

Sacrifices and Offerings

This chapter and the next will zero in on the one issue that most fundamentally separates Orthodox Judaism from Christianity: the sacrifices. As we shall see (and indeed, have already seen) the Torah is chock full of rules and regulations about precisely how to perform sacrificial rites to Yahweh—not just one kind of offering, but dozens, each with its own unique characteristics and requirements. Either Yahweh was totally fixated on sacrifices and offerings, or He was trying to teach us something very important.

Nobody performs these sacrifices today—*nobody*. Even Jews who claim to be “Torah observant” are total failures at keeping the mitzvot listed in this chapter. Why? First, they can't be performed without a sanctuary in Israel—a tabernacle or temple in the “place where Yahweh chooses,” which we now know to be Jerusalem. Second, there are no qualified priests to administer them. The Jews haven't made systematic sacrifices as described in the Torah since the Romans tore down Herod's temple in 70 A.D. Bar Kochba—Rabbi Akiba's false Messiah—attempted to reinstitute them, but his rebellion was crushed in 135 and both men were slain. In point of fact, the most significant Levitical sacrifice of all, that made on the Day of Atonement, has not been properly performed since before the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar tore down Solomon's temple in 586 B.C. That's when the Ark of the Covenant—essential for the rite—disappeared from the Holy of Holies. (It was probably secreted away by the Prophet Jeremiah. See *Future History*, Chapter 13: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem” for the whole incredible story.)

The Jews aren't stupid, of course. They know there's a whole body of Law that can't be kept. How do they deal with it? Some (very few) “hold their breath,” waiting expectantly for the day when the temple and its service can be restored. Judaism 101 reports: “Do Jews want to resume sacrifices? Orthodox Jews do. There are several places in our daily prayer services where we pray for the restoration of the Temple and the resumption of its rituals, including the rituals of sacrifice.” So there is an undercurrent of frustration among Orthodox Jews who *know* that the way things are is not really the way they're supposed to be. Something's wrong; they just don't know what it is. Again, Judaism 101 explains how they deal with it: “How do Jews obtain forgiveness without sacrifices? Forgiveness is obtained through repentance, prayer and good deeds. In Jewish practice, prayer has taken the place of sacrifices.... But isn't a blood sacrifice required in order to obtain forgiveness? No. Although animal sacrifice is one

means of obtaining forgiveness, there are non-animal offerings as well, and there are other means for obtaining forgiveness that do not involve sacrifices at all.” Tracey Rich is confused here. Yes, there are non-animal offerings, but none of them are designed to atone for sin, even temporarily. They express thankfulness and accompany petitions. For the remission of sin, however, anything less than the shedding of innocent blood is smoke and mirrors, wishful thinking—and more to the point, contrary to what Yahweh ordained. Atonement requires innocent blood, which in turn requires a temple and a priesthood, which do not exist today. Orthodox Jews today are between a rock and a hard place.

They are counting on Malachi 3:1. **“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord [adown: ruler or master], whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says Yahweh of hosts....”** Yes, they know that Messiah is coming, and that Elijah (see Malachi 4:5) will precede Him, and that the temple will stand during His reign (though they don’t see the significance in the fact that all these things defined Yahshua’s first-century advent). What I can’t figure out is how devout Jews can be so excited about verse 1, and be in such denial concerning verse 2: **“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap.”** In other words, He will separate the good from the worthless, making everything pure and clean (because as of now, it’s corrupt and filthy). It won’t be a pleasant experience. The coming purification process will shake Israel to her very foundations. Yahweh gave us so much data on this, it took me half a dozen chapters in *Future History* to describe what will happen. **“He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to Yahweh an offering in righteousness.”** The reason (one of them) that the privilege of sacrifice and offering has been taken away from Israel is that the “sons of Levi,” i.e., the priests, are in need of cleansing and purification. God is blatantly stating that the present Jewish method for dealing with the Torah—trying to obtain forgiveness through “repentance, prayer and good deeds”—is skewed and corrupted. But it won’t be this way forever. The Messiah will “purify the sons of Levi.” **“Then [and only then] the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to Yahweh, as in the days of old, as in former years.”** (Malachi 3:1-4) The last nine chapters of the Book of Ezekiel describe the “purified” Israel, its renewed temple and priesthood. It bears no resemblance to what goes on in Judaism today.

And what about Christians? We tend to make totally different blunders. Christians all too often assume that since Yahshua fulfilled the Law, it has nothing to teach them. *The Torah’s precepts need not be followed, so we can*

ignore it with impunity. At first glance, passages like this one from Hebrews seem to support that view, but what's really being said is quite different. **"If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it."** This is all the further some of us get: *the Old Covenant is faulty.* **"But God himself found fault with the old one when he said: 'The day will come, says Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, says Yahweh....'"** We need to ask ourselves, was God surprised, shocked, and dismayed by this development, or is it more likely that He knew precisely what He was doing, unfolding His plan of redemption in stages—like asking Israel to master arithmetic before tackling calculus?

"But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says Yahweh: I will put my laws in their minds so they will understand them, and I will write them on their hearts so they will obey them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, 'You should know Yahweh.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me. And I will forgive their wrongdoings, and I will never again remember their sins...." This is the heart of the issue, the definition of the New Covenant: coming to really *understand* the mind of God, to be one with it, to be so familiar with what our Father thinks that doing His will becomes second nature. A schoolchild learns his A-B-Cs. A young musician practices his scales until he's blue in the face. Why? So they can utilize these tools without having to think about them. Did Shakespeare agonize over how to form an "A" with his pen? Did Bach have to calculate how many sharps there are in the key of A? Actually, at one time, they did, but we remember their subsequent works because they got beyond these "laws." Their words and music reflect their "understanding" and "knowledge," that is, their utter and complete familiarity with the "laws" of their craft. So don't misapply the word "obsolete" in the next verse: **"When God speaks of a new covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and ready to be put aside."** (Hebrews 8:7-13 NLT) The word translated "obsolete" (Greek *palaios*) means: "pertaining to a point of time preceding another point of time, with an interval of considerable length—'of long ago.'" (Louw & Nida) The Old Covenant is only "obsolete" as musical notes became obsolete to Bach and the English alphabet became so to Shakespeare—something that was learned long ago, now moved to the background of the subconscious, as natural as breathing.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews (I assume it's Paul, though I can't be dogmatic) now uses the symbols latent in the Old Covenant to illuminate Christ's role as revealed in the New Covenant. **"Now in that first covenant between God and Israel, there were regulations for worship and a sacred tent here on earth. There were two rooms in this tent...."** He goes on to describe what was found in the Holy Place and

beyond the veil in the Most Holy Place. **“When these things were all in place, the priests went in and out of the first room regularly as they performed their religious duties. But only the high priest goes into the Most Holy Place, and only once a year [on the Day of Atonement], and always with blood, which he offers to God to cover his own sins and the sins the people have committed in ignorance....”** Paul has pointed out the fatal flaw in Orthodox Judaism: our sins *cannot* be covered by “repentance, prayer or good deeds” (though these are all good things, efficacious in maintaining open lines of communication with our God). Atonement can only be achieved through the shedding of innocent blood. Yahweh was very clear about this.

“By these regulations the Holy Spirit revealed that the Most Holy Place was not open to the people as long as the first room and the entire system it represents were still in use.” (Hebrews 9:1-2, 6-8 NLT) In the previous chapter, we discussed the temple furnishings, and how each piece instructed us how to approach the Almighty. Here we see that the “first room,” the Holy Place, represents the Law. The things done there had to be repeated over and over again throughout the year. The Holy Place—the Law—was a passageway through which one had to pass to reach the heart of the sanctuary. But in the Most Holy Place, the sacrifice was “permanent,” that is, it was done only once during the year. (Note that this demonstrates the progressive nature of the seven feast of Yahweh: the annual cycle, beginning in the spring, is a calendar marking the seven most significant events in God’s plan of redemption, just as the Temple’s layout, furnishings, and service symbolized His plan in non-chronological terms.) The inner room, the Most Holy Place, represents the grace of the New Covenant—God’s permanent, once-and-for-all-time provision of atonement for our sin. It is the place where we can commune directly with Yahweh—it’s no longer off-limits since the veil forbidding access was torn into two pieces at Christ’s crucifixion. The Law (the Holy Place) was never the final destination, though until Yahshua finished His work, it was as far as we could go. The High Priest alone was authorized to proceed further.

And He did. **“So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world. Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever....** How did Yahshua enter the Most Holy Place? By serving as our great High Priest in the *heavenly* Temple—after His crucifixion and after His ascension. Christ’s excursion into the heavenly Temple’s Most Holy Place was an exercise in the realization of Yahweh’s Old-Covenant symbols. Note first that He had to pass through the Holy Place to get there—that is, the Law had to be fulfilled in all its detail. All of its symbols and metaphors had to come to fruition in the life and work of the Messiah.

Second, innocent blood had to be shed and sprinkled upon the mercy seat. **“Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people’s bodies from ritual defilement. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered Himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.”** Annual atonement was a metaphor involving an annual sacrifice—the blood of an innocent, flawless animal. But the reality—perfect, permanent atonement—would require a perfect, eternal Sacrifice: Immanuel Himself. **“That is why He is the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, so that all who are invited can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.”** (Hebrews 9:11-15 NLT)

The Greek word translated “covenant” above, and “will” in the paragraph below, is *diatheke*, meaning: “a disposition or arrangement, of any sort, which one wishes to be valid; the last disposition which one makes of his earthly possessions after his death, a testament or will—a compact or covenant.” (S) It is an agreement between two parties, one that has legal standing. It promises certain things, and may in turn impose certain conditions. The first “arrangement” between Yahweh and Israel—the Law—was defined by the blessings and cursings of Deuteronomy 28 (and elsewhere): if Israel would keep Yahweh’s commandments, all these good things would happen to them; but if they did not, all these bad things would happen to them instead. The history of Israel proves that either they did not keep Yahweh’s covenant or God is a liar, for the curses of Deuteronomy 28 have followed them like a shadow for three millennia. People who contend that they are keeping the Law are deceiving themselves. Man has proven himself to be unable or unwilling to keep the conditions of the first covenant. So Yahweh changed the requirements of His covenant the second time around: this time, the “conditions” of the covenant would be met by His Messiah alone, not by us. Bear in mind that the two-room layout of the sanctuary demonstrates that both these covenants, Law and Grace, were part of Yahweh’s plan from the very beginning. Grace is *not* a desperate attempt on God’s part to salvage a failed covenant of Law.

