



Parasha Vayikra

March 20, 2021

Torah: Leviticus 1:1-5:26

Haftarah: Isaiah 43:21-44:23

Ketuvim Shlichim: Hebrews 10:1-14

Shabbat shalom mishpacha! The Book of Leviticus, *Vayikra* in Hebrew, immediately follows the activities of constructing and furnishing the Tabernacle, in the closing chapters of the Book of Exodus. The name of this *parasha*, *Vayikra*, the first one in the Book of Leviticus, means “and He called.” *1 Now Adonai called to Moses and spoke to him out of the Tent of Meeting, saying: 2 “Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, and tell them:...* (Leviticus 1:1-2a TLV). ADONAI called to Moses from within the Tent of Meeting, the temporary tent which Moses had set up outside the camp and He gave him instructions regarding the offering of sacrifices. The sacrifices were to become the way that Israel would be able to maintain a proper relationship and fellowship with Him. And, these sacrifices and offerings would continue throughout the years as Israel’s only means of dealing with sin until Yeshua’s sacrifice many hundreds of years in the future.

This book, *Vayikra* in Hebrew, is a book of instructions for the *kohanim*, the priests. The name Leviticus, referring to the instructions for the *Levi*, the Levitical priests, was first used in the *Septuagint*. The *Septuagint*, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, was translated from Hebrew to Greek about 200 years before the 1st century CE. The first subject dealt with in this book is the regulations regarding sacrifices. They cover all of *Parasha Vayikra* and about half of the next one, *Parasha Tsav* (Give An Order). This is an important subject for the follower of Yeshua. By identifying and becoming more familiar with the different types of offerings, we can more clearly see and understand our own relationships with ADONAI and Messiah Yeshua. There are parallels between Israel’s bringing of sacrifices to the Tabernacle and our acceptance of Yeshua as our own personal sacrifice. Just as Yeshua is much more than just a sacrifice for us, so were the sacrifices of the Tabernacle and Temple for Israel in that day. They depicted a living relationship between Israel and ADONAI and not just something to do until Messiah came as they are sometime depicted. The sacrifices were an outpouring of ADONAI’s grace, and through Israel’s obedience to His *Torah*, the relationship was established.

1 Now Adonai called to Moses and spoke to him out of the Tent of Meeting, saying: 2 “Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, and tell them: When anyone of you brings an offering to Adonai, you may present your offering of livestock, from the herd or from the flock. 3 “If his sacrifice is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to present a male without blemish. He is to offer it at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, so that he may be accepted before Adonai. 4 He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, so that it will be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf” (Leviticus 1:1-4 TLV). The first verse of *Parasha Vayikra* says that ADONAI called to *Moshe*. And, this was actually the third time that He had called to him.

Here is the first one: 2 *Then the angel of Adonai appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a bush. So he looked and saw the bush burning with fire, yet it was not consumed.* 3 *Moses thought, "I will go now, and see this great sight. Why is the bush not burnt?"* 4 *When Adonai saw that he turned to look, He called to him out of the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" So he answered, "Hineni"* (Exodus 3:2-4 TLV). The second time is this: 1 *In the third month after Bnei-Yisrael had gone out of the land of Egypt, that same day they arrived at the wilderness of Sinai.* 2 *They travelled from Rephidim, came into to the wilderness of Sinai, and set up camp in the wilderness. Israel camped there, right in front of the mountain.* 3 *Moses went up to God, and Adonai called to him from the mountain saying, "Say this to the house of Jacob, and tell Bnei-Yisrael,..."* (Exodus 19: 1-3 TLV). Each time that ADONAI called Moses was for a critical purpose. In Exodus chapter 3, when ADONAI called from the burning bush He initiated the salvation of Israel and He did it by naming Moshe to be their deliverer. In verse 10 ADONAI said to Moses: 10 *"Come now, I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people Bnei-Yisrael out from Egypt"* (Exodus 3:10 TLV). In Chapter 19 when Israel came to Mount Sinai, ADONAI gave Moses His terms for the relationship which He was about to establish with Israel. And in Leviticus 1 as we just read, He told Moses how Israel would be able to maintain their relationship with Him; how they were to deal with sin. Up to this point, ADONAI had called to *Moshe* and directed him to do three things for Israel. 1. He named Moses *Mashia*, משיח, deliverer. *Mashia* is a form of the word *Mashiach* and *Moshe* was a "type of *Mashiach*," a type of Messiah, a picture of Yeshua. 2. At Mount Sinai, ADONAI spoke to Moses as the Mediator for Israel There are several words which describe this relationship. *Melitz*, מליץ, is one. He was the intermediary between G-d and man. 3. In Leviticus, ADONAI used Moses both as deliverer and mediator when He described to him the *korbanot*, the animal and grain offerings, which were to be brought to the sanctuary.

