

BIBLE STUDY

3

LEVITICUS

1992

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EGYPT

In the name of  
the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit  
One God, Amen.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

In the book of Exodus, God released His people from the slavery of Pharaoh to lead them through the wilderness towards the heavenly Canaan. The people were in need of God's accompaniment with them through this trip, for He is the Holy One who grants the "Holy life" through His unique holy sacrifice.

The Title of the Book

The Jews called this book "Wayyigra," which is actually the first word of the text. It means "and then He called" (that is, God called Moses). The title "Leviticus" arose only from the

Septuagint translation, since it deals mainly with the role of priests and levities in the rites of the sacrifices, in the laws of purification and in the celebration of feasts. It also announces the consecration of Aaron and his sons. The Jews called it the "Law of Priests," the "Book of Offerings." It is the book of all the people whom God takes care of through His priests.

Characteristics of the Book of Leviticus

- 1. Leviticus is a sequel to Exodus, as the tabernacle was erected, this book came to reveal the nature of common worship (i.e., it is a liturgical book).
- 2. It is a book of holiness. God grants Himself as an inheritance to His people. Through unity with Him they are made holy.
- 3. The epistle to the Hebrews is considered to be a good spiritual commentary on this book. It reveals the path to the Holy One through Christ, who is simultaneously the Priest and the Sacrifice. Thus it connects the sacrifice to the life of sanctity.
- 4. It is the Gospel for the sinners, expressed in the language of forgiveness of their sins through the sacrificial blood (Lev. 17).
- 5. The sanctification of the people goes side by side with the satisfaction of their temporal needs and attention of their clothing, housing, food and drink. God sent to them the spirit of joy through the feasts and seasons.
- 6. It is the book of unity. One community with a single altar and a priesthood from a single tribe (Levites).

The Division of the Book of Leviticus

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Categorization of sacrifices        | Chapters 1-7   |
| Consecration of priests             | Chapters 8-10  |
| Laws of purification                | Chapters 11-15 |
| The day of Atonement                | Chapter 16     |
| The altar and the sanctity of blood | Chapter 17     |
| Laws of sanctification              | Chapters 18-22 |
| Feasts and Vows                     | Chapters 23-27 |

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**Chapter 2**

CATEGORIZATION OF SACRIFICES

Lev. 1 - Lev. 7

Introduction

1. As the sacrifice of the cross was unique concerning it's kind and abilites, it was not possible for one type of sacrifice to cover all of its aspects. Thus, this book presents to us five different sacrifices and oblations.

**The burnt Sacrifice (Holocaust):** A sacrifice of obedience, indicating the obedience and love the Beloved Son offered on our behalf.

**The Oblation:** the communion with God in His Son.

**The Sacrifice of Peace:** the life of internal peace and thanksgiving.

**The Sacrifice of Sin:** constant washing away of our sins and weaknesses.

**The Guilt Offering :** salvation from trespasses we commit.

2. In the sacrifices of blood, the following are offered: cattle, sheep, goats, doves and pigeons.

3. The priesthood became identified with the sacrifices. Sacrificial blood was needed to wash away the sins, but there also had to be an advocate to work on behalf of the church.

4. There was no sacrifice offered against any enemy; all were offered as a reconciliation between God and man.

The Burnt Sacrifice (Holocaust): Leviticus 1

1. This was offered according to the means of the person, from cattle (1:2-9), sheep (1:10-13) or birds (1:14-17).

2. God called Moses to speak to Him before the mercy seat in tranquility. (Exodus 25:22).

3. The holocaust is a sacrifice of devotion and ritual - part of the morning and evening offices of the temple - and also in celebrating feasts and the Sabbaths. It has a peculiar sanctity, for it is the only offering an alien of Israel could not present.

4. The rites of the sacrifice, its aim and its meaning:

+ Holocaust: totally consumed by fire, the total and absolute consumption and absorption of man in the divine love, as the martyrs and ascetics experience.

+ It was offered on behalf of man; an offering of complete and total obedience on the part of the Son, on behalf of every man.

+ A male bull without blemish: Christ without blemish, offered Himself as a Sacrifice to invite the repentants to His table (Luke 15).

+ It is offered outside the door of the tabernacle. Christ was crucified outside the camp (Heb. 13:12,13) and rejected by His own (John 1: 11).

+ It is offered seeking favor: Christ the Beloved Son gave Himself of His own accord.

+ The man offering the sacrifice places his hands on the head of the victim: He becomes one with it and his sins are imputed to it (1 Cor. 6: 17).

+ It is slain before the Lord; outside the camp but before the Lord (Heb. 9: 24; 7:5). Jesus is our Advocate to the Father.

- + The sprinkling of the blood all around on the altar: the blood is the power of the sacrifice (Rev. 7:14; 1 Peter 1:18,19), leading us into eternity (circle). It is a heavenly sacrifice.
  - + Skinning, cutting and washing the sacrifice: Christ, the Victim, came before the Father "nor was any deceit" found in Him (Isa. 53:9; Luke 23:22).
  - + Laying the parts and the head of the victim on the altar: the church shares in the cross of her head "Christ."
  - + Washing of the entrails and legs with water: the work of baptism in our inner lives is connected with the cross.
  - + Its complete combustion: the connection between the sacrifice and the Fiery Holy Spirit, who burns every evil in us and inflames us with love.
  - + It is an offering by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord [1:9]: We do not look at Christ here as the bearer of our sins but as One who obeys the Father, in our name, even unto death; so our lives become through Him a sweet aroma to the Lord.
  - + Let us imitate our Christ by burning our body on the altar of love, offering it without blemish to the Lord as a burnt offering (Rom. 12:1). We offer it through Christ, the High Priest, who dwells in us.
  - + The birds to be used as sacrifices were doves (symbolic of chastity, as it is known that a male will not accept another female even if the first one dies), and pigeons (symbolic of the simple life attained by the work of the Holy Spirit who appeared as pigeon).
- The Oblation Grain Offering: Leviticus 2
- The oblation, in all its forms, represents the communion with God in His Son through the merits of the blood. The Oblations were connected to the blood sacrifices. (Corban = gift)
1. An oblation of flour [2:1-3]: the fine flour is a symbol of Christ "the Bread of Life" (John 6:35). As the priest takes a handful of fine flour to be offered with oil and all the frankincense, that represents the church which has nothing to offer but Christ the Lord who descended to be within her reach.
  2. The oil that is poured symbolizes the Lord Christ who was anointed to serve our salvation (Acts 4: 27), to raise us up as anointed in Him. As for the frankincense, it represents prayer (Ps. 14:1.2), for in Christ we offer all worship.
  3. The saying "most holy offering of the offerings to the Lord made by fire" [2:3] means it is perfectly holy. Only the priests could eat it inside the tabernacle while they were holy. This indicates that nobody is allowed to enjoy the communion except those who have been endowed with the regeneration and the common priesthood through baptism.

4. An oblation baked in the oven [2:4]: unleavened bread baked in the shape of cakes mixed with oil, or wafers anointed with oil. Being kneaded with oil represents the work of the Holy Spirit in the divine incarnation; and the anointing with oil indicates that Christ was anointed to minister our salvation. For this reason, the oblation enters the furnace of passion for our sake.

5. An oblation baked on a pan [2:5,6] made of iron or bronze.

6. An Oblation baked in a covered pan [2:7-10] made of clay. This may be a reference to the incarnation of Christ in the Virgin's womb. None of these oblations were made with yeast (as it is a symbol of sin) or honey (representing transient pleasures), but salt may be used (indicating the preservation of love.)

7. An oblation of first-fruits of green ears of corn [2:14-16] roasted in fire, grain ground from full ears of corn with oil and frankincense on it. It symbolizes the first-fruits of the church when the Holy Spirit -as tongues of fire- descended on it on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), after the offering of prayers (frankincense).

The Sacrifice of Peace: Leviticus 3

1. This sacrifice represents the proclamation of the church as a whole, regarding her joy with God and her peace in Him through His fellowship.

2. It is the offering of the perfect man who is granted God's peace in his inner life, the peace of Christ the Victim whose blood reconciled us with the Father, giving us peace with Him, with our souls and with others; the peace which we have forsaken for the sake of sin (Eph. 2:14).

3. It is an oblation of perfection offered by the community or by one of its members; for this reason every family used to choose a day or more every year to offer it. (1 Sam. 20:6). It was imperative that it be offered at the ordination of the priests as a sacrifice of fullness (Exod. 29:19-28; Lev. 8:22-23) and at the feast of the Pentecost [23:19,20].

4. The Eucharistic liturgy (the holy Mass) is a sacrifice of peace and thanksgiving, where the church offers the unrepentive sacrifice of the cross, that we may gain the nature of thanksgiving which is of Christ, instead of our unthankfulness.

5. This is an offering of cattle [3:1-5], sheep [3: 6-11] or goats [3:12-17].

6. Setting aside for the moment the aspects shared with the first chapter, let us consider other aspects:

+ The offering may be male or female, with the sole condition that it is without blemish [3:1,6]; this is because it represents the communion of men with God through reconciliation and peace. The acceptance of the female symbolizes the entry of the church as a Bride united with her Groom that she may enjoy His supernatural peace. It is the sacrifice of the whole church, who offers her entire life as thanksgiving sacrifice to God.