“Now when someone dies and leaves a will, no one gets anything until it is proved that the person who wrote the will is dead. The will goes into effect only after the death of the person who wrote it. While the person is still alive, no one can use the will to get any of the things promised to them. That is why blood was required under the first covenant as a proof of death.” The “estate” of the animal being sacrificed wasn’t the one going through “probate” under the Law. The sacrifice of innocent beasts was only done to demonstrate that the One leaving the will would *Himself* have to die in order for us to benefit from His will. The deaths of sacrificial animals merely confirmed the covenant: **“For after Moses had given the people all of God’s laws, he took the blood of**

calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's laws and all the people, using branches of hyssop bushes and scarlet wool. Then he said, 'This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you.' And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the sacred tent and on everything used for worship. In fact, we can say that according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified by sprinkling with blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins." The reason everything in the Tabernacle was sprinkled with sacrificial blood was that everything in the Tabernacle was symbolic of the Messiah: His life, His mission, and His identity. "That is why the earthly tent and everything in it—which were copies of things in heaven—had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals." (Hebrews 9:16-23 NLT)

"For Christ has entered into heaven itself to appear now before God as our Advocate. He did not go into the earthly place of worship, for that was merely a copy of the real Temple in heaven." (Hebrews 9:24) Not to mention the fact that because Yahshua was born of the kingly tribe of Judah (not the priestly tribe of Levi), He would have been violating the Torah if He had ventured inside the earthly Temple, thus disqualifying Himself as our sinless Savior. The Babylonian Talmud, seeing the possibilities inherent in this fictitious scenario (and needing a plausible alternative explanation for the miraculous life of Yahshua) would have you believe this fanciful prevarication: *"Now, there was in the Temple a stone on which was engraved the Tetragrammaton [YHWH] or Schem Hamphorasch, that is to say, the Ineffable Name of God; this stone had been found by King David when the foundations of the Temple were being prepared and was deposited by him in the Holy of Holies. Jeschu [Yahshua], knowing this, came from Galilee and, penetrating into the Holy of Holies, read the Ineffable name, which he transcribed on to a piece of parchment and concealed in an incision under his skin. By this means he was able to work miracles and to persuade the people that he was the son of God foretold by Isaiah. With the aid of Judas, the Sages of the Synagogue succeeding in capturing Jeschu, who was then led before the Great and Little Sanhedrim, by whom he was condemned to be stoned to death and finally hanged. Such is the story of Christ according to the Jewish Kabbalists (treatise Sabbath, folio 104, treatise Sanhedrim, folio 107, and Sota, folio 47)." Oh really? All He had to do to see the "Ineffable Name of God" was to write His own name: Yahshua means "Yahweh is salvation." Rabbinic fables notwithstanding, there is no possibility that Yahshua ever "penetrated into the Holy of Holies" of Herod's Temple, or used Yahweh's name as some sort of magic charm.*

"Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the earthly high priest who enters the Most Holy Place year after year to offer the blood of an animal. If that had been necessary, He would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But no! He came once for all time, at the end of the age, to remove the power of sin forever by His sacrificial death for us." Because of the repetitive nature of the temple sacrifices,

it would be easy to misconstrue them as the appeasement of a bloodthirsty God. They are nothing of the sort, but without the fulfillment of their “types” by the Messiah, we might never have been clear on that point. Here we are seeing the fundamental difference between appeasement and redemption. Christ didn’t so much atone for our “sins” (*plural*, like paying the fines for a stack of parking tickets) as He atoned for our “sin”—our systemic falling short of God’s standard, the prodigal experience of our race. His death makes possible our reconciliation with a holy God, if only we’ll turn around and go home. It doesn’t matter whether we’ve fallen only once in our lifetime or a billion times—one perfect sacrifice is sufficient. **“And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again but not to deal with our sins again. This time he will bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for Him.** (Hebrews 9:25-28 NLT) Yahshua did what can be done to atone for our sins when last He walked the earth. By the time He returns, every human being on the planet will have chosen whether to accept His grace or reject it. Those who are “eagerly waiting for Him,” as I am, have nothing to fear from the coming judgment.

THE FIRSTBORN

(459) *Sanctify the firstling of clean cattle and offer it up.* **“Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.’”** (Exodus 13:1-2); **“All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to Yahweh your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. You and your household shall eat it before Yahweh your God year by year in the place which Yahweh chooses.”** (Deuteronomy 15:19-20) Why was Yahweh so preoccupied with the firstborn—and especially firstborn males? At first, this seems rather odd, since when choosing men for special anointing, He almost never selected the firstborn of a family—Moses and David are typical examples of *last-born* leaders. In God’s economy, the firstborn signified sacrifice, not service. But culturally, the firstborn son would normally become the head of the family, inheriting authority and a double portion of the father’s estate. This explains why the firstborn of Egypt, from Pharaoh’s eldest son on down, were the objects of the tenth and ultimate plague—the Passover. Authority belongs to Yahweh alone.

When the firstborn is first *born*, he or she is necessarily an “only begotten” child—the most precious thing in the world to the parents (or at least that’s God’s pattern—in these Last Days, natural love is becoming increasingly rare). The child is Yahweh’s object lesson at this point. Full

of promise and potential, the firstborn is the focus of the parents' devotion, attention, and love. This precept, then, was designed to teach us about the nature of the sacrifice Yahweh was planning to make on our behalf—sending His own “firstborn” son, Yahshua, to a sacrificial death so that we might live. It's the ultimate expression of love.

The object lesson continues. Yahweh is not a bloodthirsty God: although firstborn Israelite children were to be considered His property (because *His* firstborn would be sacrificed on their behalf), they were to be redeemed—bought back—not sacrificed. Clean animals, however, were to be slain; no “benefit” was to be derived from them (work, fleece, etc.) other than life itself. The owner of the animal and his family were to eat the meat of the sacrifice. That is why Yahshua **“took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”** (Matthew 26:26-28) The death of Yahweh's Firstborn is life for us, if only we will “take, eat.”

PASSOVER

- (460) *Slay the Paschal lamb.* **“On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.”** (Exodus 12:3-6) Forget the fact that Jews today don't do this, but substitute an alternate ritual—one with an entirely different meaning—for their Passover observance. In reality, this is a detailed prophecy of the coming of their Messiah. On Nisan 10, 33 A.D. (March 28, that year) Yahshua entered the “household” of Israel. This was the date of His “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem, Palm *Monday* as it turns out. (This event also fulfills the exacting requirements of the Daniel 9:26 prophecy—the culmination of precisely 173,880 days called for by the prophet—sixty-nine 360-day septades.) “On the fourteenth day of the same month,” Friday, April 1, 33, the “Lamb of God” (as John the Baptist had identified Yahshua) was slain. His death came “at twilight,” just as required by the prophecy, and the “whole assembly” was responsible. And note one more thing: the Paschal lamb was to be “just enough” for those partaking of it: Christ's sacrifice is precisely sufficient.

No works need be added to make it satisfactory, nor is it too big to comprehend and assimilate. It is perfectly sufficient for “each man’s need.”

- (461) *Eat the flesh of the Paschal sacrifice on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan. “Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”* (Exodus 12:8) The “fifteenth of Nisan,” which was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, began at sundown on the “day” of Passover. That is, the lamb that had been killed at “twilight” (see Mitzvah #460) had to be prepared and be roasting over the fire by the time three stars could be seen in the night sky—only a few hours later. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a designated Sabbath, so all the work had to be finished before the sun went down. This is a continuation of the Passover prophecy. The Lamb of God, Yahshua, had been slain on the afternoon of the Passover. By sundown, His body had been laid in a tomb, and His soul was enduring judgment (symbolized by roasting the Paschal lamb in fire) on our behalf. The bitter agony suffered by the incarnate God as He endured our punishment is reflected in the bitter herbs accompanying the meal. The unleavened bread speaks of the result of His ordeal: all of our sin (represented by leaven, or yeast) has been removed from our lives. And the Sabbath designation tells us that we can’t work for that which Yahshua was accomplishing through all of this. All we can do is accept it—“eat the flesh on that night,” assimilate Christ into our lives. In light of the historical facts, it seems to me that today’s Jews have to work really hard to miss the meaning of these things. Every facet of Passover Law has seen Messianic fulfillment.
- (462) *Do not eat the flesh of the Paschal lamb raw or sodden. “Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails.”* (Exodus 12:9) The Passover Lamb—the whole thing—was to be “roasted in fire,” not prepared in any other manner. Fire represents judgment. The heart of the symbolism is separation: fire is used to purify or “prove” metals. Heated to its melting temperature, gold separates from the dross that contaminates it, leaving only pure and valuable metal. Thus the judgment Yahshua endured for our sakes makes us pure and undefiled, able to stand guiltless before our God.

It seems to me that the instruction to roast the *whole* lamb—“its head with its legs and its entrails”—is there to prophesy what would really happen to Yahshua: His whole being—body, soul and spirit—was separated from the Father as He bore our sins to sheol. Yahweh knew that heresies would arise that denied this. Docetism, for example, claimed that Yahshua only *appeared* to have a body—that He wasn’t really God

incarnate, and therefore didn't really suffer on the cross, nor was His bodily resurrection real. Arianism, on the other hand, claimed that Yahshua was really a created being, hence His Spirit could not have undergone judgment on our behalf. Yahweh begs to differ: the entire lamb was roasted.

- (463) *Do not leave any portion of the flesh of the Paschal sacrifice until the morning unconsumed. "You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire."* (Exodus 12:10) There are no "left-overs" with the Passover meal. Whatever isn't utilized during the allotted time is to be consumed by fire. That is to say, we have a limited window of opportunity to receive the benefit of Christ's sacrifice. The Passover meal *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread—that is, it represents the removal of sin from our lives. If we choose not to partake of God's grace when it's available, we are wasting the sacrifice of the Son of God, saying, in effect, *"Your sacrifice and gracious provision are insignificant trash to me—worthy only to be consigned to the flames."* Paul quoted the prophet Isaiah: *"In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* (II Corinthians 6:2) The Passover meal—the opportunity to partake of God's grace—won't last forever.
- (464) *Do not give the flesh of the Paschal lamb to an Israelite who had become an apostate. "This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it....All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to Yahweh, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you."* (Exodus 12:43-45, 47-49) Maimonides' ban on apostate Jews isn't even hinted at in the actual text. In fact, Yahweh insists that *"all* the congregation of Israel shall keep it," and I'll guarantee that there were a few closet rebels among God's chosen. If the symbolism of the Torah is not taken into account, the actual precept makes very little sense: *Any male who hasn't had the foreskin of his penis removed may not eat lamb with flat bread and bitter herbs on the fifteenth day of the month of Nisan.* Huh? Like most everything in the Torah, the symbols must be worked out to understand what Yahweh was trying to teach us. We've been discussing Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for the past few mitzvot. The sacrifice of the Messiah and the subsequent removal of our sins are the only possible meaning. But what does circumcision mean? If you'll recall, we discussed this at length back in the first chapter

(Mitzvah #17). There, I defined the term: “Circumcision signified that the barrier of sin that separated us from Yahweh had been removed, cut off, destroyed—a process that involved blood and pain, but one that made us available for God’s use.”

