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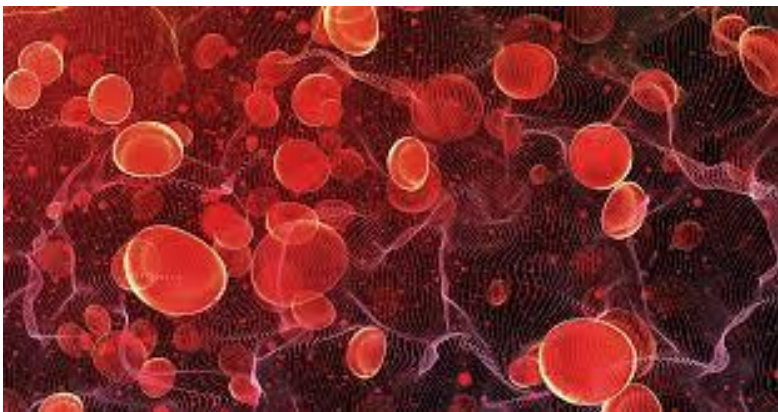
The Life is in the Blood

17: 1-16

The life is in the blood DIG: What consequences would fall upon those who failed to follow ADONAI's command regarding the sinful use of blood for a sacrifice? A major theme in Leviticus is that blood covers the people's sins and reconciles them to God. Why do you think YHVH chose blood to do that? What does that say about the seriousness of sin?

REFLECT: How does this chapter point to Messiah's blood shed for you? How do you feel about that? Do you take His sacrifice for granted? How so? Do you ever thank Him for His shed blood on your behalf? What is the most important thing you have learned from this chapter about maintaining fellowship with ADONAI? Who can you tell about His shed blood?

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.



All sacrifices brought to the Tabernacle (17:1-4): The mitzvah here concerns the prohibition bringing **sacrifices** (Hebrew *zebach*) anywhere other than **the Tabernacle**. God said to Moshe, speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the people of Isra'el. Tell them that this is what ADONAI has ordered, "When someone from the community of Isra'el slaughters an ox, lamb or goat inside or outside the camp without bringing it to the entrance of the Tabernacle to present it as an offering to ADONAI

is to be considered guilty of shedding blood.” There was to be only one place and one **God**. The idea was that the killing of **the animal** was imputed, or transferred to the man. The seriousness of this offense is underlined by the fact that the crime is called **shedding blood**, a phrase used to describe the murder. **Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed: for in the image of God has God made mankind (Genesis 9:6).** As a result, **that person is to be cut off from His people.**²⁹⁵

In rabbinic literature the penalty is called *karet*, or “cutting off.” In priestly literature, the penalty of *karet* was understood to include a series of related punishments at the hand of God, ranging from the immediate death of an offender, as in 20:17, to his premature death at a later time, and even to the death of his descendants. In Mishnah Sanhedrin 9:6 and Mishnah Keritot 1:2, this penalty was characterized as *mitah biydei shamayim*, or “death at the hands of heaven.” Since in 7:20-21 *karet* is mentioned in the context as childlessness, there is the implication that it took that course as well.²⁹⁶

Peace offerings brought before ADONAI (17:5-7): The reason for bringing their offerings to the entrance of the Tabernacle, to the priest, and sacrifice them as peace offerings to ADONAI (to see link click [Ak](#) - The Peace Offerings: At Peace with God), was to prevent sacrifices from being made to **goat idols** instead of **the LORD**. Thus, the text describes the butchering of meat in the open field as **a sacrifice. No longer will they offer sacrifices to the goat-demons, before whom they prostitute themselves (Second Chronicles 11:15; Second Kings 23:8)! They** either believed in **God** or believed in **demons!** The same is true for us today (**First Timothy 4:1**). Such an offense would be a violation of the First Commandment (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy BI - Have No Other Gods**), which explains why the offender would be **cut off**. The offense was equivalent to spiritual adultery. The proper procedure for the sacrifice of a **peace offering** is then given. **The priest will splash the blood against the bronze altar** in the courtyard of **the Tabernacle, and make the fat go up in smoke as a pleasing aroma for ADONAI.** The proper place of **the blood** in sacrifice was to be for atonement. **This was to be a permanent regulation for them through all their generations.**

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for being so wise and holy! Praise **You** that since **blood** is so important for sacrifice, **You** willingly sacrificed **Your** own **blood** on the cross in a **bloody** and painful tortuous execution. What love! It is easy to look at the sacrifice to goat idols and to dismiss it as not occurring nowadays, but sacrifice to idols still does occur. It may not be as obvious of a sacrifice; but self-centered living is a sacrifice to the god of self.*

When a person lives their life to please their own desires and wants, it is empty and unfulfilling. You give us a full life as we give you honor. **I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10c).**

Sacrifices made to the idol of one's own heart is an abomination to **You**. Dear Father, We plead for forgiveness for often putting ourselves above **You**. We need to set aside time for special worship of **You**. Our time, money and talents are all gifts from **You** that we should give graciously back to **You**. Too often our life gets so busy that meditating on **Your** Word and praise of **Your** many gracious attributes is crowded out.