+ The congregation are permitted to partake with the priests in eating of the sacrifice, so it is the sacrifice of sharing or unity. It is a sign of the heavenly meal offered to men (Ps. 23:5, Isa. 25:6, Matt. 22:1-4).

+ The placing of hands on the head of the victim is not for confession of sins, but for acknowledgement of God's mercies and favor for us.

+ It was not recorded that "there should be no blemish in it", but that it should be "without blemish," for there is no person who has not sinned, but it is possible that our sins - through repentance, confession and participating in the communion - may not be accounted against us.

+ It is stressed that the fat was not to be eaten (which covers the entrails and the two kidneys), for from a hygienic point of view, fat develops deposits of cholesterol which then cause many diseases. The same is also true of the blood [3:17], for it easily transmits contagious diseases and viruses, also because the drinking of blood is a sign of cruelty and savagery. Besides emphasizing the significance of blood, for the Law holds it as representing the soul.

The Sacrifice of Sin: Leviticus 4:1-5:13

1. The three preceding offerings all have the same theme: "a sweet aroma to the Lord;" whereas the theme of the sacrifice of sin and the guilt offering is the substitution of the sinner with the slaughtered animal who bears the curse of the Law under which we have fallen, that it may be removed from our behalf. The categorization of the types of the sacrifice of sin is not made according to the type of victim offered, but according to the status of the person who presents the offering and his role in society.

2. The sacrifice of sin is a complete atonement of the person who presents the offering even if he presents it for a particular sin he falls into unintentionally, or in weakness. For this reason, it is offered on feast days as a general absolution for the people. However the guilt offering is always accompanied by certain sin or trespass that has been committed, therefore it is not offered on feast days [4:28,29].

3. The sacrifice of sin was offered on behalf of a person who has sinned and does not require to offer compensation, whereas the guilt offering is always accompanied by an offering of compensation to injured men or to the temple.

4. The sacrifice of sin on behalf of the anointed priest [4:1-12]; i.e. the high priest, opens this section, not to honor the priesthood but to demonstrate the great danger of the situation, even if the priest's sin is unintentional; and to remind the priest of his weakness (1 Tim. 1:15; Heb. 7:28); consequently he deals with sinners more kindly.

The following must be noted regarding to rites of this sacrifice:

a. The priest offering the sacrifice puts his hands on the head of the bull, confessing his sins (Ps. 32:5), indicating that even the priest needs repentance and confession.

b. The whole rite here centralizes around "blood." Because of the critical role of the priest, the blood of the sacrificial victim was permitted inside the tabernacle and sprinkled seven times



before the Lord, before the ark, in front of the veil and on the horns of the altar of incense, while the rest was poured at the base of the bronze altar. For the priest, whose role is to revolve prayers and intercession on behalf of the people, still needs the blood to intercede on his behalf so that he may return and fulfill his priestly duties anew through the merits of the sacrifice. The entrance of the blood into the Holy of Holies, the sanctuary and the outer court represents the need of the priest to the sanctification of his spirit, soul and body.

c. The whole victim, even the head is burnt [4:11) signifying God's utter abhorrence of sin.

5. The Sacrifice of sin on behalf of the whole congregation [4:13-21) in the case of their sinning unintentionally and in ignorance, confirms the fact that the congregation must take pains to preserve the holy life. Its rites are similar to those of the sacrifice of sin on behalf of the priest, for if the priest sins he will bring guilt upon the entire congregation, and the priest is responsible for the sins of the congregation. Here the elders place their hands on the head of the victim on behalf of the whole congregation, because they share responsibility for them with the priest.

6. The sacrifice of sin on behalf of a secular leader [4:22-26], for instance the king, the elder or the judge, was a kid of goats, male without blemish. The blood of the victim is not permitted to enter the sanctuary, for even though the role of the leaders is important, they do not directly defile the divine Holies as does the priest or the congregation. The priests then eat the meat to confirm to the leader that his sin have been forgiven and he is accepted by God.

7. The sacrifice of sin on behalf of one of the common people [4:27-35]: comprises a female kid of goats without blemish, or a female lamb; a female was specified being cheaper.

8. Three examples of unintentional sins [5:1-4]:

+ Withholding testimony, if one hears that a person is accused of a certain crime and he hides the truth he knows concerning the case. This is true of the scribes and pharisees who knew the truth of Christ and hid their knowledge.

+ Touching the carcass of an unclean animal.

+ Swearing or speaking thoughtlessly.

9. The sacrifice of sin and confession [5: 5,6]: There is a connection between confession in a spirit of repentance and the presentation of the sacrifice of sin, for without shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sins. Even the Jews practiced confession before men of God (2 Sam. 12:13,14; Mark 1:5).

10. The sacrifice of sin for those who are unable to offer a lamb [5:7-13]: the value of the offering is not in its material value, but in its symbolic connotations, for this reason it was permitted for the poor people to offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons. One was instead of the fat offered to the Lord on the altar and the other was to compensate for the portion of the priests instead of the meat. The law commanded that the priests accept their portion from the poor despite its lack of material value so that they would feel that they are servants of all, the rich and the poor. This is also so that the poor man may share in the blessings of giving

and love even though the church satisfies his needs, just like the widow who offered two mites.

The Guilt Offering (Sacrifice of Reparation): Leviticus 5:4-6:7

It is divided into two kinds: sacrifices for guilt causing loss to the Holies [5:14-19] and those causing loss to the brethren.

1. Guilt offerings for unintentional sins regarding the holies [5:14-19] as a result of not offering the first-fruits or the Tithes (Malachi 3:8). The Temple does not suffer any material loss, because the Lord provides sufficiently for all, but the purpose of the Law is to train each person to make restitution for the harm that he had done to others, whoever they be. The offering was to be made in shekel (weight) of silver fixed and kept precisely in the Sanctuary, being a symbol of the Word of God (Ps. 12:6), against which our actions are measured. The person who offered it was to add one-fifth compensation for the harm he caused to the Holies, that is sanctification of the five senses, preparing them for service to the Temple of the Lord and its Holies, like the five wise virgins (Matt.25:1). The sacrifice here is essential, for a person cannot be sanctified without the blood of the Sacrificial Christ.

2. Guilt offerings for unintentional sins against the brethren [6:1-7], for instance, one who is entrusted with a pledge or something for safekeeping and unwillingly denies having it, or someone who had found something and picked it up. From the spiritual point of view, the pledge is the person's own spirit which was given to us in God's image and likeness, and which we must return again without alteration (Matt. 5:48, Luke 6:36). It is also the living ecclesiastical tradition, the treasure of the Trinitarian faith, the new life in Christ and the spiritual conduct (1 Tim. 6:20). As for someone who finds something and steals it, signifies the heretic who robs the church of her children and it is required of him to return to the Truth those whom he seduced. It should be noted that whatever sin we commit against our brethren, we commit it against God Himself (Matt. 25:40). It is also required that, as a confirmation of repentance, a person should retribute whatever he has robbed or denied and add to it one-fifth compensation in addition to the guilt-offering.

Concerning the Laws of the Sacrifices and Oblations: Leviticus 6:8-30 and 7

In the previous chapters the text was addressed to the children of Israel in a general sense, whereas here it is specially for Aaron and his sons [8:24], confirming the following:

1. Regarding the law of the burnt-offering (holocaust) [6:8-13] the fire must burn constantly all night until the morning [8:9], as a sign of our lives, the fiery love sacrifice, which remains lit throughout the night until the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness on us; that we may see Him face to face in His last advent.

2. Upon the removal of the ashes, it was required of the priests to don their priestly vestments, indicating the sanctity of this action. Christ's sacrifice did not dissolve into ash, for He was not touched by corruption but rather exchanged our ashes into life.

3. Upon taking the ash out of the camp they put off these vestments and take the ash to the place where the ashes are poured out [4:12], a place surrounded by a wall so that the ashes may not be blown by the wind, and so that no one takes anything from it; indicating to the sanctity of our bodies made of dust (ash), even after death.

4. The fire is kept burning night and day; this fire came from before the Lord at the consecration of Aaron and his sons [9:24].

5. Regarding the oblation [6:14-23], the priest takes a handful of flour as a symbol of the descent of the Son of God to our world to take on our nature as His own. It was called "most holy" because it indicates to the mystery of the Eucharist as a divine and awesome sacrifice. The priest, too, must offer it, so that he may learn to give and not only receive, so that he may learn to give his heart, his life and all what he owns in love to God and men; that is, he gladly spends and be spent for others (2 Cor. 12:15). All that the priest offers is completely burnt, for God accepts all his offerings as a sacrifice of love.

6. Regarding the sacrifice of sin [6:24-30], the priest's portions are counted as "most holy," to be eaten inside the tabernacle. Whoever touches its flesh must be holy. Its power is in the "sanctity of the blood," for if its blood is sprinkled on a garment, a clay vessel or a bronze vessel, then it is either washed or broken.

7. Regarding the guilt-offering [7:1-10]: it came to resemble the sacrifice of sin in many aspects we have previously mentioned.

