

Lv1.1

וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מֵאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר:

“And he called to Mosheh; and Yehovah worded to him from tent of appointment, saying”

v1) Leviticus 1 is an immediate continuation of Ex40.34ff. YH¹ had filled the mishkan² in such a way that Mosheh³ could not enter to accomplish what he was instructed to do. Apparently, YH had some business to accomplish before he would allow Mosheh to continue.

וַיִּקְרָא “And he called”

So, YH personally invited Mosheh to come into the mishkan. This by the way is the traditional name of the book: “Vayiqra” translated, “And He Called”.

וַיְדַבֵּר “and he worded”

I find a definite (or probable) distinction between "amar" אמר and "davar" דבר. It seems the latter is used to indicate direct quotes, where “amar” may simply refer to the summary of what was actually said, although not necessarily the exact words themselves. Typically, translators treat these two as merely synonyms, rendering “amar” as “say” and “davar” as “speak”. But “davar” as a noun refers primarily to a “word” and is also idiomatically used to refer to a “thing” or a “matter” in a concrete way. I have paid attention to the use of these two common words for quite some time and this is the conclusion I have come to. So, I translate “davar” as to “word”, keeping things as literal as possible and indicating this is a direct word for word quote.

Lv1.2

דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אָדָם כִּי-יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם קֶרְבָּן לַיהוָה מִן-הַבְּהֵמָה מִן-הַבֶּקָר וּמִן-הַצֹּאן תִּקְרִיבוּ אֶת-קֶרְבַּנְכֶם:

“Word to sons of Yisrael and you (s) say to them: “adam—when he will bring-near from you (pl) an approach to Yehovah, from the animal from the herd and from the flock you (pl) will bring-near your (pl) approach.”

v2)

דַּבֵּר “word!” i.e. say the following word for word.

YH wants the following to be worded exactly, precisely passed on.

אָדָם “adam” i.e. human

1 YH, short for YHVH which according to the best evidence I have seen to date should be pronounced “Yehovah”. I use the abbreviation for the sake of brevity only. I do not subscribe to the tradition of not speaking our creator’s name. I find this tradition to be man made, specifically against the written Torah, and resulting in something of a loss of intimacy with our creator.

2 Literally “dwelling-place”, i.e. the tabernacle

3 i.e. Moses

The one bringing-near is an “adam”⁴, i.e. “human”. This is striking particularly when you consider the following chapters where, using the same format, the word “nefesh” (i.e. “soul” what we might consider the essence of the person). What is being dealt with in this initial way to approach Yehovah is the issue of corrupted humanity reestablishing an intimate connection with his creator. Everything else is dealing with the substance of the person, appetites, will, emotions, etc. But this initial contact must deal with the nature of humanity. It is foundational.

קָרַבְּנָו “approach” i.e. a thing with which we may intimate “come near” Yehovah.

“Qarban” is usually translated “offering”, but the problem is that this word does not describe the exchange of items. It pictures the intimate conversation which the act facilitates. “Qarab” קָרַב means to “come near”.⁵ There is a physical closeness and by implication an emotional, mental, spiritual closeness involved. This not the caricature of a works-based religion which we have been so commonly sold. This how to intimately connect with Yehovah!

Why the misleading translation? I believe it comes out of a pagan understanding of animal sacrifice and interaction with pagan gods. The pagan concept is to give that god something so that either he will leave you alone and do you no harm or you are trying to get that god to do something for you. It is a bribe. It is what powerful men and warlords have been doing for almost 6000 years. In contrast, what is described in the Torah is not at all bribery, nor is it a works-based religious ceremony. It is all about relationship and always has been.

Lv1.3

אִם-עֹלָה קָרַבְנֹו מִזֶּה-הַבָּקָר זָכָר תָּמִים יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ אֶל-פֶּתַח¹ אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד יִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לְרִצְנֹו לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

“If an ascent (is) his approach from the herd, he will bring-it-near (being) a whole male; to opening of tent of appointment he will bring-near it, to his acceptance to faces of Yehovah.”

עֹלָה “ascent” i.e. something which goes up

“Olah” עֹלָה is usually translated as “burnt offering” because, presumably, it is completely burned and not eaten and it is something which is given. (although the cohen⁶ keeps the skin Lv7.8) But, this is not at all what the word conveys. “Alah”⁷ means to “ascend” or to “go up”.

Pictured here in the “ascent” is our giving of ourselves completely—specifically and tangibly experienced by “leaning” (סָמַךְ) your hand on the animal (Lv1.4) and so identifying yourself as that surrogate. Compare, for example, Ro12.1 the “living sacrifice” passage. Also

4 i.e. in Genesis, it mostly refers to “the adam” as an indicator or a title and not as a personal name of the man.

5 The Hebrew language, opposite of English, is rooted in verbs, in action. Things get their meaning in Hebrew from the action pictured behind them. Thus, the 3-letter action (verb) pictured informs the meaning of things (nouns) in the Hebrew brain.

1 BHS has been faithful to the Leningrad Codex where there might be a question of the validity of the form and we keep the same form as BHS.

