

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

Legislative Guidance to Spiritual Progress

The Book of Leviticus, third of the five Books attributed to Moses, is devoted chiefly to legislative measures designed to aid the pioneering, Israelites in moral conduct and spiritual progress. Numerous specifications are laid down governing personal conduct, social relations and ceremonial practices.

The laws and regulations contained in Leviticus were adapted to the peculiar requirements of a people who were being specially prepared for a great destiny. In their literal application they were suited to the people to whom they were given and the times in which they lived. In their aspects they are dated, localized and racially distinctive.

Since this is so, this ancient code of Moses is not and cannot be regarded as a living book containing specific guidance for the world today unless there be a spiritual perception of values that go beyond the letter of the law. This perception has been lost by the rank and file of Jews and Christians alike. Even when accepted as belonging to an ever-living, inspired Book, Leviticus is treated primarily for what it meant to bygone Israel and only secondarily for what it may mean to man today.

Leviticus, like every other Book in the Bible, contains something for the devout literalist, but it contains vastly more for the student who has discovered the keys that unlock its mysteries. The day has arrived for an awakening to other and deeper strata of truth. In Leviticus, as throughout the whole of Sacred Scriptures, is outlined the way of spiritual progress for the unawakened multitude and the way of Initiation for the awakened few.

The Book of the Law deals primarily with the several laws of sacrifice, purification, atonement, holiness and compensation.

The Law of Sacrifice

Sacrifice is fundamental to spiritual progress. It is inseparable from it. Sooner or later, a neophyte grasps the paradoxical truth that before one can (win all one must be willing to lose all. Complete renunciation precedes boundless possession. The story of Job emphasizes this, and the Christ gave it immortal utterance when He said: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 6:2-5)

The life that must be sacrificed is the self-centered animal nature; the life that is gained is the ever-giving spiritual nature which, in its emancipation from the lower self, claims its heritage as one with universal Being.

Until man reaches a certain stage of development he does not even recognize his eternal spiritual nature as apart from and superior to his physical. He could not, therefore, be expected to sacrifice the latter since it is what he conceives himself to be. To do so would be to him a blotting out of his very existence. Consequently, the Law does not require of man at that stage that he go counter to such rationality as he possesses by denying expression to the only life he knows. This is allowed him, though his actions are regulated by laws which tend to guide him in the right direction and to prevent his expression from unduly interfering with the rightful development of others. But the law of sacrifice must be inculcated in growing humanity even in its early stages by such means as come within grasp of reason and ability of performance. Such are the sacrifices prescribed for the Israelites, as laid down in the Mosaic code of Leviticus.

Under the law of burnt-offerings, sacrifices could be made of cattle, sheep, or birds. It is specifically stated that cattle and sheep so offered must be without blemish. It was required that whatever was surrendered have quality and value; only thus could the law of sacrifice be effectually inculcated in the life of early humanity.

Leviticus 1:3,5

If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him

offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary, will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord.

And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

The offering was made at "the door of the tent of meeting." The tent symbolizes the mind, the link between the threefold spirit that comes down from above and the threefold body that arises from below. It is the instrument that joins the spiritual and animal natures, which in union produce man, the thinker.

The mind is the path. At its door the animal (personality) is sacrificed on the altar of Jehovah (the divine self) with the result that it makes "atonement for him." Then the personal will becomes unified with the divine will. Furthermore, it is required that the blood (life essence) of the sacrifice be presented by the priests (aspiring nature) before the Lord (spirit self) and sprinkled "round about upon the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting." This is a figurative manner of describing the process whereby the sacrifice of animalistic forces to those of the spiritual nature tends to illumine and spiritualize the mind.

The various offerings are representative of sacrificial work to be performed upon the several bodies, or principles, of man in the course of the regenerative process. As this proceeds, the spirit's action on its composite vehicle results in generating forces which build the soul. This luminous body of light is virtually absent in primitive man. Gradually it grows in strength, influence and luminosity, until it becomes a scintillating radiance of such proportions that its effulgence brightens and purifies the psychic atmosphere of ever extending areas. The purpose of evolution is the development of soul. The practices required of the Israelites, as specified in Leviticus, were assigned with this end in view.

