

VAY'YIKRA – “AND HE CALLED”

LEVITICUS (VAY'YIKRA) 1:1 – 5:26

INTRODUCTION

1. The oldest name for this book is *Torat Ha’Kohenim* – Instructions for the priests.
 - a. The function of the priesthood and duties of priestly Nation i.e. Israel.
 - b. *Vay’yikra* is derived from the first word of the first verse.
 - c. Leviticus is derived from the Septuagint.
2. One half of this book deals with sacrifices and accompanying laws.
 - a. The other half deals with holiness and sanctification of life.
 - b. Almost completely devoid of narrative.
3. Chapters 1 – 4 form a manual of the ritual of sacrifice for the average citizen.
 - a. Deals, for the most part, with *voluntary*, private sacrifices.
 - b. Sacrifice not explained but pre-supposed.
 - c. Familiar to everyone and, like prayer, was an expression of devotion to one’s god.
 - d. Admittedly, hard for man to grasp function and purpose of sacrifice rationally.
 - e. Can’t understand why slaughter and burning of animal and its blood invite Presence.
 - f. Is it possible reasons are so profound that it escapes our comprehension?
 - g. Did God NEED those sacrifices? Has He a bloodlust? No, He is for life.
 - h. Actually, they remind us of His mercy that the animal is permitted to substitute.
 - i. Thus, the magnitude of Y’shua’s sacrifice.
4. With very few exceptions, deliberate sin is excluded from the sphere of sacrifice.
 - a. In all cases repentance and restitution must precede the sacrificial act.
 - b. This truly accentuates the work of the Messiah – He is our sacrifice.
5. Nevertheless, many lessons learned from these different sacrifices, for example:
 - *Olah* (burnt offering) expresses complete surrender to God’s will.
 - *Shalamim* (peace offering) expresses gratitude for His mercy.
 - *Chatat* (sin offering) demonstrates sorrow of the error.
 - *Asham* (guilt offering) acknowledges guilt of the error.
6. In one regard these offerings act as tutors and tutors prepare you for the test (real thing).
 - a. Thus, we shouldn’t take position that this is not for us – we are priests.
 - b. Sacrificial system was to teach us about presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” - Romans 12:1-2

- c. Blood symbolized the seat of life – man’s soul was to be poured out.
 - d. The innards were to be burned representing the need to purge everything from within.
 - e. Cut in pieces suggesting every “piece” of us should surrender to His will.
 - f. God gives life and man is to devote his life to God.
7. If we don’t learn how complete this is to be, will we be ready for the test that surely comes?
 - a. Specifically, can we hope to be those who overcome, who didn’t love their lives?

8. Obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22).
9. After Adam sinned, animals became the agent of sacrifice (Gen. 3)
 - a. Adam would bring an offering; Abel continued this practice.
 - b. After the Flood (man's failure), Noah brought an offering.
 - c. When Abraham was chosen (after more failure), he brought an offering.
 - d. Each time God revealed Himself to man initiating a new beginning, an offering.
10. Revelation at Mt Sinai signified a new era after more failure.
 - a. Israel experienced something that recalls what things were like with Adam.
 - b. God was in the midst of them.
 - c. Offerings were brought.
11. This is how things continued and there was even more failure.
 - a. Another offering was brought – this time it was Messiah Y'shua, the "last Adam."
12. Coming as a bondservant, He makes it possible for us to be "temples" of Holy Spirit.
 - a. We are waiting for the "completion" that is, when we behold His Glory.
 - b. When we see Him as He is – mortal puts on immortality.
 - c. Thus everything comes full circle and we can, like Adam, behold Him face to face.

