

פרשת
ויקרא
Parashat Vayikra

*Vayikra / Leviticus 1:1-5:26, 1 Samuel 15:1-34
Matthew 5:23-30*

Yeshua (Jesus) and the book of Leviticus

It can be stated with confidence that the book of Vayikra / Leviticus is one of the most important books in the entire Bible! From a Jewish perspective, the book of Leviticus is among the first books studied by a Jewish child. On the other hand, it is often among the last books of the Bible to be studied by a Christian. I have spoken to Christian Pastors who have said to me that the book of Leviticus is one of the most difficult books to understand and to teach from. This is surprising to those who go through the Torah every year and study the five books of Moshe year after year. Today's readers are often put off by the lists of laws in Leviticus regarding diet, sacrifice, and social behavior. The significance of this book is found within these highly detailed directives where we discover the holiness, the separateness, the distinction, and the utter "*otherness*" of God. We also learn how sin devastates humanity's relationship with their Creator. We also learn of God's great mercy providing a way to draw near to Him in the sacrifice of atonement. In the opening chapters of the book of Vayikra / Leviticus, it is important to understand to whom this book was written? This book was written to a covenant people, to those who have joined themselves to the Lord God of Israel, and who by faith have entered into a covenant agreement with God. The important point is

that salvation was a matter of entering into the covenant of God and the khatat korban (קָרְבַּן הַטָּאֵת, Sin offering) was not meant to earn a man's way into the covenant of God or to earn one's salvation. The covenant of God was entered into by faith. Our being in a covenant relationship with God and being a covenant people, we are told how we are to live our lives and how we are to approach the Lord God Almighty. The *Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 62a* discusses the sacrifices in the following way:

Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 62a

As it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yosei says with regard to the verse: "If any one shall sin through error, in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and performs from one of them" (Leviticus 4:2), that there are times when one is liable to bring one sin-offering for all of his transgressions together, and there are times when one is liable to bring a sin-offering for each and every transgression.

Here the rabbis speak of one committing a sin in error, and the bringing of a sin offering according to the instructions laid out here in the book of Leviticus. God established the sacrificial system so that His covenant people might enjoy His fellowship through worship; this system also allowed for repentance, renewal, restoration, and forgiveness.

Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4-5 states the following, וְסָמַךְ יָדוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ הָעֵלָה וְנִרְצָה לוֹ לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו: ה' וְשָׁחַט אֶת-בֶּן הַבָּקָר לְפָנָי יְהוָה וְהִקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת-הַדָּם וְזָרְקוּ אֶת-הַדָּם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב אֲשֶׁר-פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: 1:4 'He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. 1:5 'He shall slay the young bull before the Lord; and Aaron's sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar (NASB) We are told when an Israelite worshiper laid his hand on the animal, he identified himself with the animal as his substitute. This accomplished a symbolic transfer of his sin and his guilt to the animal by faith. The Lord God then accepted the slaughter of the animal as paying the cost for the sin that had occurred. The Talmud describes a

situation where one may bring one sacrifice for all of one's transgressions. It was many years later (1400 years after Israel left Egypt) that Yeshua came as God's Messiah, Deliverer, Redeemer, and Savior who offered himself in our place to make atonement for sin. The overall message of Leviticus is sanctification. This book communicates a message of receiving God's forgiveness and acceptance to the one who comes before Him seeking these things according to His Word. One goes before God in Teshuvah (Repentance) and what follows is holy living and spiritual growth. Because Israel has been delivered from bondage, brought to the mountain of God, enter into a covenant relationship with God by faith, they are then purified into a people worthy of their God. This is how Moshe describes God's people according to *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:2* "*You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.*" This fantastic book on the grace and love of God details for us how the Lord God of Israel wants to be approached, but we must do so on His terms.

The commentary Chizkuni states the following on *Vayikra / Leviticus 4:2*:

Chizkuni, Vayikra / Leviticus 4:2 Part 1

כִּי תַחֲטָא בְשִׁגְגָה, "if you transgress a law inadvertently; sin offerings as a form of atonement are acceptable only when that sin had not been committed deliberately. Deliberately committed sins cannot be atoned for by that method. [There are some exceptions. Ed.]