Not everyone was financially able to offer an ox, a lamb, a goat, or even a dove. From such, real offerings were acceptable. This could be raw, baked into cakes, or boiled in a pot. The meal was to be made from first fruits; it was to be mingled with oil, and frankincense was placed upon it. When baked, it was to be unleavened and seasoned with salt.

The first fruits are the most cherished of a season's product. In meal, man's labor is added to nature's bounty; moreover, that labor is carried to a point of refinement. It symbolizes the process by which spirit, working through a body, builds a Soul. The oil used is of like symbolical

significance. It is the extract of fruit even as the forces of the soul are an extract of the spirit's experiences in physical incarnation. Frankincense represents the soul's aroma; the unleavened wafer is a purified product, free from the fermentation and decay common to all things ephemeral, and the salt is a preservative element. So the "covenant of salt" is one that cannot be broken.

The sacrificial animals placed on the Altar of Burnt offering are symbolical of man's carnal nature that must be consumed in the fires of affliction. Pain is chastening. By it, lower desires are cleansed and the desire body is prepared for higher living. Purification is the purpose of the burnt offerings.

The meal offering relates to work done upon the etheric or vital body. Being a product of the plant kingdom, it pertains to the chaste life within reach of those who do not possess an "animal" for sacrifice; in other words, those who are not involved with grosser animalistic appetites of the lower desire nature. Though poorer in physical propensities, such are richer in the treasures of the spirit.

The vital body is composed of four ethers. The function of the two denser ethers is to maintain the physical form and secure perpetuation of the species; the function of the two higher ethers is to provide a suitable vehicle for the spirit; this is the soul body, of luminous blue and gold, referred to

as the wedding garment" in the Parable of the Marriage Feast. Without this soul body there can be no entrance into the "kingdom of heaven", the vehicle necessary to functioning in the higher realms would be lacking.

In the life of a spiritually awakened neophyte on the path the sacrificial offerings of Leviticus are not abrogated, they are still applicable in a non-physical sense and relate to a higher, though corresponding, set of principles.

The offering of a bullock is a necessity to the higher life when interpreted in terms of the love principle, governed by Taurus whose pictorial symbol is a bull. The love principle which became entangled with animal desire after the Fall must be sacrificed in its personal aspect before it can function in its impersonal relation as the love-wisdom manifestation of the universal Christ consciousness.

Similarly, the lamb when interpreted as the principle of will, governed by Aries, sign of the lamb — must be sacrificed in its aspect of self-will before it can become one with the will of the Father. The goat, symbol of Capricorn, is representative of the forces of this sign. When these are expressed negatively they are the stubborn, resistant, Saturnian qualities which must be surrendered before the depth of the divine nature within can be plumbed and awakened into activity. It is in the darkness of that depth that the Christ within is born.

He who sacrifices a dove gives up the attempt to execute divine judgment, office of Libra, by use of reason and feeling only, however highly developed his illumined mind and inspired intuition. So, too, with the meal offering. This is the sacrifice under Virgo, whose symbol is a virgin holding a sheaf of wheat. To her is given the pledge of chastity, which, when adopted as a way of life, gives power to close the mouth Of the red lion — as the ideal is presented in Tarot symbolism.

The fire on the altar burned continuously in obedience to the command that it never be put out. Without cessation, the law of action and reaction is at work. Reactions to actions contrary to law are painful. Memory of them endures in the form of conscience which warns against a repetition of whatever brings sorrow and suffering. At times the reactions come with an intensity the aspirant recognizes as a crisis in his spiritual life indicating a particular weakness is finally overcome or an undesirable element in his nature is completely eradicated. Such is the significance of the incident recorded in Leviticus 9:24. Fire came forth "from before the Lord," and so heightened the heat on the altar that "when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces." This is the rejoicing of a neophyte when inner fires have perfected another step in the process of his regeneration.

Wrongly applied, this same fire may have an opposite effect, resulting in destruction and death. For a person to call down spiritual fire into an unclean body is to invite annihilation, so certain exercises pertaining to this phase of development are carefully guarded lest they fall into the hands of the curious, the ignorant or the unprepared, who, by its application, would not enter into higher states of illumination and power but into insanity and, perhaps, disintegration of the body through derangement of the various vehicles.