CHAPTER 1: THE BURNT OFFERING

1. Verse 1: "**And** the LORD called" – v': there is a close connection with this book and Shemot.
 - a. Last Torah portion records completion of Sanctuary.
 - b. The *mishkan* was culmination of His desire to "dwell in them."
 - c. It was completed - מלא milah – when *sh'kinah* rested in the *mishkan*.
 - d. Was to indicate the revelation received at Sinai would continue with them.
 - e. The Psalmist wrote:

"The Lord is among them (as in) Sinai, in the Holy (Place)." – Psalm 68:17

2. Opening of *Vay'yikra* describes instructions concerning sacrifice and priestly duties.
 - a. What they must do to sustain what had been attained – God among them.
 - b. He is holy and they must approach him in holiness.
 - c. The way they were to maintain this status was the sacrificial system.
3. According to ancient regulation, א *alef* of ויקרא *vay'yikra* is miniature.
 - a. In ancient times written in continuous row, so words that ended and started in same letter often shared the letter.
 - b. Later, when both written, the letter not originally there is written smaller.
4. Verse 1: "spoke to him from tent of meeting": before *mishkan*, had to go to Sinai.
5. Verse 2: "When any man" means even heathen could bring burnt offering if so inclined.
 - a. A man's faith, not his genealogy is what God considers.
 - b. The word "man" is not what would be expected – יש ish – but אדם *adam*.
 - a. Intended to put us in mind of Adam.
6. The *haftarah* says:

"Your first father sinned..." – Isaiah 43:27

 - a. referring to Adam.
7. What is being conveyed by the use of אדם *adam*?
 - a. Adam was placed in the garden to "work" and "guard."

8. Considering the garden functioned as first earthly sanctuary:
 - Eden (court)
 - Garden (holy place)
 - Midst of Garden (Holy of holies)
9. Would imply Adam was priest.
 - a. Before the fall, Adam didn't eat by the sweat of his brow; food was present.
 - b. What was his work? Minister unto the Most High.
 - c. Consider Aaron and sons didn't plow, sow and reap to eat – offerings.
10. Adam's work was as priest (to walk holy) and to guard that entrusted to him.
 - a. לעבדה *l'avdah* (to work) synonymous with עבדה *avodah* (service) of Temple.
 - b. Root עבד is also *eved*, which is “servant” or “bondservant.”
 - c. His work was to be a bondservant.
11. Bondservant was someone who had determined to serve master because of love.

“But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free.’ ” - Exodus 21:5

- a. He serves master forever meaning no longer concerned for welfare.
- b. In fact, he is becoming a son.
12. This is to say that the use of Adam is suggesting that Adam's mission was be an offering.
 - a. Thus, when any *adam* brings an offering, it is as if he is offering himself.
 - b. “Living sacrifice” of Romans 12:1.
13. He negates himself and seeks to please God by offering Him what He truly wants – heart.
 - a. As a bondservant, he chooses to serve his Master because he loves Him.
 - b. Great command: Love the LORD your God with your heart ...”
 - c. He will follow all His commands because of this love.
 - d. The animal was secondary; it was emblematic of what the worshipper feels.

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire; my ears you have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering you did not require. Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart.’”

– Psalm 40:6-8

14. Offering first mentioned is voluntary, distinct from the one's required described later.
 - a. The word is קרבן *korban*: - that which is “brought near” to God.
 - b. That is the purpose of the offering – to get closer to God.
 - c. Interesting the name YHVH used exclusively in connection to sacrifices.
 - d. No other title like *Elohim* (denoting judgment) is used.
 - e. It is NOT for God's benefit: not to satisfy a taste for blood and satiate His anger.
 - f. It is for our benefit.
15. God doesn't need our cattle, flocks or fowl – He owns cattle on a thousand hills.
 - a. God made provision to dwell among them; would they surrender to draw near?
 - b. God had made sacrifice to be among them – lamb slain from foundation of world.
16. *Korban* hints at “calling a son” – קראh *karah* בן *ben*.
 - a. Voluntary offering is medium by which man attains nearness to God.
17. It must come from the “herd” or “flock” meaning domestic animals were the only ones valid.