Notice how the interpretation here is that sin offerings are required when an individual commits a sin against God unintentionally. This comes right from the text (ב דִּבְרֵי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר נֶפֶשׁ כִּי-תַחֲטָא) (בְּשִׁגְגָה מִכָּל מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲשִׂינָהּ וְעָשָׂה מֵאַחַת מֵהֵנָּה: with the Hebrew word שִׁגְגָה meaning "*unintentional transgression.*" The Torah does not provide an offering for sin that was committed intentionally. This is consistent with the author of the book of *Hebrews 10:26* *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 10:27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 10:28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses*

dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 10:29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? (ESV) This is a significant point from the Torah and the Apostolic Writings regarding repentance before God. The Torah text describes different sin offerings for different people. For example, a bull for the priest or the elders, a male goat for the ruler and a female goat or female lamb for an individual who sins. The Torah states the following:

Vayikra / Leviticus 4:4

ד וְהֵבִיא אֶת-הַפָּר אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְסָמַךְ
אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ הַפָּר וְשָׁחַט אֶת-הַפָּר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: 4:4 *'He shall bring the bull to the doorway of the tent of meeting before the Lord, and he shall lay his hand on the head of the bull and slay the bull before the Lord.*

The text describes how a sinner must place his hands upon the animal as it is slaughtered. Its blood is dabbed on the horns of the altar, and what remains is poured on the base of the sacrificial altar. In the case of the bull-offerings, the blood is also sprinkled towards the curtain of the Holy of Holies. The innards of the animal are then burnt upon the altar, and what remains of the animal is burned outside the camp. By this the priest makes atonement on behalf of the sinner and he receives atonement and is forgiven. Sin offerings are required when an individual commits a sin against God unintentionally. The Torah points out in some cases, such as contact with impure objects or inadvertently broken vows, the precise make-up of the sin offering varies. In addition, the sin offering is also based upon a persons wealth, for example, a wealthy man brings a female sheep or goat, a poorer individual may bring a bird, while a truly destitute person can bring a grain offering. When a sin is committed by the entire community, the Torah directs the elders to bring their offering for their community which reinforces the unity of the people by demonstrating each person is collectively responsible for the other.

The guilt offers on the other hand are for specific transgressions

such as violating the sanctity of God's altar, a breach of trust, of when one is unsure of whether he has sinned (*Vayikra / Leviticus 5:17*) or which sin he has committed. The Asham (guilt) offering consists of the ram offering. In the case of theft, restitution must be made and adding a fifth to the value of what was stolen; this must be completed before an offering can be brought to the Lord. Notice how this is consistent with what Yeshua taught in *Matthew 5:24*.

What we are being provided here in the opening chapters of the Torah is related to the theme of the holiness of God's people. When we study the Apostolic Writings, we see these themes of holiness being extended to God's people today. The Apostle Peter in *1 Peter 1:15-16* cites *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:2* when he states "*like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'*" Notice how this is consistent with the Torah in the sense that those who are redeemed by the grace of God offer sacrifices unto God. Paul wrote one example may be that we offer our bodies as living sacrifices unto God. (*Romans 12:1*) According to the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua offered himself as the perfect sacrifice on our behalf, taking the punishment we deserved, just as we see in the animal sacrifices according to the book of Leviticus. The people of the day placed their trust in God and their faith in the sacrifice of atonement. Today we place our trust in God and our faith in the sacrifice of atonement, Yeshua the Messiah. Placing our faith in God's Messiah we enter into a covenant relationship and become God's children. As His children He wants us to reflect His character. He sanctifies us much like he did the nation of Israel as is being described here in the text. In a sense, the sacrifices were a foreshadow of the Messiah of God. They direct us to what was to come, a future expectation of God's chosen one.