Korbanot is the plural of *korban*, a word referring to any kind of offering which was devoted to ADONAI. The underlying relationship and purpose for these offerings was the contract between ADONAI and Israel, the covenant. It was a blood covenant. Animals were killed and their blood was splashed on the twelve pillars that Moses had erected at the base of Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:4-8). Another way to look at the relationship depicted here between ADONAI and Israel is as a marriage. At Mount Sinai there was a marriage between ADONAI and Israel. The *Torah* which He gave to Moses is the *ketubah*, the marriage contract. Later in the book of Exodus, the house for the marriage was built; the Tabernacle. And in Leviticus, where we are now, the wife, Israel, is being taught how to live in the house. And, while the *Kohanim* are those especially called for this purpose, the learning of the laws of sacrifice was for all of Israel. By learning and carrying out the *korbanot*, Israel would become "a kingdom of priests" as ADONAI told them in Exodus 19 just before they arrived at Mount Sinai: 6 *"So as for you, you will be to Me a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation"...* (Exodus 19:6a TLV).

The first chapter of Leviticus is about the burnt offering, the *olah*, עֹלָה. This was a freewill offering that was completely burned on the altar. This type of offering represented complete submission to ADONAI's will and the entire offering was given to Him. Presenting this offering expressed a desire by the person offering it to commune with ADONAI. The root of this word carries the idea of "going up." It was an offering that was completely burned up and from this we get another name for this sacrifice- "burnt offering." It was a purely voluntary offering. Leviticus 1 doesn't tell us its purpose, but it definitely was a sin offering. We know this because the person offering it had to place his hands on the head of the offering which implied that he was confessing sin, sin which had to be dealt with before the relationship between ADONAI and this person could continue. The *olah* was available to

any person regardless of their financial circumstances. The wealthy could offer cattle, the average man could offer sheep or goats, and the poorest could offer a dove. And, ADONAI looked upon their gifts equally. Each man or woman has the same importance in His eyes. The *olah* offering was totally burned on the altar. This teaches us that our whole being must be submitted to ADONAI and Yeshua in order to accept atonement. In faith, we submit not only our spirits, but also soul and our physical bodies. Even as we accept His atonement in our hearts, we must also seek to do that which pleases ADONAI. As Ya'acov, Yeshua's brother, says in James 2: 17 "So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself" (James 2:17 TLV).

In chapter 2 we read about the *mincha*, מִנְחָה. 1 "When anyone brings a sacrifice offering of grain to Adonai, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he is to pour oil on it and put frankincense on it" (Leviticus 2:1 TLV). We are not given the specific purpose of the *mincha*, but by seeing how the word is used elsewhere in the *Torah*, we can make a reasonable guess of its purpose. After Daniel interpreted the king's dream about the great statue, we read this: 6 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and paid homage to Daniel and gave orders that an offering (***mincha***) and incense be provided for him (Daniel 2:46 TLV). Strong's interprets *mincha* as offering or gift and the most likely purpose for it in *Torah* was as a tribute, a gift by the worshipper to ADONAI. We also see this in Genesis 4 where the offerings brought by both Cain and Abel were said to be *mincha*. There was one more ingredient added to the *mincha* - salt. Every offering was to be salted. The *Torah* doesn't tell us why, but tradition gives two possible reasons: 1. Salt is a preservative and represents that which is lasting; as in "an everlasting covenant of salt." Eating salt together was also a sign of friendship among ancient people. 2. Salt also represented purity. This indicates that the covenant with ADONAI is a covenant of purity, but also of permanence. There were five ways that the *mincha* offering could be presented. It could be uncooked, baked in an oven, fried in a pan, deep fried in a pan, and as a first-fruit grain offering.