- a. Wild animals, which cost nothing, are excluded.
 - b. Domesticated animals do not prey on other creatures and don't live by killing.
 - c. Because it was symbolic of the sword, iron not used in building of Sanctuary.
 - d. Likewise animals associated with violence disqualified.
 - e. Footnote: Tubal-Cain first maker of iron weapons – i.e. associated with serpent's seed.
18. Verse 3: burnt offering (עלה *olah*) is "that which ascends."
- a. Complete submission to God because entire animal was burnt on altar (except hide).
 - b. This is the oldest and most common type of sacrifice.
 - c. Could be brought by Israeli and heathen alike.
 - d. If person felt estranged from God, could VOLUNTARILY bring his sacrifice.
 - e. Because communion with God impossible if there is sin, it had an expiatory effect.
19. עלה *olah* is related to עליה *aliyah*, (one who ascends); those who ascend hill of the LORD:
- Must have "clean hands (palms) and a pure (בר *bar*) heart." – heart of a son (*korban*).
 - Must totally submit themselves to Him.
 - Offer themselves as living sacrifice, holy and acceptable" (Rom 12:1).
 - The feet symbolize the hands and feet of man – committing sinful acts.
20. The sacrifices could be taken from the herd, flock or from fowls.
- a. Indicating that God doesn't look to the cost but the spirit in which it is offered.
 - b. Yet, does acknowledge that some have more and some have less.
 - c. Prescribes offerings that are to accommodate those with less.
 - d. But those with more who gave as those who have less is revealing their heart.
 - e. Thus, their offering would be disqualified – not due to cost, but intent of heart.
 - f. It again comes back to being a matter of heart.
 - g. Some can't see beyond the nuts and bolts, the blood and ritual.
21. Person would bring an offering "without blemish" – anything less is unacceptable.
- a. Again, Romans 12:1 speaks to this – "holy and acceptable" is our "reasonable service."
 - b. To the entrance of the Sanctuary, inside the Court.
22. This command centralizes and attains unity of worship.
- a. i.e. people could not themselves determine where or how to present gift.
 - b. Even Greek philosopher Plato saw danger of lack of unity in worship.
 - c. Would result in private temples with every superstition running rampant.
 - d. Something this important can't be left to discretion of individual (pastor or no).
 - e. Unity of worship prescribed here speaks to one point made by James in Acts 15.
 - f. Abstention from the pollution of idols – we are not permitted to determine the place.
23. "That he may be accepted before the LORD" – his offering may be received by the LORD.
- a. If you're going to do it, then do it the right way.
 - b. This reminds us of what God spoke to Cain after his offering rejected.

"So the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.' " – Genesis 4:6-7

24. Verse 4: "Lay his hand" on the sacrifice; Hebrew is שָׁמַח *samakh* – "lean, take hold, support."
- a. Indicating that the animal was substituting for the one offering the animal.
 - b. Related to *sm'ikhah* "ordination" e.g. Moses placing hands on Joshua (Num. 27:23).
 - c. During this process prayer and confession was occurring.

d. Without it the offering was pointless because:

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.” – Proverbs 15:8

25. “To make atonement for him” is כָּפַר *khapher* “to cover” but also “to purge,” “to restore.”

a. In English, “atone” originally meant “to set at one”; now, “to make amends.”

26. Verse 5: “He shall kill” that is the person bringing the offering.

a. Word is שַׁחַט *shachat* from which we get *shechitah*.

b. Not put to death, but slaughter yet in swift, painless way; maximum effusion of blood.

c. Blood is received by priest and taken to altar.

d. The blood, wherein is the life, is given back to God, the lifegiver.

27. This should not be understood to say that God is blood thirsty.

a. It is to say that being the carrier of life (Lev 17:11) it is sacred.

b. It is to be reserved for sacred purposes.

c. Blood on altar was for benefit of worshipper, not for gratification of God.

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”

– Leviticus 17:11

28. Verse 6: “He shall flay” – the person removed the hide because it was not part of offering.

a. Was divided among the priests (cast lots for His garments).

b. Animal was cut into pieces but limbs not broken (none of His bones broken).

c. Flame passed between pieces symbolizing covenant established between God and person offering the animal.

d. Linked to covenant made with Abraham (Gen 15:10).

29. In the garden, *olah* was most likely the result of Adam’s sin.

a. Made them coats of skin to cover their shame (nakedness).

b. Thus skin of offering had to be removed to reveal the “naked” condition of those willing to offer the *olah*.

30. Verse 14: Turtle doves were the poor man’s offering.

a. Most inoffensive of birds; if attacked it never retaliates.

b. It is a symbol of Israel; inferring Israel is not to strike back – God is our defender.

c. Thus, Y’shua instruction to us:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” – Matthew 5:10-12

CHAPTER 2: THE MEAL OFFERING

1. Verse 1: “When any one” – is נֶפֶשׁ *nefesh* or “soul.”

a. It is assumed that only the poorest of people would bring meal offering instead of animal or bird.

b. Poorest of poor focus on one temporal goal – feed my family.

