

ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HAPPY ARE THE PEOPLE WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD:
THE עֹלָה (WHOLE BURNT OFFERING) IN LEVITICUS 1 AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE
GREATEST COMMANDMENT

A Thesis Presented to
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ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

There are five sacrifices mentioned in Leviticus, and the *עלה* is listed first. The significance of this offering is that it was one of the most frequently made sacrifices; it was one of the most important, and the only sacrifice which completely belonged to God. The *עלה* was completely surrendered to God by the worshipper, and it was completely accepted by God. The most significant aspect of this *עלה* can be found in its voluntary aspect. The difference between voluntary offering and mandatory offering is that the voluntary offering flows out of love whereas the mandatory offering is offered because of the sin the person committed. Their purposes also are not the same; the voluntary offering is for expressing love, thanks, and paying homage, and serves as a gift to God. The voluntary aspect of the *עלה* can be found in its center in the heart of the offerer. This is expressed by the desire of the offerer to present a costly offering rather than a cheap offering. By the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross, believers are made holy and acceptable before God. Christ's death is a sacrifice made for all; all the sacrifices are fulfilled in Christ. There is, however, an ongoing aspect that can be drawn out from the *עלה*. The *עלה* helps us to understand the self-willingness of Christ to sacrifice himself for us all. As the *עלה* is burnt totally before God, Jesus asks us to give up everything for Him (Luke 14:33).

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DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Van Nun Thang May 2, 2022
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אשרי העם שיהוה אלהיו (Psalm 144: 15^b)

DEDICATION

To my parents, Pu Lian Hmung and Pi Kai Eng: I hope this will help you in your daily lives with the Lord and love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

There are five sacrifices listed in Leviticus. Among them, the *עֹלָה*—‘whole burnt offering’—is listed first. The *עֹלָה* plays an important role in the worship of God in the history of Israel. It is the most mentioned sacrifice in the Hebrew Scripture.¹ It indicates something special about the relationship between God and Israel. Cornelis Van Dam said, “Life could not be imagined without it. To miss the burnt offering was a catastrophe.”² Further, this whole burnt offering is different from the other four offerings because—unlike the sin or guilt offerings—it is not mandatory. It is a voluntary offering that serves the purpose of gift, and atonement. This demonstrates the importance of love and obedience in one’s life in the worship of God. My research, therefore, will highlight the voluntary aspect of it.

Background of the study

Several years ago, a conversation with my father first sparked my interest in the Old Testament. He asked me a question about the validness and applicability of the Old Testament in today’s Christianity. This made me consider why we have the Old Testament as the inspired word of God. It made me ponder what the on-going significance of the Old Testament is. I found that the sacrificial system is interesting. And among the five sacrifices, I found the *עֹלָה* as the most interesting sacrifice for me.

¹ Robert J. Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2009), 32.

² Cornelis Van Dam. “The Burnt Offering in Its Biblical Context.” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 7:2 (Fall 1991): 197. He argued that in Daniel 8:11-13, the tribulation is pictured as a removal of burnt offering from the life of Israel.

Statement of the Problem

While studies on the sacrifices in Leviticus abound, surprisingly few deals specifically with the עֹלָה. This calls for more research about the עֹלָה. My research, therefore, will answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature and function of the עֹלָה found in Leviticus 1?
2. How is the עֹלָה different from other sacrifices in the Ancient Near East, and from the other four sacrifices mentioned in Leviticus?
3. How was the עֹלָה understood in both the Old and New Testaments?
4. What is the on-going significance of the עֹלָה? What does the עֹלָה teach to today's churches.

Significance of the Study

When it comes to Old Testament sacrifices, Christianity today mostly emphasizes their obsolescence, and the supremacy of Christ's self-sacrifice. This may call for the need of the study of the sacrifice because the laws of the sacrifices are also the word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit; they can be used for teaching and correcting as well. Because of the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, the believers today are not required to perform sacrifice as it is prescribed in the Leviticus, however there is an on-going significance of this sacrifice. As I choose the עֹלָה out of the five sacrifices mentioned in Leviticus, my study aims to contribute the עֹלָה as expressing the greatest commandment — 'Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.'³ The significance of this offering is that it was one

³ Deuteronomy 6:5. The greatest commandment is taken from the word of Jesus (Matt 22: 37–38; Mark 12:30).

