

The “Easy” Mentality

Today, we often hear the terms “*Old Testament*” and “*New Testament*,” but few people truly realize the meaning of these words, the underlying theologies involved, and the impact these words have had on our understanding of the Scriptures. In last week’s study on Parashat Vayikra, we looked at the opening chapters of the book of Leviticus and the sacrificial system God had put in place for His people. We also studied the Torah and the rabbis discussion on the meaning of phrase, “*the Tabernacle of the Testimony*.” The conclusion by the rabbis was the Torah is God’s testimony to all of mankind and that God has declared there is salvation in Israel.

In this weeks reading from Parashat Tzav (*Vayikra / Leviticus 6:1-8:36*), the Scriptures continue to describe the Sacrificial system and the various sacrifices that are to be brought “*if a man sins*.”

ספר ויקרא פרק ה

כ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
כא כַּאֲנִי נִפְשׁ כִּי תִחַטָּא וּמַעַלְתָּ מֵעַל
בִּיהוָה וְכַחֵשׁ בְּעַמִּיתוֹ בְּפִקְדוֹן
אוּ-בְתִשׁוּמַת יָד אוּ בְגִזְל אוּ
עֲשָׂק אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ: כב אוּ-מֵצָא
אֲבֵדָה וְכַחֵשׁ בָּהּ וְנִשְׁבַּע עַל-
שֵׁקֶר עַל-אַחַת מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה
הָאָדָם לַחַטָּא בְּהֵנָה: כג וְהָיָה
כִּי-יִחַטָּא וְאָשָׁם וְהָשִׁיב אֶת-
הַגְּזוּלָה אֲשֶׁר גָּזַל אוּ אֶת-הָעֵשֶׂק
אֲשֶׁר עֲשָׂק אוּ אֶת-הַפִּקְדוֹן אֲשֶׁר
הִפְקִד אֹתוֹ אוּ אֶת-הָאֲבֵדָה אֲשֶׁר
מָצָא:

Vayikra / Leviticus 6:1-3

6:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:2 ‘When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the Lord, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, 6:3 or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do; 6:4 then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, (NASB)

The opening verses in Parashat Tzav continues from last week with the Lord speaking to Moshe with regard to the guilt offering, and then

proceeds to describe the involvement of the Priests in the Olah (raise) offering (6:8-9), the Minchah (grain) offering, the Chatat (sin) offering, the Asham (guilt) offering, and the Shelamim (Peace) offering. The Torat (תּוֹרָה, instruction) of the Olah offering is to be kept burning continually. The Torat of the Minchah offering is to present it before the Lord at the altar (6:14-18). The Torat of the Chatat offering is to eat it in a holy place. The Torat of the Asham offering, it is to be slain in the same place the burnt offering is slain (7:1-2) and eaten in a holy place. Note the connection here based on last week's study on the transformation of the sacrifice through destruction (burning). The Olah Korban is burned up completely and continually, the smoke goes up to heaven as a pleasing aroma. The Asham Korban is to be slain in the same location as the Olah Korban showing a connection to the Olah offering in the offering of our guilt which goes up as a pleasing aroma. The Torat of the Shelamim offering (7:11-13) states this is a thanksgiving offering, one is to bring it with the cakes of unleavened bread and the person is to present one of every type of offering as a contribution to the Lord (7:13-16). The Shelamim Korban represents the table fellowship with one another and with God (*as we described in Parashat Vayikra last week*). Table fellowship is representative of the intimate relationship we have with God.

While reading through the Apostolic Writings, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the book of Acts, and the Epistles of Paul and the disciples, and the book of the Revelation of John, there appears to be limited discussions on the topic of the Sacrifices. This is most likely the result of the Sacrifices that are described here in the Torah from Leviticus are considered to be general knowledge within the first century context of the second Temple period (e.g. *Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-44, Luke 5:12-14, Yeshua healed the leper and told the man to go and show himself to the priests and offer the prescribed sacrifices as a testimony to the priests. It was understood what was required of the covenant relationship Israel had with God according to the Torah and having been healed, they were to follow through with their covenant agreement with God.*) The Torah, having been taught in the synagogues throughout Israel every Shabbat and through the week, was common knowledge amongst the children of Israel. In order for a more proper understanding of the Apostolic Writings, we must study the Torah, otherwise the NT can be greatly misunderstood. Many people today simply gloss over these Scrip-

tures from Parshiot Vayikra and Tzav not realizing how our understanding of Yeshua's death, burial, and resurrection are greatly depends upon our understanding of the Torah.