- c. This offering would be representative of what is most important to him.
 - d. So, it is believed, God views this person's offering as if he offered his soul.
 - e. The widow's mite – more than all the offerings because she gave all she had.
 - f. Implying she gave of her heart, not of her means.
2. Meal offering is מנחה *minchah*; not involving the slaughter of an animal.
 - a. Doesn't mean it is less important.
 - b. Two main ingredients – flour and oil – were common food articles.
 - c. Not natural products but as a result of toil.
 - d. Was to typify the consecration of man's work to the service of God.
 - e. This was type of offering Cain offered and it was rejected.
 3. Abel also brought of the “firstlings of his flock” and his *minchah* was accepted.
 - a. Signifying that it was based on the condition of one's heart and spirit it was given.
 4. Verse 2: “memorial part thereof” is understood to be that which was actually placed on altar.
 - a. The Hebrew term denotes, “the best and finest portion.”
 5. Verse 4: unleavened loaves, wafers “smeared with oil.”
 - a. Rabbinical sources say it was smeared in form of CHI or X.
 6. Verse 6: “break it in pieces” these cakes and breads were broken so as to replicate the dissecting of the animal of the burnt offering.
 - a. The worshipper also brought it near to the LORD.
 - b. Of course, we see the resemblance to the *matzah* broken representing Y'shua.
 7. Verse 11: No meal offering brought to the LORD could contain leaven חמץ *chametz*.
 - a. Symbol of fermentation and corruption.
 - b. Sin viewed as moral fermentation.
 8. In pagan cults, honey was considered to be a favorite food of the gods.
 - a. Thus one belief that this prohibition was to free Israel from thinking sacrifices were food to God.
 - b. However, there is reason to consider that דבש *d'vash* here intends to be “fruit.”
 - c. Fruits have “honey- like” sweetness.
 - d. Jewish sources say honey not brought as a first fruit.
 - e. At any rate, they could both be offered as first-fruits but not on altar as sacrifice.
 9. Compare Verse 13: Salt was used with every offering.
 - a. Leaven and honey with none.
 - b. Salt prevents putrefaction while leaven produces it.
 - c. Function of salt is to preserve what is given us; in this context what is offered to God.
 - d. In Sermon on Mount, Y'shua says:

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.” – Matthew 5:13

10. What is our purpose? To preserve – i.e. work and guard what is entrusted to us.
 - a. To propagate the covenant.
11. In ancient times, salt was a sign of friendship; a sign of covenant.
 - a. Salt is a preservative and symbol of everlasting covenant (Num. 18:19).
 - b. The salt was to be offered with all the offerings including the animals.

12. Man's table considered to be an altar, there is custom of dipping bread in salt for the Grace before meals.
13. Considering the sacredness of the table, Acts 15 is relative to this topic.
 - a. As non-Jews were coming into faith, wanted to establish table fellowship.
 - b. *Shulchan* שלחן "table" symbolized altar – must not defile with anything unclean.
 - c. No pollution of idols; no fornication; nothing strangled, no blood.
 - d. Keep in mind had to bring offering to door of tent – where He established.
 - e. Their hearts had to be repentant and dedicated to the One God – no harlotry.
 - f. Had to bring clean offerings and slaughter the proper way.
 - g. Blood was for atonement of soul, not to be devoured.

CHAPTER THREE – PEACE OFFERINGS

1. Verse 1: שלמים *shalamim* is also "thank offerings."
 - a. Given in gratitude (a tribute) for His goodness.
 - b. Wants to be at peace with the Creator.
2. Literally it is "slaughter peace offering" but is rendered often as "feast peace offering."
3. Unlike the burnt offering, only small piece of *shalamim* was burnt on altar.
 - a. The rest, except for priest's portion, was eaten by worshiper, his family and guests.
 - b. Part of a solemn meal which followed the sacrifice.

"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh - who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands - that at that time you were without Messiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Y'shua you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near." - Ephesians 2:11-17

4. Verse 2: Blood was dashed against the altar in the event the worshipper had done anything to render him unworthy to partake of the sacrificial meal.
 - a. It was a rite of purification.
5. This brings to mind Paul's admonition of not eating of Passover unworthily.