of the most frequently made sacrifices; it was one of the most important, and it was the only sacrifice which completely belonged to God. Therefore, the עלה is significant because it was completely surrendered to God by the worshipper, and the עלה was complete acceptance by God of the worshipper.⁴

The most significant aspect of this עלה can be found in its voluntary aspect. The difference between voluntary offering and mandatory offering is that the voluntary offering flows out of love to express honor and thanks to YHWH whereas the mandatory offering is offered to ask forgiveness of sin which the person committed. Their purposes also are not the same; the voluntary offering is for expressing love, thanks, and paying homage, and serves as a gift to God. The purpose of the mandatory offering is atonement. Alfred Marx argues that atonement was not the primary purpose of the sacrificial cult, but its major purpose was to establish a relationship with God.⁵ Besides, R. Judan writes, “But among the upright there is favour, refers to a man who brings a sacrifice, not for any sin of his [as it is said].”⁶ This demonstrates the voluntary aspect of עלה as an expression of loving God wholeheartedly.

Another significance of the עלה found in voluntary offerings is the total burning of the sacrifice. Three offerings are listed in voluntary offerings: the עלה, the מנחה (The grain offering), and שלמים (The fellowship offering). In both the מנחה and שלמים, a small portion is offered to

⁴ Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 85.

⁵ Rolf Rendtorff, Robert A. Kugler, and Sarah Smith Bartel, eds., *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature, v. 93. 3 (Boston: Brill, 2003), 111.

⁶ Midrash Rabbah, Leviticus, chapter 9 (tzav):1, 5, 8, 106,111,115, quote in Ximena DeBroeck, "Becoming A Priestly People: A Biblical Theology of Liturgical Sacrifice as Spiritual Formation." PhD dissertation, Duquesne University, 2017. <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/docview/1901535388?accountid=8380>. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

God, and the rest being given to the priest or consumed by the offerer.⁷ In the עלה, the entire animal is given to God; neither the offerer nor the priests receive anything. Sprinkle said that the total burning of the animal represents the worshipper's total consecration to God.⁸

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

Leviticus has listed five offerings in Chapters 1–7. These five offerings are the most important sacrifices in the Old Testament. They are עלה (Lev 1; 6:1–6 [Eng. 8–13]), מנחה (Lev 2; 6: 7–11 (Eng. 6:14–18), שלמים (Lev 3; 7:11–21), חטאה (Lev 4; 7:1–10), and אשם (Lev 5:14–19). Describing and presenting the five offerings is a huge task which cannot be done within a limited time and selected topic. I, therefore, would like to describe the summary of these offerings so that the significance of the עלה can be seen vividly. I will discuss the differences of the עלה from the other four offerings in brief.

The word מנחה means 'gift' and it has a general meaning, referring to 'tribute' (Judg 3:15, 1 Sam 8:2). In Leviticus and Priestly traditions, it indicates the grain offering, or others call it the cereal offering. The grain offering was the only offering which did not have any blood rite, or the only non-animal sacrifice.⁹ Jacob Milgrom believes the sacrifice can be understood as being equivalent to the עלה, especially for the poor, since the function of עלה describes the total consecration.¹⁰ The difference between these two offerings are the burning of the sacrifice and

⁷ In the grain offering a handful of the fine flour and oil was burnt in the altar, and the rest are given to Aaron and his sons (Leviticus 2: 2–3). And in the fellowship offering only the fatty portions (fat covering inner parts; fat tail, kidneys, lobe of the liver) are burnt in the altar (Leviticus 3).

⁸ Joe M. Sprinkle, *Leviticus and Numbers*, Teach the Text Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2015), 9.

⁹ Lester L. Grabbe, *Leviticus*, Old Testament Guides 20 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 32.

¹⁰ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, Continental Commentaries (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 25.

the atonement. In the *עלה*, the sacrifice is completely burnt whereas in the *מנחה* a portion is kept for the priests. The absence of atonement¹¹ *כפר* makes the *מנחה* different from the *עלה*.