Vayikra / Leviticus 4:1-12, 5:1-13

4:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 4:2 'Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a person sins unintentionally in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them, 4:3 if the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to the Lord a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed. 4:4 'He shall bring the bull to the doorway

of the tent of meeting before the Lord, and he shall lay his hand on the head of the bull and slay the bull before the Lord. 4:5 'Then the anointed priest is to take some of the blood of the bull and bring it to the tent of meeting, 4:6 and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. 4:7 'The priest shall also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense which is before the Lord in the tent of meeting; and all the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 4:8 'He shall remove from it all the fat of the bull of the sin offering: the fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat which is on the entrails, 4:9 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys 4:10 (just as it is removed from the ox of the sacrifice of peace offerings), and the priest is to offer them up in smoke on the altar of burnt offering. 4:11 'But the hide of the bull and all its flesh with its head and its legs and its entrails and its refuse, 4:12 that is, all the rest of the bull, he is to bring out to a clean place outside the camp where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

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5:1 'Now if a person sins after he hears a public adjuration to testify when he is a witness, whether he has seen or otherwise known, if he does not tell it, then he will bear his guilt. 5:2 'Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean beast or the carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things, though it is hidden from him and he is unclean, then he will be guilty. 5:3 'Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever sort his uncleanness may be with which he becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty. 5:4 'Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty in one of these. 5:5 'So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. 5:6

'He shall also bring his guilt offering to the Lord for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin. 5:7 'But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the Lord his guilt offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. 5:8 'He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer first that which is for the sin offering and shall nip its head at the front of its neck, but he shall not sever it. 5:9 'He shall also sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar: it is a sin offering. 5:10 'The second he shall then prepare as a burnt offering according to the ordinance. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it will be forgiven him. 5:11 'But if his means are insufficient for two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then for his offering for that which he has sinned, he shall bring the tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not put oil on it or place incense on it, for it is a sin offering. 5:12 'He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as its memorial portion and offer it up in smoke on the altar, with the offerings of the Lord by fire: it is a sin offering. 5:13 'So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin which he has committed from one of these, and it will be forgiven him; then the rest shall become the priest's, like the grain offering.' (NASB)

א וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב דִּבֶּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר
נִפְשׁ כִּי-תִחַטָּא בְּשִׁגְגָה מִכָּל מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲשִׂינָהּ וְעָשָׂה
מֵאַחַת מֵהֵנָּה: ג אִם הִכְהִין הַמְּשִׁיחַ יִחַטָּא לְאַשְׁמַת הָעָם וְהִקְרִיב
עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא פֶּר-בֶּן-בְּקָר תָּמִים לַיהוָה לְחַטָּאת: ד וְהֵבִיא
אֶת-הַפֶּר אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְסָמָךְ אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ הַפֶּר
וְשָׁח אֶת-הַפֶּר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: ה וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַמְּשִׁיחַ מִדָּם הַפֶּר וְהֵבִיא
אֹתוֹ אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ו וְטָבַל הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-אֶצְבָּעוֹ בְּדָם וְהִזָּה מִן-הַדָּם
שָׁבַע פְּעָמִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶת-פָּנָיו פְּרִכָת הַקֹּדֶשׁ: ז וְנָתַן הַכֹּהֵן מִן-
הַדָּם עַל-קַרְנוֹת מִזְבֵּחַ קִטְרֵת הַסַּמִּים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
וְאֵת | כָּל-דָּם הַפֶּר יִשְׂפֹךְ אֶל-יְסוּד מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה אֲשֶׁר-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד: ח וְאֵת-כָּל-חֶלֶב פֶּר הַחַטָּאת יָרִים מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת-הַחֶלֶב הַמְּכֻסָּה

על-הקרב ואת כל-החלב אשר על-הקרב: ט ואת שתי הפלית
ואת-החלב אשר עליהן אשר על-הכסלים ואת-היתרת על-הכבד
על-הפליות יסירנה: י כֹּאֲשֶׁר יוֹרֵם מִשׁוֹר זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים וְהַקְטִירִם
הִפְּהוּ עַל מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה: יא וְאֶת-עוֹר הַפָּר וְאֶת-כָּל-בָּשָׂרוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ
וְעַל-כַּרְעֵיו וְקִרְבּוֹ וּפְרָשׁוֹ: יב וְהוֹצִיא אֶת-כָּל-הַפֶּר אֶל-מַחוּץ
לַמִּחֲנֶה אֶל-מְקוֹם טְהוֹר אֶל-שַׁפָּף הַדָּשָׁן וְשָׂרַף אֹתוֹ עַל-עֵצִים בְּאֵשׁ
עַל-שַׁפָּף הַדָּשָׁן יִשְׂרָף:

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א וּנְפֹשׁ כִּי-תִחַטָּא וְשָׁמְעָה קוֹל אֱלֹהִים וְהוּא עַד אוֹ רָאָה אוֹ יָדַע
אִם-לוֹא יִגִּיד וְנָשָׂא עֲוֹנוֹ: ב אוֹ נֶפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תִּגַּע בְּכָל-דְּבַר טְמֵא אוֹ
בְּנִבְלַת חַיָּה טְמֵאָה אוֹ בְּנִבְלַת בְּהֵמָה טְמֵאָה אוֹ בְּנִבְלַת שָׂרִץ טְמֵאָה
וְנִעְלָם מִמֶּנּוּ וְהוּא טְמֵא וְאָשִׁם: ג אוֹ כִּי יִגַּע בְּטְמֵאֹת אָדָם לְכָל
טְמֵאָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִטְמָא בָּהּ וְנִעְלָם מִמֶּנּוּ וְהוּא יָדַע וְאָשִׁם: ד אוֹ נֶפֶשׁ כִּי
תִּשָׁבַע לְבַטָּא בְּשִׁפְתָיִם לְהִרְעוֹ | אוֹ לְהִיטִיב לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִבְטֵא הָאָדָם
בְּשִׁבְעָה וְנִעְלָם מִמֶּנּוּ וְהוּא יָדַע וְאָשִׁם לְאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה: ה וְהִיָּה כִּי-
יֵאָשֵׁם לְאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה וְהִתְוֹדָה אֲשֶׁר חָטָא עָלֶיהָ: ו וְהִבִּיא אֶת-אֲשָׁמוֹ
לִיהוָה עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא נִקְבָּה מִן-הַצֹּאֵן כְּשִׁבָּה אוֹ-שִׁעִירַת עֲזִים
לְחַטָּאת וְכֹפֶר עָלָיו הִפְּהוּ מִחַטָּאתוֹ: ז וְאִם-לֹא תִגִּיעַ יָדוֹ דֵּי שָׂה
וְהִבִּיא אֶת-אֲשָׁמוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא שְׁתֵּי תָרִים אוֹ-שְׁנֵי בָנִי-יוֹנֶה לִיהוָה אֶחָד
לְחַטָּאת וְאֶחָד לְעֹלָה: ח וְהִבִּיא אֹתָם אֶל-הַפֶּהוּ וְהִקְרִיב אֶת-אֲשֶׁר
לְחַטָּאת רֹאשׁוֹנָה וּמִלֵּק אֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ מִמּוֹל עָרְפוֹ וְלֹא יִבְדִּיל: ט וְהִזָּה
מִדָּם הַחַטָּאת עַל-קִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהִנְשָׂאָר בְּדָם יִמְצָה אֶל-יְסוֹד הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
חַטָּאת הוּא: י וְאֶת-הַשְּׁנֵי יַעֲשֶׂה עֹלָה כַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְכֹפֶר עָלָיו הִפְּהוּ מִחַ-
טָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-חָטָא וְנִסְלַח לוֹ: ס [שְׁבִיעִי] יא וְאִם-לֹא תִשָּׂיג יָדוֹ
לְשְׁתֵּי תָרִים אוֹ לְשְׁנֵי בָנִי-יוֹנֶה וְהִבִּיא אֶת-קֶרְבָּנוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא עֲשִׂירַת
הָאָפֶה סֶלֶת לְחַטָּאת לֹא-יֵשִׁים עָלֶיהָ שָׁמֶן וְלֹא-יִתֵּן עָלֶיהָ לְבִנָּה כִּי
חַטָּאת הוּא: יב וְהִבִּיאָהּ אֶל-הַפֶּהוּ וְקִמֵּץ הִפְּהוּ | מִמֶּנָּה מְלֹא קִמְצוֹ
אֶת-אֲזִכְרֹתָהּ וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַל אֲשֵׁי יְהוָה חַטָּאת הוּא: יג וְכֹפֶר
עָלָיו הִפְּהוּ עַל-חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-חָטָא מֵאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה וְנִסְלַח לוֹ וְהִיָּתָה
לְכַהֵן כַּמִּנְחָה: ס