Putting the symbols together then, we see that in order for us to be reconciled to God (and spared an encounter with the destroyer—cf. Exodus 12:23), we must partake of the sacrifice Yahweh Himself provided, one whose blood has been smeared on the doorpost and lintel of our dwelling place—the cross of Calvary. We must do this during the window of opportunity God has specified—“*Now is the day of salvation,*” for we never know how much longer our mortal lives will last. No one whose sin has not been “removed, cut off, and destroyed” will benefit from the sacrifice of Yahweh’s Messiah, though one need not be born an Israelite to be reconciled to God through His death, burial, and resurrection.

- (465) *Do not give flesh of the Paschal lamb to a stranger who lives among you to eat. “This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it.... A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it.”* (Exodus 12:43, 45) All of the congregation of Israel were to partake in the Passover/Unleavened Bread feast. But no one who didn’t share in Israel’s calling or destiny was eligible. Mere proximity wasn’t enough. One had to be an active participant in the life of Yahweh’s chosen people.

As we saw above, the universal criteria was what circumcision symbolized. “Strangers” who had been circumcised had said with their actions that they desired to share in the set-apart life of Israel, to worship their God, and to forsake Egypt for the hope of a Promised Land beyond the wilderness. We read that a “mixed multitude” accompanied Israel out of Egypt at the exodus. Some of these were merely taking advantage of the situation—fleeing from the harsh rule of Pharaoh. But others were truly devoted to the God of Israel. A notable example is the mighty Caleb, the son of a Kenizzite—from a Canaanite tribe whose land was promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:19. Caleb was circumcised and absorbed into the tribe of Judah—chosen as one of the twelve men to spy out the land, and one of only two in his entire generation who had the faith to believe Yahweh’s promises.

- (466) *Do not take any of the flesh of the Paschal lamb from the company’s place of assembly. “In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house.”* (Exodus 12:46) In the context of the original observance of this *miqra*, it was easy to see why you weren’t to leave the house during the Passover meal: Yahweh had purposed to slay the firstborn of everyone and everything in Egypt who wasn’t sheltered by the blood of the Paschal

lamb, smeared on the doorposts and lintel of the houses. If you wanted to live, you stayed indoors, protected by the blood. It's no different today, but the "doorpost" is the cross, the blood is Yahshua's, and the life you save is eternal.

- (467) *Do not break a bone of the Paschal lamb. "...nor shall you break one of its bones.* (Exodus 12:46) It's details like this one that fairly scream: *No, you're not just imagining the connection between the Torah's requirements and the life and mission of Yahshua of Nazareth.* The Passover lamb's bones were not to be broken because the Messiah's bones would not be broken—even though it was common for the victims of crucifixion to suffer broken limbs, even as Christ's two unfortunate companions did. I'll leave it to you to figure out what God meant by this if He wasn't referring to the Messiah's death.
- (468) *The uncircumcised shall not eat of the flesh of the Paschal lamb. "When a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to Yahweh, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it."* (Exodus 12:48) To me, the remarkable thing isn't that Yahweh requires males to be circumcised in order to partake of Passover, but that He provides a means for "strangers," non-Israelite believers, to approach Him in worship. Circumcision was only a symbol, however. The New Covenant writers, especially Paul, make it clear that now that the Reality has come, the shadow it casts is no longer essential—the rite of circumcision, like the rest of the Torah, has been fulfilled in the work of Yahshua the Messiah. He has removed our sin from us, permanently and completely. We gentiles may therefore benefit from the Passover sacrifice—if we want to.
- (469) *Do not slaughter the Paschal lamb while there is chametz in the home. "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning.* (Exodus 23:18) *"So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to Yahweh throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you*

shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.” (Exodus 12:14-20)

Removing the *chametz* (leaven or yeast) from the household for seven days means roughly the same thing circumcision does: that sin has been permanently and totally eliminated from our lives in Yahweh’s reckoning. Maimonides’ mitzvah cannot be found in the Scriptural instructions, for it misses the point, the order of things: the removal of our sin is the *result* of Yahweh’s Paschal Lamb being slain—even though as a practical matter Jewish households did not wait until the last minute on Passover to go hunting for yeast to get rid of.

- (470) *Do not leave the part of the Paschal lamb that should be burnt on the altar until the morning, when it will no longer be fit to be burnt. “You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. (Exodus 23:18) “You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.” (Exodus 12:10)* Maimonides has once again missed the point, which is: the Passover sacrifice was to be consumed all at once, in the narrow timeframe Yahweh had provided. The grace it represents is a limited-time offer. It’s only extended while we as individuals are alive in our mortal bodies. If we don’t take the opportunity to partake of the Passover Lamb while we can, we are consigning God’s Son to the fire of judgment. There is no “get-out-of-hell-free” card in this game after we die. We have to move when it’s our turn.

SACRIFICES AND THE SANCTUARY

- (471) *Do not go up to the Sanctuary for the festival without bringing an offering. “Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.” (Exodus 23:14-16)* Phrasing this as a negative mitzvah is an attempt to skirt the sensitive issue of there being *no sanctuary to go to*. Like so many precepts in this chapter and the next, this one is impossible to keep in any literal way, and it has been since 70 A.D. If you’re not willing to look at the symbolic aspects of these feasts, you’re left with a horrific

conundrum—God requiring you to perform that which cannot be done. The Israelites were to gather in Jerusalem three times a year. The spring feasts (Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits) were prophetic of the death, burial, and resurrection of the coming Messiah. In early summer, the Feast of Weeks (called here the “Feast of Harvest,” and later known as Pentecost) foreshadowed the permanent indwelling of Yahweh’s Spirit within His followers. The next two *miqrym*, oddly enough, didn’t require a journey to the central place of meeting in Israel. The Feast of Trumpets signals the gathering of God’s elect—who over the last two millennia have been primarily gentiles. And the Day of Atonement isn’t a feast at all, but a prediction of the bittersweet day when Israel, as a nation, recognizes her disastrous first-century miscalculation and finally recognizes Yahshua as the Messiah. The last *miqra* of the year, the Feast of Tabernacles (here referred to as the Feast of Ingathering) again required a central gathering within Israel, for this Feast was prophetic of God’s coming to “tabernacle” or camp out among men on the earth.

Maimonides’ *mitzvah* points out, quite rightly, that when people came to the sanctuary for these three annual celebrations, they were not to come empty handed, but were to bring the prescribed sacrifices with them. Does this indicate that we must in some way purchase our redemption? No, but to understand why, we must once again study the symbols. What did the sacrifices mean? They aren’t a means of appeasement, and they aren’t bribes. Rather, they are symbolic of key elements of Yahweh’s plan of redemption, concepts that must be addressed if we are to be reconciled to God. Although the feasts varied somewhat, several categories of sacrifice came up time and again.

1. Lambs (unblemished, usually a year old, male)—symbolic of the Messiah, Yahshua, the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”
2. Bulls—a metaphor for human power and pride leading to false doctrine, teaching, and worship.
3. Goats—symbolic of sin, missing the mark set by Yahweh.
4. Rams (male adult sheep with horns)—to atone for sin. Like lambs, rams must be unblemished, for they are symbolic of Christ. The horns symbolize authority.
5. Grain (fine flour, with no chaff or bran)—indicative of Yahweh’s provision for our temporal needs through our separation from the world.

6. Unleavened bread or wafers—Bread (usually fine wheat flour) baked without leaven or yeast (so it would be flat, like pita bread). The deletion of leaven symbolizes the absence of sin, and bread is reminiscent of the body of Yahshua (John 6:35).
7. Oil (i.e., olive oil, usually mixed with the fine flour)—symbolic of the Holy Spirit: the source of light, available only through the crushing of the olive, again a picture of the Messiah’s sacrifice. (see Zechariah 4:1-6)
8. Frankincense—a symbol of the attainment of purity through sacrifice.
9. Drink offerings (libations of wine, poured out upon the ground)—predictive of the blood of Christ that would be shed for our sins.

Each of these things was offered up as an acknowledgment that Yahweh was the undisputed sovereign of Israel. Whether or not the worshippers understood their significance (and until the Messiah came, how could they?) the Law was to be followed simply because Yahweh said so. That was reason enough.

(472) *Bring the first fruits to the Sanctuary.* **“The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of Yahweh your God.”** (Exodus 23:19) Each of the three annual gatherings came at a time of agricultural significance. At the Feast of Firstfruits in the spring, the barley harvest was just beginning. Seven weeks later, the same thing was true of the wheat harvest, celebrated at the Feast of Weeks. And the Feast of Tabernacles (a.k.a. Ingathering) came at the end of the growing season, when the harvests of field, orchard, and vineyard were complete. In arranging things this way, Yahweh was encouraging His people to acknowledge His bountiful provision—both before and after they received it. It’s easy enough to be thankful when the harvest is already in the barn, but God’s precepts emphasize showing gratitude *before* the crop has come in—Firstfruits. Thankfulness before the fact is evidence of faith.

Fruits and vegetables aren’t the only crop on God’s mind, of course. People are the fruit of God’s field. Yahshua Himself was the “firstfruits” of the harvest of mankind, proving it by His resurrection on the Feast of Firstfruits and His subsequent ascension to the “house of Yahweh our God” in Heaven. Today, Yahweh is looking for evidence of our faith, manifested in thankfulness for our secure eternal destinies—now, while we’re still growing in the field, rooted in these mortal bodies. We will join our Messiah at the harvest—coming soon to a world near you.

