

**September 23, 2018 - Lev. 17:1-16 - Sacrifice only at the Tabernacle - Don't eat blood**

**Torah Reading: Leviticus 17:1-16 - Sacrifice only at the Tabernacle - Don't eat blood**

**Psalm 81**

**Haftarah: Isaiah 66:1-2, 5-12**

This chapter serves as a punctuation on what was said about the Yom Kippur rituals. The prohibition against consuming blood is because blood is reserved by God for one thing - the blood shed in sacrifice for atonement of sin, trespass and for cleansing.

### **No Private Altars or Sacrifices**

In patriarchal times, the head of each family had the duty of offering sacrifices as priest for his household. But sacrifice is now restricted to the Tabernacle and performed solely by the priests.

**Leviticus 17:3-5** - "What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people: To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace offerings unto the LORD."

Peace offerings are mentioned because they were numerous and could be brought any time, and therefore had the greatest chance of being abused.

(The killing here refers to sacrifice, not to general slaughter or butchering for eating. See **Deuteronomy 12:15** - "Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee")

### **Blood is for Sacrifice**

**Leviticus 17:6** - "And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savor unto the LORD."

### **Christ's blood fulfills the Law**

- **Hebrews 9:12** - "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

- **Hebrews 9:14** - "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to

serve the living God?"

- **Hebrews 9:21-22** - "In the same way, he sprinkled with blood the tabernacle and all the vessels used in worship. According to the Law, in fact, nearly everything must be purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

- **Hebrews 9:25-26** - "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

**Leviticus 17:7** - "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils (*sa`iyrim*), after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations."

(Rashi explains the word *l'sa`iyrim* - satyrs, 'hairy' - to mean *l'shaydim*, unto the demons, [as the KJV translates]. "and satyrs (ושַׁעִירִים) will dance there" (**Isaiah 13:21**). - [Torath Kohanim 17:100])

All other sacrifices are not sanctioned, and are therefore considered as offerings to demons, not to God.

### 'Offering unto Demons'

Paul adapts this phrase in his admonitions to the Corinthians regarding eating food offered to idols.

First he notes that drinking the wine and eating the bread of the Afikomen / Lord's Supper means we are in "communion" with the body of Christ.

- **1 Corinthians 10:16** - "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

He relates this to the eating the Peace Offering, in which God, the priests and the offer are consuming the same thing as one.

- **1 Corinthians 10:18** - "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" i.e. what God is consuming off he altar as a sweet savor."

To drink the poured out blood of Christ and eat his broken body unites us with Him in his death, and the remembrance of it.

To knowingly eat food offered to idols is to be in the same relationship - you become one with the idol. Any food that came out of a pagan temple was considered offered to

idols.

- **1 Corinthians 10:20** - "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

"The cup of blessing" (**1 Corinthians 10:16**) was an important concept in Judaism.

"Three things (says R. Judah) shorten a man's days and years; when they give him the book of the law to read, and he does not read; "the cup of blessing to bless with", and he does not bless; and when he accustoms himself to government." [T. Bab. Berncot, fol. 55. 1.]

In fact, only David (as type of Messiah) can bless with the "cup of blessing: the cup of salvation"-

God will make a feast for the righteous, in the day that he weans the people of the seed of Isaac, and after they eat and drink, they give to Abraham "the cup of blessing to bless with"; he says to them, I will not bless, because Ishmael sprung from me; they give it to Isaac, he says to them, I am not fit to bless, for Esau came from me; they give it to Jacob, he says unto them I will not bless, for I married two sisters in their lifetime, which the law forbids me; they say to Moses, take it and bless, he says to them I will not bless, for I was not worthy to enter into the land of Israel, neither in life nor in death; they say to Joshua, take it and bless, he says I cannot bless, for I am not worthy of a son, as it is written, Nun his son, Joshua his son; they say to David, take thou it and bless, he saith unto them I will bless, and it is comely for me to bless; as it is said, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord"."