8. Regarding the sacrifice of peace [7:11-34], it is the only sacrifice where the person presenting the sacrifice shares in eating of it, for it represents the life of unity and sharing. If it is offered for thanksgiving, its flesh is eaten entirely on the same day (for the Word of God is renewed each morning); whereas if it is presented for a vow or as voluntary offering, it may be eaten in two days (the Word of God: two Testaments). The wisdom in this, was that the flesh should not be corrupted and so that the person presenting it may invite his friends especially the poor to share with him in eating it, that all may have joy in this sacrifice. It is also a sign of the resurrection of Christ who arose on the third day. With the sacrifice of peace it was required that an edible oblation of unleavened bread and cakes of leavened bread should be presented. These three offerings together indicate that we thank God in both, deed and word also by heart. The priest then sets aside the breast of the victim and its right thigh for himself to announce the acceptance of the work of God in his internal life (the breast) and in his visible actions (the right thigh), that his whole life may be devoted to the Lord.

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## Chapter 3

### CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

Lev. 8 - Lev. 10

After presenting the laws of sacrifices and oblations, he speaks of the consecration of priests, for the sacrifice is well related to priesthood. Thus he presents a wonderful picture of a life of devotion.

The Rite of Consecration: Leviticus 8

It is based on two complementary principles: sanctification through blood and devotion of life to the divine work through the Holy Spirit.

1. Throughout the rites of consecration, the phrase "this is what the Lord has commanded to be done", or "as the Lord commanded Moses" is repeated several times to confirm that the action taking place is realized through the divine plan in all its aspects. It is God who chooses His priests, sanctifies them and works through them and in them.
2. The whole congregation was to assemble at the gate of the tabernacle, for the church is not just a gathering of priests but of the entire populace whom the priests serve, for it is a democratic church (church of the people).
3. Aaron and his sons were required to be washed. The priest, regardless of his rank, is required to be washed from his weaknesses and sins, an internal washing even of his evil thoughts (Jer. 4:14).
4. The priestly vestments: the priests are hidden in Person of Christ, so that He may work through them (Exod. 28).
5. The anointing of priests symbolizes our unity with Christ through the work of His Holy Spirit in the sacrament of priesthood.
6. The need for sacrifices: for Christ is the only One who does not need sacrifices for Himself because He is without blemish. But as for priests, their right ears, thumbs of their right hands and the big toes of their right feet should be sanctified by the blood of the ram of consecration. This means consecrating the hearing, deeds and conduct; in other words, the priest listens to God's voice, fulfills His commandment and follows the heavenly way.
7. The priests abide seven days a week, day and night, at the gate of the tabernacle. This means the continuous work all the days of their lives for the kingdom of God and the edification of the church without getting preoccupied with transient matters.

#### Practicing the Work of Priesthood: Leviticus 9

1. The priests started offering the sacrifices on the eighth day of their anointment, abiding seven days in the tabernacle. They beheld the Lord, and His glory was declared to all the people. Fire descended from the Lord and burnt all that was on the altar. This incited the feelings of the people; they shouted to the Lord and fell down on their faces. All this was realized on the eighth day as a sign of the celestial nature of the priestly work (number 8 = above time), and also of the power of the Lord's resurrection which was on the first day of the new week (7+1).
2. Aaron and his sons committed themselves to offer sacrifice of their own money so as to feel the need of forgiving their sins, besides their commitment to offer their lives as a burnt-offering to the Lord (a feeling of vulnerability accompanied by a genuine desire to devote all their lives).

3. Aaron blessed the people twice; where he raised his hand in blessing [9:22] to proclaim the priestly authority, not to rule but to bless through the Lord Himself and not through the priest. At the first time, he confirmed that the blessing occurred during the sacrifices; the second time, it happened during his meeting with Moses (the unity of priesthood, Aaron, with the divine commandment, or the word) and their joint entrance to the tabernacle; for the blessing comes down through the holy church. The priest is a member of the church who received the Holy Spirit working in her.

4. The descent of the fire from the Lord following the revelation of His glory shows the victory of God's fire over that of sin, and its power in inflaming the soul with the fiery Spirit or with the divine love; this fills one's heart with joy and jubilation.

The Priestly Ministry and the Strange Fire: Leviticus 10

1. On the eighth day of the priests' ordination, fire came down and the people were filled with joy amidst the divine glory; as if they were in Paradise. But Nadab and Abihu - Aaron's sons - brought grief on the congregation by offering a strange fire, most probably during drunkenness. Therefore, the law forbade the priests from drinking wine in the tabernacle [10:8-9] after they were divinely disciplined.

2. This chapter illustrated the characteristics of the minister:

+ Complete obedience to God (Aaron's two sons disobeyed God).

+ Sublimation above natural feelings; Aaron and his two sons committed themselves to remain in the tabernacle to serve God, and others would take action with the other two sons Nadab and Abihu (Luke 9:60).

+ Non-drinking of wine and intoxicants, in order to distinguish between the holy and the unholy, the profane and the pure, and so that the priest does not lose his ability to teach the divine commandment to the people. From the allegorical point of view, Origen states that the high priest and his two sons represent Christ, His disciples, and apostles. When these approach the Cross they do not drink the joyful wine but remain seeking the redemption of mankind. The Lord offers His blood as an atonement, meanwhile, the apostles and disciples offer their lives as witnesses and preaching for the redemption of the world, so that when the eternal kingdom of God is declared, the Lord drinks with them anew (Matt. 26:29); when perfect eternal joy is achieved by crowning the whole church and attaining the participation in the glory of her Groom. Let us imitate Aaron's two sons, serving the Lord in sadness because of the perishing of others until they enjoy sharing us the inheritance (Heb. 11:39-40).

+ Moses asked Aaron and his two sons to eat their portions of the offerings of the Lord made by fire and of the sacrifice of peace, as they were not able to do that because of their sorrow for Nadab and Abihu. Moses was angry from Aaron because he found that the male goat of the sacrifice of sin was all burnt contrary to the rite, but Aaron excused himself that it was not possible for him to eat on the same day his two sons died. Moses accepted the issue and was not adamant [10:20].

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## Chapter 4

### LAWS OF PURIFICATION

Lev. 11 - Lev. 15

God, the Holy One, receives us as sanctified people through the sacrifice (Leviticus 1-7), offered by the priest [8-10]; this sanctified life is governed by its own laws, that is rules and rituals by which every member of the community is bound. From its literal side, the Law was concerned with all aspects of the Jewish nation's life; including food, corporal birth, physical health, clothing, hygiene etc.... All these issues bore symbolic meanings relevant to the inner life of the faithful.

Foods Permitted and Forbidden: Leviticus 11

These permitted foods refer to the characteristics of the man sanctified in the Lord, thus the verse is repeated at the end of the chapter: "You must be holy, because I am Holy" [11:44,45].

1. The animal is not considered clean unless two factors combine:

a. Ruminant: referring to continuous murmuring with meditation on God's word and the release from the literalism to the spirit.

b. Divided hoof: that is to receive the word of God as given in both Testaments, the old and the new, and to accept this as a constitution in this world (the daily life) and as the way to eternity (spiritual life). It also refers to separating what is dead in us, that is crucifying the evil bodily lusts. Examples of unclean animals are: camels, rabbits, badgers (similar to the rabbits), pigs (symbolizing excessive talk because of its rowdiness, also lust and gluttony).

2. As to aquatic creatures, they must have fins to assist in swimming and scales to protect them. The fins refer to the means of grace that support the faithful in the midst of the worldly tides so that he may not be carried away unwillingly. The scales refer to the same means that shield him from evil.

3. Birds: those that are prohibited are the ones of prey which are featured by snatching, attacking and devouring of corpses and carcasses; similar to the law prohibiting us from viciousness, robbery, oppression and greed in our dealings with others.

4. Winged insects: in general these are undesirable except for locusts, bold locusts, crickets and grasshoppers [22]; all these are species of locusts that can be eaten. The condition in four-legged winged insects is that the hind legs are to be longer than the front ones. There is also a warning against some instances of uncleanness, for example touching carcasses of unclean animals or dead snakes, eight species of which are specified. It was feared that infectious diseases would transfer through luggage, utensils, water springs, wells etc...

5. Reptiles: All that crawls on its belly is considered unclean, symbolizing the person who is swallowed in earthly matters and whose heart is incapable of rising to heavenly issues. These foods were symbolic but are not profane in themselves (Acts 10:11-13).

The Purification of Women after Childbirth: Leviticus 12

1. Man's life had been spoiled, therefore his birth like death is connected with uncleanness. A new birth is needed and also death with the Holy Crucified Lord. Perhaps calling a woman unclean after childbirth (40 days for a male child and 80 days for a female) was meant for her well being, so that she refrains from all chores in order that she may look after herself.

2. In the joyful atmosphere of the newborn, this ritual draws the whole family to realize sin's infiltration inside us through our ancestors (Job 15:14; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:3).

3. Emphasizing the need for blood for sanctification and purification (1 John 1: 7), so that the newborn belongs to God's people.

4. The set days for the purification of the mother are not sufficient for her to be considered pure; she is bound to present sacrifices (holocaust and sacrifices of sin) to emphasize the fact that time is not capable of abolishing the sin or uncleanness, but the need exists for the sacrifice of the Messiah.