(473) *The flesh of a sin-offering and guilt-offering shall be eaten.* **“Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the**

door of the tabernacle of meeting. They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them....” (Exodus 29:32-33)

The ordinary sin offering (*chata't*) and guilt offering (*asham*) are not in view here. (We'll discuss both of these in detail later in this chapter.) Rather, the entire 29th chapter of Exodus describes how the priests, beginning with Aaron and his sons, were to be consecrated, or set-apart, for Yahweh's service. The chapter begins, **“This is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests.”** *Eating* the flesh of a sacrifice is the least of it—it's like saying the recipe for baking a cake consisted of licking the spatula you used to apply the frosting.

The symbolism is so rich, I could ramble on for pages describing the process in detail, but let's confine ourselves to the high points. The consecration of the priests involved several elements: **“one young bull and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil,”** (verse 2) as well as clean water, the priestly garments (see Mitzvah 372), special anointing oil (see Mitzvah #436), and the big altar that stood outside the door of the Tabernacle of Meeting. See Mitzvah #471 for the symbolic significance of the various sacrificial items. First the priests were ceremonially washed and clothed, a picture of receiving imputed righteousness. The first thing sacrificed was the bull—specifically called a “sin offering,” and indicative of the forsaking of worldly power and pride and the false beliefs that inevitably spring from them. Next was one of the two rams, said to be a “burnt offering,” indicative of judgment (which is essentially the separation of good from evil, the valuable from the worthless, or the living from the dead). Both the bull and first ram were completely consumed in the flames.

The second ram (the “ram of consecration”) was then slain. A bit of its blood was applied to the priests' right earlobe, thumb, and big toe, signifying that whatever the priest heard (which would, of course, include what he said), what he did, and where he walked, were all consecrated to Yahweh. The entrails and fatty parts were “waved” before Yahweh and then burnt, along with the bread and oil part of the rite. Only then were the edible parts of the second ram waved before Yahweh in consecration. Surprisingly (perhaps), this meat was not to be roasted with fire, but was to be *boiled* instead—no judgment was implied here; duly consecrated priests (a group ultimately including all believers) were not “appointed unto wrath,” nor are we if we are Yahweh's children.

There is a great deal more to the process of consecrating the priests for Yahweh's service than my quick survey covers. As I read Exodus 29, I can't help but conclude that either God is skillfully weaving an intricate

tapestry of symbol and metaphor fraught with redemptive significance for all mankind, or He is an obsessive-compulsive micromanaging control freak who enjoys watching people struggle under a mountain of pointless minutiae. There is no middle ground. The problem for “observant” Jews is that because they have rejected the Object of Yahweh’s symbolism, they are stuck with the unlikely and unattractive alternative. One thing is absolutely certain: *no one* performs this precept today—*no one* is Torah observant.

- (474) *One not of the seed of Aaron shall not eat the flesh of the holy sacrifices. “...But an outsider shall not eat them, because they are holy.”* (Exodus 29:33) In the immediate context, one could easily come to the same conclusion Maimonides did. But the word translated “outsider” here (or worse, “layman” in the NASB) is actually the verb *zur*, meaning to be alienated, to turn aside, to be a stranger, a foreigner, or an enemy. The implications are eye-opening, if only we’ll accept the Messianic symbolism discussed in the previous mitzvah. Christ has made it possible for *all of us* to be “consecrated priests” of Yahweh, to talk face to face with God Almighty and intercede on behalf of our fellow believers—and thus be eligible to “eat the flesh of the holy sacrifice,” that is, benefit from Yahshua’s atoning sacrifice. As He Himself explained (without really explaining), **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”** (John 6:53-58) “Outsiders,” on the other hand, have no such life in them: they are alienated from Yahweh.

LEVITICAL OFFERINGS: FIVE CATEGORIES

The first seven chapters of Leviticus describe in detail five types of offerings: the burnt offering or *olah* (Mitzvah #475), the grain offering or *minha* (#476), the peace offering or *selem* (#494), the sin offering or *chata’t* (#491), and the trespass or guilt offering, the *asham* (#493). I’ll provide a summary of all five sacrificial types at the end of this chapter. They are similar, but not identical, and described but not explained, making them all but incomprehensible to the average layman. And since they can’t be literally performed today (for lack of a priesthood and temple), they present one of the greatest temptations in the entire Bible: *to skip over them as quickly as possible*. But hopefully, with a little prayerful analysis,

we will begin to see them as five distinct facets on the brilliant diamond of God's grace.

(475) *Observe the procedure of the burnt-offering.* "When any one of you brings an offering to Yahweh, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock. If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before Yahweh." (Leviticus 1:2-3) The burnt offering (Hebrew: *olah*) was a subset of the larger concept of an "offering" (Hebrew: *qorban*), denoting a gift made to deity. The *olah* was completely voluntary, and, depending on the wealth of the giver, could be a bull, ram, goat, young pigeons, or turtledoves. The quadrupeds had to be males, and unblemished—a clear indication that the Messiah's sacrifice is in view. (Young birds are notoriously hard to differentiate by sex, so Yahweh didn't require it.) The giver "identified" with the animal by placing his hand on its head. The killing of the sacrificial animal was then done, but not by the priest (as was the usual practice)—it was done by the worshipper, who then skinned it, cut it up, and washed the parts in water. The priest sprinkled the blood all around the altar, placed the sacrifice on the altar, and burned it completely—no meat was eaten by priest or worshipper.

The Torah does not overtly explain why the *olah* would be offered up. It is not meant as atonement for sin, for other types of *qorban* accomplished that. Although sometimes offered when a petition was made for Yahweh's intervention (as in Judges 21:4), that was more properly the role of the peace offering. The burnt offering was, rather, a pure expression of homage to Yahweh, often given in an overflowing of joyful celebration. (A good example is in I Samuel 6:14, when the relieved Israelites got the Ark of the Covenant back from the pesky Philistines who had captured it.) This translates today into the spiritual sacrifice of *ourselves* to Yahweh, as Paul points out: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove [i.e., test, examine, recognize as genuine] what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2) Remember, the *worshipper* prepared the *olah*. If we are to "die" to the world in homage to Yahweh, it must be by our own hand.

(476) *Observe the procedure of the meal-offering.* "When anyone offers a grain offering to Yahweh, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of

whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to Yahweh.” (Leviticus 2:1-2) The grain offering, or *minha* (from the Hebrew consonant root *mnh*, meaning “to give”) was part of the daily life of Israel. It was offered at many of the Feasts of Yahweh and as part of the tithe. “Fine” flour was specified, meaning that no chaff or bran was to be present, a reference to the separation of the valuable from the worthless in our lives—the essence of judgment. The grain could presumably be either wheat or barley—whatever was growing at the time. It could be presented to the priests as raw grain or as cakes or wafers, baked or fried in a pan or oven. But in every case, the *minha* had frankincense sprinkled upon it, and it was prepared with oil, either mixed in or poured over it. The frankincense, you’ll recall, indicates purity through sacrifice (see Mitzvah #430), and the oil represents the Holy Spirit (see Zechariah 4). Neither leaven nor honey were to be used (see Mitzvah #477), but the *minha* was to be salted (see Mitzvah #478). After a token amount of grain was burned upon the altar as an offering to Yahweh, the rest of the *minha* was to serve as food for the priests.

Grain speaks of God’s provision for us—blessings that just “pop up out of the ground” on our behalf. Atonement is not in view with this offering, because no blood is being shed. But judgment is, not only in the burning of a handful of the grain, but also in the fact that the chaff is separated out from the flour. I can only deduce that the judgment being spoken of is that of our works: what did we do with the opportunities and resources Yahweh provided, and what was our motivation for performing these works? Three times in the second chapter of Leviticus, the portion of the *minha* to be burned on the altar was called “a memorial.” Since *all* of the frankincense was to be sprinkled on this portion, it is clear that the object of the “memorial” was to be the Messiah, whose death provided “purity through sacrifice” to us. One gets the distinct impression, however, that Yahshua’s sacrificial death on the altar of Calvary is only a “sweet aroma to Yahweh” if we avail ourselves of the redemption it provides—if it has become a memorial to us of God’s undying love. It is only under that condition that our works have any potential value to Yahweh, any basis for qualitative judgment. The works of the unredeemed, even the “best” of them, are nothing but filthy rags to Yahweh.

- (477) *Do not offer up leaven or honey.* “No grain offering which you bring to Yahweh shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to Yahweh made by fire.” (Leviticus 2:11) Then as now, bread was usually baked with leaven, or yeast, to make it rise and soften its texture. There was no prohibition against this in the Torah’s dietary laws (see

Chapter 5). Nor was there any dietary problem with honey, recognized as a familiar and healthful natural sweetener since the days of the Patriarchs (e.g. Genesis 43:11), and probably back to Adam. It's easy enough to see why leaven was prohibited from inclusion with grain offerings: it was a fermenting agent made from soured barley bran or vetch. Not only was it "rotten" (in the technical sense), but a little bit would spread throughout the dough, affecting the entire loaf. Thus it was a natural metaphor for sin and its effect on the lives of men.

But honey is another matter. It is never spoken of as a negative thing in Scripture, but always as something sweet, healthful, and good. In an extreme contrast to the connotation of our mitzvah, honey is even used as a metaphor for the sweetness of the Word of God: **"How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding. Therefore I hate every false way."** (Psalm 119:103-104) Why then was it prohibited from being offered up by fire to Yahweh? We must remind ourselves that good things were not offered up *because* they were good. The Levitical offerings were not a means of appeasement. Even though the things sacrificed necessarily had some intrinsic value, they were not offered to placate or "buy off" an angry God, nor were they a bribe to induce Him to grant our wishes. Rather, they were primarily a picture of the sacrifice *He* would make on *our* behalf—a rehearsal (on some level) of the death of the Messiah for our transgressions. Each sacrifice in the Torah reflected that prophetic fact in some way. His blood would be shed, so bulls and rams were slain in anticipation of that event. There would be no sin in the Sacrifice, so leaven was ruled out. And honey? Honey is pleasant and sweet, a delight to the taste. Christ's sacrifice, by contrast, was marked by sorrow and bitterness, pain and suffering. Honey was not descriptive of Messiah's first-century mission, so it was not to be offered.