The third offering is the *sh'lamim*, שְׁלָמִים, the peace offering. Don't confuse this with *shlameil*, a hapless bungler and not even *shlemazel*, a person with very bad luck. Not much chance of that though. Those Yiddish words didn't even exist back then. Even though this was an animal sacrifice, it did not atone for sin. It differed from the *olah*, the burnt offering, in that only a small part of it was burned. The rest of the animal was cut up in such a way that it could be cooked and eaten. The person offering it would slaughter the animal at the entrance of the tent of meeting. The word used here for slaughter comes from the same root word for "ritual slaughterer," *shochet*, שׁוֹחֵט. This indicates that this offering was intended to be used for a fellowship meal and the owner would invite his whole family, his friends, his acquaintances, and the *kohen* who officiated to join him. During the meal, he would praise ADONAI and tell about His kindnesses. The *sh'lamim* would not be offered by itself, an individual offering, but would follow the presentation of an *olah* offering for sin. At the time of eating the *shlamim*, the peace offering, the offerer would also be rejoicing that he had been forgiven of his sins and was another reason for wishing to share this wonderful time with his family and friends.

The fourth offering was the *chatat*, חַטָּאת, offering. 1 Adonai spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, saying: If anyone sins unintentionally in any of Adonai's mitzvot that are not to be done, and commits any one of them..." (Leviticus 4:1-2 TLV). This passage goes on to describe the type of offering required for a *kohen* who sins, for the whole community when they sin, for a leader who sins, or for an individual who sins. The word *chatat* is usually translated as sin, sin offering, but actually means something more like, "missing the

mark." It was an unintentional sin, one that was committed inadvertently, or maybe because of carelessness. The sacrifice was an expression of sorrow for the error and a desire to be reconciled with ADONAI. The size of the offering would vary according to the nature of the sin and the financial means of the sinner. In most cases the *chatat* offering was eaten by the *kohanim* and was considered a part of their support from the community. There were also other times when the *chatat* offering was required. Examples are a woman after childbirth (Lev. 12:6), people with skin diseases (Lev. 14:9), and for the dedication of priests, Levites, and the altar (Num. 8:8).

The fifth offering was the *asham*, אֲשָׁם, offering usually translated as "guilt offering." This offering was for a very serious sin and in some cases also required that the offender make restitution to the one damaged for the value of the animal or whatever item was affected. They would pay full value plus one-fifth. This offering was also required for trespass against holy things or speaking false oaths in court. Some of these sins could have been unintentional, but lying and defrauding are intentional. What we see, is that in these cases, there was forgiveness for intentional sins. Also, when there was doubt as to whether a person had committed a sin, the person would make an *asham*, a guilt offering rather than a *chatat*, a sin offering. The *asham* offering was also eaten by the *kohenim* as a part of their support. It is the *asham* which describes Yeshua: 10 "Yet it pleased Adonai to bruise Him. He caused Him to suffer. If He makes His soul a guilt offering (**asham**), He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the will of Adonai will succeed by His hand." (Isaiah 53:10 TLV). Although this sacrifice is used in reference to Yeshua, it doesn't completely describe what He did for us or mean that is the way that we obtain our salvation through Him. All five sacrifices of Leviticus plus the Passover Lamb relate in some way to what He has done for us. But, the sacrifice which most clearly describes what Yeshua did for us is the *Yom Kippur* sacrifice.

Here's a quick review.

1. The *olah*, or burnt offering, was a sacrifice for sin and completely burned up.
2. The *mincha* was a tribute offering of grain, oil, and frankincense.
3. The *sh'lamim*, or peace offering, was only partially burned and the majority was eaten in fellowship.
4. The *chatat*, or sin offering, was for missing the mark, unintentional sins.
5. The *asham*, or guilt offering, was for serious sin and could also carry restitution as a penalty.

