

The Israelite sacrificial system for penalty payment explained

STATEMENT OF BELIEF – ADDENDUM – B Jan.15, 2020

The English word “Sacrifice” when correctly translated from the Hebrew word *is* “*ZBHh*,” it means to kill an animal for food, or to offer it (as a gift, or for payment). The word holocaust comes from the Greek word “*holokautos*” and means “a burnt offering” or thing offered as payment, the whole of which is consumed by fire (the thing going up). It is understood by many that adhere to the modern fundamentals of Christian doctrine, that the death of an animal (by way of the sacrifice) is presented for atonement or as a substitute to nullify the sin(s) of an individual or group committed against society or against one’s god. This understanding although commonly understood is completely incorrect from a Biblical view point.

An animal (that is slaughtered) placed on an altar and burnt (for a thing going up) by way of fire and smoke was simply a primitive method of payment thought to right an offence; to develop a higher good, or as an attempt to please or to seek an advantage (the good graces) from an unknown superior power located somewhere in the heavens. It was the “**loss to the owner**” of the animal or item offered that payment or restitution was thought to have been made, or for a wrong to be corrected, or that a blessing (undeserved favor) would be received by having done so. However, food items were not the only means of payment that primitive man used to seek forgiveness for violating the local law, or to atone for sins committed against society, or the act to develop an advantage (or a blessing) from a superior power.

Once the Biblical Nation of Israel developed from what was basically a nomadic society and when land was allocated to the various tribes, the National Identity would also require social, and civil order, rules and regulations, as was recognized by Moses. In addition to YHWH’s (Yahweh’s) 10 Commandments, statutes, ordinances, and judgments were developed to regulate the new Nation. Payments for penalties and offences other than food items (like gold and silver) eventually became more popular and convenient. As the Israelite Nation continued to develop and to mature it was no longer necessary or even practical to use slaughtered animals or other food items to pay for civil and/or religious infractions of the law.

The animal slaughter system as a payment was reduced with the destruction of the first Temple, since it became difficult for priests to use the approved Temple slaughtering method for animals or food for payment for violations under the ancient Israelite Laws. The growth of the population and the stinking mess caused by the blood and guts of the ancient slaughter system, at times using hundreds animals a day, became an impossible system to maintain. At the time of Yahshua (Jesus), and the Second Temple, considering all the problems of waste disposal and the complete lack of food refrigeration facilities, things came quickly to a head and the ancient system had to stop. This (we believe) was a primary reason for the “over-throwing incident” of the Temple money tables by a frustrated angry Yahshua, Matt. (21:12-13).

Side Note: This is a good place to explain the original need to make atonement (at-one-ment) for civil or religious violations of the Law(s) in the first place. The payments of using animals, had nothing to do with pleasing Yahweh, since the Almighty Sovereign Creator Power Life-Force Essence of all does not need or receive any benefit from a dead animal or from any burnt food item offered to Him, nor did He accept or need gold or silver offered by a priest trying to purchase atonement by payment for someone else. It does not take a “rocket Scientist” to understand that! Even in our age, penalties, or fines for violations or infractions of the law “serve mostly” as a deterrent. Payment is a “sacrifice” (a lesson) and provides a reason to help keep the violator on a straight and correct narrow path. Payments required from violators contribute to what can be called “learned behavior” and are used in almost every society beginning with childhood to correct and direct behavior. The intended result - righteousness is rewarded but wickedness or bad behavior will have negative consequences (the violator may be punished). With

Yahweh, there are no free rides for wickedness, and all men will be judged whether it is good or bad, (Ecc. 12:14).