5. The combination of the two sacrifices together: holocaust with that of sin refers to the mixture of our joy with attaining the forgiveness of our sins.

6. The sacrifice allowed for joy (holocaust) differs according to the financial means of each family, but the sacrifice of sin is the same one that applies to the rich and poor so that everyone realizes our equality in forgiveness of sin before God.

Purification of Leprosy of the Body and Garments: Leviticus 13

1. God cares for His people so that infection does not spread among them. He is even concerned about their garments, that moth does not move from one garment to the other. According to the Jews, leprosy was connected with sin because of its rate of infection, thus it was counted uncleanness.

2. Some people are of the opinion that isolating the leper, under Moses' law, is a kind of cruelty; but we find that even in modern societies, sufferers of skin diseases are isolated in hospitals far away from residential areas, and even doctors are concerned about themselves fearing infection, despite the progress of medicine.

3. The chapter starts by talking about the symptoms of the disease that might affect one's body or garments.

a. If someone has a swelling or a red spot with a scab or a spot that differs in color from that of the body, he shall be examined by the priest and be isolated for seven days; after which he shall be reexamined by the priest. If the sore does not spread and starts to fade, it is considered a mere sore and the person is not considered a leper.

b. He whose leprosy is chronic [13:9-17], where the sore is deep and the hair turns white, his case becomes evident. If the whole skin from head to toe is white, the person is counted clean because this is not a disease. From the spiritual point of view, the former symbolizes the person who is swinging between two ways where he had white swelling on some parts of his skin and not on others. The latter symbolizes that person who admits he is completely sinful and in his remorse obtains purification through the merits of the Cross.

c. If anyone has a boil in the skin and it is healed [18-23], bearing traces of previous scars resembling the first case, he is to be isolated for seven days so that the priest be ensured whether it is a spreading disease within the body or merely fixed marks. The boil refers to the unclean thoughts that deprive the soul from health. The soul must be scrupulously examined by the guidance of Christ the High Priest.

d. The case of a person who has been burnt [24-28]: the burning arrows of the evil one (Eph. 6:16).

e. A person has a sore in the head or the beard [29- 37], symbolizing what might affect faith in Jesus (the Head) or what might affect the priest (the beard). He who regards marriage as an unclean thing is considered being affected on his head, because man is the head of the woman (1 Cor. 11:3).

f. A person who has white spots on the skin [38,39]; if the spots are of a dull white it is Vitiligo, he is clean.

g A person loses his hair [40-44]: distinction is to be made between natural causes (baldness) and this that are diseases (ringworm). The first instance refers to those who renounce the deadly actions (hair), therefore they are clean.

4. Verdict on the leper: wearing torn clothes in the case of men = removing hypocrisy and external covering of sins; the uncovered head = confessing our sins committed against Christ our Head; covering the mustache, that is the mouth = commitment to silence and non-preaching even if it were a priest; his living outside the camp and his calling: unclean, unclean = confessing that he isolated himself from the holy community by his internal and external uncleanliness, that is uncleanliness of body and soul.

5. Mildew on clothing and leather [47-59]; if spreading of mildew is confirmed, it is to be burnt.

Law of Purification of Leper: Leviticus 14

1. The ritual of purification on the first day [1-8]:

a. The person is to be brought before the priest: the church brings the sinner before Christ, the High Priest, similar to the paralyzed carried to the Lord by four Men (Matt. 9:2).

b. The descent of the priest to him: the Lord descended to us as we were incapable of ascending to His own sanctuary (John 16:18).



- c. A bird was killed in a clay bowl on a living water: Christ was sacrificed for us through His body (the clay bowl), from which blood and water flowed.
  - d. Using cedar wood that does not rot: our unity with the wooden Cross that renews our nature.
  - e. Scarlet: the blood of Christ (John 19:43) that tinctures us and gives us a new colour; the hyssop is used for washing.
  - f. The living water: baptism.
  - g. Sprinkling blood and water on the purified seven times: enjoying the baptismal action during our life.
  - h. Releasing the living bird over the desert: our resurrection with the Risen Christ.
  - i. Washing the garments of the leper: the sanctification of the body.
  - j. Shaving the leper's hair: removing every trace of the deadly actions.
  - k. Living outside his tent for seven days: living above the demands of the body (the soul's tent).
2. The seventh day purification ritual [9]: Repetition of the hair shaving, washing of his body and garments, meaning the continuation of enjoying the everlasting purification throughout all our life by removing the deadly thoughts and by sanctifying the body and its senses.
3. The eighth day purification ritual [10-20]: purification is completed through enjoyment of the heavenly life (number 8= above time), which is realized through the action of Christ the Victim (offering the sacrifices), belief in the Holy Trinity (offering three-tenths flour mixed with oil) and this is through the work of the Holy Spirit (oil) within us. As the purified presents the sacrifices and oblations, the priest and the leper stand at the gate of the tabernacle (the Door), through whom we enter His sanctuary. Two priests participate in the ritual. A priest takes some of the blood of the lamb and put it on the lobe of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the right feet, signifying that the believer should spiritually behave by listening to the commandment, obeying it and behaving according to it. We hear the Divine voice, fulfill the commandment and walk towards heavens. The priest sprinkles some oil towards the Holy of Holies and puts some of it on the same spots signifying the need for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Giver of sanctification. The rest of the oil is poured on the head of the purified. Following that, a sacrifice of sin and a holocaust are offered, for purification is realized through the blood and Spirit (1 John 5:8).
4. Ritual of purification for the poor [21-23]: This is practiced in the same meticulous manner as that for the rich, only that the sacrifices offered do not form a financial burden.

5. Mildew in houses [33-56]: This law was introduced when they lived in tents before they acquired houses. The Lord assumes the role of the architect to protect the life of His people against the danger of their homes collapsing. The priest must not rush to declare the fitness of any house or its unfitness, lest someone should needlessly lose one's home.

The Law for Unclean Bodily Discharges: Leviticus 15

1. It deals with the person who is with discharges. With regards to the male, it means a person whose sperm discharges naturally or because of a disease. As to the woman, it means her monthly menstruation or hemorrhage as a result of illness. Uncleanliness is called profane so that a person looks after his hygiene and that of those around him. The law laid a definite distinction between what occurred within the boundaries of nature and what are resulted from a disease. The discharge that takes place in a person symbolizes an uncontrollable soul, who is in the grip of profane lusts.

2. The case of a male disease [1-15] that is the person who suffers a venereal disease where there is a continuous spermal ejection or congestion. The law prohibits that he, his garments, or his utensils be touched for fear of infection. He who contacts sin becomes profane for the whole day, until he meets God to start a new day, in which he leaves his past for a better life. Washing of body and garments: internal and external purity. All what he owns are unclean even his bed, but the righteous is pure even in his sleep (Song of Solomon 5:2). Also the animals he rides and his spit (the heretical teaching) are unclean. He abuses his body and its endowments and those who are around him, completely polluting the surrounding environment. Regarding the ritual of purification, the same symbols apply as those stated previously.

3. Natural state of man [16-18]: nocturnal ejection and marital intercourse do not necessitate atonement sacrifices.

4. Natural state for a woman [19-20]: concerning the menstruation (monthly period), the term "uncleanliness" is intended for physical rest, preventing marital intercourse during that week for the comfort of the wife and for practicing marriage in a sacred way, for during this period, conception does not take place.

5. The case of female disease [25-33]: Continuous bleeding is a serious disease that requires special treatment.

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## Chapter 5

### THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT

Lev. 16

The Great Day of Atonement Leviticus 16, this is the day most revered by the Jews. The Talmud intellectuals called it "Yom Kippur" (The Great Day). It corresponds to Good Friday in the church of the New Testament. It is also called "The Sabbaths," as in this day complete rest is observed for it is the "Feast of Feasts". Because of it's importance the 70 Senhedrin

elders used to train the new high priest regarding the rituals and the memorizing of all relevant matters. The high priest practices this together with over 500 priests.

#### Its Aim

Atonement or "Kepudit" means "Cover," for on this day, sins are covered by the precious blood. The high priest atones for himself, for the priests, for all the community and also for the tabernacle and its contents. It is a communal atonement for the whole year [32-34].

#### Its Rituals

1. The high priest performs the daily morning service, at this particular day. At midnight, the lot is cast for the priests to remove the old ashes from the altar so that atonement day sacrifices are not offered on old ashes. On this day, the high priest bathes five times in a golden vessel devoted for this purpose. He also washes his hands and feet ten times. The high priest wears the rich clothes for glory (Exod. 28). He enters the sanctuary to arrange the lanterns and to burn the incense. He offers the holocaust with one-tenth of flour mixed with one-quarter bin of olive oil and one-quarter bin of wine (Exod. 29:38-42). If the day was a Sabbath, this would be doubled (Numb. 28:38-42).

2. Besides the ritual of Atonement Day mentioned in this chapter, additional sacrifices are offered, also the daily evening service is ministered by the high priest wearing his glorious vestments.