May the wonder and glory of **You**, be the first thought of our day. **Bless Adonai, O my soul. Adonai my God, You are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty - wrapping Yourself in light as a robe (Psalms 104:1-2).** May praising **You** be the last thought of our day. **Praise the Lord of lords, for His lovingkindness endures forever, who alone did great wonders, for His lovingkindness endures forever, who made the heavens by wisdom, for His lovingkindness endures forever (Psalms 135:3-5).** You are worthy! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen

Burnt offerings brought before ADONAI (17:8-9): Also tell them, “When someone from the community of Isra’el or one of the foreigners living with you offers a burnt offering or sacrifice without bringing it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to sacrifice it to ADONAI, that person is to be cut off from His people.” These two verses restate the principle regarding the location for the presentation of the offerings. All sacrificial offerings had to be brought to **the Tabernacle**, that is, **before ADONAI**. This mitzvah not only applied to **the Israelite**, but also to any **foreigner living among the Israelites**.²⁹⁷

Blood ritual and slaughter (17:10-16): In addition to regulations regarding sacrifice, **Leviticus 17** warned **the Israelites** against consuming **blood** (also see **Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 7:26-27; Deuteronomy 12:23; Acts 15:20 and 29**). **When someone from the community of Isra’el or one of the foreigners living with you eats any kind of blood, I will set myself against that person who eats blood and cut him off from his people.** Consuming **blood** was strictly forbidden, **for the life** (Hebrew: *nefesh*, meaning *soul*) **of a creature is in the blood**, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the bronze altar; for it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life (17:10-11).

By saying **the life of a creature is in the blood**, the Torah speaks of life in the sense of **life-force**. The Hebrew word *nefesh* can be used to refer to one's person, one's life, one's

consciousness, or one's eternal essence. Here, in **Leviticus 17** it should probably be understood in **its** simplest form: the *nefesh* is the **life-force**. **It** is the **life** of the flesh, without which the flesh is dead. Obviously, that **life-force** is dependent upon **the blood**. When **the blood** is drained from the body, the spark of **life** leaves with **it**.

This is why I told the people of Isra'el, "None of you is to eat blood, nor is any foreigner living with you to eat blood." When someone from the community of Isra'el or one of the foreigners living with you hunts and catches game, whether animal or bird that may be eaten, he is to pour out its blood and cover it with earth. For the life of every creature is in the blood. Therefore, I said to the people of Isra'el, "You are not to eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is in the blood. Whoever eats it will be cut off from His people and the Tabernacle/Temple sacrifices (17:12-14). The belief that *the nefesh is in the blood* is testified to by **Abel's blood** which cried out from **the ground** (see the commentary on **Genesis Bj - Your Brother's Blood Cries Out to Me from the Ground**). According to the Torah method of **slaughter**, even **animals** that are hunted are to be drained out onto **the ground** and then **covered with earth**. This is suggestive of a dignified burial.

In Jewish burial customs, blood is accorded great dignity. That the life is in the blood is the reason behind the Jewish burial practice of collecting and burning even blades of grass stained with Jewish blood. In Jewish burial rituals, embalment is not practiced. People are buried with the blood still in their bodies rather than having it run down the sewer drain of a mortuary before being pumped with formaldehyde.

Meat with the blood still in it is meat that was not ritually slaughtered in a way that completely drains the blood from the flesh. The traditional procedure for sacrifice is to slit the jugular of the animal so that its pumping heart will continue to beat until it has pumped all of the blood (life) from the body. Of course, some blood inevitably remains in any cut of meat, but the blood containing the life of the animal has been drained because the life departed with the blood. This method of slaughter is called shechita, the Hebrew word for butchering. This traditional method of butchering has been inherited from the sacrificial procedure used in the Temple.

Any **meat** that has not been bled to death by this method is not considered kosher by observant Jews today because it still has **blood** in it. They are forbidden **meats of animals** torn or that have died on their own (**Exodus 22:31; Leviticus 22:8**). The early Messianic community referred to **animals** not **slaughtered** by being bled as the **meat of strangled**

animals (Acts 15:20 and 29). We learn that anyone **eating** such an **animal** would be rendered unclean by it. **Anyone eating an animal that dies naturally or is torn to death by wild animals, whether he is a citizen or a foreigner, is to wash his clothes and bathe himself in water; he will be unclean until evening; then he will be clean. But if he doesn't wash them or bathe his body, he will bear the consequences of his wrongdoing (17:15-16).**

Are hunted **animals** deemed kosher? Obviously, an **animal** wounded or killed in a hunt cannot be **slaughtered** by *shechita*. Therefore, in Orthodox Judaism, hunted **animals** are not regarded as kosher. But here the Torah allows for them so long as **their blood** is drained out upon **the ground** and **covered with earth**. The implication is that the Jewish tradition of *shechita* is not the biblical standard of whether or not **eating hunted meat** is permissible.

Understanding the sanctity of **blood** and the Torah relationship between **life/soul** and **blood**, we can better understand the significance of **the Master's blood**. We frequently speak of **His blood** and that it was **shed for us**. Being **shed** means that **His life/soul** was poured out. It is the precious **life/soul** of **Yeshua** which ransoms, cleanses and atones for us.²⁹⁸ The B'rit Chadashah frequently mentions **the blood** of **Messiah** as it relates to our salvation. On the night in which **He** was betrayed **He** said: **This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28). And through him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:20).**

The purpose of **the blood** was to symbolize sacrifice for **sin**, which brought about cleansing from **sin**. **Indeed, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22b).** **Forgiveness** is very, very costly. **The Father** doesn't forgive **sin** by looking down and saying, "Well, it's all right. Since I love you so much, I'll overlook your **sin**." **ADONAI's** righteousness and holiness will not allow **Him** to do that. **Sin** demands payment by **death**. And the only **death** great enough to pay for all of the **sins** of mankind was the **death** of **His Son**. **YHVH's** great love for us will not lead **Him** to overlook our **sin**, but it has led **Him** to provide *the payment* for our **sin**, as **John 3:16** so beautifully reminds us. **Ha'Shem** cannot ignore our **sin**; but **He** will **forgive** our **sin** if we trust in **the death** of **His Son** for that **forgiveness**.²⁹⁹