- (478) *Every sacrifice is to be salted.* **"Every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt."** (Leviticus 2:13) Salt (Hebrew: *melach*) is another of the substances common to man that took on symbolic significance in the Torah. We know it best as a flavor enhancer and preservative, which is primarily why Yahshua described his followers as "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13), rhetorically asking, "What good are you if you don't do what salt does—making the world a better place?" But salt also has negative, destructive uses. It has the ability to make land barren and infertile—worthless for any productive purpose (cf. Judges 9:45). Indeed, Israel's fields were sowed with salt by Hadrian in 135 A.D. in his effort to permanently sever the

Jews' ties to the Land in the wake of Rabbi Akiba's disastrous endorsement of Bar Kochba as Israel's Messiah. Preservation or destruction—the choice is ours to make, and we are reminded of this by adding salt to every grain sacrifice. (Salt is not specifically mentioned in reference to sacrifices other than the *minha*.)

This dual potential was (perhaps) the origin of yet another metaphorical use for salt. A “covenant of salt” (the *brit melach*—mentioned in Numbers 18:19 and II Chronicles 13:5) confirmed a relationship using salt as a symbol of its permanence and binding nature—and the damage that would result if the covenant was broken. A covenant of salt was characterized as perpetual, irrevocable, and serious. One type of salt covenant bound a subject to his king. The phrase *melach hekal melachna*’ meant “to be under obligation,” literally, to “eat salt of the palace.” This implied the subject's solemn oath of loyalty to the interests of the king, since he was in the king's debt. So when Yahweh commanded that “with all of your offerings you shall offer salt,” He was telling us that because every Levitical grain sacrifice was a reflection of His own commitment to His provision of redemption of mankind, the addition of salt duly demonstrated our obligation to be loyal and thankful.

- (479) *Do not offer up any offering unsalted.* **“Every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.”** (Leviticus 2:13) This is merely the negative restatement of the previous affirmative mitzvah. Maimonides is padding the list.
- (480) *The Court of Judgment shall offer up a sacrifice if they have erred in a judicial pronouncement.* **“Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done something against any of the commandments of Yahweh in anything which should not be done, and are guilty; when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting.”** (Leviticus 4:13-14) The passage goes on to describe precisely how the sacrifice (in this case, the *chata't*, or sin offering) was to be done. Maimonides has erred in his identification of the object of this mitzvah. It is not addressed to the Sanhedrin—the ruling council or “Court of Judgment”—but rather the “whole congregation of Israel.” (Similar unintentional sins for individuals are covered later in the same chapter. See Mitzvah #481.) The really big “unintentional sin” for Israel, of course, is their long-standing national rejection of grace under the Messiah Yahshua in favor of the pointless and convoluted system of rules so forcefully promulgated by the rabbis. To this day, this sin is still

“hidden from the eyes of the assembly,” but God’s word reveals that it won’t be like this forever. See Zechariah 12:10 for a description of their future national epiphany.

In *Future History*, I covered the service of the Millennial Temple as it’s described in the last chapters of Ezekiel. There I made the following observation about the use of bulls as sacrifices: “Bulls were the sacred sacrificial animal of choice for virtually every ancient culture; thus I perceive that they are a symbol in God’s economy of falsehood and apostasy, of institutionalized evil on a national, as well as a personal, level. Case in point: Aaron’s golden calf debacle. Cattle symbolized several things: in agrarian societies, cattle represented temporal wealth; the more cattle you owned, the wealthier you were. Indeed, a ‘fattened calf’ was the symbol for luxurious living—killing a fattened calf in order to entertain a guest was considered a mark of great honor. But cattle or oxen were also beasts of burden—a metaphor for doing work. There is a fine line between service and servitude, between working in grateful response to Yahshua’s grace and working in order to obtain it. Every religion in the world focuses on work as a means to achieve ‘heaven,’ whatever they conceive that to be. But our works are as pointless in establishing a relationship with Yahweh as they would be in any family. A child can’t earn his way into the family—he must be invited into it, either by physical birth or by adoption—accepting the invitation. Thus the bull represents the wrong way to approach God—you can’t buy or work your way to Him. It’s an insult to Him to even try.”

- (481) *An individual shall bring a sin-offering if he has sinned in error by committing a transgression, the conscious violation of which is punished with excision. “If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of Yahweh in anything which ought not to be done, and is guilty, or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. (Leviticus 4:27-28)* This concerns the *chata’t*, or sin offering. My first impression upon reading the text was, “We’re gonna need more goats.” This condition applies to all of us, virtually all the time. Paul expressed the frustration of the child of God who wants to do right, but constantly finds himself falling short: **“For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.... Oh, wretched man that I am.”** (Romans 7:19, 24) There *is* good news, however. First, Yahweh is well aware of our fallen condition, and has made provision for us to return to fellowship with Him. Our shortcomings don’t shock or anger Him, though they may disappoint and sadden Him.

Second, look carefully at the description of the sacrificial animal: it's a goat (which tells us it's a sin offering), without blemish (which is the key that Yahweh's sacrifice is in view, for He alone is perfect). But the goat is *female*. There's something unusual going on here. God is making a point. I think the reason for the distinction is the difference between "sin" and "sins," that is, between the systemic condition of our separation from God and our individual acts of imperfect behavior. The "Lamb of God," the unblemished male of the flock symbolizing Christ, died to reconcile us with Yahweh—to remove the *sin* (singular) that had estranged us from Him. But once the blood of the Lamb has been spilled, once we have placed our trust in its atoning power, must the Lamb of God be slain again every time we screw up? No. As we saw earlier in this chapter, "[Yahshua did not] enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the earthly high priest who enters the Most Holy Place year after year to offer the blood of an animal. If that had been necessary, He would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But no! He came once for all time, at the end of the age, to remove the power of sin forever by His sacrificial death for us. And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins [i.e., the *condition* of sin] of many people." (Hebrews 9:25-28 NLT) Why, then, is the goat a female? Remember that in Hebrew, the word *ruach*, meaning spirit, is a feminine noun. The role of the Holy Spirit—not the Messiah—is the symbol in view for this sacrifice. When we as mortal believers goof up and fall short of perfection, we have not necessitated the re-sacrifice of Christ. He has already paid for our sin. What we have done, however, is to diminish the influence of God's Spirit—our *Heavenly Mother*, if you will—in our lives. We have grieved or quenched the Holy Spirit. (See Ephesians 4:30-32 and I Thessalonians 5:19.) That, I believe, is the reason the goat is female.

- (482) *Offer a sacrifice of varying value in accordance with one's means. "If he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to Yahweh, for his trespass which he has committed, two turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.... But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering."* (Leviticus 5:7) The context here is that of the trespass, or "guilt" offering (Hebrew: *asham*, see Mitzvah #493), but the principle is repeated elsewhere (e.g., with the burnt offering; see Mitzvah #475). Proving that these offerings have nothing to do with appeasement, we see that there is no correlation between the sin and its remedy: it could be a lamb if the sinner is able to afford it, but if he is not, then a couple of turtledoves or pigeons will do. (In the case of the birds, only one of the pair is really a "trespass" offering—the other one is a

“burnt” offering, which as we have seen, is voluntary and indicates homage or reverence for God.) And if he can’t even afford that, he is to bring a couple of quarts of flour. This is like saying the fine for driving 50 in a 25 zone is a hundred bucks if you’re driving a Mercedes, but only pocket change if you’re driving a Hyundai. The punishment doesn’t fit the crime—it fits the criminal! Since we tend to like the idea of justice (at least for other people), this may seem unfair to us. And it is. Yes, God is unfair. If He *were* fair, we’d all have been sent to hell a long time ago. Yahweh dispenses justice only to those who choose it over mercy. For those of us who have chosen to receive God’s mercy, however, it is the attitude of our hearts that counts—not the girth of our wallets. Both the expensive lamb and the cheap birds symbolize Yahshua’s atoning sacrifice, and the flour speaks of His provision. It’s our recognition of these facts that Yahweh values.

- (483) *Do not sever completely the head of a fowl brought as a sin-offering. “And he shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first, and wring off its head from its neck, but shall not divide it completely.”* (Leviticus 5:8) A continuation of the previous mitzvah, this precept instructs what is to be done with the birds brought as a trespass offering (*asham*). As with the larger animals (where achieving this was presumably easier, and thus not a matter for special instruction), the birds were to be slain and bled, but their heads were not to be separated from their bodies. Since all animal sacrifices in the Torah ultimately point toward the Messiah, the lesson seems to be that both God’s head *and* heart played their parts in His self-sacrifice—that is, His knowledge of our condition (and what it would take to fix it) and His unfathomable, inexplicable love for us were both essential components of His plan of redemption. God’s master plan is neither a cold intellectual exercise, nor is it driven purely by passion and emotion. His whole being is involved. You’d think the Creator of the universe could find something better to do with His time and energy, but no, all He thinks and dreams about is saving us. The very thought gives me goose-bumps.
- (484) *Do not put olive oil in a sin-offering made of flour. “But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering.”* (Leviticus 5:11) Still in the context of the *asham*, or “trespass offering,” we see some special instructions for the poorest supplicants—those who can’t even afford a pair of turtledoves. No olive oil is to be mixed in or poured over the offering (as was the case with the burnt offering and the grain offering). Why? Oil, as we have seen, is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. But the type of

“sin” being addressed in the trespass offering is inadvertent goofs (see Mitzvah #493), things we do that we’re often not even aware of when we do them. They are not the result of ignoring the Spirit, of quenching her counsel with cynicism or apathy. They are just mistakes, and you can’t effectively repent from making mistakes—they’re part of the human condition. That being said, they *are* mistakes: they’re not part of God’s perfect will for our lives, and are therefore still “sin” in a manner of speaking—a falling short of His perfect standard.

- (485) *Do not put frankincense on a sin-offering made of flour. “But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering.”* (Leviticus 5:11) Same song, second verse. Frankincense, as you’ll recall, represents purity through sacrifice—specifically, the imputed righteousness we enjoy through Yahshua’s sacrifice. The trespass offering, however, is there for us to acknowledge our mistakes, our unintentional trespasses against God’s perfect standard. As long as we inhabit these mortal bodies, we will continue to inadvertently stumble into sin. We will never attain purity in these corrupt vessels—which explains why God is planning to replace our bodies with new, incorruptible ones (see I Corinthians 15:35-58). So frankincense is inappropriate for addressing our unintentional sins as long as we remain mortals.
- (486) *An individual shall bring an offering if he is in doubt as to whether he has committed a sin for which one has to bring a sin-offering. This is called a guilt-offering for doubtful sins. “If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of Yahweh, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity. And he shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him regarding his ignorance in which he erred and did not know it, and it shall be forgiven him. It is a trespass offering; he has certainly trespassed against Yahweh.”* (Leviticus 5:17-19) This is the bottom line to the Torah’s discussion of the *asham*, or trespass offering. It’s kind of depressing, if you think about it: we’re all guilty, even if we don’t realize how—even if we’re totally serious about being “Torah observant.” We’ve all inadvertently done things that violated Yahweh’s standards of behavior or holiness (note: they’re not the same thing). It’s a measure of His love that He provided even for these sins—the places where we fall short, even if we *never* become aware of them. Yahshua came to fulfill the Law—all of it, including this one.