6 A cohen is a “priest” but the connotation is misleading. A cohen's function is really to facilitate a person's intimate meeting with Yehovah. A cohen is not a go-between.

7 Not to be confused with the Arabic term for god, alah. (although I suppose it is probably from the same word but I don't know) Actually, this 3 letter root would be written 'LH because the first letter is practically silent to the English ear. In practice, this letter takes on its associated vowel sound.

Lk14.33, Lk9.62, Jn12.24-26

Why upwards? Because the spirit realm is pictured as being upward. (see for example Gn28.17) The spirit realm is pictured as being in the “heavens” (שמים) which literally refers to everything above the earth and seas, but idiomatically refers to the spirit realm.

So then what is being pictured by the “olah” is the spiritual total surrender of an “adam” to Yehovah!

In translation, I translate “olah” as an “ascent”. (others, “ascending offering”) By interpretation, we may call it something along the lines of “approaching Yehovah in the spirit realm, in total surrender of self”.

מִן־הַבְּקָר “from the herd” (this refers to larger livestock, i.e. cows etc.)

This word for “herd” (בקר) is interesting. It is a general term referring to cattle and oxen, but elsewhere is used as a verb meaning to “inquire” or “seek”.

זָכָר “male” (literally, “remembered”)

The animal must be “zakar”. “Zakar” (זכר) as a verb means to “remember”. Here, I will quickly (and with little explanation) mention that I read Gn1.27 as follows: “And Elohim⁸ created the adam in His image. In image of Elohim He created him: male (“zakar”) and female (“neqebah” literally, “pierced”) He created them.” The “image” of Elohim is described as being “male and female”--“remembered and pierced”. So then Elohim is described as two parts. I associated “remembered” with Yehovah and “pierced” with Yeshua. (I personally understand Yehovah as spirit and Yeshua as any physical manifestation of Yehovah)⁹ Why does Yehovah care that the gender of the animal used as an ascent be male? Because it's maleness is associated with Yehovah the spirit; and at issue here is the spiritual reality not simply a physical ritual. Also note now that nowhere is this ascent commanded to be done. It is our choice to volunteer to do this, as Yehovah calls to us.

תָּמִים “whole” or “without blemish”

This word expresses completeness or wholeness. Again, the language used expresses the spiritual necessity of our giving of ourselves to be an entire thing. “All-in” is necessary.

לְרִצְנוֹ “to his acceptance”

רצה (ratsah), to “accept” is used in the sense of acceptably satisfying a debt. See Lv26.34 and 43 as well as other places. This is used in conjunction with verse 4 “and he leans his hand upon head of the ascent and it “is-accepted” (רצה) to him to cover upon him”.

“Cover” is “Capfar” (כפר) and is typically translated as “atone”. (I suppose nobody outside of bible college really knows what that means) Literally it means “cover”. JPS¹⁰ translates it “in expiation for”. (whatever that means) Related is a “copher” which is a “ransom” (Ex21.30; 30.12), the price paid to save a life. The way “cover” is used through

8 The Hebrew word for “god” or “powerful persons”

9 I find this understanding explains all the evidence consistently and is consistent with the plain statement in Dt6.4 that Yehovah is “one”. The Holy Spirit I understand is Yehovah. Spirit is spirit. The idea of a trinity being three different persons I don't think stands the test of scripture, regardless of tradition.

10 Jewish Publication Society (their translation of the old testament). Just because it was translated by Jews, does not mean it is necessarily more or less correct than a translation made by Christians.

scripture is likely, in my observation, more in the sense of forgiving debt, removing guilt (as in the Christian New Testament understanding). It may literally mean “cover” as the Christian caricature of the Torah claims, i.e. turning a blind eye to ignore the offense, but not actually taking it away or “washing” it as Christians would say. But I'm convinced it is used idiomatically (a figure of speech) in the sense of a full payment of a debt (as it is indeed paired with “ratsah”) or of a ransom to purchase a captive or slave to give them freedom. The common statement that in the Old Testament sin was only covered and in the New Testament sin is now washed away betrays a lack of understanding of the OT and an uninformed view of Paul's writings. (Hebrews I think—maybe written by Paul).

Lv1.5

וְשָׁחַט אֶת־בֶּן הַבְּקָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהִקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אֹהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַדָּם וְזָרְקוּ אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב אֲשֶׁר־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:

“And he butchers son of the herd to faces of Yehovah. And sons of Aharon the facilitators bring-near the blood and sprinkle the blood upon the slaughter-place around—opening of tent of appointment.”

“And he butchers son of the herd...” Could this common language be one of the reasons Yeshua is considered the “son” of Elohim¹¹ figuratively?

“...to faces of Yehovah...” Usually translated “before” as to say “in front of”. (“faces” in Hebrew is plural, kind of like we think of “pants”, presumably because there are two symmetrical sides to the face.) The imagery in Hebrew is much more striking than what is conveyed in our English translations. We are pictured as literally coming-near face to face with Yehovah in an intimate manner.

“slaughter-place” is typically translated “altar”. But it is literally a place of slaughter. Although, the animal is slaughtered next to the slaughter-place and not actually on it.