In the list describing the Asham (guilt) offering, the rabbis call this paragraph from *Vayikra / Leviticus 5* the “ascending or descending” meaning that the reason of sin or guilt is why one is bringing a offering. This portion of the text describes the one knowing about his sin as opposed to unknowingly sinning (*Vayikra / Leviticus 5:17*), in either case one is guilty of sin. The ascending and

descending is in reference to this aspect of whether one knows about his guilt before God in his heart and how that is demonstrated by his response to God's Word. This is a very important concept for understanding the sacrifices were not meant as a means to earn salvation, a doctrine that is so prevalent in the Law-vs-Grace theologies of today. In Hebraic thought, the heart , לב is the centre of the will and of the rational faculties. Often לב can be translated as "mind" or "brain." The חכמה "wisdom" describes the activities of the Hebrew "heart" which in modern times in English is translated as "intelligence." In the widest sense of the word חכמה "wisdom" refers to both Emotional quotient (EQ) and intelligence quotient (IQ). These words in the Hebrew Bible (לב and חכמה) are related to the one who knows he has sinned, he has become guilty before God, this becomes known in his heart and the sinner responds to God's Word. In *Vayikra / Leviticus 5* on the guilt offerings discuss how the value of the offering is on a sliding scale meaning the cost for the sacrifice is adjusted according to the economic circumstances of the person who is bringing the offering.

In addition to these things, we read the following from *Or HaChaim on Vayikra / Leviticus 4:2 Part 4*:

Or HaChaim on Vayikra / Leviticus 4:2 Part 4

A moral-ethical meaning of the term נפש as used in this paragraph may be the following. The soul of a human being becomes defective when its owner has sinned intentionally. This is why sinners are referred to as "dead" even while they are still "alive," as we know from Ezekiel 18,32: "for G'd does not desire the death of the dead, etc." The sinner is referred to by the prophet as dead already seeing he no longer has a soul. Solomon refers to something similar in Proverbs 23,2 "if you are someone possessed of a נפש, soul." Our verse tells us that even sins committed inadvertently result in damage to one's soul. While it is true that such inadvertently committed sins do not destroy the soul completely, nonetheless the Torah requires a sin-offering in order for the damage to that soul to be

repaired. The offering of that קרבן, the sacrifice whose purpose it is to re-establish the affinity of the soul with its origin, enables the diseased soul to be infused with the spiritual values which will heal its wounds. The same result cannot be achieved if someone who had sinned intentionally were to offer such a sacrifice seeing he had already forfeited his soul. There is nothing left that can be reconstituted until the sinner repented and experienced the beneficial effect of the Day of Atonement, as pointed out by Ezekiel 18,32 והשיבו והזיו, “when you return and cause others to return so that you may live.”

Here the commentary Or HaChaim describes the soul that sins is dead. The rabbis connect this to the moral-ethical meaning of the term נפש (soul) and the soul becoming defective when one sins. This Jewish idea that one becomes dead when one sins is found throughout the New Testament. The interpretation on one becoming the living-dead is based upon the Scriptures, *Ezekiel 18,32: “for G’d does not desire the death of the dead...”* is very interesting. This is coupled to the guilt offering in the sense on whether one knowingly sins, or unknowingly sins, Oh HaChaim goes on to interpret saying, *“the Torah requires a sin-offering in order for the damage to that soul to be repaired. The offering of that קרבן, the sacrifice whose purpose it is to re-establish the affinity of the soul with its origin, enables the diseased soul to be infused with the spiritual values which will heal its wounds. The same result cannot be achieved if someone who had sinned intentionally were to offer such a sacrifice seeing he had already forfeited his soul. There is nothing left that can be reconstituted until the sinner repented and experienced the beneficial effect of the Day of Atonement.”* Notice how if there was an intentional sin, only Teshuvah (Repentance) allows one to receive atonement from the sacrifice. This draws the conclusion that without repentance, there is no forgiveness of sins. Coupled to this interpretation, we read the following from *Daat Zkenim on Vayikra / Leviticus 4:2 Part 1.*