- (487) *The remainder of the meal offerings shall be eaten.* **“This is the law of the grain offering: The sons of Aaron shall offer it on the altar before Yahweh. He shall take from it his handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil, and all the frankincense which is on the grain offering, and shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma, as a memorial to Yahweh. And the remainder of it Aaron and his sons shall eat; with unleavened bread it shall be eaten in a holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of meeting they shall eat it.”** (Leviticus 6:14-16) In Mitzvah #476, we discussed the grain, or meal, offering (the *minha*) as covered in Leviticus 2. The next few entries will continue that discussion. (I would apologize for the helter-skelter organization of the subject matter, but the numbering system for these mitzvot, as I explained earlier, isn’t mine.) A small portion of the grain that was brought to the priests was to be burned—with *all* of the frankincense provided—“as a memorial to Yahweh.” The rest was to be used as food by the priests tending to their sacrificial duties at the Tabernacle or Temple. If I’m right about the meaning of the *minha*—that it represents our thankful acknowledgment of the resources and opportunities Yahweh provides for us, then it is clear that He expects us to tangibly advance the cause of His kingdom by meeting the needs of those who are functioning as priests in the world today—interceding between God and man. Since Calvary, of course, that description should fit every believer. That’s why Yahshua commanded us to **“love one another as I have loved you.”** (John 15:12)
- (488) *Do not allow the remainder of the meal offerings to become leavened.* **“...With unleavened bread it shall be eaten in a holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of meeting they shall eat it. It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their portion of My offerings made by fire; it is most holy, like the sin offering and the trespass offering.** (Leviticus 6:16-17) I honestly don’t know where Maimonides gets some of this stuff. Yahweh merely said to prepare the *minha* without leaven. The reason, as we have seen, is that leaven, or yeast, is a symbol for sin—it is something that tends to grow until it permeates the whole loaf—or the whole *life*. In the context of the grain offering, our thankfulness for God’s provision must be expressed in purity. Even Caiaphas understood that blood money could not honor God (see Matthew 27:6). It is blasphemous to thank God for what we have stolen.
- (489) *The High Kohein shall offer a meal offering daily.* **“And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘This is the offering of Aaron and his sons, which they shall offer to Yahweh, beginning on the day when he is anointed: one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a daily grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it at night. It shall be made in a pan with oil. When it is mixed, you shall bring it in. The baked pieces of the grain offering you shall offer for a sweet aroma to Yahweh. The priest from among his sons, who is anointed in his place, shall offer it. It is a statute forever to**

Yahweh. It shall be wholly burned. For every grain offering for the priest shall be wholly burned. It shall not be eaten.” (Leviticus 6:19-23) This is a corollary to the law of the *minha*, or grain offering, that we first saw in Mitzvah #476. There we saw that when the grain was presented to the priests by the worshipper, a handful of it was to be burned on the altar as a memorial to Yahweh. The remainder was set aside as food for the priests. Maimonides erroneously states that what is being described here is a daily offering. Though the NKJV version adds the word “beginning” in verse 19, it’s not actually there in the text—it should read, “. . . which they shall offer to Yahweh on the day when he is anointed.” And the word translated “daily” (*tamiyd*) actually means “perpetually” or “continually.” The passage is *not* speaking of a daily offering at all but an oft-recurring special occasion: days when male descendents of Aaron are anointed to serve as priests in the sanctuary. On these special days, one tenth of an ephah (which comes out to a little over two liters) of fine flour is baked with oil in a pan or griddle into cakes, which are then completely burned on the altar, half in the morning, and the rest that evening. The fledgling priest is to perform this ritual himself, making it his very first official act.

The symbols involved should be quite familiar by now. From the beginning to the end (reflected in the morning and evening rites) of the priest’s ministry, he is to thankfully acknowledge Yahweh’s provision (the grain offering). His priestly acts are to be guided by the Holy Spirit (the oil), for they’re a rehearsal of the Messiah’s redeeming sacrifice (the burning of the offering upon the altar). Thus the faithful ministry of the priest (the believer) brings pleasure to Yahweh.

- (490) *Do not eat of the meal offering brought by the kohanim.* **“For every grain offering for the priest shall be wholly burned. It shall not be eaten.”** (Leviticus 6:23) If you don’t pay attention to the context, you’ll get hopelessly lost. Back in Leviticus 2:10, we read, **“And what is left of the grain offering shall be Aaron’s and his sons’.”** But here we’re instructed that **“It shall not be eaten.”** Chapter 2 described the grain offering in general. Here in Chapter 6, we’re receiving instruction concerning the grain offering to be presented upon the anointing of new priests. The key is in the phrasing: “Every grain offering *for the priest* . . .,” i.e., for the inauguration of his ministry, as we saw in Mitzvah #489.
- (491) *Observe the procedure of the sin-offering.* **“This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed, the sin offering shall be killed before Yahweh. It is most holy. The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of meeting.”** (Leviticus 6:25-26) The entire fourth chapter of Leviticus is descriptive of the *chata’t*, or “sin

offering,” and the instructions are summarized here in Chapter 6. The details vary, depending on whose sin is being atoned for: “If an anointed priest sins, bringing guilt upon the people” (4:2), or “If the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly” (4:13), the sacrifice required is a young bull, symbolic of repentance from false doctrine. Third, if the sinner was a ruler of the people (4:22-26), the proper *chata’t* sacrifice was a young male goat, indicating his repentance from the sin as one in authority, yet under God’s authority. A fourth case was an ordinary Israelite individual: “If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of Yahweh in anything which ought not to be done, and is guilty” (4:27), then the sacrifice was a young *female* goat, an acknowledgment that the transgression is a failure to heed the leading of the Holy Spirit of God.

As we shall see, the sin offering (the *chata’t*—see also Mitzvot #480, #481 and #492) and the trespass (or guilt) offering (the *asham*—see Mitzvot #482, #483, #484, #486, and #493) are quite similar. Both covered unintentional sins. Indeed, we read that “The trespass offering is like the sin offering; there is one law for them both” (Leviticus 7:7), specifically in that the offering is to be eaten by the priests who perform the ritual. The principal difference between them seems to be that the *chata’t* was concerned with sins “against any of the commandments of Yahweh in anything which ought not to be done” (4:13), while the *asham* is a “trespass...in regard to the holy things of Yahweh” (5:15) including that which would require restitution to be made (see verse 16). The distinction is apparently that the *chata’t* covered shortcomings in behavior, while the *asham* dealt with lapses in holiness or ritual purity.

- (492) *Do not eat of the flesh of sin offerings, the blood of which is brought within the Sanctuary and sprinkled towards the Veil. “...Everyone who touches its flesh must be holy. And when its blood is sprinkled on any garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled, in a holy place. But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken. And if it is boiled in a bronze pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water. All the males among the priests may eat it. It is most holy. But no sin offering from which any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of meeting, to make atonement in the holy place, shall be eaten. It shall be burned in the fire.”* (Leviticus 6:27-30) Some of the blood from the *chata’t* sacrifices for the unintentional sins of the priesthood or the whole congregation was to be brought inside the Sanctuary—into the first room, the Holy Place—and there the priest would dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it seven times “before Yahweh,” after which he would “put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before Yahweh, which is in the tabernacle of meeting” (4:7, also 4:18). The remaining blood was to

be poured out at the base of the big altar of burnt offering, outside the door of the Sanctuary, and the sacrifice was not to be eaten, but rather, **“He shall carry the bull outside the camp, and burn it.”** (4:21)

To eat, or not to eat: that is the question. I realize this is potentially all quite confusing. First we read, **“All the males among the priests may eat it.”** (6:29) But in the next breath, we hear, **“But no sin offering from which any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of meeting...shall be eaten.”** (6:30) The sacrificial bulls atoning for the sins of the priesthood and the whole congregation are *not* to be eaten—these are the *chata't* offerings whose blood has been brought into the sanctuary and sprinkled before the veil. But there is no such application of blood required for the goat sacrifices made by rulers or individual Israelites, so their *chata't* sacrifices *are* to be eaten by the priests. The principle here is that the priests are not to benefit from their own sin or error. Further, it is presumed that if *everybody* has fallen into sin, the priesthood is to blame, for it is their job to lead the people in matters of faith and sound doctrine. This is a stern warning for us today: “religious leaders” trying to get rich by “tickling the ears” of a gullible world with trendy lies and half-truths are the objects of Yahweh’s displeasure. *Priests must not profit from their own sin.*

- (493) *Observe the procedure of the guilt-offering.* **“Likewise this is the law of the trespass offering (it is most holy): In the place where they kill the burnt offering they shall kill the trespass offering. And its blood he shall sprinkle all around on the altar. And he shall offer from it all its fat. The fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; and the priest shall burn them on the altar as an offering made by fire to Yahweh. It is a trespass offering. Every male among the priests may eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place. It is most holy.** (Leviticus 7:1-6) The guilt or trespass offering, the *asham*, is also covered in Leviticus 5:14-19, and we have discussed it in Mitzvot #482, #483, #484, #485, #486, and #491. The offenses for which it is offered are described in Chapter 5: concealing the nature of an oath someone has taken, touching the carcass of an unclean animal, touching “human uncleanness,” or making flippant oaths, whether for good or evil.

