

## How Do Sacrifices Atone?

### Leviticus 4:27-31

**If any person from among the populace unwittingly incurs guilt by doing any of the things which by the Lord's commandments ought not to be done, and realizes guilt— or the sin of which one is guilty is made known—that person shall bring a female goat without blemish as an offering for the sin of which that one is guilty. The offerer shall lay a hand upon the head of the sin offering. The sin offering shall be slaughtered at the place of the burnt offering. **The priest shall take with his finger some of its blood and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and all the rest of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar.** The offerer shall remove all its fat, just as the fat is removed from the sacrifice of well-being; and the priest shall turn it into smoke on the altar, for a pleasing odor to the Lord. **The priest shall thus make expiation for that person, who shall be forgiven.****

### ויקרא ד:כז-ל

ואם-גפש אחת תחטא בשגגה מעם הארץ בעשיתה אחת ממצוות יהוה אשר לא-תעשינה ואשם: או הודע אליו חטאתו אשר חטא והביא קרבנו שעירת עיזים תמימה זקבה על-חטאתו אשר חטא: וסמך את-ידו על ראש החטאת ושחט את-החטאת במקום העלה: ולקח הפהו מדמה באצבעו ונתן על-קרנת מזבח העלה ואת-כל-דמה ישפך אל-יסוד המזבח: ואת-כל-הלבנה יסיר כאשר הוסר חלב מעל זבח השלמים והקטיר הפהו המזבחה לריח ניחח ליהוה וכפר עליו הפהו ונסלח לו:

### Leviticus 16

15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with his blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the ark-cover, and before the ark-cover. 16 **And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins; and so shall he do for the tent of meeting, that dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.** ... 18 And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. 19 And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleannesses of the children of Israel.

### ויקרא טז

טו) ושחט את שעיר החטאת אשר לעם והביא את דמו אל מבית לפרכת ועשה את דמו כאשר עשה לדם הפר והזה אתו על הפפרת ולפני הפפרת:

טז) וכפר על הקדש מטמאת בני ישראל ומפשיעיהם לכל חטאתם וכן יעשה לאהל מועד השכן אתם בתוך טמאתם: ...

יח) ויצא אל המזבח אשר לפני יי וכפר עליו ולקח מדם הפר ומדם השעיר ונתן על קרנות המזבח סביב:

יט) והזה עליו מן הדם באצבעו שבע פעמים וטהרו וקדשו מטמאת בני ישראל:

### Samuele Bacchiocchi, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History Volume II: The Fall Festivals* Chapter 4

The two major rites of the Day of Atonment were (1) the purification of the sanctuary, priesthood, and people (Lev 16:16-19, 30, 33, 34), and (2) the expulsion of Azazel, the scapegoat, with all the sins of the Israel (Lev 16:10, 20-22). **The purification rites prescribed for the Day of Atonment presuppose a prior defilement/pollution of the sanctuary.** ...

Israel's sanctuary could be defiled by only one source, namely, the sinful acts of the people. ...

**Sin defiles the sanctuary because it is a transgression of the principles of God's government. When God's principles are transgressed the sanctuary is morally defiled by the objective reality of sin.** ...

**The blood that was brought into the Holy Place for sprinkling against the veil and upon the horns of the altar of incense, served to symbolically transfer into the sanctuary the sins which had been atoned for. There the sins remained until the Day of Atonment, when the sanctuary was cleansed of the accumulated sins of the people. This blood ritual of the daily services was not "a ritual detergent for purging the sanctuary," because it is explicitly stated that "the priest shall make atonement for them [the people]" (Lev 4:20), and not for the sanctuary. By contrast, it is explicitly stated that on the Day of Atonment the blood ritual served to cleanse the sanctuary (Lev 16:16) as well as the altar of burnt offerings (Lev 16:18-19).**

## Leviticus 17:11-12

Any Israelite or stranger amongst you who eats blood, I will place my wrath upon the person who eats blood and I will cut him off from the nation.

Because the soul of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you to place on the alter to atone for your souls; for the blood atones for life.