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged." - 1Corinthians 11:26-31

6. Verse 11: mentions “food of the (peace) offering” – food is לחם *lechem*, literally bread.
 - a. Primitive meaning of this was “flesh.”
 - b. So interesting, that the bread (*matzah*) we eat is to represent His body (flesh).
7. Verse 17: Fat, as well as blood, not to be eaten.
 - a. Prohibition against blood should be obvious – goes back to beginning.
 - b. Against fat – perhaps because this is where toxins are stored.

CHAPTER FOUR – SIN OFFERING

1. Now come to offerings that were mandatory.
2. Verse 1: Notice it is a “sin through error” – not intentional sin.
 - a. These regulations did not apply when the sin was intentional.
 - b. Animal sacrifice was insufficient if sin was intentional.
 - c. Thus, the question what would atone for intentional sin?
 - d. How was David’s sin with Bathsheva atoned for?
3. Verse 2: Hebrew root for חטאת *chatat* is חטא *chatah* – “to miss the mark.”
4. Verse 3: הכהן המשיח *Ha’cohen ha’mashiach* – anointed priest (High Priest) – if he sins.
 - a. His sin would affect the entire congregation of Israel.
 - b. He would sprinkle blood toward the veil that separated the Holy of Holies.
 - c. The blood of other sacrifices disqualified if brought into Holy Place.
 - d. Meaning that this part of ritual occurred in the Holy Place.
 - e. Certain portion was burned upon the altar.
 - f. But the skin, carcass etc. were taken outside the camp and burned in clean place.
 - g. This was done, not just for his sake, but for the entire nation.
5. Consider that our heavenly High Priest – He who knew no sin – became sin for us.
 - a. He was taken outside the camp.
 - b. Crucifixion occurred on Mt. of Olives; in a sense blood sprinkled toward Temple.
6. The writer of Hebrews tells us:

“But Messiah came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” – Hebrews 9:11-12

7. Verse 22: “When a ruler sins” – Hebrew word is נשיא *nasi* and means “prince of a tribe.”
 - a. This notable person makes a public acknowledgment of sin.
 - b. What would reaction of public be? It would expose THEIR heart.

CHAPTER FIVE – OTHER OFFERINGS INCLUDING GUILT OFFERING

1. Verse 1: Any one with facts that have bearing on a legal situation and keeps silent is guilty.
 - a. The word אלה *alah* suggests that person becomes subject to a curse.
2. Suggests that we are obligated to speak up when we have facts that could affect situation.
 - a. Not talking about slander or gossip but factual information.
 - b. Consider what we should do if someone is headed in dangerous situation.
3. Prophetically, does this suggest we should speak out in regard to אלה *alah*?

- a. In other words, does this hint at being a watchman and its obligations?
- 4. Verse 2 – 3: Coming in contact with unclean things, uncleanness of man etc.
 - a. Must present an (אֲשָׁמָה *asham*) offering.
- 5. Verse 6: Where sin offering expresses inward conciliation, guilt offering deals with the outward effect of the transgression.
- 6. Verse 8: Before the “gift” (*olah*) can be received, the sin offering must be dealt with first.
 - a. Must be reconciled to Creator before God will receive the gift.
 - b. Considering that we are also to “love our neighbor” note words of Y’shua.

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” – Matthew 5:23-24

- 7. Rabbis teach that on Yom Kippur, man’s sins against God are atoned for but sins against fellow man are not atoned for until the offender has made restitution with his fellow.
 - a. Y’shua relates this principle to us in parable:

**“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
- Matthew 6:14-15**

- 8. Verse 14: Guilt offering - אֲשָׁמָה *asham* – like others deals with unintentional sins.
 - a. Unintentionally appropriates to his own use some “holy thing.”
- 9. Verse 21: Commit a trespass against the LORD by dealing falsely with neighbor.
 - a. Anyone hiding fact they have neighbor’s property denies God.
 - b. God is the witness to the situation.
 - c. This is an intentional sin.
 - d. Constitutes robbery – even person intends to replace it (adds 1/5).
- 10. This is considered very serious because first sin to condemn is robbery.
 - a. Cain – robbed his brother of his life.
 - b. His name means “to acquire” – he chose to by force.
 - c. Cain would not respond to invitation to offer with the right heart.