A separate category of “trespass” seems to be, **“If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of Yahweh....”** Precisely what these sins might be is not spelled out, but they have to do with the “holy things,” that is, the sanctuary, its dedicated furnishings, appurtenances, and utensils about which Yahweh gave such detailed instructions in the book of Exodus. Each item had symbolic significance, and all of it, one way or another, pointed toward our redemption through

the atoning sacrifice of the coming Messiah. **“Then he shall bring to Yahweh as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering. And he shall make restitution for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.”** (Leviticus 5:15-16) The requisite sacrifice is an unblemished ram—a male sheep—in contrast to the bulls or goats specified for the sin offering (the *chata't*). Whereas goats speak of sin and bulls are symbolic of false doctrine, the ram is a picture of God’s Messiah and His atoning sacrifice. What does it all mean? I think Yahweh is telling us that even our ignorant offenses against Him are atoned for through the blood of Christ. The 120% restitution, however, tells us that our carelessness concerning the things of God can be costly to us. Notice that unlike the *chata't* sacrifices for the sins of the priests and the congregation, the priests—representing all believers—can and do “profit” from the *asham*. They are to eat the *asham* sacrifices—not the fatty portions, which Yahweh instructs must be burned in His honor, but the meat itself. The lessons we learn through the repentance of our trespasses may be expensive, but in the end, they nourish our souls.

- (494) *Observe the procedure of the peace-offering. “This is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which he shall offer to Yahweh....”* (Leviticus 7:11) The next six mitzvot will explore the “peace offering,” or *selem*, the last of the five distinct types of sacrifices discussed in the first seven chapters of Leviticus. (We have already seen the *olah*, *mincha*, *chata't*, and *asham*.) The peace offering is further explained in Leviticus 3 and 22:18-30. The *selem* (which is invariably used in the plural: *selamim*—peace offerings) was used for several different purposes: as a spontaneous expression of praise to Yahweh, to show one’s thanksgiving for answered prayer (e.g. I Samuel 1:24), to accompany a vow, or as a freewill offering to demonstrate one’s devotion. Both animal and grain offerings were made, and because the *selamim* were strictly voluntary, the rules were quite relaxed. Cattle, goats, or lambs could be brought, always unblemished but either male or female. As usual, the fatty portions were to be burned on the altar as a “sweet aroma to Yahweh.” The sacrifice itself was eaten by the worshipper and his family, with a portion—the right thigh and breast—going to the priest (7:32-33). Basically, the peace offering was a party, one whose guest of honor was Yahweh Himself.

Besides the animal sacrifices, grain was also offered up. **“If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of**

blended flour mixed with oil.” No surprise there, but wait: “Besides the cakes, as his offering he shall offer leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. And from it he shall offer one cake from each offering as a heave offering to Yahweh. It shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering.” (Leviticus 7:12-14) *Leavened* bread?

Doesn't that indicate the presence of sin? Yes, and it makes perfect sense here, because Yahweh doesn't want us to feel that we have to have achieved a state of sinlessness before we can offer our gratitude and thanksgiving. He knows our condition. That's why He provided for our redemption. But notice something: the worshipper doesn't eat the unleavened bread; the priest does. Once again, we see that we are not to benefit or profit from our own sin. The leavened bread is “heaved” in symbolic dedication to Yahweh, as if to say, “I acknowledge my sin before You, and I thank You for rescuing me from its inevitable consequences.”

- (495) *Burn meat of the holy sacrifice that has remained over.* **“The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow [Hebrew *neder*: see Mitzvah #496] or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten; the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire.” (Leviticus 7:15-17)** What's God's policy on leftovers? It depends on the nature or purpose of the *selem* being offered. If it's a thank offering, then He values spontaneity and promptness. In other words, if we have something for which we owe Yahweh thanksgiving, we should communicate our gratitude immediately. That's why Paul told us to “Pray without ceasing,” I imagine. However, if the *selem* is being offered to show our earnestness in a vow we are making to Yahweh, then our own future actions are in view, not just what's happening now in the realm of our best-laid intentions. So we partake of the sacrifice today, to celebrate our vow, and tomorrow, to commemorate the keeping of our promise. And the third day? No, if there's anything still left over, it must be burned with fire. This tells us that if we procrastinate in fulfilling our vows, if we don't take them as seriously as Yahweh does, then there is judgment in our future. We aren't required to make promises to God, but if we do, we are expected to keep them.
- (496) *Do not eat of sacrifices that are eaten beyond the appointed time for eating them.* **“And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be imputed to him; it shall be an abomination to him who offers it, and the person who eats of it shall bear guilt.” (Leviticus 7:18)** Continuing the thought of the previous mitzvah,

we see God using even stronger language as a warning to those who would eat the *selem* on the third day or beyond, symbolic of taking their vows lightly. Maimonides seems to be thinking of the dangers of eating rancid meat, but Yahweh has bigger fish to fry. Allow me to extrapolate a bit. Psalm 22 described the horrors of the Messiah’s crucifixion—a thousand years before it took place. But in the context of the Messianic sacrifice, David sees this remarkable promise: **“My praise shall be of You in the great congregation; I will pay my vows before those who fear Him.”** (Psalm 22:25) The word translated “vows” here is *neder*, the very same word used in Leviticus 7:16 above to describe the “vow” under which the *selem* “shall not be accepted” if eaten on the third day. If the Messiah’s sacrifice on Golgotha had not taken place as God had vowed (on Passover, publicly before the congregation of Israel), we would still be lost in our sins. By the third day, His mission had already been fulfilled. The only reason any of us can even begin to contemplate the meaning of Yahweh’s magnificent Torah is that His Messiah *paid His vows*. He did what He promised to do, when He promised to do it, and because He did, we live.

- (497) *Do not eat of holy things that have become unclean.* **“The flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire. And as for the clean flesh, all who are clean may eat of it.”** (Leviticus 7:19) Our context is still the “peace offerings,” the *selamim*. Since these were strictly voluntary, it follows that they are a good metaphor for God’s primary gift to mankind: choice. That is, we have been given the opportunity to choose Yahweh as our God, or not to. But make no mistake, *how* we may approach God remains His decision to make. Yahweh is a holy God—there is none beside Him. Therefore it is His right to insist that we are holy as well—clean, purified, and set apart for His purposes—if we are to enjoy a relationship with Him. Here He is reminding us that the world will be judged, and anything that has been “touched” by the world’s evil will be purged. On the other hand, we whom Yahweh has made pure and clean are thereby qualified to walk freely in the presence of our God. What Yahweh has cleansed is clean indeed.
- (498) *Burn meat of the holy sacrifice that has become unclean.* **“The flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire. And as for the clean flesh, all who are clean may eat of it.”** (Leviticus 7:19) This is merely the usual negative rewording of the foregoing affirmative mitzvah. The point is clear enough: that which is unclean (by Yahweh’s definition) will be burned. That which is not set apart *to* Yahweh will be set apart *from* Him.

(499) *A person who is unclean shall not eat of things that are holy. “But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that belongs to Yahweh while he is unclean, that person shall be cut off from his people. Moreover the person who touches any unclean thing, such as human uncleanness, an unclean animal, or any abominable unclean thing, and who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that belongs to Yahweh, that person shall be cut off from his people.”* (Leviticus 7:20-21) Continuing and explaining the previous thought, these verses detail what might make one “unclean” in the context of the *selamim*. Note first that the things mentioned are not “sins,” in the sense of being trespasses against Yahweh’s perfect moral standard. Rather, they are sources of ceremonial defilement—touching things that have been *defined* as being unclean. Again, we are reminded that it’s God’s prerogative to make the rules. A mouse (on the outside, anyway) may not be any less sanitary than a sheep, but it has been declared unclean by God’s law, whereas the sheep has not. We may think that we’re pretty good. In comparison with our average fellow man, we (in our imagination) are A-Okay. But Yahweh is reminding us here that His standard is *perfection*. We approach Him on His terms or not at all.

Under normal circumstances, of course, that should mean that “not at all” is our only option, for all of us have “fallen short of the glory of God.” But we were created for no other purpose than to have fellowship with Yahweh—to communicate with Him and reciprocate His love. The sin that separates us is no surprise to Him. He is quite aware of our fallen condition. But His agenda hasn’t changed. If we imperfect creatures desire to fulfill creation’s mandate, Yahweh has provided a way for us to do that—not by relaxing His standards, but instead by making us perfect. Hence the lesson of the peace offering. If God has *defined* us as being clean, then we are clean indeed, free to talk and walk with Yahweh unimpeded by our sin. But if we insist on defining “goodness” ourselves, we remain unclean, cut off from His people.

A side-by-side comparison of these five types of Levitical offerings may help to clarify their individual significance:

Type 1: **Burnt Offering** (*olah*) Leviticus 1:1-17; 6:8-13
Mitzvah #475

- What: Bulls, sheep, or goats—males without blemish—were specified. Turtledoves or young pigeons were also acceptable.
- Who: The worshipper was to kill the *olah* and skin it (quadrupeds only—birds were killed by the priests.) The priests handled the blood, washing, the complete burning of the sacrifice (the *olah* was not eaten), and the removal of the ashes.
- How: The worshipper brought his sacrifice to the sanctuary: bulls to the door, i.e., on the west side of the altar, and sheep to the north side of the altar. He was to place his hand on its head, symbolically transferring guilt, before he slew and skinned it. The priest was then to sprinkle the blood around the altar, wash the entrails and legs with water, and completely burn the whole animal upon the altar. Birds were slain by wringing their necks. The priests drained their blood near the altar, removed the crop and feathers (these were placed on the east side of the altar, where the ashes were gathered), split the bird into two connected halves, and burnt it on the altar.
- Why: The *olah* was a voluntary sacrifice made for atonement, homage to Yahweh, and celebration before Him. Total dedication is implied, for the offering was to be completely consumed by fire. Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah was called an *olah*, making the messianic message evident. Through it we are reminded that Yahshua's self sacrifice for our redemption was not something He *had* to do, but was something He *wanted* to do, because He loved us. **"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire...Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require."** (Psalm 40:6)

Type 2: **Grain Offering** (*minha*) Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:14-23

Mitzvot #476-479, 487-490

- What: Fine flour was specified (that is, grain that has been crushed to powder and sifted or winnowed to remove the hulls or chaff—as distinct from “meal,” or whole grain). Olive oil, frankincense, and salt were incorporated in the *minha*. Leaven, or yeast, was specifically excluded, as was honey. The flour could be raw in bulk, or prepared as cakes, loaves, or wafers (in other words, cooked either in an oven, a covered pot, or a flat pan or griddle).
- Who: The worshipper was to bring the offering to the priest at the sanctuary. It was he who poured the olive oil and added the frankincense and salt. The priest was to bring the *minha* to the altar, and was to eat what remained.