### Rashi ad locum

For the soul of the flesh - of all creatures depend upon blood; therefore, I have given it upon the alter to atone for the life of Man. One life shall come and atone for (another) life.

## Leviticus 1

2 Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When any man brings an offering to the Lord,

4 **And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering;** and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

5 And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall present the blood, and dash the blood round about against the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting.

## Leviticus 16

**Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat** and confess over it all the iniquities and transgressions of the Israelites, whatever their sins, putting them on the head of the goat; and it shall be sent off to the wilderness through a designated man. Thus the goat shall carry on it all their iniquities to an inaccessible region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.

### Avot D'Rebbe Natan Ch. 4

Once Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai was exiting Jerusalem and Rabbi Yehoshua was following him. He saw the Temple destroyed. Rabbi Yehoshua said woe to us that the temple is destroyed—a place that the sins of Israel were atoned. **He told him: my son, don't be in sorrow, we have one atonement equal to it. It is charity, since it said: "I desired charity not sacrifice."** (Hosea 6:6)

### Mechilta D'Rebben Yishmael Yitro Masechet D'Bechodesh Parsha 10

R. Nehemiah says: precious is suffering. For just as sacrifices are the means of atonement, so also is suffering. What does it say about sacrifices? "And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement" [Lev. 1:4]. And what does it say in connection with suffering? "And they shall be paid the punishment of their iniquity" [Lev. 26:43]. **And not only this, but suffering atones even more than sacrifices. For sacrifices affect only one's money, while suffering affects the body. And thus it says: "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life."** [Job 2:4]

## ויקרא יז

(י) ואיש איש מבית ישראל ומן הגר הגר בתוכם אשר יאכל כל דם ונתתי פני בגנפוש האקלת את הדם והכרתי אתה מקרב עמה

(יא) כי נפש הבשר בדם הוא ואני נתתיו לכם על המזבח לכפר על גפשתיקם כי הדם הוא בגנפוש יכפר

## רשי שם

כי נפש הבשר - של כל בריה בדם היא תלויה, ולפיכך נתתיו על המזבח לכפר על נפש האדם. תבוא נפש ותכפר על הנפש

## ויקרא א

(ב) דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם אדם כי יקריב מקם קרבן לה' ...

(ד) וסמך ידו על ראש העלה ונרצה לו לכפר עליו:

(ה) ושחט את בן הקורבן לפני ה' והקריבו בני אהרן הכהנים את הדם ונרקו את הדם על המזבח סביב אשר פתח אהל מועד:

## ויקרא טז

(כא) וסמך אהרן את שתי ידיו על ראש השעיר החי והתנדף עליו את כל עונת בני ישראל ואת כל פשעיהם לכל חטאתם ונתן אתם על ראש השעיר ושלח ביד איש עתי המדברה:

(כב) ונשא השעיר עליו את כל עונתם אל ארץ גזרה ושלח את השעיר במדבר

### אבות דרבי נתן פרק ד

פעם אחת היה רבן יוחנן בן זכאי יוצא מירושלים, והיה רבי יהושע הולך אחריו, וראה בית המקדש חרב. אמר רבי יהושע: אוי לנו על זה שהוא חרב. מקום שמכפרים בו עונותיהם של ישראל. אמר לו: בני, אל ירע לך. יש לנו כפרה אחת שהיא כמותה, ואיזה? זה גמילות חסדים. שנאמר: "כי חסד חפצתי ולא זבח"

### מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל יתרו - מסכתא

#### דבחודש פרשה י

ר' נחמיה אומר, חביבין יסורין שכשם שהקרבנות מרצין, כך יסורין מרצין. בקרבנות מהו או' ונרצה לו לכפר עליו, בייסורין מה הוא אומר והם ירצו את עונם. ולא עוד אלא שהייסורין מרצין יותר מן הקרבנות, מפני מה, שהקרבנות בממון והייסורין בגוף. וכן הוא אומר עור בעד עור וכל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו

Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 17a

When R. Sheshet kept a fast, on concluding his prayer he added the following: Sovereign of the Universe, You know full well that in the time when the Temple was standing, if a man sinned he used to bring a sacrifice, and though all that was offered of it was its fat and blood, atonement was made for him therewith. **Now I have kept a fast and my fat and blood have diminished. May it be your will to account my fat and blood which have been diminished as if I had offered them before you on the altar and do though favor me.**

רב ששת כי הוה יתיב בתעניתא, בטר דמצלי אמר הכי: רבון העולמים, גלוי לפניך, בזמן שבית המקדש קיים אדם חוטא ומקריב קרבן, ואין מקריבין ממנו אלא חלבו ודמו ומתכפר לו; ועכשיו ישבתי בתענית ונתמעט חלבי ודמי, יהי רצון מלפניך שיהא חלבי ודמי שנתמעט כאילו הקרבתי לפניך על גבי המזבח ותרצני.

Pesikta de-Rab Kahana, Piska 24 Shuva

Instead of bulls we will pay [The offering of] our lips” (Hosea 14:3); **“R. Abahu said: How are we to compensate Thee for the bullocks we used to offer to Thee? Our lips will pay by means of the prayer we offer to Thee”**

פסיקתא דרב כהנא (מנדלבוים) פיסקא כד

- שובה

ונשלמה פרים שפתינו: א"ר אבהו מי משלם אותם הפרים שהיינו מקריבים לפניך, שפתינו, בתפילה שאנו מתפללים לפניך

Anim Zemirot

May the poor man's song be dear in Your eyes, like the song that is sung over Your offerings

אנעים זמירות

תיקר שירת רש בעיניך כשיר יושר על קרבניך

Moshe Halbertal, On Sacrifice

In its essence as an offering as opposed to a gift, the sacrifice defies the common ethics of giving since its acceptance is not secured. The fatal possibility of rejection gives rise to an important function of “ritual”: successful transfer. Ritual is a prescribed procedure meant to guarantee the transfer’s success. Adherence to detailed routine makes the passage from laying down to acceptance less fraught. Ritual is thus a protocol that protects from the risk of rejection....The ritual’s intricate rules serve as a shield for the human approaching God. Any change in the protocol might be lethal, like walking in a minefield. This shield comes at the expense of visibility....

Ritual as a protocol for an approach erases the individuation of the one who is approaching. Such a person is one among many who follow the routine, approaching under the canopy of the secure and recognizable. The acceptance of such a gift is not unique, but at least it is safe. It secures enough attention without drawing too much of it.

Vayikra 16

No person shall enter into the tent of meeting when he comes for atonement in the sanctuary until his departure and he shall atone on his own behalf, on his home’s behalf and on behalf of all of Israel.

ויקרא טז

יז) וְכָל אָדָם לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּאֵתֹל מוֹעֵד בְּבֵאֵל וְיִכָּפֵר בְּקֹדֶשׁ עַד צֵאתוֹ וְכִפֹּר בְּעֵדוֹ וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ וּבְעֵד כָּל קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Vayikra Rabba, Acharei Mot, 21

R’ Abahu said, And is not the Kohen Gadol himself a person? Rather, this is as R Pinchas said, that at the moment that the presence of God rested upon him, his face was ablaze like a torch

ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשת אחרי מות

פרשה כא

אמר ר' אבהו וכהן גדול לא אדם היה אלא כההוא דאמר ר' פנחס בשעה שהיה רוח הקודש שרוי עליו היו פניו בווערות כלפידים עליו

Mei HaShiloach Acharei Mot s.v Vchol Ha'adam

"The preparations of the heart are man's, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord" (Prov. 16:1). **God answers one according to their mental preparations, but here it is says that no person should be present (in the tent of meeting) since it is entirely inappropriate to confine a person to his thoughts or understanding during the Yom Kippur sacrificial service when inspiration descends from God from this place.**

מי השלוח פרשת אחרי מות ד"ה וכל אדם

וכו'

... לאדם מערכי לב ומה' מענה לשון, שלפי מערכת האדם במחשבותיו כן יענה ה' אבל כאן נאמר וכל אדם לא יהיה, שאין שום שייכות לגבול תפיסת האדם במחשבתו בבינתו בענין עבודת יום הכפורים בהשפעה שיורדת מה' יתברך ממקום זה

## Leviticus 4:22-23

If a leader [of Israel] sins and unintentionally commits one of all the commandments of the Lord, which may not be committed, incurring guilt. If his sin that he has committed is made known to him, then he shall bring his offering: an unblemished male goat.