In the Apostolic Writings, the book of Hebrews however does take up the topic of the Sacrifices and goes on to describe the Temple sacrifices in relation to the Sacrifice provided by Yeshua the Messiah. According to the Torah, the role of the Priest in the process of atonement appears to be an important one. Studying the rabbinic commentary, a lot of discussion is given on the atonement process and the Sacrifice. The point is, God is trying to showing us how the role of the priest is to bear our iniquity and our guilt for the purpose of making atonement by the use of "*the food and the drink*" in the Temple ritual. Note that the Roman Catholic priesthood does not function in the manner in which the Torah describes the Priesthood. I have been told that it does, however, based upon these Scriptures, the RCC priesthood does not bear the iniquity of the individual and then go before God to make atonement upon the altar in the manner and in the place that He prescribes according to the Torah.

Vayikra / Leviticus 6:24-26, is one of the source texts on eating the offering in the holy place. The Priest who is making atonement is the one who is responsible for consuming a portion of the sin-offering. What is the reason the Priests are commanded by God to consume the sacrifice? The reason is related to the need for the priest to bear one's iniquity. This is the context that must be understood while studying the book of Hebrews, when the author discusses the blood of goats and bulls for atonement, and the ashes of the heifer for the cleansing of the flesh. Hebrews chapter 9 has the following to say regarding the sacrifices. The author summarizes what takes place in the Temple service:

Hebrews 9:13-22

9:13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 9:15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the trans-

gressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 9:16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 9:17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 9:18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. 9:19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 9:20 saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.' 9:21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. 9:22 And according to the Law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (NASB)

In *Hebrews 9: 13-22*, a parallel is drawn between the Temple sacrifices and the act of Yeshua giving himself for the forgiveness of our sins. The author of Hebrews says, *9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (NASB)* It is interesting how he says “*cleansing the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*” Many have used this as a proof text against obeying the Torah, but this is not what the author is speaking of or is it? We do know through past discussions regarding *Galatians* and *Acts 15* that the Pharisees were promoting the ritual conversion in order to enter into the covenant with God and with Yeshua. The point was that one enters the covenant by faith, and the stipulations (requirements) of the covenant are performed out of a love for God and as a testimony to His Word, and not for a means of earning salvation. The idea of works being dead, mentioned by the author of Hebrews, is within the context of the person who believes their observance of the Torah will provide them with entrance into heaven. Paul, in *Romans 6-7*, said that when the command came, so did sin, and he died. Obeying the command for the purpose

of gaining entrance into heaven, is a “*dead work.*” In addition to this, based upon Paul’s letter to the *Romans 6-7*, sin is also considered a “*dead work.*” An important point here is that the reason Paul’s writings are confusing to us is because he is working within multiple threads of thinking typical of rabbinic and Jewish thought. Note how in the midrashim there are various interpretations on the same verse, phrase, or word. In the midrashim, each of the rabbinic interpretations of the Scriptures have an equally valid point. Similarly, Paul uses his rabbinic background in the process of writing his letters to the Romans and others. The point is, our obedience to God’s word should be motivated by our love for the Lord, and not for the purpose of getting something out of it (e.g. gaining heaven). The author of Hebrews is correct, because Yeshua came teaching us that we serve God and others out of love, and not for the end goal of “*receiving.*” The previous approach is very self serving and thereby very covetous. Those who teach that man earned his salvation in the OT are suggesting a form of covetous relationship man had with God under the Mosaic Law. That is obviously an erroneous doctrine.

The author of Hebrews continues saying it was the insufficiency of the previous covenant that had led to the mediator of a new covenant. *Hebrews 9:15-16* states,, *9:15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 9:16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 9:17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. (NASB)* The idea here is that a covenant is ratified by blood and death. Note also, the author speaks of the “*first covenant*” however, the Lord also made covenants with previous peoples. The Adamic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, and the Davidic covenant to name a few. Why does he speak of only “*the first*” covenant? It could be that this was the first national covenant and is the major turning point in Israel’s history and God’s deliverance from bondage. *Hebrews 9:18* states that the first covenant was inaugurated with blood. Notice something here, the author is describing the “*start or beginning*” of the covenant as it is compared to the covenant in Yeshua the Messiah. The inauguration of the covenant does not occur over and over again. This would be the mentality or idea

of a man working for his salvation and then loosing it by sinning until he brought another sacrifice. This would also be the mentality of the concept of transubstantiation. This kind of theology of works salvation under the first covenant taught in the church today is clearly and gravely in error. A summary of the inauguration of the covenant in blood is given with the sprinkling of the blood on the Torah itself, the tabernacle, and upon the people. The author states that based upon the Torah, one may even say that “*all things*” are cleansed with blood.