#### The Concept of Atonement Day Rituals

1. The high priest enters the Holy of Holies once a year following long rituals and preparations so that he does not become an invader on God's presence and gets killed. That was because the way of the Holies did not appear then (Heb. 9:8). Christ came to renew our nature so that we enter the Holy of Holies to enjoy the divine glory and be united with God through our reconciliation with Him. The congregation considered the entrance of the high priest as their own entrance, thus the day was joyful to all of them. Through the sacrifice, the priest had to enter [3] to atone for himself and for the congregation. He needed another's blood to intercede for him, for his brothers and sons, but our Lord Jesus Christ offered His own blood for us as He was not in need of any atonement.

2. After the constant morning service, the ritual of Atonement starts by taking off the golden garments of glory, washing his body and wearing the linen garments devoted for this day, that is the ordinary priestly robe, so that the high priest does not boast or become arrogant. As to our High Priest, He gave us His garments to cover us for we wear Him as a garment (righteousness) (Gal. 3:27), while He was naked on the Cross.

3. The high priest confesses on behalf of himself and the other priests.

4. He offers two male goats at the same time as one sacrifice of sin, one is slaughtered for the sin of the people and the other is released in the desert denoting the removal of sin. The high priest draws lots, one for the Lord and the other for Azazel [7,8]. This takes place by his placing them in front of the tabernacle gate facing westwards, two priests stand beside the high priest, one on his right and the other on his left and so the two male goats stand. The high priest shakes a small box containing two pieces of ebony (later of gold), on one is written "For Jehovah" and on the other "For Azazel"; one is placed on each of the male goats. The one for

the Lord is distinguished by a red woolen yarn around the goat's head or horns, the other is distinguished by a crimson yarn.

What does Azazel (scapegoat) mean?

- a. It means the devil; for the "sacrifice" defies the devil in his domain (the desert).
- b. In general, it means "common banishment" or "total seclusion," that is removal of sin.
- c. Sending it to the desert is a sign of its inability to achieve salvation until the coming of the true Lamb of God.
- d. The two male goats refer to the two thieves who were at the Cross (Luke 23:13), also they refer to Christ and Barabas as the people demanded the release of the latter (Matt. 27:17).

5. The high priest fills the golden censer with embers of the fire of the Lord's altar [9:24]. He fills his palms with fine aromatic incense and places it in a small golden vessel. Usually, he holds the incense with his right hand and the censer with the left, but on this occasion, he is allowed to do the reverse due to the huge size of the censer. For the first time, he enters the Holy of Holies sideways, so that he does not see the ark. He places the censer on the ground on a great stone and fills it with incense which fills the place and obscures the altar lest he should die if he sees it. He prays for the people quickly and walks backwards so that his face is directed towards the Lord. The burning coal symbolizes the incarnation of the Son of God who fills heavens with His sweet aroma and with His work of salvation. He who is in unity with Christ enters with Him to the Holy of Holies and ascends to the highest of heaven, to enjoy Christ's heavenly life within him.

6. The second male goat is sent with one of the priests to be released in the desert at a rock on a high mountain, about 12 miles from Jerusalem where there are 10 cottages a mile apart from each other. As the priest arrives at each cottage, a man comes out to accompany him to the following cottage and so on until they reach the rock where the crimson yarn is cut into two parts; one is tied to the rock and the other to the goat's horns, the male goat is thrown from the top of the rock where it falls to its death and no one can use it. Through a special flag, the priest signals the last cottage which conveys it to the next and in a few seconds the news reaches Jerusalem in the Temple and the people feel relieved as if their sins for the whole year were erased. Some think that this refers to Christ who was sent out of camp for our salvation.

7. The high priest offers holocausts and the other sacrifices, then he offers the daily evening sacrifice.

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## **Chapter 6**

### THE ALTAR AND THE HOLINESS OF BLOOD

Lev. 17

In the previous chapter, the Law proclaims the role of the holy sacrifice in sanctifying the high priest, enabling him to penetrate the veil and enjoy the closeness of the ark of testimony to intercede for himself, for the priests and the congregation. This chapter signifies the importance of the sacrifice, its connection with the altar and the sacredness of blood.

1. Leviticus 17:3-7 appears to forbid offering sacrifices for worship outside the circle of the camp or the temple; that is away from the holy altar of the Lord. The intention was that the people won't deviate to heathen worship surrounding them. For this purpose, men of God were allowed to erect altars in emergencies (Jos. 8:20; Jud. 6:25-27; 1 Sam.7:5-11; 2 Sam. 24:18-25; 1 Kings 18:19-40).

In the New Testament, we acquired the holy altar on which the heavenly sacrifice of Christ, the very sacrifice of the Cross and not its duplicate is offered. Isaiah the prophet, foretold of the altar in the middle of the land of Egypt (Isa.19:19-21). The Lord confirmed the existence of the altar in the New testament (Matt. 5:34).

2. Emphasis was also laid on the prohibition of blood-eating, to illustrate its importance for the forgiveness of sins through redemption (Eph. 1:7; Col 1:14; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 7:14).

3. If they hunt an animal or a bird, its blood must be covered by dust, perhaps to remind us that from dust it came and to dust it shall return, and as a kind of respect to any creature as it is unfit to step on it (a compassion even towards clean animals and birds). The law prohibited the eating of strangled and dead animals. Animals must be slaughtered. Prohibited also are those animals killed by beasts. If a person unwillingly eats of any of these animals, he shall remain unclean until the evening when he washes and is purified. The cause of prohibition is hygienic, for the fear of a contagious disease that might get transmitted to the eater, and for the fear that poison might be diffused in the victim or it may have carried a microbe from the teeth of the devouring beast. In the New Testament, Christians have been prohibited from eating blood or the strangled animals (Acts 15).

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## **Chapter 7**

### **LAWS OF SANCTIFICATION**

Lev. 18 - Lev. 22

This chapter presents the practical laws that touch the believer's relationship with God, with his brothers, or dealing with the divine Holies. These laws dealt with the holiness of God's people, priests and divine Holies.

Laws Relating to the Holiness of the People

Holiness and physical relationship: Leviticus 18

1. God starts these laws by the prohibited marriages. He repeated the phrase "I am the Lord your God" so that they do not think that He wanted them to be in deprivation. He confirms that He is the caring Lord who protects and looks after them and satisfies them with the holy life in Him. He devoted them for Himself and freed them from Pharaoh's slavery not to lead them into deprivation but to grant them life through His commandments.

2. To preserve the sacredness of the family, there was a prohibition of marriage to relatives and to those who have relationship by marriage. At that time, many families lived under one roof. The believer has to respect his relationship with his parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and their children; the same applies to those who are in law, as they are his own flesh and blood. These relationships should be on the basis of love that is far from any carnal thought. From the point of view of genetics, it has been proven that marriage to close relatives is harmful to children. Perhaps another intention behind the prohibition of marriage to close relatives was to expand the circle of a strong love relationship. Abstaining from marrying close relatives of the husband and wife emphasizes their oneness in body.

3. Also prohibited were sexual perversions and other bad customs that were common among pagan peoples, for example, approaching a woman during her monthly periods [for she is not physically or psychologically ready, besides that no conception takes place during these periods], adultery, homosexuality, offering children as human sacrifices by letting them pass through fire.

4. Two Consequences of promiscuity were clearly illustrated which were a person who defiles the land is expelled [25], and loses church membership as it is a holy community [29].

Holiness and Relationships: Leviticus 19

Our holy life must be demonstrated through our relationship with God, parents, brothers and even through our behavior with animals and plants.

1. With God: Accept Him as the Holy One, the source of holiness, with whom we are united to attain His attributes [1-2]. Through Him our inner life is sanctified and our hearts can be lifted up towards heaven itself.

2. With parents: Our love to God as our Father and to the Church as our mother, is reflected on our relationship with parents [3].

3. Keeping the Sabbaths and refusing idolatry [3-8].

4. Regarding the harvest: the believer is not allowed to reap his field to its very border, nor gather the gleanings after his harvest. A symbol of a wide-hearted person towards the poor and foreigners so that they may find something to pick-up from the field without hurting their feelings (Prov.17:5).

5. Regarding our relationship with our brethren: no stealing, lying, dealing falsely, swearing by God's name falsely, oppressing the neighbour, nor do injustice in judgment, slander, hate your brother in your heart, take vengeance...but rather "love your neighbour as yourself" [18].

6. Regarding animals and plants [19]: forbidding that your cattle breed with a different kind so that a third kind may not be the result; sowing your field with 2 kinds of seed, nor making a garment of two kinds of stuff. Perhaps God meant by this that man lives spiritually in harmony without division within his heart. Since breeding two different kinds of animals together gives birth to a barren animal (as the mule) incapable to beget, so does division in man's heart and body lead him to be spiritually sterile.

The field that is sowed by mixing two different kinds of seeds together refers to the church that is deprived of the spirit of discrimination between truth and false, or the heart that mixes between light and darkness. Similarly concerning the stuff for the church must have unity of thought.

7. Adulterous relationship with a woman who is a slave: if she is betrothed to another man she should be scourged together with the man she committed adultery with, and the free man has to offer a guilt sacrifice. There is a need of purification through blood.