Next is the *שלמים*, which originally was called the *זבה שלמים*, and many translations render as ‘Fellowship offering’, ‘Peace offering,’ or ‘Well-being offering.’ The Priestly offers three types of *זבה שלמים*, which are the thanksgiving offering, the votive offering, and the freewill offering. Joe M. Sprinkle said there are two themes in this sacrifice: to take joy in God and give thanks for food.¹² Sprinkle provides the difference between the *עלה* and the *שלמים* that the sacrificial animal in the *שלמים* can be both male or female whereas in the *עלה* only the male animal is allowed. The *שלמים* gives the worshipper an experience of eating together with the priests at the sacred meal in which God is considered as the honored guest.¹³ Roland De Vaux argues that the *עלה* is an act of homage expressed by a gift, a total surrender to God, whereas the *שלמים* emphasizes the joyful character.¹⁴

Next, I would like to discuss the two mandatory offerings. These two offerings *הטאת* and *אשם* are expiatory offerings. The *הטאת* atones for unintentional sins or ritual uncleanness. The requirement for the sacrificial animals varied according to the importance of the person or the sin of the person (4:1–5:13). And the *אשם* (5:14–6:7) demands two things which need to be atoned. The first is the unintentional sin related to the holy things of the Lord (5:1–19). And the second deals with sins against one’s neighbors (such as for deception or theft.)¹⁵

J. H. Kurtz argues that the difference between the three kinds of blood sacrifice is in the ritual. Kurtz argues that the sprinkling of the blood was the culminating point of the sin-offering.

¹¹ Lloyd R. Bailey, *Leviticus*, Knox Preaching Guides (Atlanta: J. Knox Press, 1987), 25.

¹² Sprinkle, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 19–22.

¹³ Shai Held and Yitz Greenberg, “The Meaning of the Thanksgiving Offering,” in *The Heart of Torah*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2017), 15.

¹⁴ Vaux, *Studies in the Old Testament Sacrifice*, 32, 37.

¹⁵ Kinlaw, “The Book of Leviticus,” 334–40.

The blood is poured out on the horn of the burnt offering altar, and in some cases the blood was brought to the Most Holy Place. Kurtz calls the עֹלָה ‘a sacrifice of entire, full, unconditional self-surrender.’¹⁶ Another significance of the עֹלָה is that the עֹלָה does not demand the cause of sacrifice as in the חַטָּאת and אִשָּׁם. John E. Hartley writes, “There is no indication in the regulation that a whole offering was offered for specific sins.”¹⁷ Furthermore, the opening word of the instruction for the עֹלָה is the word כִּי (Lev 1:1) which indicates that the sacrifice is rather a voluntary sacrifice, not a compulsory one. Jacob Milgrom argues that when the particle כִּי heads up in the main sentence in the text, the word אֵם follows as subdivision which indicates the idea of voluntary sacrifice.¹⁸

Cornelis listed nine legislated whole burnt offerings which are 1) the daily offering, 2) Sabbath offerings, 3) New Moon, 4) Feast of Passover-Unleavened Bread, 5) the Feast of Weeks, 6) Feast of Trumpets, 7) The Day of Atonement, 8) Feast of Booths, and 9) Various purification rituals.¹⁹ Allen Ross calls these ‘scheduled sacrifices.’ He also mentioned ‘unscheduled sacrifice’ in which he refers to any whole burnt offerings offered in the sanctuary (Num 29:39), and they could be offered at will, they could be offered at any time.²⁰ This sacrifice is a freewill or volunteer offering.²¹

Furthermore, the function of the עֹלָה both in the Leviticus and outside of Leviticus are different. There are biblical texts outside Leviticus which are understood to reflect early

¹⁶ Kurtz, Martin, and Kurtz, *Offerings, Sacrifices and Worship in the Old Testament*, 174–75.

¹⁷ John E. Hartley, “Leviticus,” in *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 4 (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1992), lxix.

¹⁸ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 144.

¹⁹ Van Dam, 197. For purifications rituals, burnt offerings were required; after childbirth, after a man is cleansed from discharges, for touching unclean things, for a woman after cleaning from her discharge of blood or monthly period, after defiling the Nazirite vow, and after being cleansed from skin diseases. He also provides the total numbers of burnt offerings alone for one year which is 113 young bulls, 32 rams, and 1086 lambs.

²⁰ Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus*, 80-81.

²¹ Joe M. Sprinkle, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 9.

functions of the עֹלָה as an all-purpose type of sacrifice. Job, for example, offered the עֹלָה for his children so that God would forgive them (Job 1:5). Elmer B. Smick argues that the עֹלָה, here in this case, serves as an expiation for sin because Job included the sins of the heart when making this sacrifice.²² Another example can be found in 1 Samuel 7:9 that Samuel offered a sucking lamb as the עֹלָה. Here, the context suggests that the עֹלָה functions as the sacrifice asking favor of the Lord. In the priestly literature, the עֹלָה appears to have a specific function of gift and devotion. As the עֹלָה in Leviticus 1 was instructed for everyone and for offering anytime, the function here expresses love and devotion.