Hebrews 9:22

9:22 And according to the Law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (NASB)

While studying Leviticus, it is important to note the reason and need for atonement being made for the Tabernacle and the altar, is due to the iniquity of the sanctuary. Is the Torah suggesting a place or thing as having iniquity? Why does a place or thing need to be atoned for? This is the definition of bringing something under the regulation or control of a set procedure that is defined specifically by the Lord God in heaven. It is a description of the sanctification of a place or thing for service to the Lord. For example, the priest is to bring a Olah Korban first upon the altar for the purpose of sanctifying, purifying, or setting the altar apart for the Lord and for the service of the Chatat and Asham Korbanot. The central feature of these verses is, (i) *the Priest bearing the iniquity of the non-Priest, and (ii) the priest make atonement with regards to himself having bore the guilt that is in connection with the sinner.* The nature and the role of the Priest was to take care of and make atonement for the one bringing the offering. The focus on the blood requirement and the priest bearing one’s iniquity are what the author of Hebrews is putting forward in his letter as it is compared to Yeshua the Messiah. The following Scriptures from Vayikra / Leviticus drive forward the importance of these two things.

Summary on the priestly bearing of guilt

1. *Vayikra / Leviticus 10:16-18*, this Scripture specifically discusses the need for the Priest to eat the sacrifice in order

to bear the guilt of the one bringing the offering as the Torah states. The Torah indicates the role of the Priest is to bear ones iniquity and then make atonement before God.

2. *Vayikra / Leviticus 6:24-26*, the source text (mitzvah) on eating the offering in the holy place. The Priest who is making atonement is the one who is responsible for consuming part of the sin-offering. What are the reasons why the Priest is commanded by God to consume the sacrifice?
3. *Shemot / Exodus 28:38*, this text states that the Tzitzit is to be placed upon the High Priest forehead and its purpose is to take away the iniquity of the holy things. The simple meaning of the text does not indicate the Tzitzit is that which will be used by the Priest to remove the sin of the holy things. The Torah is a little unclear on the use of the Tzitzit which gives rabbinic commentators (like Rashi) a little bit of leg room to work with. As a result, Rashi has a lengthy discussion on the use of the Tzitzit saying it is the Tzitzit which bears the sin of the holy things and not the priest.
4. *Vayikra / Leviticus 22:16*, Moses instructs on what happens when one eats a holy gift unintentionally.
5. *Bamidbar / Numbers 18:1*, God is telling the Priests they will bear the guilt of the sanctuary that is in connection with the priesthood. The text here is in relation to the sacred things, the Priest will bear the iniquity of the non-Priests when they sin. The most interesting feature of the text is is related to the questions: *(i) why does the Priest bear the iniquity of the non-Priest and (ii) how does the Priest make atonement for after the one who is guilty?*

According to the Torah, the role of the Priest in the process of atonement appears to be an important one. The point is, what God is trying to show us in the use of the priest to bear our iniquity or guilt and making atone-

ment with regard to “*the food and the drink.*” The author of Hebrews is drawing a distinction between things that are temporary, things that pass away, such as food and drink. Things that are temporal, things that pass away, these have the need to be brought again and again due to the corruptible nature of the food and drink (e.g. bread gets mold, etc). The contrast is being made between the one who is eternal, to Yeshua who is raised from the grave. The Torah requirement of the Priest bringing the sacrifices, and the drink and food offerings which are brought over and over again, is contrasted to the one who is eternal, and to Yeshua who is raised from the dead.

In Parashiot Vayikra (*Vayikra / Leviticus 1:1-5:26*) and Tzav (*Vayikra / Leviticus 6:1-8:36*) we are given the procedures regarding how and why each type of sacrifice is offered. Parashat Tzav deals with the procedures for offering the various Sacrifices and Parashat Vayikra discusses on which Sacrifice is to be offered under which circumstance. Take for example the following summary for the Chatat (sin) and Asham (guilt) offerings:

Chatat (Sin, Vayikra / Leviticus 6:17-23)

- The procedure of how to offer the korban.
- The portion eaten by the Priest.
- Instructions on where it may be eaten.