- How: All of the frankincense was to be applied to the portion of the *minha* that was to be burned upon the altar. Only a handful was to be burned as a “memorial portion.” The rest was to serve as food for the priests. It was to be eaten in the court of the Tabernacle. Two special cases are mentioned for subsets of the grain offering: (1) the firstfruits offering was not to be burned, but was to be simply waved before Yahweh by the priests. (2) Conversely, on the occasion of the anointing of a new priest, the neophyte was to personally offer about two quarts of baked fine flour, half in the morning and the other half that evening—and this *minha* was to be completely burned on the altar.
- Why: The *minha* was a memorial of the provision of all our needs by Yahweh. It began with grain, the bounty of the earth—that which sustains us in this world. The addition of oil symbolized the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and the sprinkling of frankincense onto the portion of the offering that was to be burned on the altar spoke of the purity that God would provide through the sacrifice of Yahshua. Because no blood was shed, atonement was not in view; but the judgment of our works—the separation of the valuable from the worthless—was indicated by the removal of the chaff of the grain.

Type 3: **Peace Offering** (*selem*) Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-34

Mitzvot #494-499

- What: The *selem* was an animal sacrifice, either from the herd (cattle) or the flock (sheep or goats). It could be either male or female, but it had to be without blemish or defect. Also, if the reason for the *selem* was thanksgiving, unleavened cakes and leavened bread were to be included. The grain portion was to be prepared with oil.
- Who: The worshipper and his family were to share the sacrifice with the priests, the latter receiving the breast and the right thigh. The fatty portions were to be removed and burned on the altar in honor of Yahweh by the priest.
- How: The unusual thing about the *selem* was that the rules for eating “leftovers” varied depending on the purpose of the peace offering. If it was brought as an expression of thanksgiving, then the meat had to be eaten on the day of the sacrifice—spontaneity and immediacy were required. However, if the *selem* accompanied a vow, the sacrifice could also be eaten on the second day, an indication that both the vow and its fulfillment were taken seriously. But in no case was the meat to be eaten

after the second day—three-day-old leftovers were to be completely burned with fire, a picture of judgment.

Why: The *selem* was always voluntary. It was offered as a spontaneous expression of praise to Yahweh, as a way to express one's thanksgiving for answered prayer, to underscore the seriousness of a vow the worshipper was taking, or as a freewill offering to show one's devotion.

Type 4: **Sin Offering** (*chata't*) Leviticus 4:1-35; 6:24-30

Mitzvot #480, 481, 491, 492

What: If a priest's sin or that of the whole congregation is in view, a young bull was sacrificed. For a ruler of the people, a male goat was slain. For an individual, a female goat or lamb was specified.

Who: The *chata't* was brought by the guilty party, when he became aware of his transgression, to the priest to be sacrificed.

How: A sin offering was to be eaten only by the priests, and then only if they themselves were not culpable in the sin for which the *chata't* was being offered. The meat belonged to the individual priest who performed the offering. The fatty parts were removed and burned on the altar in homage to Yahweh, but the carcass was taken out of the camp and burned there. Blood from the sacrifice was to be sprinkled seven times before the veil (that is, outside the door of the sanctuary), or applied with the priest's finger to the horns of the altar.

Why: Blood sacrifices like the *chata't* speak of atonement for sin, for the life is in the blood. Ultimately, Christ's sacrifice is in view, but the specific animals to be brought by the different classes of Israelites are instructive of how our position in this world relates to our sin and its consequences. Bulls (brought by the priests or by the congregation at large) indicate false doctrines that lead to sin and death. Male goats represent the sins of those in positions of temporal authority—who exercise human governance in this world—surrogates for the coming King. And female goats or sheep (brought by ordinary citizens) speak of failure to heed the counsel of the Holy Spirit.

Type 5: **Trespass Offering** (*asham*) Leviticus 5:1-19; 7:1-10

Mitzvot #482-486, 493

What: Depending on the financial status of the worshipper, either a female lamb or goat, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons were to be offered.

And if he was too poor even for that, he was to bring a tenth of an ephah (about two quarts) of fine flour, but unlike the *minha*, no oil or frankincense was to be added.

- Who: The *asham* was to be eaten by the priests. As with the *chata't*, the priest personally officiating was entitled to the meat and hide from the sacrifice (after removing the fatty parts, which, as always, were burned on the altar as Yahweh's portion). Grain offerings, however, were to be shared among all the priests.
- How: The little details concerning the *asham* conspire to teach us about Yahweh's grace and mercy. As with the *olah*, here is sliding scale of sacrifice value based on one's wealth or lack of it. We are specifically instructed not to remove the head of a sacrificed bird from its body. We are told not to add oil or frankincense to a grain *asham*. All these things underscore the fact that even though Yahweh is perfect and holy, requiring absolute perfection of those who would approach Him, His entire agenda is focused on providing that perfection for us—regardless of our station in life—with His whole being, head and heart, and even if we have sinned purely by accident and never even realize our trespass!
- Why: The *asham* is provided for our “mistakes,” our offenses in holiness (as the *chata't* covers our “sins,” our lapses in behavior). As we walk through this world, it is practically impossible to remain perfectly set apart from it (as Israel was supposed to be) or to fulfill our mandate to be called out from within it (as the *Ekklesia*, the Church, is supposed to be.) Yahweh made us. He knows our frailty. He realizes that any perfection we have must be provided by Him, for it is not something we can muster in our fallen state, no matter how hard we try, no matter how much we would like to. That cloak of perfection is freely bestowed upon us through the sacrifice of His Messiah, Yahshua. All we have to do is put it on.

Thus we have seen five types of sacrifices or offerings described in detail in the first seven chapters of Leviticus. But we should be familiar enough with Yahweh's patterns by now to expect not five, but *seven*. I believe the sixth category of offerings is the “drink offering” or *nesek*. This offering was most fully described in this passage: **“When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you, and you make an offering by fire to Yahweh, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or in your appointed feasts, to make a sweet aroma to Yahweh, from the herd or the flock, then he who presents his offering to Yahweh shall bring a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil; and one-fourth of a hin [about a quart] of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare**

with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each lamb. Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil; and as a drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin [about one and a half quarts] of wine as a sweet aroma to Yahweh. And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, or as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or as a peace offering to Yahweh, then shall be offered with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; and you shall bring as the drink offering half a hin [about half a gallon] of wine as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to Yahweh.” (Numbers 15:2-10)

Type 6: **Drink Offering** (*nesek*) Numbers 15:2-10, 28:7

(Not specifically addressed by Maimonides)

What: Wine was to be offered up in conjunction with any animal sacrifice, whether an *olah*, *asham*, *chata't*, or *selem*. It would accompany the grain component that was mixed with oil, and there was to be the same amount of wine as there was oil. The amount of wine (and oil) varied with the size of the sacrificial animal, about a quart for a lamb or goat, up to twice that amount for a bull.

Who: As with most offerings, the worshipper would supply the wine and the priest would attend to its ritual.

How: The wine was to be poured out at the time of the sacrifice, presumably upon the altar, for the libation was said to be a “sweet aroma to Yahweh.”

Why: Although the Torah says nothing about what the pouring out of wine might mean, all four Gospels tie it directly to the blood of Yahshua that was poured out for us at Calvary. The fact that the same amount of oil and wine were specified ties Yahshua’s blood to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Torah is full of descriptive terminology for various facets of sacrifice and offering, many of which we haven’t explored. They aren’t necessarily all separate things, however, but may be used to emphasize one feature or another. For example, Moses used several of these terms in giving this instruction to the Israelites about to enter the Land: “**But you shall seek the place where Yahweh your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. There you shall take your [1] burnt offerings, your [2] sacrifices, your [3] tithes, the [4] heave offerings of your hand, your [5] vowed offerings, your [6] freewill offerings, and the [7] firstborn of your herds and flocks. And there you shall eat before Yahweh your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which Yahweh your God has blessed you.**” (Deuteronomy 12:5-7)

- (1) *Olah*: a burnt offering, the whole sacrificial animal being completely consumed by fire. This is one of the basic types of Levitical sacrifice we've already reviewed.
- (2) *Zebah*: a sacrifice—an offering that is killed as an act of worship, expiation, or propitiation to a deity; meat that is killed for consumption at a feast. *Zebah* is a catch all term for any animal sacrifice.
- (3) *Ma'aser*: the tithe, the tenth part, goods or money given as an offering. This was a special class of offering designed to fund the operation of the temple and feed the poor. See Mitzvot #394, 397, 399, and 402-425.
- (4) *T'rumah*: an offering, a contribution, a heave offering. *T'rumah* was also the word used for the tithe the Levites paid to the Aaronic priesthood from the tithes *they* had received from the people of Israel.
- (5) *Neder*: a vow or the votive offering that consecrates it. This would be a subset of the *selem*, or peace offering.
- (6) *Nedabah*: a freewill offering, that which is voluntary, not compulsory, and is prompted only by the impulse of the donor. This is a descriptive term for the voluntary nature of the peace offering (*selem*) as well as the burnt offering (*olah*).
- (7) *Bekor*: firstborn animals or men, set aside to Yahweh. This, I believe, represents the seventh and final classification of offerings to Yahweh.

Type 7: **Firstborn Offering** (*bekor*) Exodus 13:11-13, Leviticus 27:26, Numbers 3:40

Mitzvot #368-371, 403, 410, 413

- What: The firstborn male of every Israelite family belonged to Yahweh, as did every animal owned by an Israelite. Clean animals (sheep, goats, cattle, etc.) were to be sacrificed. Donkeys (and presumably other unclean animals such as horses or camels) were to be substituted with lambs, or their necks were to be broken. But clean animals were to be eaten.
- Who: Firstborn male children belonged to Yahweh, but they were to be redeemed by paying the Priestly tribe of Levi five silver shekels. The tribe of Levi thus were Yahweh's designated substitutes for the firstborn of the other eleven tribes.
- How: The whole scenario was based on the original Passover, when the firstborn males of all the households that weren't sheltered by the blood of the lamb were slain. According to Exodus 13, the slaying of the firstborn animals was *designed* to elicit questions from Israelite children

about the meaning of the rite, giving parents the perfect opportunity to explain Yahweh's deliverance—both past, present, and future.

Why: The slain firstborn son was a metaphor for Yahweh's own "firstborn," who would be slain to save men from the consequences of their own transgressions, just as the Passover lamb's blood was shed to identify those who were under God's protection. The picture couldn't be any clearer if God Himself had painted the blood on the upright wooden post and its crosspiece with His own hands. As a matter of fact that's precisely what He did—on Calvary's cross.