By the time Yahshua was walking on the land, most of the Israelites (of the lost 10 ½ Tribes) were already scattered and living well outside of the Promised Land and dwelling throughout Western Europe under the names of the Jutes, Danes, Saxons, Angles, Vikings, Celts, and Normans. Many of these white Indo-European 'Caucasian' Adamic people remained under pagan influences much of that time, and would not have cared very much about what was happening in their Ancient "Promised Land." Yet the believers among these dispersed Israelites were never worried that the Almighty Sovereign Creator Power Life-Force Essence Yahweh could not forgive them for their sins without an animal sacrifice, a Temple, or a priesthood to manage it for them. The reason why they had no such fear was that throughout all of the Hebrew Bible it is very clear that no animal sacrifice (blood payment) is necessary for the forgiveness of sins, or that it was even an exclusive means for Yahweh's relationship to continue, or that atonement for Adamic man ever required the death of an animal. The sacrifice of one's children which was a practice in some primitive pagan cultures in the early history of man was absolutely always forbidden by Yahweh's chosen Israelite people, but they nevertheless did it anyway and it angered Yahweh. (Jer. 7:30-31).

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it (the life of the animal) to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood (life of the animal) that makes atonement (payment for an offence) for one's life." (Leviticus 17:11).

Leviticus 17:11 is often used as the passage that appears to require a shed "blood" sacrifice during ancient primitive times in order for Yahweh to forgive sins committed against him. However, the entire context of this passage is a reference to "abstaining from eating the blood of an animal" a practice when the animal was used as a sacrifice for payment. Yahweh commanded the abstaining from eating or drinking blood because many ancient primitive pagan religions of the time ate (or drank) the blood of slaughtered animals. It was thought by them to be a way to incorporate their gods (many of which were animals) into their own bodies. In this convoluted way they thought they were "eating god" and receiving power from its blood (this pagan practice is still today by some primitive African tribes). The Holiness (set-apartness) of the Israelites, and the direct commandment to them from their Sovereign required them NOT to practice any primitive pagan ways and not to mirror the beliefs of their pagan neighbors.

Furthermore, a payment for a penalty by an Israelite who was using an animal (which, by the way, benefited the food needs of the priest and his family) would not be final without the animal becoming a complete loss to the payer by its death. In other words, unless there was an unredeemable loss by the death of a valuable prime first class breeding animal, or the loss of important food products, or the loss of some other item having important trading value to the violator, the payment for any violation of the law would not have been made. In our present age we place value on currency (we use as money) or items of value such as gold or silver. When payment for violations of the law are made we lose the purchasing power of the currency or money and that becomes (the sacrifice) because it is lost. In extreme cases the violator may even lose his freedom by being jailed, or lose his life (such as in the case of a conviction for murderer). However, in the ancient nomadic society, as was found by early National Israel, that the moving of prisoners throughout the country in mobile jails was not a viable option, so sacrificial payments for violations of law using various items was at that time the normal accepted procedure.

The whole quotation from Leviticus 17 reads: *"Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood-- I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it (the animal) to you to make atonement (a payment) for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood (death of the animal, by its loss) that makes the atonement (payment) for one's life. Therefore I say to the Israelites, 'None of you may eat blood, nor may an alien (non-Israelite) living among you eat blood. Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any*

animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the Israelites, You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off.” . . .

Some might still insist that shed blood was needed for atonement (at-one-ment, a payment) in order for Yahweh to forgive sin. However, there are many examples in the Hebrew Bible where other items besides the death of animals were used to make atonement for law violations. If someone was poor and unable to afford an animal (for a payment) Yahweh allowed them to use flour (which is not an animal, and does not involve any blood). If the poor were not even able to offer a payment of flour or food, forgiveness would only be available for the wealthy. Yahweh would never exclude poor people from obtaining forgiveness for violations of law, or for violations against Him on the basis of wealth, or their ability to pay.

. . . . *“If, however, he cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, he is to bring as an offering for his sin (violation) a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He must not put oil or incense on it, because it is a sin offering. He is to bring it to the priest, who shall take a handful of it as a memorial portion and burn it on the altar on top of the offerings made to Yahweh by fire. It is a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement (payment) for him for any of these sins he has committed, and he will be forgiven.”* **To repeat, it is the “loss” that makes the payment.** NOT the item it’self. . **it is the loss!**

The majority of the item offered (in most places) belonged to the priest, as with the grain offering. (Leviticus 5:11-13). Here, in the middle of the commandments concerning the sacrifices for sin, the Hebrew Bible tells us we do not need dead animals for the forgiveness of sin. The idea that one needed an animal sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin (violation of the law, civil or criminal) is not Biblical.