Nahab and Abihu, the two eldest of Aaron's four sons, are examples of the tragedy that overtakes those who play with "strange fires." (Leviticus X) They are representative of the lower nature as Eleazar and Ithamar, the two youngest sons, are representative of the higher. The former offered fire before the Lord, "which he commanded them not," whereas the latter offered holy fire before the altar. The distinction was made between common fire and the fire taken from the altar. The one was kindled by man; the other by God. The fire of human passion is contrasted with the fire Of pure spirit; the one brings death, the other eternal life.

The sacrifice of burnt-offering, as previously observed, pertains to work on the desire body; the meal offering to a refinement of the vital body. The peace offering is also

related to one of the vehicles used by the Ego, namely, the mind. True inner peace cannot come until thought is controlled, and the mind is capable of a stillness which permits a perfect reflection of divine will into human will. The circumstances attending this offering indicate its relation to the principle in man which unites the higher with the lower. The offering is of a communal nature; part is placed on the altar as a gift to the Lord: part is consumed by priests who perform the ceremony (Leviticus 7:28-34), and the rest is consumed by the offerer and his family at a sacrificial meal. (Leviticus 7:15, 16) Thus do the several participants express the establishment of a harmonious relationship between the personality (offerer), the spiritualized Mind (priests) and Deity (the Ego).

The Law of the Clean and the Unclean

The rules and regulations in the section containing the eleventh to the sixteenth chapters inclusive, pertain to purification of the physical body. "Ye shall be holy," says Jehovah, "for I the Lord Your God am holy." The holiness extends to the whole of man; in fact, holiness and wholeness are two words for a closely related idea. In the human constitution — embracing the mind, the desire body, the vital body and the dense or physical vehicle all must be clean and sound if it is to serve as a suitable and worthy temple for an indwelling god.

The Levitical code deals with four types of uncleanness. These have to do with meats, carcasses, leprosy, and certain bodily functions and conditions. Regulations pertaining to meat specify the kind of beast which may or may not be eaten. The rule governing the selection of clean meat stipulates: "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat." (Leviticus 11:3) Thus flesh of all carnivorous animals is classified as unclean and not to be eaten. This is important since it prohibited the Israelites from taking more than one step away from the pure, passionless food available to them in the plant kingdom, which alone was intended to provide for man's physical sustenance. Immediately God had created man He said: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." (Genesis 1:29) Nor was the animal kingdom designed to feed upon its own kind, but to live on the fruits of field and forest, according to the statement in the verse succeeding the one quoted. It was after the Fall that man's bestial nature turned to animal food, and the kingdom below him fell into a correspondingly cruel and destructive way of preying on fellow creatures to satisfy its ravenous appetite. The flesh of beasts of prey, being more highly charged with animalistic passions than that of herbivorous creatures, is yet classified as unclean, and its use forbidden to those who

aspire to fulfill their destiny as God's "chosen" people. As they advance, they will in time, like Daniel who "Would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat," demonstrate that fairer countenance and that greater wisdom and understanding, which accorded with his simple diet of pulse and water.

The leper was pronounced unclean; specific directions were given for discerning the malady and for performing necessary rites of purification. Leprosy, in exceedingly loathsome disease and one that means virtually a living death, is the result of unclean living in this or past lives, or in both. It is a crystallization of base desires manifesting in the form of a diseased, disintegrating, physical body. Deeper instruction regarding the cause and cure of this dread illness than that publicly recorded in the pages of Leviticus, was given to an inner group, on which was placed chief responsibility for leading the pioneering Israelites along their upward path. They were taught to read scrolls of the past and to note how wrong desires form lines of force along which are marshaled atoms for a new dense vehicle to be used on Earth. In order to effect a permanent cure in an afflicted body, the cause, which is seated in a higher vehicle, must be completely removed. For accomplishing this a regenerated life is the only adequate prescription. It alone is capable of clearing the karmic sheet on which is charged the plague of leprosy.

The Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering

The sin and the trespass offerings relate to the lower concrete mind. This is the mortal mind that leads man into evil; yet it is the principle which differentiates man from animal and makes him morally responsible by virtue of his freedom to choose the way he goes.

All of the offerings so far considered were related to the four vehicles making up the composite body of man. This applies also to the law of the clean and the unclean. These several sacrifices and regulations were instituted for the purpose of bringing man into right relationship with God; or, in terms of the individual, in establishing a fundamentally harmonious relationship between the indwelling spirit and its external counterpart, the personality.