Lv1.9

וְקִרְבּוֹ וְכִרְעָיו יִרְחֵץ בַּמַּיִם וְהִקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַכֹּל הַמִּזְבֵּחַהּ עָלֶיהָ אִשָּׁה רִיח־נִיחּוֹחַ לַיהוָה:

“and its innards and its legs he will wash in waters. And the facilitator makes-smoke the entirety toward the slaughter-place. (It is) an ascent—a fire, a breath of rest to Yehovah.”

“its innards” or its “entrails” refers to internal organs. This is another form of the exact same word described earlier that is translated “offering” (qarab). Qarab means to “come-near”. The intimacy described by this word is quite literal in this use—there's nothing more intimate to you than your internal organs!

This word is commonly used as an idiom for something “in the midst of”, i.e. “among” a group and is a synonym for “betok” (בתוך) meaning “in (the) midst of”. Yehovah is frequently portrayed as in the “innards” of his people and I get the sense that this word choice (over the more common and general “betok”) is purposely meant to be intimate, i.e. the Holy Spirit¹² is

11 His being the “son of god” makes most Muslims stumble because they take it literally and see it as impossible. I do not understand it as a literal thing. Yeshua is the figurative “son of Elohim”.

12 By the way, Judaism also understands persons having the “Ruach HaKodesh” (the Holy Spirit) in them. This concept is throughout the Old Testament. Although many Jews would argue the Ruach HaKodesh and the

“in” us.

Why are the innards and the legs washed in water? Because the innards picture who you are on the inside (remember the individual is specifically identifying himself as the animal) and the legs picture what you have done. These are washed clean in our giving ourselves over completely to YH. The Hebrew language is very action and direction oriented.

This animal is actually being burned, but it is described as being “made to smoke”, i.e. turned into smoke. The spiritual connection is evident as discussed previously because the spirit realm is pictured as being upwards. Smoke rises. Perhaps also there is an understood conception of the spirit realm as being composed of air (i.e. sky—felt but not seen) and a physical animal being turned into smoke may also be seen as spiritually connected. But this point is somewhat conjecture on my part.

The same root “qatar” (קטר) in “make to smoke” is also used for the word “incense”.

Interesting here also is the language “and the facilitator (cohen or priest) makes-smoke the entirety toward the slaughter-place” or more properly, “in the direction of the slaughter-place”. It does **NOT** say “**on** the altar”. The language used is directional and not positional. I wonder that this may be purposeful here because the “slaughter-place” being referred to is not the physical one there in front of the tent, but the smoke is being sent upward “toward the slaughter-place” which is in the heavens, the spirit realm where YH resides. This is, after all, make after the pattern shown Mosheh. (Ex25.9,40; Nu8.4; He8.5) It is a physical reflection of the true spiritual dwelling place where YH is. **All this action is designed to be a physical reflection of the spiritual reality which is actually happening/happened. It is not, has never been, all about any ritual in and of itself!**

The final words here describe what this is all about and deserve some discussion:

עֲלֵה אֵשׁ רֵיחַ-נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה:

I'll translate it quite roughly first: (never mind modern translations) “an ascent—fire of breath of rest to Yehovah”

“an ascent” --we talked previously what an ascent is. The following further describes what exactly an ascent is, and so is very important in understanding what exactly is an ascent.

“fire of” --what follows describes what specific kind of fire this is. This particular form of the word for “fire” is also used in Lv2.11 in reference to the grain-offering. It is also used in Lv34.7,9 of the bread of faces (or bread of the presence, shewbread—12 loaves put weekly on the table in the tent). So, this kind of fire is something put in fire but not necessarily consumed in fire. I am sure it is also significant that YH has us use fire to purify things, especially as they are contaminated by death. See Nu31.21-24 for example.

“breath of rest” --or we might say “rest-breath” or we might say “rest-fragrance”. “Breath” here is in the sense of what that breath smells like. “Breath” is from “ruach” which we translate “breath”, “spirit”, “wind”, etc. All these have the sense of air moving. “Rest” here is from “nuach” meaning to “rest”. (from which we get the name Noach, i.e. Noah.) It is a “quieting”, a “soothing”, a “tranquilizing”, i.e. something that brings stillness, peacefulness.

Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit are different. But really it is the caricature they see of the Christian trinity tradition that confuses the issue.

When it says “breath of rest” it is really a figure of speech for a “peaceful reputation”. Contrast this with Ex5.21 for example when the leaders of Israel accuse Mosheh of “making us loathsome” in the eyes of Pharaoh. Literally they said “you cause our breath to stink”! (i.e. you give us a bad reputation). So, the end result of this particular kind of fire is really to give us good-smelling breath as we become intimate with our creator Yehovah. It's about restoring us to a good reputation. It's about the relationship—not about some required ritual to avoid punishment. YH consistently describes our relationship with Him as a marriage. I think this is one of the reasons He created marriage in the first place! All this is about restoring that relationship which we have walked away from.

We see this phrase first in Gn8.21. See also Ex29.18,25,41. Compare Ez6.13;16.19;20.28,41.