There are additional passages of non-animal sacrifices (payments not requiring slaughtered animals): *“So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement (payment) for them,”* (Numbers 16:47).

In the following passage jewelry is offered for atonement, but no animal dies, and no blood is shed: *“So we have brought as an offering to Yahweh the gold articles each of us acquired, armlets, bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces . . .”* to make atonement for ourselves before Yahweh, . . .” (Numbers 31:50).

It is obvious, that animal slaughtering is not required for forgiveness! Another example is that Isaiah had his sins removed by a live coal: *“Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, see, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned (paid) for . . .”* (Isaiah 6:6-7).

Some will still say that without a Temple, there cannot be any kind of animal sacrifice. This is true; that is why Yahweh gave many different methods of atonement (payments for violations of the law) to the ancient Israelites. There was a time in Israel’s history when they became all too consumed with the sacrificial (payment) ceremonies. For this, Yahweh rebuked them. He reminded them that keeping His Laws were more important than the slaughtering ceremonies.

“For when I brought your forefathers out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices (penalty payments), but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your Alueim (Mighty One) and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you that it may go well with you.” (Jeremiah 7:22-23).

Out of all the methods Yahweh gave to us for atonement (payment), slaughtering animals was the weakest, because it only made atonement (payment) for one kind of sin. Some may point out several verses that show that there needs to be a payment for sin, and often point out the verses that show that

payment does atone for sin. But they seem to leave out just what sins are covered by these slaughtering, and that is, only UN-intentional sins:

"Yahweh said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of Yahweh's commands--'" (Leviticus 4:1-2).

If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of Yahweh's commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, they were guilty, (Leviticus 4:13).

When a leader sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the commands of Yahweh his Aloah (Power), he is guilty, (Leviticus 4:22).

If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of Yahweh's commands, he is guilty, (Leviticus 4:27).

When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of Yahweh's holy things, he is to bring to Yahweh as a penalty payment a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering, (Leviticus 5:15).

He is to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement (payment) for him for the wrong he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven...., (Leviticus 5:18).

Now if you unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands Yahweh gave Moses..., (Numbers 15:22).

The priest is to make atonement (payment) before Yahweh for the one that violated by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement (payment) has been made for him, he will be forgiven. One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien. (Numbers 15:24-29).

But if someone were to commit a sin intentionally, he would be punished! But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien blasphemes Yahweh, and that person must be cut off from his people (Numbers 15:30).

For some intentional sins, the punishment was severe:

While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was found gathering wood on the Shabbat/Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. *Then Yahweh said to Moses, "The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp." So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as Yahweh commanded Moses.*" (Numbers 15:32-36).

Yahweh is a righteous judge. For intentional sins to be atoned for there had to be repentance and restitution and often punishment because the sins were committed on purpose!

A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft... *If a man grazes his livestock in a field or vineyard and lets them stray and they graze in another man's field, he must make restitution from the best of his own field or vineyard... If a fire breaks out and spreads into thorn-bushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution... But if the animal was stolen from the neighbor, he must make restitution to the owner...If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is injured or dies while the owner is not*

present, he must make restitution....., (Exodus 22:3, 5, 6, 12, and 14).

Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a man must be put to death. (Leviticus 24:21).

Say to the Israelites: When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to Yahweh, that person is guilty and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged. (Numbers 5:6-7).

Wouldn't it be nice to live in a society where, if a criminal stole and stripped your car, he would have to replace it, and then give you 20% in addition to what it was worth? There were other methods used to receive atonement (payment) that were superior to the sacrificial system. This is what Yahweh truly desires from us, Teshuvah, which means "repentance and return" to Yahweh.