Daat Zkenim on Vayikra / Leviticus 4:2 Part 1

נפש כי תחטא בשגגה, “if someone commits a sin inadvertently;” it is noteworthy that the verse does not commence with the word: אדם, “a human being,” as it does in Genesis chapter one verse two, where it describes someone feeling the urge to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. When the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 18,4, writes about the same subject, he too commences by referring to the subject as נפש, i.e. the animalistic part of our soul. The point that is being made in both these verses is that a sin can only be the product of the animalistic life force in our body, not the spiritual part that G-d blew into Adam’s nostrils when the result was his becoming a human being, אדם. (Compare Genesis 2,7 where he is then described as נפש חיה, “a living creature,” not just as נפש.) The creature described as נפש, is by definition mortal, as is clear from the verse quoted from Ezekiel 18,4, where the prophet concludes with the word: תמות, “it is bound to die...”

Notice how Daat Zkenim writes about the part of us that causes us to sin. He is contrasting the flesh and the spirit. The flesh sins whereas the spirit wants to do the things of God. Notice the parallels to the Apostle Paul in *Romans 7*. Rereading *Romans 7*, Paul writes about four laws, (i) the law of the flesh, (ii) the law of sin and death, (iii) the law of the spirit, and (iv) the law of God. He parallels the law of the flesh to the law of sin and death (i) and (ii), respectively, and the law of the spirit to the law of God (iii) and (iv), respectively. We can see here the rabbinic parallels to Paul’s teaching style in the book of Romans.

One of the most important points that is being brought out in this week’s study is on the bringing of a sacrifice due to various sins. These words in the opening chapter of the book of Vayikra / Leviticus are designated for a covenant people. Having the Spirit of God dwelling in their midst, when one unwittingly sins he is to bring the prescribed sacrifice. When one willingly sins, he is to repent first

and determine not to repeat his sin, then he is to bring the appropriate sacrifice before the Lord to receive forgiveness. The sacrifices were a means to draw near to the Lord God of Israel. We are also told in the book of Hebrews that the blood of bulls and goats never took away sins. (*Hebrews 10:4*) This is an important interpretation because of what we are reading here in the book of Leviticus, the priest will make atonement on behalf of the sinner and the sinner will receive forgiveness. Notice how in the Hebrew text, the focus is shifted to the priest, to the one who makes atonement on behalf of the sinner. This is what the author of the book of Hebrews is showing us shifting the focus off of the sacrifice to the one who makes atonement, the high priest.

Hebrews 10:10-18

10:10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 10:11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 10:12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, 10:13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. 10:15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, 10:16 'This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write them,' He then says, 10:17 'And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' 10:18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin. (NASB)

Notice how here we read the author of the book of Hebrews shifting the emphasis off of the sacrifice to the one who makes atonement. This is consistent with the opening chapters of the book of Vayikra / Leviticus.

Vayikra / Leviticus 5:13

5:13 So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin which he has committed from one of these, and it will be forgiven him; then the rest shall become the priest's, like the grain offering. (NASB, יג וְכֹפֵר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן עַל-הַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-הִטָּא מֵאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה וְנִסְלַח לוֹ וְהִיְתָה לַכֹּהֵן כַּמִּנְחָה:

The text states “*So the priest shall make atonement for him*” making clear who it is that is making atonement. The sinner is not making atonement for himself. This tears down the Law-vs-Grace theologies demonstrating a proper understanding of the Scriptures brings proper interpretation and doctrine! This is what we see happening here in *Vayikra / Leviticus 5:13*, the priest making atonement for the sinner concerning his sin. This answers some questions we may have concerning what Paul did according to *Acts 21* and his making a sin offering in the Temple in Jerusalem after having put his faith in Yeshua many years prior. Paul made a Nazarite vow on his way back to Jerusalem and brought the prescribed sacrifices as we read according to *Acts 21:23-26*. In *Acts 21*, Paul made the vow of the Nazarite (see *Acts 21:23, and Bamidbar / Numbers 6:1*). According to the requirements laid out in the Torah the individual taking this vow would voluntarily give up wine, grapes, raisins, haircuts, and going near dead bodies (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:3-6*). According to the Scriptures and rabbinic tradition, the minimum amount of time for a nazarite vow was 30 days. To conclude his vow he was to bring a one year old lamb and one ram (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:14*). One was also required to bring food, grain, and drink offerings (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:15*). Then the priest would offer his sin offering before the Lord (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:16*). Afterwards, the man would shave his head and offer this on the fire (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:18*). The Nazirite would receive back some of the sacrifice (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:19*). The remainder of the sacrifice was then presented as a “*wave offering*” before God (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:20*). The list of sacrifices given to us according to the book of *Bamidbar / Numbers 6* touches on what we have been studying here in the book of Vayikra / Leviticus. In completing the vow of a Nazarite one was to bring a whole burnt offering,