The sin and the trespass offerings have for their purpose the re-establishment of such a relationship once it has been broken through wrong actions, committed either wittingly or unwittingly.

The "law of the leper is the day of his cleansing" is contained in the fourteenth chapter, wherein explicit instructions are given regarding burnt offerings and trespass offerings made for him by a priest. The ceremonialism includes fragments from magical rites

carried over from ancient Atlantis. The power resident in the blood and the lines of magnetic force flowing through the body are known and dealt with. For example, a priest is instructed to take some of the blood of the trespass offering and put it on the tip of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot of him who is to be cleansed. The priest is then to pour oil into the palm of his own left hand and sprinkle some of the oil, with his right finger, on his left hand seven times before the Lord. Next, some oil is placed upon the right ear, the right thumb and the toe of the supplicant's right foot even as with the blood. Whatever oil remains is put upon the head of him who is being cleansed. (Leviticus 14:25-29)

The blood, the life stream in man, must be purified through regeneration. The oil used in the cleansing ceremonial is symbolical of the process. Since the blood is the direct vehicle through which the Ego works, it is of paramount importance to the spirit that it be free from earthly taint. When clean, it imparts strength and impetus to the body, along with clarity to the mind and keen responsiveness to impressions projected to it by the indwelling spirit. Food is also an important consideration to an aspirant, for unless it be pure the body it feeds cannot be so. Also, it is essential that thought be brought under control and spiritualized; except this be done, the blood stream will suffer contamination by thought forces that flow

into it. "Pure food, a clean mind and a constant memory of God" is the axiom of purification.

The Ritual of Atonement

The chief features which distinguishes the ritual of atonement from other sacrificial ceremonies is the offering of two goats. One of these is slain and burnt on the altar as a sin offering, the other is sent alive into the wilderness with Israel's iniquities heaped upon its head. (Leviticus XVI) These two sacrificial victims are symbolical of two aspects of law that work for righteousness, namely cause and effect. According to this law a man reaps as he sows, and remission of sins is by repentance, thus setting a constricting force into operation which modifies effects generated under the law of action and reaction. The former is "an eye for an eye" doctrine of the Old Dispensation the latter is "forgiveness of sin" as taught in the New. Law is uppermost in the first: love in the second. The law is not abrogated by love, it is fulfilled.

The two goats also symbolize two paths Of evolution. the one direct, the other indirect. All Egos on Earth follow one or the other. The small minority, choose the first; a majority the second. In the words of a wise teacher: "Humanity moves in circles: the wise ones in spirals."

In the ritual of atonement the high priest "cast lots upon two goats: one lot for the Lord. and the other lot for the scapegoat." (Leviticus 16:8) The goat upon which the Lord's lot falls is offered on the altar for a sin offering. This represents the shorter of the two paths, the Path of Initiation. Under its requirements the lower nature is completely surrendered to the will of the higher: it dies to all self-interest; it is sacrificed entirely to the higher law.

The scapegoat, on whose head the high priest places both hands and confesses over him all the transgressions of Israel, is led out into the wilderness and set at liberty. It represents the longer evolutionary path where the consequences of violations against divine law are heaped upon the head of a wrongdoer to be endured in the wilderness of an unilluminated Earth life. Therein he wanders until pain and suffering have moved him to a realization that the way of the transgressor is hard. He thus learns that by returning to the Father's house (law of the higher life) where a welcome and forgiveness await him, he can fulfill his desire for an abundant life.

The goat was looked upon in early times as a symbol of spirit. It is the pictorial representation of Capricorn, the sign under which the Master Jesus was born, and under whose rays the Christ within is quickened to conscious being. The goat of Mendes, a symbol of perverted spiritual power, was

used as a sign of black magic by medieval alchemists. "Riding the goat," in the facetious phraseology of the Masons, refers to ancient rites in which a candidate was taught the control of his lower nature by calling into action the powers of his Ego.

Repeated enactment of the ritual of atonement served to impress (first) its outward form and (later) its inner significance upon the conscious and subconscious mentality of worshipers until the truths it embodied became formative factors in the unfoldment of their spiritual life.

— ***Corinne Heline***