..if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land, (2 Chronicles 7:14).

But if from there you seek Yahweh your Aloah (Power), you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul (Deuteronomy 4:29).

He prays to Aloah and finds favor with him, he sees Aloah's face and shouts for joy; he is restored by Aloah to his righteous state, (Job 33:26).

Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it, (Ps 34:14).

Yahweh is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit, (Ps 34:18).

It is true repentance and prayer that Yahweh wants from us, NOT sacrifice!

"You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of Aloah are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O Aloah, you will not despise." (Ps 51:16-17).

Remember, the Psalms were written to sing praises to Yahweh in the Temple, right where the sacrifices themselves were to be performed. They understood quite well Yahweh's attitude towards the sacrifices:

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require." (Ps 40:6)

Take words with you and return to Yahweh. Say to him: *"Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the bulls of our lips," (Hosea 14:2).*

Note: Many English translations intentionally mistranslate this passage. The Hebrew is quite clear, "Pa-reem S'fa-tay-nu, the bulls of our lips." Instead they mistranslate the Hebrew as if it said, "Pay-rote S'fa-tay-nu, the fruit of our lips." This means that for the specific purpose of misrepresenting what the Bible says that Yahweh accepts prayer in place of sacrifices, thereby they have changed the word of Yahweh!

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

Another superior payment method was charity:

“Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of Yahweh a man avoids evil.” (Proverbs. 16:6).

“To do what is right and just is more acceptable to Yahweh than sacrifice.....” (Proverbs 21:3).

“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of Aloah rather than burnt offering.” (Hosea 6:6).

The following quotations all come from I Kings 8, in which King Solomon dedicates the only Temple in the world to the One True Sovereign. It was in this very Temple that the sacrifices (penalty payments) were to take place. Yet even at the dedication of this very Temple, Solomon knew that one need only pray to Yahweh for forgiveness, after repenting, and He would forgive:

“...and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel-- each one aware of the afflictions of his own heart, and spreading out his hands toward this temple--then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men).....” (1 Kings 8:38-39).

The Non-Israelites were also to pray directly to Yahweh for the forgiveness of their sins, and without the need of any sacrifice!

“As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel, but has come from a distant land because of your name -- for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm -- when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the land may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.” (1 Kings 8:41-43).

Notice here, that Yahweh allowed the Non-Israelites to pray directly to him, without the need of a mediator. Yahweh never did exclude anyone from Him. All He asks for is a contrite heart, and the willingness to follow Him!

Remember, still, that the whole of the sacrificial (penalty payment) system was centered at the Temple.

Solomon continues:

When they sin against you -- for there is no one who does not sin--and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near; and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their conquerors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly!’; and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their conquerors to show them mercy.... (1 Kings 8:46-50).

If you repent, and walk in righteously Yahweh will save you from your sin!

Yahweh is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18).

And he will restore your righteousness! Even though you have sinned!

“He prays to Aloah and finds favor with him, he sees Aloah's face and shouts for joy; he is restored by Aloah to his righteous state.” (Job 33:26). Aloah = Hebrew for “Mighty One, Power, Strength, the singular form of “Alueim.”

Yahweh has clearly shown us that sacrifice of animals, a man like Yahshua (Jesus) or other items of value are NOT necessary for atonement or forgiveness. Yahweh has made it abundantly clear to Israel what we are to do...! Even in the New Testament, if Jesus (Yahshua) was given the “power” to forgive “sins” just by saying so (according to Matt. 9:5-8), would not that have been a much better way to forgive the sins of men, then going through the death experience of being executed on a cruel stake by the Romans?

*“For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? **But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,** (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, **which had given such power unto men.**” Mat 9:5-8.*

Conclusion:

“With what shall I come before Yahweh and bow down before the exalted Aloah? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (The answer is NO!)

(What is the answer?) - *“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does Yahweh require of you? **Only to do Justice, and to love Mercy and to walk humbly with your Aloah (Mighty One).**” Micah 6:6-8.*

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