a sin offering, a peace offering, and an offering of unleavened bread. Many Christian commentaries have much difficulty with Paul having the priest in the Temple perform a sin sacrifice after he had placed his faith in Yeshua, and their quandary (a state of perplexity or uncertainty) is based upon *Hebrews 10*. When the Apostle Paul completed the vow of a Nazarite, he brought these offerings and he did these things many years after his new found faith in Yeshua the Messiah. Today we are taught that the sacrifices at the temple were replaced by Yeshua. If this is the case, what was Paul doing bringing these sacrifices to the Lord at the Temple? This difficulty can be easily resolved by understanding one's salvation is found within the covenant relationship which is entered into by faith. We are told the blood of bulls and goats did not remove sin, therefore the idea of spiritual cleansing was something that was a work of God and not something that was efficacious by our hands. We had studied earlier in [Parashat Vayakhel](#) on the words עֲבוֹדָה and מְלָאכָה referencing work in the Torah. We learned that we do not set our hand to a salvific work. Salvation is a work of God and that the Sabbath rest supersedes both the physical and the spiritual constructions. This leads us to understand how the Sacrifices were a part of being in a covenant relationship with God. They were not a part of entering into a covenant relationship with God. (Remember the Lord said *"I desire mercy and not sacrifice"* [6,1 Samuel 15:22](#), [Hosea 6:6](#), [Matthew 9:13](#)) What we are learning here is how the Sacrifices in the opening chapters of Vayikra / Leviticus area a future expectation of the one who would come and make atonement on our behalf. This is what we see taking place in [Vayikra / Leviticus 5:13](#). The sacrifices in the Temple (Tabernacle) are related to the differences between the cleansing of the body verses the cleansing of spirit and soul. This was what Daat Zkenim is trying to sort out according to His commentary on the Sacrifice of atonement and the soul. The Torah does not teach us that man is able to make himself spiritually clean, this is a salvific work of God. The purpose of the purity laws and those regarding what is clean and unclean is to train us to separate ourselves from the world, to make a distinction between what we should and should not be doing. We are holy because God has made us holy and thus calls us to live holy lives. How do these things fit with the modern theologies of today teaching on Yeshua the Messiah? The Scriptures say that we are sanctified in

Him. This is true! The book of Hebrews is emphasizing the importance of the Messiah who came to make atonement on our behalf. *Hebrews 10* does not do away with the blood of bulls and goats as a sacrifice of atonement if we were to go to the Temple in Jerusalem (if it were rebuilt). The Sacrifices coupled to the High Priest function as a future expectation testifying of the finished work of Yeshua the Messiah. This is how Paul was continuing in the Temple service under the vow of a Nazarite, and the connection to physical impurity. If the Temple was rebuilt, one would need to follow the Torah prescribed method for purification if one wanted to go before the Lord in His Temple. If one did not do as the Scriptures state, one would be sinning before God. Note also that physical impurity does not prevent us from seeking the Lord in prayer and His hearing our prayers. We have access to our Father in His Son, Yeshua the Messiah. As can be seen here according to the study, this is a very complex topic, but yet we are able to understand all of these things as Yeshua, his death, burial, and resurrection, as not doing away with God's word according to the book of Vayikra / Leviticus. The book of Hebrews states that we do have a better sacrifice in the Messiah of God. This emphasis is upon our faith in the One whom God had sent, leading us to understand that our salvific work is of God, and we as a covenant people respond to God's Word and doing so demonstrates how we have God's Spirit dwelling within us, in our hearts. This is how the Torah and the Gospel Message go hand in hand!