It is important for us to understand that even at the time that the offerings were made, they did not take away sin, but merely covered it until *Yom Kippur*. On that day the *Kohen HaGadol*, the High Priest, would offer sacrifices for his sins and for the sins of the people which occurred during the year. In effect, this was also only a covering of sins. We know this is true because of what we read in Hebrews 10: 3 "But in these sacrifices is a reminder of sins year after year— 4 for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Hebrews 10:3-4 TLV). Verses 10 and 11 explain this and also show us how powerful was Yeshua's sacrifice of Himself: 10 "By His will (**ADONAI's**) we have been made holy through the offering of the body of Messiah Yeshua once for all. 11 Indeed, every (**Levitical**) kohen stands day by day serving and offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins" (Hebrews 10:10-11 TLV).

Dr. Louis Goldberg in the Messianic periodical, "Tishrei" has very clearly shown us how Yeshua functioned as a sacrificed substitute. There are five different actions which occur in the atonement for a sin.

Man is always the guilty one, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Sin is sin and missing the mark is not acceptable to a holy G-d. But ADONAI out of His grace and mercy provided a substitute, an acceptable sacrifice, to take the place of guilty man, who would otherwise die for his sin. In the Tabernacle, the offering was the substitute which represented the one who sinned and it was killed in his place. In the same way we are told that Yeshua was given to be a sinner's substitute. He was the G-d-given acceptable sacrifice who died in the place of the sinner. *Shimon Kefa* said: 18 "You know that you were redeemed from the futile way of life handed down from your ancestors—not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with precious blood like that of a lamb without defect or spot, the blood of Messiah. 20 He was chosen before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake" (1Peter 1:19-20 TLV). ADONAI knew him before the foundation of the universe, but only revealed him in the *acharit hayamim*, the latter days, for our sakes. Yeshua is our substitute. It was we who should have been sacrificed, but He took our place. Point number "1" is "substitute." We must have a substitute.

The guilty sinner brought the animal for sacrifice and placed his hands on the animal's head. As he did this he confessed his own personal sin and his unworthiness to receive ADONAI's grace. This was also true for the sacrifices made on *Yom Kippur*. The *Kohen HaGadol* laid his hands on the sacrifice and confessed all of Israel's sins over it. We must do the same thing. John said: 9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9 TLV). We must confess our sins before ADONAI. Yeshua will forgive sins that are sincerely confessed. Point number "2" is confession.

The laying on of hands also depicts the concept of identification. By laying hands on its head, the sinner designated the animal as his substitute and the substitute was now identified with the sin of the person bringing the offering. After the sin was placed on the substitute, it was now the substitute's sin. In Romans 6 *Sha'ul* tells us that the sinner was identified with the death of Yeshua: 3 "Or do you not know that all of us who were immersed into Messiah Yeshua were immersed into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried together with Him through immersion into death—in order that just as Messiah was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become joined together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also will be joined together in His resurrection— 6 knowing our old man was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be done away with, so we no longer serve sin" (Romans 6:3-6 TLV). We can explain it this way: When Yeshua died, it was as if ADONAI took our guilty hands and placed them on the head of Yeshua who was the sacrifice. In this way Yeshua represents all sinners who place their faith in him. Our sin has become identified with Yeshua and is now on Him. Point number "3" is identification.

Here is the most important verse for the sacrificial system: 11 "For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives—for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life" (Leviticus 17:11 TLV). It teaches us that unless blood is shed in a sacrifice, no atonement is made. The sacrifice must have died, but it also had to be a bloody death. It could not just be electrocution or by hanging, or something which does not produce blood. The descriptions of Yeshua on the stake in the

Scriptures would certainly qualify His body as a bloody sacrifice. *Sha'ul* told us: 7 “*In Him we have redemption through His blood—the removal of trespasses—in keeping with the richness of His grace 8 that He lavished on us*” (Ephesians 1:7-8a TLV). Yeshua could not have been a sacrificial substitute for us unless His blood was shed and He died. And He did die and then took his own blood into the *Mishkan*, the Tabernacle in heaven, and placed it in the Holy of Holies there: 1 “*But when Messiah appeared as Kohen Gadol of the good things that have now come, passing through the greater and more perfect Tent not made with hands (that is to say not of this creation), 12 He entered into the Holies once for all—not by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption*” (Hebrews 9:11-12 TLV). We were saved by Yeshua's bloody death. Point number “4” is the shedding of blood.