## Tosefta Bava Kama 7:5

Happy is the generation who whose leader brings a sin offering for their unintentional sin.

## Rabbi Shai Held, *The Fall and Rise of Great Leaders: Or: What Kind of Leaders Do We Need?*

When it comes to leaders and their temptations, Jewish ethics offers an unblinking perspective: Power can corrupt, often in unspeakable ways. A generation blessed with leaders able to acknowledge their failings is both fortunate and rare. Leaders may spring up from--and in turn reinforce—a culture where cunning and artifice remain alternatives to heartfelt apology; or they can grow from and nurture a culture in which people are able to say, “I have sinned against God.”

## Erica Brown, *Take Your Soul to Work 365 Meditations on Every Day Leadership*, p.56

Audacity is the daring willingness to take risks and fail...

Just in case you were losing your nerve to change the world - or at least your little corner of it - because it suddenly feels too risky, remind yourself of four of the most important words that shape all of leadership - given to us by Erasmus:

"Fortune favors the audacious"



**Joe Blitzstein**  
@stat110

**Mathematics is the logic of certainty. Statistics is the logic of uncertainty.**

4:19 PM · Jan 6, 2013 · Twitter Web Client

## ויקרא ד כב-כג

אֲשֶׁר נָשִׂיא נִחְטָא וְעָשָׂה אֶתְּ מִכְּל־מִצְוֹת ה' אֶל־לִקְיוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִעָשֶׂינָהּ בְּשִׁגְגָה וְאִשָּׁם: אוֹהֹדְעֵ אֱלֹהֵי חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא בָּהּ וְהָבִיא אֶת־קֶרְבָּנוֹ שְׂעִיר עִזִּים זָכָר תָּמִים:

## תוספתא מסכת בבא קמא (ליברמן) ז:ה

אשרי הדור שהנשיא שלו מביא קרבן חטאת שגגה על שגגתו

“Let’s do something special,” I suggested a month before Julia’s fortieth birthday. “Something unlike us. A party. A blowout: band, ice cream truck, magician.”

“A magician?”

“Or a flamenco dancer.”

“No,” she said. “That’s the last thing I’d want.”

“Even if it’s last, it’s still on the list.”

She laughed and said, “It’s sweet of you to think of that. But let’s do something simple. A nice dinner at home.”

I tried a few times to persuade her, but she made clear, with increasing force, that she didn’t want “a big deal.”

“The thing I want most is to have a nice, quiet dinner with my family.”

The boys and I made her breakfast in bed that morning: fresh waffle, kale-and-pear smoothie. ...[We] ate lunch at one of the outside tables of her favorite Greek restaurant in Dupont Circle”...

It was getting dark when we made it home, with half a dozen bags of groceries for dinner supplies.

Julia and I unloaded the bags on the island and started putting away the perishables. Our eyes met, and I saw that she was crying. “What is it?” I asked.

“You’re going to hate me if I tell you.”

“I’m sure I won’t.”

“You’ll be extremely annoyed.”

“I’m pretty sure there’s an annoyance moratorium on birthdays.”

And then, really letting the tears come, she said, “I actually wanted a big deal.”

“Here,” I said, handing her a box of orecchiette. “Put these away.”

“That’s as far as your sympathy can reach?”

“Put the pretentious pasta away.”

“No,” she said. “No. Today, I won’t.”

I laughed.

“It’s not funny,” she said, banging the counter.

“It’s so funny,” I said

She inhaled, understanding something she didn’t yet understand, and opened the pantry door. Out spilled the boys, and the grandparents, and Mark and Jennifer, and David and Hannah, and Steve and Patty, and someone turned the music on, and it was Stevie Wonder, and someone released the balloons from the hall closet, and they jangled the chandelier, and Julia looked at me.