- Capthor, fol. 47. 1. Commenting on Genesis 21:8

"What is a beautiful cup? "The cup of blessing" [T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 76. 2. & Erubin, fol. 29. 2.] and it ought to hold the fourth part of a log of wine. [Piske Tosephot in Sabbat, art. 287. & Erubin, art. 46. 157. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 57. 3. & 59. 2, 3. & 65. 1.]

-- See John Gill's Exposition

### Cut Off

Any who offer sacrifices away from the Tabernacle will be "cut off from the people" - verse 10.

**Leviticus 17:10** - "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people."

Rashi - I will set my attention: [God is saying,] "I will make Myself free (פְּוֹנָה) from all My affairs, and I will deal with this person!" - [Torath Kohanim 17:108]

## The blood atones for the soul!

**Leviticus 17:11** - "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Targum of Jonathan: "for the sins of the soul"

Today Jews often argue that atonement can be obtained without a blood sacrifice, citing a number of scriptures: **Numbers 31:50; 1 Kings 8:46-50; Hosea 6:6; Hosea 14:1-2; Micah 6:6-8; Jeremiah 18:1-8; Jeremiah 29:10-14; Psalm 51:15-17; Psalm 69:30-32; and Ezekiel 18:20-22.** But the assumed prerequisite was always the sin and trespass offering, along with the Yom Kippur rituals, which covered over the sins of the people until Messiah would come.

No less a sage than Rashi agreed:

Rashi - For the soul of the flesh: of every creature is dependent upon the blood, and therefore, I have given it to atone for the soul of man. [In this way,] one "soul" [namely, the blood of a sacrifice] shall come and atone for another soul.

Christ's "soul" or life was given - through the shedding of His blood - for all other souls.

Therefore, not other blood/life should enter in to us except when we drink and eat the blood and body of Christ, expressed in the wine and unleavened bread of communion. By drinking His "blood," His life enters into us symbolically, because "the life is in the blood."

- **John 6:53-54** - "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

## Consuming Blood Forbidden

**Leviticus 17:12** - "Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood."

The prohibition meant that the blood of any clean animal that is allowed for food should be drained and covered by soil.

The earth, from which all animals came forth at their creation (**Genesis 1:24**), is to receive back again the principle of their life.

During the second Temple period, the following Benediction was ordered to be recited whenever the blood was covered up: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hath sanctified us by His precepts, and hath commanded us to cover up

the blood.”

-- *Ellicott's Commentary*

## Seething Blood and Blood that Cries Out

Abel's blood cried out for justice:

- **Genesis 4:10-11** - "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground (*adamah*). And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand"

"Blood" here is plural - "bloods," as in "rivers of blood." The word for cry (Hebrew *tsa'aq*) is used for human expressions of the most desperate, extreme need, usually for justice.

If it is not covered over and absorbed back into the ground, shed blood will sometimes "seethe" until justice has been satisfied, as in the story of Zechariah's blood in the Temple.

See <https://beyondthegolem.wordpress.com/2011/01/25/the-seething-blood-and-the-massacare-at-solomons-temple/>

See also **Isaiah 26:21** - "...the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

The prohibition against drinking blood was continued by the Apostles. (**Acts 15:20; Acts 15:29; Acts 21:25**).

[For a striking example of both the sin of swearing a rash oath combined with consuming meat with the blood, see King Saul and his son Jonathan's attack on the Philistines in **1 Samuel 14**.]

## Unclean Carrion

**Leviticus 17:15** - "And every soul that eateth that which died of itself, or that which was torn with beasts, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean."

Rashi explains this speaks only of a clean bird or clean cattle found torn - it transmits a mild defilement until the evening. Unclean animals are defiling already and forbidden to eat.

**Leviticus 17:16** - "But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh; then he shall bear his iniquity."

"he shall bear his sin:" If he [subsequently] eats holy sacrifices or enters the Sanctuary [in his unclean state], he is punished by excision because of this uncleanness, like all

other cases of uncleanness. — [Torath Kohanim 17: 129] However, for [not] immersing his garments, [and entering the Mishkan wearing them,] he is punished by lashes. — [Torath Kohanim 17:129]