8. The first-fruits of trees: The yield of fruit trees is not to be eaten for three years so that it is not deprived of nutrition, the yield of the fourth year is given as first offering to the Lord [23-25]. Thus, the tree is sanctified and its fruits will belong to its owner. It is noted here that the first offering is not given until the fruit becomes suitable in the fourth year.

This refers to Christ, the First-born who was to be offered to the Father in our name. He came in the fourth dispensation to sanctify us. (The first three dispensations were: man in Paradise, man out of Paradise under natural law and man under the Law of Moses.)

9. General laws affecting the holiness of people; these prohibit the practices of pagan nations such as eating meat with blood still in it, witchcraft, shaving of men's hair in the shape of a circle on the top of the head [27] to satisfy pagan gods (Jer. 9:26); or trimming part of the beard so that it covers the lower part of the chin [27] in consecration to pagan gods. Cutting of the hair round refers to the removal of the faithful (the hair) from Jesus (the Head); trimming the sides of the beard means ridiculing the priestly service. Cutting gashings in the body for the death of one's relative as a sign of hopeless mourning, tattooing for the pagan gods, surrendering one's daughter to prostitution whether it be for financial gain or idol worship, all these are prohibited. On the other hand, they were to respect the elders [32], to care for foreigners and to do justice in judgment.

Idolatry and Adultery: Leviticus 20

1. There was a harsh penalty especially with regards to witchcraft and adultery because of its relation to idols, so as to expose the effects of evil upon the soul and to sanctify the community lest it be spoiled by evil. Under the New Testament, we do not find those harsh penalties. This does not mean that we take advantage of God's compassion upon us but we must realize the gravity of sin now that we have reached spiritual maturity.

2. The stoning sentence was applied to many incidents; for example, offering children as a human sacrifice to Molech [2], adultery with the mother, the step-mother, the daughter-in-law

or a betrothed virgin; seeking witches, abuse of parents, false prophecy (Deut. 13:6), blasphemy, breaking the Sabbath (Deut. 20:32-36), inciting others to idolatry (Deut. 13:6-11) or practicing it (Deut. 17:2-5).

The sentenced person is paraded in the town to give a chance to those objecting the verdict, besides that he becomes an example to others, he must confess to proclaim justice of the verdict and so that his soul may be justified before the Lord.

3. God's abhorrence of sin is clear even with regard to the innocent animal with which evil was committed, it is to be killed (Lev. 20:16), so that no trace of sin is left.

4. The aim behind all this is the attainment of God's image and our belonging to Him: "You shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am Holy" [26].

### Laws Relating to the Holiness of Priests

#### Leviticus 21

1. The person committed to a more accurate life with the increase of responsibility. A priest who accepts the spiritual fatherhood of everyone in Jesus Christ, goes above all particular human emotions. Through this common fatherhood, the Law of the Old Testament ordered him not to mourn for the death of his relatives or defile himself for the dead among his people [1]. An exception to this is the father, mother, son, daughter, brother and unmarried sister [2-3]. This law has been presented by Christ in an evangelic concept: "Let the dead bury their own dead," (Matt. 8:22; Luke 9:60) so that for the sake of the whole community the minister is not to get interrupted even by family obligations. The high priest is not to mourn even for the death of his parents for he has to live overcoming even death.

2. The priest cannot marry an adulteress, even if she repents, or an unclean woman, or a divorced, so that he and his wife be without blemish and present a good example to the congregation. The high priest cannot marry even a widow but a virgin as he represents Christ who acquires the church as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:2).

3. A priest's daughter who commits adultery defiles her father, thus she has to be burnt [8]. "For everyone to whom much is given, for him much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

4. There are other laws that concern the high priest, such as:

a. He should not cover his head because it has been anointed. He received Christ (the Anointed One), therefore he has to hide Him within himself (Song of Solomon 4:2). He must not tear his clothes [10], for the clothes refer to the church, the garment of Christ, must remain without schism.

b. Once he is in service, he should not leave the tabernacle or the temple irrespective of the causes as this is considered a scorn to the holy duty entrusted to him and also to the glory with which the anointment adorned him. Let us remain in our church and not leave it for unbecoming affairs and also let our Christ dwell in us - His sanctuary - and not leave us (2 Cor. 6:16).



5. The law dictated that the priest must be free from any physical deformity: he must not be blind, lame, disfigured etc... He must be without blemish.

+ Blindness: loss of spiritual sight and loss of direction (1 Sam. 2:9).

+ Lame: he who knows the way but is incapable of walking in it (Heb 12:12-13).

+ He who has a marred face: he who is incapable of discerning.

+ He who had any limb too long: someone who is preoccupied with others' affairs in an officious manner.

+ A man who has a broken foot or broken hand: he who can never practice the true way nor perform good deeds.

+ The hunchbacked: he who is burdened by earthly worries and cannot raise his inner eyes to heaven but always looks at lower matters (Ps. 38:6).

+ He whose eyes is cloudy: a person whose eyes-sight is darkened by corporal deeds (Rev. 3:18).

+ He whose eyes have a white layer: he who pretends wisdom and goodness, thereby he falls in the blindness of vain-glory (Rev. 1:22).

+ He who suffers from leprosy is the person who is conquered by the luxury of the body.

+ He who has a skin disease: he whose mind has been corrupted by greed (1 Tim. 6:10).

+ The eunuch: he who is burdened by the thoughts of lust in an excessive manner without practicing sex.

## Laws Concerning the Sanctity of the Offerings Leviticus 22

1. This chapter speaks about eating the shares of sacrifice as a sacred work that must have special preparations [1-9]. It is not an occasion for satisfying cravings of the stomach. No one has to approach these holies while he is unclean because its eating represents communion between God and man and an indication of reconciliation between them. If this be the case for a symbolic sacrifice, how would it be with regard to the enjoyment of the Lord's sacrificed Body and Blood?!

2. The segregation of those who are entitled to eat of it; no stranger can eat it [10-16]; thus, the table of the New Testament is offered to the children of God who received the new generation. The daughter of the priest does not eat from the sacrifice if she has married a foreigner, for he who is united with unbelievers is not eligible to enjoy the banquet.

3. Segregation of the Victim itself before its offering [17-28]: in chapters 1-7, we remarked the necessity of examining the victims to be sure that they are without blemish. Here this chapter is concerned with regards to certain observations concerning the victim: it must have neither too long nor too short limb [23]. Also it must not be taken from its mother before seven days so that the mother does not grieve bitterly for it. God teaches us to be gentle even to animals (Prov. 20:10).

4. Eating the thanksgiving sacrifice should be on the same day it is offered (Lev. 7: 15).

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## Chapter 8

### FESTIVALS AND VOWS

Lev. 23 - Lev. 27

The book of the Leviticus starts with the categorization of sacrifices and offerings to the way of reconciliation. Aaron and his sons were dedicated to this sacrificial work, the laws of consecration were then detailed. In order that these laws would not be burdensome upon the congregation, the book was concluded by speaking of the holy festivals and vows, inviting mankind to enjoy a joyful life. The word "Feast" in Hebrew is equal to "joy"; it is a return to the happy paradisaal life. The feasts were called "Sacred convocations", Leviticus 23:2, for the congregation used to be assembled to celebrate the feast joyfully around the Holy God. We already spoke of the feast of Pasch in Exodus 12, and on other feasts in Numbers 28 and 29.

#### System of Jewish Feasts and Fastings

1. The feasts system is based on the consecration of whatever is "seventh" on all levels.

a. Saturday: the seventh day (Exod. 20:8-11).

b. The feast of the weeks or Pentecost: after seven weeks of the Passover (Pasch) (Exod. 23:26).

c. The seventh month starts with the feast of the Trumpets, (Lev. 23:23), then the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23) and the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

d. The Sabbatical year (Exod. 23:10-11; Lev. 25:1-7).

e. The Jubilee (the fiftieth Year): the year that comes after counting seven times seven years (Lev. 25:8-22).

2. Additional feasts pertaining to important occasions for the Jews, like the Purim (lots) which Queen Esther had established with Mordecai. The feast of the dedication of the temple or the feast of renovation which took place during the days of Judas the Maccabean.

3. Besides the individual fasting, the public weekly fasting was founded on Mondays and Thursdays in the periods between the Pasch and the Pentecost, and between the feast of Tabernacles and that of renovation. On Thursday, Moses ascended Mount Sinai and on Monday, he received the Law for the second time.

Feasts and Holy Convocations During Christ's Time

1. Month of Nisan (at the end of March and the beginning of April):

The New moon (1); preparation for Passover sacrifice (14); the first day of the feast of the Unleavened Bread (15); the offering of the first sheaf of corn (16); the end of Passover (21).

2. The month of Iyar (Zir):

The New Moon (1), minor or second Passover (15); the thirty-third day of offering the first sheaf of corn on the second day of the Passover (18).

3. Month of Sivan (Hourzairan):

The New Moon (1), the Pentecost (commemoration of Moses' receiving of the Law) (6).

4. Month of Thamuz:

The New Moon (1); fastings commemorating Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Jerusalem on the ninth and Titus on the seventeenth (17). If it occurs on Sabbath, the Fast is kept on the following day.

5. Month of Ab:

The New Moon (1); fasting commemorating the destruction of the Temple (9).

6. Month of Elul:

The New Moon (1).