My study will neither cover the entire history of the whole burnt offering nor all of the whole burnt offerings mentioned in the Scripture. Neither will it deal with the post-biblical sacrifices and offerings. This is because the post-biblical concept of sacrifice may have shifted from an emphasis on the centrality of the rituals themselves to an emphasis on the heart of the worshiper. The greatest change came about when the temple was destroyed in AD 70, after which there was no place to offer sacrifices. Hence, a change in the concept of worship and sacrifice was necessary.²³ This change came about with the end of the sacrificial system and with a new emphasis on study and prayer. However, there is still an ongoing consideration that we can draw from the עֹלָה, i.e., its voluntary aspect. My study, therefore, will focus on the voluntary aspect of the עֹלָה.

²² Elmer B. Smick, "Job," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 4 (1 Kings-Job), (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 879.

²³ Nahum N Glatzer, *Essays in Jewish Thought*. Judaic Studies Series (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 48. Available at muse.jhu.edu/book/41864.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter is divided into two sections: first, findings in recent scholarship on the עלה, and second the methodology of my thesis.

The Interpretation of the עלה in Recent Scholarship

As noted above, while scholars have discussed the sacrificial system as a whole, relatively few have paid specific attention to the עלה. I would like to begin with the interpretation of the sacrifice in general to give an overview before going into the interpretation of the עלה. Douglas Davies provides an analysis of sacrifices in the Old Testament from an anthropological perspective. Davies' article discusses structuralism, which is a way of looking at the question concerning human nature, social structure, myth, and symbolism. The main idea argued in this article is that sacrifice can be interpreted in terms of social structure because the atonement given in sacrifice is concerned more with social relationships than with individual moral guilt. Murder and adultery, for example, were not subject to sacrificial correction. The sacrifice reconciles humanity and God, and humanity with each other. Once the supplicant has made his sacrifice, and if God has forgiven him, he is accepted back into society. Therefore, this article talks about the interpretation of the sacrifice, seeing the sacrifice from an anthropological perspective.¹

Walter Brueggemann describes the indispensability of holiness and justice in his book *Old Testament Theology*. Especially in chapters nine and ten, Brueggemann talks about Israel as a community of the LORD, and how it is done is based on hearing and doing God's command.

¹ Douglas Davies, "Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus." *ZAW* 89, no. 3 (1977): 387–99.
<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a6h&AN=ATLA0000765906&site=ehost-live>.

God initiated the choice of his people Israel, and the relationship was tightened in obeying the Torah. Brueggemann describes Israel as the community bound in covenantal obedience. Brueggemann provides three dimensions of Israel life: 1) Sociological, 2) Political, and 3) Ethnic. Brueggemann argues that both Christianity and Judaism emphasize the ‘both/ and’ relationship concerning *covenantal, theological* on the one hand, and the *sociological, political, and ethnic* on the other.² He asserts that holiness, the vertical relationship with God must exist in harmony with justice, the horizontal relationship with one’s neighbor. Brueggemann also mentions the ethical dimension of sacrifice. He argues that the rituals are centered in the relationship of God; however, the expression of that relationship is lived in the relationship with one’s neighbor.³

Jacob Milgrom mentions two purposes of sacrifice: to receive external and internal aid from the deity. The deity provides external aid when one receives victory, blessings, or fertility. By internal aid, he means forgiveness from sin and impurity which is expiation. He said, “In essence, the system of sacrifice provided a metaphor, a method, for Israelites to reach God, responding to the deep psychological, emotional, and religious needs of the people.”⁴ For him, the burnt offering, since it is a gift given to God, is intended for any person to offer to God as an expression of loyalty.

Van Dam argues that this whole burnt offering is a form of gift. He argues that there is no evidence that God commands people to initiate offering this sacrifice; rather human beings came up with it as a gift to God. He also said that sacrifices were done after the fall into sin which describes their desire to have communion with God again. And this desire is given by God.

² Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction*, The Library of Biblical Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 206.

³ Brueggemann, 197–217.