In the Tabernacle, when the sacrifice was killed by the sinner, something happened in the spiritual world. When the sacrifice died the sins were removed from the sinner and placed upon the sacrifice. The sacrifice died, but the guilty sinner lived and was now considered righteous, at least for the area of his life for which he was seeking forgiveness. How much more true is this when the sacrifice is the Holy Messiah of Israel who offered himself once and for all. *Sha'ul* said: 21 “*He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God*” (2Corinthians 5:21 TLV). Romans 6, which we read a few moments ago, also told us that we died with Messiah. The sinner who trusts in Yeshua dies; that is, his old man dies. Our old man was nailed to the tree with Yeshua and because Yeshua, our Messiah, rose from the dead, so did we. Our spirits are now eternally alive because Yeshua died. Point number “5” is, sacrifice dies, sinner lives.

Passover is one week away. During this season, we are reminded even more of Yeshua's blood which was shed for us. If there is anyone here who has not accepted Yeshua as Messiah and would like to, think about these five points: First: Yeshua is our substitute. Recognize Him as the lamb of G-d who takes away sins. Second: Understand that Yeshua will forgive sins that are sincerely confessed. 2. Sincerely confess your sins to Him. Third: Our sins are personally identified with Yeshua. 3. Recognize that Yeshua took your sin on His own body. Fourth: We were saved by our acceptance of Yeshua's bloody death as a personal sacrifice for us. 4. Recognize that because of his death you can have salvation. Fifth: Our spirits are now eternally alive because Yeshua died. 5. Yeshua died, you live. Eternal life is yours. Salvation costs us nothing monetarily, but costs us everything in terms of our lives. Salvation is not cheap. We must give up our old lives of living for ourselves and live for Messiah. We must make *teshuvah*. That is, we must turn 180 degrees around from the life we were living and live unto ADONAI. When we do this we fulfill His plan for us, and that is to make us a nation of priests. As ADONAI's *kohanim*, we are anointed to minister to the nations. And in doing this, we experience *shalom*. *Sha'ul* teaches us: 17 ... “*for the kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking, but righteousness and shalom and joy in the Ruach ha-Kodesh*” (Romans 14:17 TLV).

Are these five inactive *mitzvot* of *Torah* useful for us as followers of Yeshua? Can what they teach us help us to understand our relationship with Yeshua and the Father even better? Do the offerings of the Tabernacle still have meaning for us, even though they are no longer in active use? I believe that they can. Each one relates to some part of our relationship with Yeshua. The ancient Israelites are an example of what we are not to do. They allowed ADONAI's *Torah*, His instructions for living, to be overruled by their fleshly desires and their continued disobedience caused ADONAI to judge them: 11 “*I gave them My laws and taught*

them My judgments, which if a man does, he will live by them. 12 I also gave them My Shabbatot, as a sign between Me and them, so that they would know that I am Adonai who made them holy. 13 “But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not walk in My statutes. They rejected My judgments, which if a man does, he will live by them. They greatly profaned My Shabbatot. Then I resolved to pour out My fury on them in the wilderness to consume them” (Ezekiel 20:11-13 TLV). Israel was chosen by G-d, was saved out of Egypt, and they threw it all away to follow their own desires.

24 Then Yeshua said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to follow after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 16:24-25 TLV). This is a very hard word, but a word which each of us as Yeshua’s followers must consider carefully. We are all guilty to some degree of “saving our lives,” living for ourselves. In our relationship with Yeshua, if we live for ourselves, we are following the path of the ancient Israelites. What Yeshua meant by “our cross” was not carrying some burden, but what happened on the cross, “our actual death.” We must die for Him daily. It’s about His actual death on the stake and our being willing to die for Him every day. He said: “die to self and follow after Me.” “Give up your desires for your life and take on My desires for your life.” ADONAI’s grace is amazing; that He would send His Son to die for us so that we might have life. All we have to do is accept His wonderful gift. How can we possibly thank Yeshua for such a tremendous gift? It’s easy! We can thank Him by doing what He has asked of us. All He asks is that we live for Him. *Shabbat shalom!*