7. Month of Teshri I or Ethanim, Beginning of Civil Year:

Feast of shouting (1,2); fasting for the murder of Gedaliah (3); Day of Atonement (10); Feast of Tabernacles (15); end of the Feast of Tabernacles (21); the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles (22).

8. Month of Cheshvan or Marcheshvan (Teshri II or Bul):

The New Moon (1).

9. Month of Kislev or Kanoun I:

New Moon (1); Feast of the Dedication of the temple, or feast of the Candles, or the Renovation, in memory of renovating the Temple following the victory of Judas the Maccabean in 148 B.C. (25) for eight days.

10. Month of Tebeth or Kanoun II:

New Moon (1); fasting for the Siege of Jerusalem (10).

11. Month of Shebat:

New Moon (1).

## 12. Month of Adar:

New Moon (1); fasting of Esther (if it occurs on a Saturday, it is to be observed on the preceding Thursday) (13); Feast of Purim (14); Purim Proper (15). Some scholars are of the opinion that some or all of the present Hebrew months go back to a Chaldean or Persian origin which came to be after the return from Babylon, and that Hebrew months did not bear names but numerical reckoned:

| Civil months | sacred months | name of the month                 | reference            |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 7            | 1             | Abib <MIS>(sprout)                | Neh. 2:1, Exod.13:4. |
| 8            | 2             | Ziv <MIS>(Beauty)                 | 1 Kings 6:1          |
| 9            | 3             | Sivan                             | Esther 8: 9          |
| 10           | 4             | Thamuz                            |                      |
| 11           | 5             | Ab                                |                      |
| 12           | 6             | Elul                              | Neh. 6:15            |
| 1            | 7             | Ethanim <MIS>(overflowing rivers) | 1 Kings 8:2          |
| 2            | 8             | Bul <MIS>(rain)                   | 1 Kings 6: 38        |
| 3            | 9             | Kislev                            | Neh 1:1, Zac. 7:1    |
| 4            | 10            | Tebeth                            | Esther 2:16          |
| 5            | 11            | Shebat                            | Zech. 1:7            |
| 6            | 12            | Adar                              | Esther 3:7           |

Holy Convocations: Leviticus 23

1. The Sabbath: It is focused upon as a joyful feast, and as a rest in the Holy Lord, Christ our Sabbath.

2. The Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread: abstinence from leavening is a sign of attainment of the new life. (Isaiah 52:11-12).

3. The Feast of the Firstfruits: the first of the agricultural feasts, observed by the people following their entrance into the promised land, its purpose is offering thanksgiving to God the Giver of good things. By offering the sheaf of the firstfruits, the whole harvest is consecrated; through Christ the first-born and all those who believe in Him are consecrated. The sheaf of corn is waved before the Lord, for the priest raises it up and waves it towards the four corners as if he were offering it to the Omnipresent God. He returns it to become the share of the priests as if they would receive it from God. According to some, the priest waves the sheaf after dipping it in oil and burning part of it on the altar, a quantity equivalent to a handful together with frankincense, the remainder goes to the priests. Others state that corn heads are beaten by a stick and the seeds are roasted on the flames. The priest mixes a quantity with oil and takes a handful for burning. The majority state that the sheaf is waved after roasting the seeds, pounding it in a mortar, sifting the flour through 13 sieves for the priest to offer a handful of the fine flour after mixing it with oil and waving it before the Lord. In any case, it is a symbol of Christ who offered His life as a sacrifice that pleases the Father; offered through the fire of the cross so that the whole human harvest be blessed to enjoy participating in His nature. This feast is related to the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread (the

crucifixion and resurrection), for Christ is the First-born who is risen and ascended to heaven on our behalf.

4. The Feast of Weeks [15-22] equivalent to the Pentecost (Acts 2:1): an agricultural feast, called the Feast of the Harvest (Exod. 23:6), falls at the end of the harvest season. Some see that from the feast of the Unleavened Bread to the feast of the Weeks is a period of continuous joy. Therefore, the purpose of the crucifixion of Christ and His resurrection is the descent of His Holy Spirit on His church to grant her reconciliation through blood and communion with the Father in the Victim Son. Its aim is thanksgiving to God on the occasion of wheat harvest through the joyful common ritual (Prov. 3:9). Some see it as a commemoration of Moses' receiving of the Law, preparing for it by confession, washing and spending the feast even in worship and giving hymns. In their feast, two leavened loaves are waved as a first offering to the Lord; they are not burnt on the altar because they are leavened; but the high priest takes one while the other is distributed over the priests. These two loaves are probably referring to the consecration of our transient as well as eternal lives through the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Number 2 refers to love, as if the first work of the Spirit on Pentecost is to grant us the divine love to work in us, consequently we love God and men. Therefore, in this feast, voluntary offerings are given by the people, according to their means, to the Levities, the foreigners and the poor (Deut. 16:9-12).

5. The Feast of the Trumpets [23-25]: It is the feast of the consecration of the months and is celebrated at the beginning of the civil year, at the seventh month of the religious one. It is a festival of the new year and its consecration through the word of God (the trumpets), at the Day of the Atonement in the middle of the month. The two trumpets proclaim the destruction of the kingdom of evil and the establishment of God's kingdom (John 6:5-21).

6. The Feast of Atonement [26-32]: see Lev. 16.

7. The Feast of Tabernacles [33-44]: It is the last of the festivals and seasons that were mentioned in the Law. The agricultural year is concluded by this feast. It is called also "The Feast of Ingathering" (Exod. 23:16; 34:22). The people thank God for the end of the agricultural year and they recall their being foreigners who lived in tabernacles. Its main characteristics are the great joy (Deut. 16: 14), the dwelling in tabernacles for seven days and its unique ritual. For seven days, two great processions leave at dawn, one goes to gather the branches and the other to the lake of Siloam, with one of the priests holding a golden pitcher in which he pours water of the lake. The two processions are accompanied by groups of singers returning with cheers and praises. All arrive at the temple simultaneously, the morning holocaust is offered; those holding the branches and palms form a beautiful tabernacle around the altar while the priests welcome their colleague holding the pitcher by blowing the trumpets three times. The priest ascends the altar's stairs together with another priest holding a golden pitcher containing wine. They pour the offering's mixture of water and wine in two golden bowls that are perforated and fixed on the top of the altar. The liquid pours down the altar, and the people joyfully drink of the lake's water during the feast in memory of the flowing of the water from the rock (Isaiah 55:1, 12:3). The Sadducees were confined to the pouring of wine only and in 95 B.C., the high priest was one of them. He poured the water

away from the altar on the ground, the Pharisees attempted to kill him and a fight began in which more than 6000 were lost as a result of this battle. Water and wine were poured at the time of music and praising while worshipers waved branches towards the altar. This ritual was accompanied by lights, where four elevated torches were lit in the temple space, on the top of each are four large golden lamps, their wicks are made of the garments of the priests and their lights were seen in all the city. The people lit their lanterns in the city and adorned their houses with flowers. Light was related to joy, priests danced while singing on the fifteenth step of the temple stairs. Perhaps the connection of water with light represented God's appearance in the forms of a cloud and a pillar of light for His people. Our Christ is the foundation of the living water and Giver of light and joy. In addition to these rituals, there are sacrifices and holocausts mentioned in Deuteronomy 29:12-19. The eighth day was counted as an independent feast called "Retreat" where everybody goes into retreat for worship.

#### The Inner Joy: Leviticus 24

Having already spoken of the holy feasts and joyful convocations, God now proclaims the mystery of true inner joy through care for the golden lamp-stand to enjoy the light, and care for heavenly bread to enjoy satisfaction. Light and satisfaction bring inner happiness, while the loss of joy is due to blasphemy against God's name and offending others.

1. All lamps are lit the whole night with pure olive oil and only three lamps during the day. Oil refers to love; without it, we lose the divine light and will not enjoy the wedding with the wise virgins (Matt. 25).
2. The table of the show-bread (Exod. 25:30) is equal to the mystery of the Eucharist.
3. Blasphemy destroys joy and life; for the son of the Shulemite's woman was sentenced to death (his father was Egyptian and his mother was Jewish). He symbolizes the blasphemous person, for he belongs to the church (the Jewish Mother), but he accepts Pharaoh (that is Satan) as his father instead of God.

#### Laws of Internal Liberties: Leviticus 25

Here, He speaks about internal liberties through some laws concerning the poor, slaves, fields and houses.

1. The law of the Sabbatical year [1-7]: It is a year of solemn rest, when it is not lawful to sow the land and gather its harvest even with regards to fruit-bearing trees. This year gives the soil a kind of rest so that it does not lose its fertility. It also gives the poor and the foreigner a chance to gather and to eat without embarrassment. Also, those who work in the land have some rest. From the spiritual point of view, it gives a chance and a lesson for trusting in God [20-22].
2. Law of Jubilee Year [8-22]: It is the culmination of the Sabbatical system. It is called year of liberation (Ezekiel 46:17). Its rituals are as follows:
  - a. As a symbol of the Pentecost (liberty of the Holy Spirit), the slaves are granted their freedom; all lands (mortgaged and sold) are to be restored to their owners; debtors are forgiven their debts etc. Through this ritual, everybody is filled with joy; all realize that they are foreigners (Lev. 25:23), and what they own are God's own (Lev. 25:23), which He grants

them not for exploitation of others but for their assistance. Through this ritual, each tribe and each family restore the shares granted to them. The feast is to show fairness and to avoid exploitation, hence, one is not to oppress the other.

b. Like the Sabbatical year, it is a year for rest [11,21]; it symbolizes the eternal rest.