⁴ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, 17.

Therefore, when a person made a sacrifice, it was to find favor with God again. The point he makes is that the burnt offering is a picture of the dedication of ourselves to God.⁵

Alexi E. George provides a South Asian view on the burnt offering. George argues that sacrifice is more relevant in South Asia because of its culture. In many South Asian countries, religion affects many aspects of people's lives. Culture can be understood in the framework of religion. George argues, therefore, that what mattered was not obedience, but relationship. In the other words, George argues that the sacrifice was made to maintain a relationship with the divine. In the burnt offering, George emphasizes the cost of the offering by arguing that each animal has sufficient cost and value. He argues that no wild animals are presented to God, and those being offered were probably domesticated. Even birds were probably raised for meat and therefore would have been costly for the poor. The main idea argued here is that giving the costly sacrifice describes how they value their relationship with God.⁶

Saya Lee argues that in the burnt offering, the heart of the worshipper is the most important thing. The author argues that the reason for offering male animals is to give the best because male animals had superior value in ancient times. Lee argues that the burnt offering provides different levels of possible sacrificial animals based on one's social and economic class because each of the regulations of the sacrifice is for every class of society. Lee argues that the act of the priest in the bird offering 'tearing it without being torn' is to make the bird bigger. This is to indicate that the offerer gives his or her best. In the burnt offering, the dove and cattle or sheep have same function. The size did not matter. Lee concludes that the heart of the worshipper is more important than the sacrifice; the burnt offering is totally dedicating oneself to God. Lee

⁵ Cornelis Van Dam, "The Burnt Offering in Its Biblical Context," 195–206.

⁶ Alexi E. George, *Leviticus: South Asia Bible Commentary*, ed. Brian Wintle, Jacob Chrian, and Ashish Chrispal (Rajasthan: Open Doors Publications, 2015), 135–70.

said that the priest does not take part in this offering alone; rather, both the offerer and the priest worship together, which tells the reader that worship is not done alone by the pastor.⁷

Alfred Marx provides two purposes of sacrifice; 1) it is an aroma to God, 2) it may serve to atone. The author argues that sacrifice demonstrates the relationship between Israel and God. The author is against the idea that the purpose of the sacrifice is just to atone. The chief aim is to establish a relationship, rather than just to be atoned in order to escape the wrath of God. The author distinguishes between two kinds of the sacrifice: the offering of pleasant aroma, and the sacrifice for atonement, in which he places the burnt offering as an offering of pleasing aroma, rather than atoning sacrifice. Marx argues that the verb קרב hip'il, demonstrates a relationship with the Lord. Marx emphasizes 'bringing an offering to the Lord' to draw near to the presence of the Lord, which shows the burnt offering as an act of volunteer.⁸

Thomas King also discusses the four functions of the whole burnt offering: invocation, devotion, celebration, and atonement. King argues that listing the עלה in the first place in Leviticus indicates its function of invoking God's presence and drawing His attention to the offering. King is against the idea that the motive for atonement in sacrifice is to appease the wrath of God. King affirms that it is God's grace and love that provides the atonement for Israel. King also argues against the idea of 'substitution' in the sacrifice which indicates that the sacrificial victim dies for a penalty. Rather, it functions more as a representative sacrifice. The animal offered is a representative of the offerer. The burning of the whole animal represents the whole giving of the offerer whereas the idea of substitute indicates the idea that the animal died instead of the offerer as a ransom. To be simpler, King argues that 'substitution' makes the

⁷ Saya Lee, "A Reconsideration of the Theological Significance and Application of the Burnt Offering," *International Journal of Information Research and Review* 5, no. 4 (April 2018): 5420–22.

⁸ Rendtorff, Kugler, and Bartel, *The Book of Leviticus*, 103–20.

animal a sinner, and the death of an animal is the death of a sinner as a ransom whereas ‘representation’ makes the animal an offerer, the death of an animal is a total submission. King argues that the application of the blood to the altar indicates the offering of life to God, not as a substitutionary death; rather it is offering life up to God as the offerer renews fellowship with God.⁹