Asham (Guilt, Vayikra / Leviticus 7:1-7)

- The procedure of how to offer the korban.
- The portion eaten by the Priest.
- Instructions on where it may be eaten.

The MT lists the steps for the Asham (guilt) and Chatat (sin) offerings. There is great importance in the need for the blood offered in the sacrifice and the need for the portion of meat to be eaten by the Priest to bear away our sin. What can we learn from or say about this very important role of the priest regarding eating a portion of the sacrifice in the process of making atonement? One interpretation is that this is an example of the earthly copies and heavenly originals like what the author of Hebrews is trying to say. Does the parallel given in *Hebrews 9* suggest that Yeshua does away with or replace the sacrifices in the Tabernacle? Yeshua does not

necessarily replace these things. Especially in light of last weeks study on the Torah and the rabbis discussion on the meaning of phrase, “*the Tabernacle of the Testimony*,” coupled with the connection that the Torah is God’s testimony to all of mankind and that God has declared there is salvation in Israel. The Sacrifices in the Temple service could remain as a testimony of God and of the finished work of Yeshua the Messiah. Note that this concept is very Hebraic and well grounded in the Tanach. The Torah contains a shadow of the good things to come but not the actual manifestation of the originals. The Scriptures say that Yeshua ascended into heaven to offer His blood upon the heavenly originals. The point of the matter is that as long as we are hear on earth, we have only the earthly copies as a reminder of the heavenly originals, and of the work of Yeshua the Messiah. We have the fullness of what Christ did in Yeshua according to our faith. This does not mean that we now no longer need to bear the testimony of God in our lives. This would include the Temple sacrifices if the Temple stood today.

In respect to the sacrificial system, the Messiah’s death and entry into the heavenly Holiest Place brings to humanity the actual manifestation here and now of what the Torah previewed. According to the Torah, we are given evidence on the necessity for Yeshua to go to the cross for the purpose of bearing our sins. Yeshua bore our sins upon the cross, because the Torah says cursed of God is the one who is hung upon a tree. (*De-varim / Deuteronomy 21*) Following His death and resurrection, he made atonement on our behalf in the Heavenly Holiest Place. Having this understanding on the Priest eating a portion of the sacrifice for the purpose of incorporating the sin of the sacrifice in his body, as detailed in *Vayikra / Leviticus 10:17*, these Scriptures become a very significant messianic expectation on the work of the Messiah. If the Temple was rebuilt today, and the daily sacrifices continued, we would see the messianic expectation of the finished work of Yeshua, our High Priest, who has taken our sins once and for all and made atonement in His own blood, just as it is written in *Hebrews 9:28*.

The bearing of our sins and making atonement by the Priest is very important as it is written in *Hebrews 9:28*, Yeshua the Messiah fulfilled this Torah command. The idea of bearing sins and making atonement is so important and foundational to the Torah the author of Hebrews mentions it in *Hebrews 9*. Note also these Scriptures describe a covenant

relationship of a covenant people, where God defines a way of life for a people who are saved, redeemed, and set apart by Him and for Him.

This week's Torah portion, Parashat Tzav, coupled with the book of Hebrews chapter 9, reveals to us that Yeshua the Messiah has become our Asham (guilt) and Chatat (sin) offering; he bore our sins on the cross so by faith we can have forgiveness of sins by the manner in which the Torah prescribes. We have a High Priest today, right now, and we have a Priest who took (bore) our sins from us, and who made atonement on our behalf. By doing this Yeshua has become our righteousness and brings a newness of life, He has separated us and made us holy before the Lord God Almighty. Now that we are a holy people, we are called to live holy lives. The way we do this is by separating ourselves from the way the world lives. All of these things are taught in the Apostolic Writings (NT) and draw us back to the importance of living in obedience to the Lord and His Holy Word. There is no easy button for the life of the god-fearer who is saved in the Messiah Yeshua. Our lives as the children of God should be noted by our diligence in serving and seeking Him. Is this an easy thing to do? Certainly not. However, if we have Him dwelling in our midst, in our hearts, and in our lives, we are given the power and the will to seek, to serve, and obey with a joyful heart.

SIMCHAT TORAH!

