

Stollen Moments – Vayikra – March 25, 2023

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God instructs Moses on the five different kinds of sacrifices that were to be offered in the sanctuary:

- The olah or "burnt offering" was a voluntary sacrifice that had a high degree of sanctity and was regarded as the "standard" offering. The entire animal, except for its hide, was burned on the altar. (1:1-17)
- The minchah or "meal offering" was a sacrifice made of flour, oil, salt, and frankincense that was partly burned on the altar and partly given to the priests to eat. (2:1-16)
- The zevach sh'lammim or "sacrifice of well-being" was a voluntary animal offering from one's herd, sometimes brought to fulfill a vow. (3:1-17)
- The chatat or "sin offering" was an obligatory sacrifice that was offered to expiate unintentional sins. This offering differs from the others in the special treatment of the blood of the animal. (4:1-5:13)
- The asham or "penalty offering" was an obligatory sacrifice of a ram that was required chiefly of one who had misappropriated property. (5:1-26)

Leviticus Chapter 5

וְנִפְשׁ כִּי־תִחַטָּא וְשָׁמְעָה קוֹל אֱלֹהִים וְהוּא עֵד אֹי רָאָה אוֹ יָדַע אִם־לֹא יִגִּיד וְנִשְׂא עוֹנוֹ:

1 If a person incurs guilt —When he has heard a public imprecation and — although able to testify as one who has either seen or learned of the matter — he does not give information, so that he is subject to punishment; 2 Or when a person touches any unclean thing — be it the carcass of an unclean beast or the carcass of unclean cattle or the carcass of an unclean creeping thing — and the fact has escaped him, and then, being unclean, he realizes his guilt;

3 Or when he touches human uncleanness — any such uncleanness whereby one becomes unclean — and, though he has known it, the fact has escaped him, but later he realizes his guilt; 4 Or when a person utters an oath to bad or good purpose — whatever a man may utter in an oath — and, though he has known it, the fact has escaped him, but later he realizes his guilt in any of these matters —

וְהִיָּה כִּי־יֵאָשֵׁם לְאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה וְהִתְנַדָּה אִשְׁרֵי חֲטָא עָלָיָהּ:

5 when he realizes his guilt in any of these matters, he shall confess that wherein he has sinned. 6 And he shall bring as his penalty to the Lord, for the sin of which he is guilty, a female from the flock, sheep or goat, as a sin offering; and the priest shall make expiation on his behalf for his sin.

7 But if his means do not suffice for a sheep, he shall bring to the Lord, as his penalty for that of which he is guilty, two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. 8 He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer first the one for the sin offering, pinching its head at the

nape without severing it. 9 He shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, and what remains of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar; it is a sin offering. 10 And the second he shall prepare as a burnt offering, according to regulation. Thus the priest shall make expiation on his behalf for the sin of which he is guilty, and he shall be forgiven.

11 And if his means do not suffice for two turtledoves or two pigeons, he shall bring as his offering for that of which he is guilty a tenth of an ephah of choice flour for a sin offering; he shall not add oil to it or lay frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. 12 He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall scoop out of it a handful as a token portion of it and turn it into smoke on the altar, with the Lord's offerings by fire; it is a sin offering. 13 Thus the priest shall make expiation on his behalf for whichever of these sins he is guilty, and he shall be forgiven. It shall belong to the priest, like the meal offering.

14 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 15 When a person commits a trespass, being unwittingly remiss about any of the Lord's sacred things, he shall bring as his penalty to the Lord a ram without blemish from the flock, convertible into payment in silver by the sanctuary weight, as a guilt offering. 16 He shall make restitution for that wherein he was remiss about the sacred things, and he shall add a fifth part to it and give it to the priest. The priest shall make expiation on his behalf with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.

17 And when a person, without knowing it, sins in regard to any of the Lord's commandments about things not to be done, and then realizes his guilt, he shall be subject to punishment. 18 He shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, or the equivalent, as a guilt offering. The priest shall make expiation on his behalf for the error that he committed unwittingly, and he shall be forgiven. 19 It is a guilt offering; he has incurred guilt before the Lord.

20 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 21 When a person sins and commits a trespass against the Lord by dealing deceitfully with his fellow in the matter of a deposit or a pledge, or through robbery, or by defrauding his fellow, 22 or by finding something lost and lying about it; if he swears falsely regarding any one of the various things that one may do and sin thereby — 23 when one has thus sinned and, realizing his guilt, would restore that which he got through robbery or fraud, or the deposit that was entrusted to him, or the lost thing that he found, 24 or anything else about which he swore falsely, he shall repay the principal amount and add a fifth part to it. He shall pay it to its owner when he realizes his guilt. 25 Then he shall bring to the priest, as his penalty to the Lord, a ram without blemish from the flock, or the equivalent, as a guilt offering. 26 The priest shall make expiation on his behalf before the Lord, and he shall be forgiven for whatever he may have done to draw blame thereby.

Olah	Minchah	Zevach Sh'lamim	Chatat	Asham
עֹלָה	מִנְחָה	זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים	חַטָּאת	אָשָׁם
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burnt Offering Most common Completely burnt on altar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meal Offering Sharing one's work with God Partially burnt, rest eaten by the kohanim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace/Well-Being Offering Partially burnt, some to the kohanim, some to offeror 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sin Offering Unintentional sins, but admission of guilt Generally eaten by the kohanim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Penalty/Guilt Offering If offered and then offeror admits sin, offeror does Chatat Eaten by the kohanim

Maimonides, Guide to the Perplexed

“It is unreasonable to expect that one who grew up as a slave, laboring in mud and bricks, should one day wash his hands from the dirt and straight off [without any preparation] do battle with the giants. Therefore, God did not immediately bring the people into the Land of Israel, and did not lead them [along the direct route], “the way of the Land of the Philistines” (Ex. 13:17). Similarly, it is unnatural for one who is accustomed to many forms of service and practices, so ingrained that they are like unquestionable laws, to abruptly desist from them.”

History of the Jewish People, H.H. Ben-Sasson (as compiled by Rabbi Daniel Plotkin)

[In regards to the Jews of Babylonia during and after the exile] Worship was now decentralized. Apparently each community met in an assembly, and it might be supposed that their houses of assembly became a place of worship. If so, this was the origin of the synagogue, the focal point of the Jewish community in later times. (p. 173)

Of all the institutions developed by Judaism in the Second Temple era, the synagogue is perhaps the one that exercised the greatest influence on later generations. It has been rightly said that, in establishing the synagogue, Judaism created one of the greatest revolutions in the history of religion and society, for the synagogue was an entirely new environment for divine service, of a type of unknown anywhere before, and it did not entail the ceremonial restrictions and financial sacrifices that were required for the maintenance of the temples. ... The synagogue was the instrument that kept Jewish tradition and the Jewish faith alive and that made them accessible to the rank and file of the Jewish people. Its functions extended to many areas: it was a house of Torah study and of Prayer, but also a focus of social and cultural life. (p. 285)