3. Laws for sale of lands [23-28]: The commitment of each family to keep its land as long as they can, symbolizes the attachment of man to the new land, that is to the eternal life. If he is compelled to sell the land, he or his guardian will release it [25:25], as was the case of Ruth and Boaz. Our Christ is the Guardian who bought the church (the holy land) and released it through His precious blood.

4. Laws for sales of houses [29-33] or mortgaging them and the manner of releasing them. Laws distinguished between houses in walled cities [29-30], where they can be released only within a year, and houses in villages [31] which if not released within a year, they would be restored in the Jubilee year, because they are necessary for agricultural lands. Levities' houses in their cities can be released at any time; fields of Levities' houses in their cities allotted as folds for cattle and not for agricultural purposes, cannot be sold at all. Fenced houses represent those whose behavior became heavenly (Phil. 3:2) as Jerusalem is fenced (Rev. 21:14). May men do not sell their lives for a sin that relates to their faith, and if they fall, they have to hurry for repentance lest the span of their lives passes and they lose their eternity without restoring their inner houses. Those who own houses in a village without walls refer to those who behave in simplicity and thus are exposed to continuous casual sins and they need continuous repentance. The houses and fields of the Levities symbolize the lives of ministers devoted to the Lord who must hurry to restore their lives as soon as they exposed sin.

5. Laws for lending brothers [35-38]: Those who borrow out of need must be treated kindly. It is not right to receive interest or usury from them.

6. Law for the Hebrew slave (Lev. 25:39-43) and foreign slave (Lev. 25:44-46): the Hebrew slave who accepts slavery by his own will in Jesus Christ who was a Hebrew and became slave for our salvation. Perforating the ear of the slave who accepts slavery means perfect obedience. Our Lord Jesus Christ obeyed the Father for our sake so that we might be obedient children to God.

7. Law of the Hebrew enslaved to a foreigner [47-55]: His relatives have to pay for his release without injustice to the foreigner but they have to pay for him equitably.

Promises of Blessing and Retribution: Leviticus 26

a. Blessings of obedience to the Holy God:

1. Material blessings: "I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce" [4]. God cares for the needs of the whole mankind, especially those who follow His commandment. Rain refers to God's word (Deut. 32:1,2) which is abundantly bestowed upon us, transferring our inner desert to a paradise. Our land is our earthly body that gives a spiritual fruit through the work of the Holy Spirit in it. Fruitful trees mean the various virtues granted by God. God gives in abundance so that those who harvest the crops work up to the

time of fruit-reaping; and those who gather, work to harvest. In this manner, their lives are incessantly reaping and harvesting.

2. Peace: "I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid" [6]. Thus the heart is filled with peace and the body enjoys a restful sleep without fear or anxiety (Phil. 4:7; Ps. 91:65; Ps. 17:1-3).

3. Power to send away the forces of darkness [7]; that no evil beast, meaning spiritual armies of evil, approaches us (Eph. 6:2; 1 Peter 5:8; Ps. 74:19).

4. Safety from the sword [6].

5. Expulsion of enemies [7-8]: Five expel a hundred, and a hundred will expel ten-thousands. By sanctifying the five senses, the force of darkness are defeated and holy thoughts (100) expel the ten-thousands of evil spirits.

6. Continuous growth [9], as mentioned in Ezekiel 37:10 where man becomes a very great army.

7. Dwelling with God and entering into a covenant with Him. We enjoy His old covenant not through the letter that kills but through the Spirit that renews [9-11].

b. Curses upon the disobedient:

1. Anxiety and fear: "I will appoint terror over you" [16].

2. They sow without blessing or fruit as it will be eaten by enemies [16].

3. Man becomes fugitive without a true chaser, (Prov. 28:1); our enemy is the "ego."

4. Increase of punishment and disasters.

5. Their killing by the beast [22].

6. Destruction of idols worshiped by them.

7. Sieged cities become ruins. He does not shut the door of repentance but waits for the return of every soul to enjoy His blessings.

Vows and First-Fruits: Leviticus 27

The law of vows and first-fruits represents the reciprocation of man to God of love for love, through the consecration of his life and devoting it to God before offering his animals and the fruits of his field etc.

1. Law of vows: It stipulates that the person offering the vow be a mature person, subject to the guardianship of no one. If the vow is made by a slave, he will be exempted from it if his



master heard it and immediately objects. The second condition is that the subject of the vow should be holy and not unclean otherwise a ransom is to be paid instead. The Nazarite (consecrated to God) who voluntarily devoted his life is Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, who offered His life as a burnt sacrifice in obedience to the Father. When we fulfill our vow, we are united with Christ, be hidden in Him as members of His Body.

2. The law started with the Nazarites (consecrating of persons) like Hannah who vowed her son to the Lord (1 Sam. 1:11). A person or his guardian can pay a certain amount of money as a ransom for the Nazarite. It is the right of the priest to estimate it. It is calculated on the basis of the shekel kept in the temple. If the person is poor, the priest will give his estimate according to the means of the Nazarite [8].

3. As to the clean animals, it is not permissible to exchange the vow by something better or worse. If exchanged, both have to be offered, the original animal and the substitute. As to unclean or defective animals, the price is estimated and the cost has to be paid into the treasury of the house of the Lord. If a person wishes to own it, its price is assessed plus 20. Unexchanging refers to God's desire to have us for Himself in our names; and He does not accept us unclean.

4. As to the vows of the fields, if it is inherited, it will be returned in the Jubilee Year. Therefore, it can be returned to its owner against a price fixed according to the number of years left until the next year of restorative Jubilee plus 20.

5. Law of First-fruits: The previous vows are optional, but first-fruits must be consecrated to the Lord.

6. Law of unconditional devotions, that is, a person or a thing that cannot be used or dealt with. In relation to man, it is he who spoiled his life by idolatry and uncleanness, therefore, Moses' Law ordered his execution. This seems cruel but if we go back to those times, we find that those used to pass their children in fire as human sacrifices to the idols and we ask why God would be merciful with such people. What is unconditionally devoted of animals and fields is used by the priests in the House of the Lord. What is unconditionally devoted of silver and gold goes to the Lord's treasury.

7. Laws of Tithes: Tithes are dedicated to the Lord. If a person wishes to retain it, equivalent cost of crops or fruits is paid plus 20. These laws although bearing some kind of literalism, still bear deep spiritual concepts to the one who approaches them with the Gospel's spirit and thus examines the practical love between God and His people.

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T1 = QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSIONS

1. What's the relation between the Book of Leviticus and Moses' Pentateuch?

2.. What's the role of the Book of Leviticus in the Church life as an assembly and in the believer's life as a member of the Church?

3. Give an account showing how the five sacrifices and oblations of the Old Testament have been symbolic to Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross from several aspects? (Lev. 1-7).
4. What's the difference between guilt sacrifice and sin sacrifice?
5. Compare between Leviticus priesthood and the Lord's Jesus Christ priesthood. (Lev. 8-10; Heb. 7,8)
6. What did the Laws of Purification mean to men of Old Testament?
7. On the other hand what does these Laws mean to us?
8. Are the Laws of Purification abolished (Col. 2:6...etc., Mark 7:18)?  
How is the law fulfilled?
9. Does God consider some food clean and other unclean?
10. Is a woman considered unclean after childbirth?
11. Compare between leprosy and sin, and between the Law of Purification of leper and the work of the Cross in the mysteries (Lev. 13)
12. Why was the Great Day of Atonement the most revered day by the Jews? (Lev.16)
13. Compare between the rituals of the Day of Atonement and the work of the Cross.
14. What does Azazel mean in the rituals of the Day of Atonement? (Lev.16)
15. Blood has a main role in salvation; explain. (Lev. 17; Heb. 9,10)
16. The word "Sanctification" is mentioned repeatedly in this Book. What does it mean?
17. Compare between the warning given to mankind in Lev. 18:24-30, and the extent of evil man committed in Rom. 1:24-32.
18. What's God aim of sanctifying your life?
19. How is the sanctified life interpreted in your relationship with God, family and community, even with the solid nature? (Lev. 19)
20. Why was witchcraft related to adultery in the Old Testament? (Lev. 20)
21. Why was God more severe in laws concerning priests?
22. Does God ask priests to restrain their feelings towards their relatives? (Lev. 21)
23. Show How God is concerned with the sanctity of His Holies. (Lev.22)
24. What are the weekly, monthly and yearly feasts in the Old Testament? (Lev. 23:25)
25. What was the aim of feasts in the Old Testament? How did the Church give up it's literality not it's spiritual concept?
26. Why has God promised the people in old days with temporary blessings, meanwhile threatened them with earthly curses" (Lev. 26)
28. Does God need vows and first-fruits? (Lev.27)  
What's the relation between first-fruits and the Lord Jesus Christ the first-born?