their brethren, yet they transgressed, in burning the sin offering of the people, when they should have eaten it. Jarchi observes, that he expressed his anger not to Aaron, but to his sons, which he did for the honour of Aaron, laying the blame not on him, who was overwhelmed with grief, but on his sons:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore have ye not eaten of the sin [offering] in the holy place, seeing it [is] most holy,* etc.] The sin offering was one of the most holy things, and therefore to be eaten only in the sanctuary; though this was not the fault they are here charged with that they had eat it, but not in the holy place; for they had not eaten it at all, but burnt it, as appears from the preceding verse; this is what they are blamed for particularly, though they are reminded of the whole law concerning it, that it was to be eaten by them, that it was to be eaten in the holy place, the reason of which is given; but they had not eaten it any where:

and [God] hath given it to you, to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord? for by eating the sin offering, or sin itself, as it is in the original text, (see ^{<RB18>}Hosea 4:8) they made the

sins of the people, for whom the offering was, in some sense their own; and they bore them, and made a typical atonement for them; in which they were types of Christ, who was made sin for his people, took their sins upon him, and by imputation they were made his own, and he bore them in his own body on the tree, and made full satisfaction and atonement for them. Now since the eating of the sin offering of the people was of so great importance and consequence, the neglect of it by the priests was very blameworthy.

Ver. 18. *Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place,* etc.] When that was the case, indeed, the flesh of the sin offering was not to be eaten, but burnt, (see ^(R65)Leviticus 6:30) but this was not the case now, and therefore its flesh should have been eaten, and not burnt:

ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy [place], as I commanded, (^(R65)Leviticus 6:26).

Ver. 19. *And Aaron said unto Moses,* etc.] For what Moses had said was said in his presence, though not addressed to him directly, but to his sons; and he was sensible that he was pointed at, and that if there was any blame in this affair, it lay as much or more on him than on his sons; and therefore he takes it upon him to give an answer, and to excuse the fact as well as he could:

behold, this day they have offered their sin [offering] and their burnt offering before the Lord; that is, the people of Israel had brought a kid of the goats for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb for burnt offering, and he and his sons assisting him, had offered them for them, even on the very day his two eldest sons were removed by death in an awful manner:

and such things have befallen me; at this very time, soon after the above sacrifices were offered, happened the death of his two sons, which occasioned great anguish and distress, grief and sorrow, so that he could not eat of the sin offering; he had no appetite for it, and if he had, he thought in his present circumstances it would not have been right, as follows:

and [if] I had eaten the sin [offering] today, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord? he being a mourner. The Jews say ^{t211}, an high priest may offer, being a mourner, but not eat; a common priest may neither offer nor eat; and which they illustrate by this passage, that Aaron offered and did not eat, but his sons did neither.

Ver. 20. *And when Moses heard [that], he was content.*] He said no more, he did not proceed in blaming him and his sons, but was satisfied with the answer returned; he considered the grief and trouble of mind that attended Aaron, which might not only cause him to disregard food, but even to forget what was commanded to be done in this case; and besides he might observe, that there was some difficulty attending it; in some cases the flesh of the sin offering was to be eaten, and not burnt; in others, to be burnt, and not eaten; and this being the first time of offering one, the mistake might be the more easily made; and fearing one might be made, and especially when Aaron was in such circumstances, might be the reason Moses so diligently sought after the goat of the sin offering: moreover, what Aaron had done appeared to be not out of any wilful neglect of the command of God, but with a good design, as judging it would be unacceptable to him, should he have eaten of it in his circumstances. Moses upon the whole thought him excusable, at least insisted no more upon the blame. The Jewish writers make the mistake to lie on the side of Moses and not Aaron; and which the former acknowledged, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: (see ^{<1832>}Deuteronomy 26:12-14).