Allen P. Ross provides a different perspective on the עלה by arguing that this sacrifice is a substitutionary sacrifice, and its purpose is communion with God. Ross argues that the animal serves as a substitute for the offerer to make atonement for him. The substitution opens the possibility of access for the offerer to approach God. Therefore, it is good news to Israel that although they are sinful, they can approach God through this sacrifice. Another important factor with the עלה is that it grants one acceptance before the LORD. Ross argues that the sacrifice symbolically expresses the unworthiness and the dependence of the offerer, and the gracious provision of God. Therefore, the offerer’s sin in general was atoned for and this made it possible to approach and be near to God. Therefore, this sacrifice achieved communion. The main idea is that God accepts everyone who comes into his presence by making substitutionary sacrifices through slaying animals that shed blood.¹⁰ Ross’ view differs from King in that King uses the word substitution to indicate a substitutionary death of the victim for punishment whereas Ross’ usage of the word substitution indicates the death of the victim for atonement. Both view the עלה from its relational aspect.

Philip Jenson argues that sacrifice can initiate and correct the state of affairs, and while sustaining and strengthening a relationship. He argues that sacrifice has an important role in

⁹ Thomas J. King, *Leviticus: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition, New Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City: The Foundry, 2013), 45-84.

¹⁰ Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus*, 73-97.

maintaining a relationship with God because it has the power to restore a broken relationship. With this view, he provides two theories on the burnt offering: expiation or atoning and a gift. He points out that most scholars take only one theory. He provides the possibility of seeing this burnt offering with a combined view. As sacrifice maintains, restores, and strengthens a relationship, the burnt offering expresses a communion between God and the offerer.¹¹

Joe M. Sprinkle thinks that the main idea in the whole burnt offering is to show God's receptiveness to human petition. Sprinkle argues that the whole burnt offering not only makes God favorable to the offerer but it also quenches the wrath of God. Sprinkle provides three key themes in understanding the burnt offering: 1) It is to show total consecration to God. Sprinkle argues that the burning of all animals in the fire to ashes symbolizes the total surrender of life to God. 2) It is seeking the favor of God. By totally burning the sacrifice, a person is appealing to God which made God answer prayers and overlook the sin that hinders him from bestowing favor. 3) It is a substitutionary sacrifice because the sacrifice of Abraham was a substitutionary one. Its total burning represents the offerer's total consecration to God.¹²

Timothy M. Willis also argues that the whole burnt offering does not aim at forgiveness for some wrongdoings, because the heart of the worshipper is directed more toward expressing honor to the LORD. Willis provides the fact that the ideal in this offering is of the spiritual/moral state of the worshipper. Willis argues that although the text seems to suggest that the physical state of the animal is most important in God's acceptance, it is the heart of the worshipper which

¹¹ Philip P. Jenson, "The Levitical Sacrificial System," in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. by Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 25–40.

¹² Joe M. Sprinkle, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 1–11.

sacrifices an ‘aroma’ to the LORD. The main idea is that the burnt offering is not appealing for forgiveness for specific sin; rather it is primarily a sacrifice for honoring God.¹³

Sylvain Romerowski divides the five sacrifices into two categories: regular offering and mandatory offering. Romerowski puts the *עלה* in the category of a regular offering arguing that it provides atonement for a general sin so that the offerer would be accepted by God to worship. Romerowski discussed how the act of laying one’s hand on the animal symbolizes the transfer of sin from the offerer to the animal. The sprinkling of blood is a sign for the death of the animal for atonement. Romerowski’s idea of an ‘appeasing aroma’ is identical to the concept of appeasing the wrath of God. According to Romerowski, when the sacrifice is done, the sacrifice’s aroma moves the heart of God. The author argues that the offerings are seen as a prefiguration of Christ’s death which atoned for our sins. In the Old Testament, God’s forgiveness can be received after his wrath is removed. The main idea is that the sacrifice removes the wrath of God.¹⁴

Ximena DeBroeck provides five points for the intention of the *עלה* offering in her dissertation. They are 1) expiation, 2) giving for homage, thanksgiving, or petition, 3) gift for total consecration, 4) assurance of divine presence, and 5) pleasing God or divine acceptance.¹⁵ From among these five intentions, she places more stress on the gift for total consecration. As she sees sacrifice as a spiritual formation, the *עלה* had different intentions for spiritual formation purposes. She presents the underappreciated aspects of the sacrifice in three ways by using the canonical approach. First, she describes the relationship between the outward action of ritual and

¹³ Timothy M. Willis, *Leviticus*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 1–10.

¹⁴ Sylvain Romerowski, “Old Testament Sacrifices and Reconciliation.” *European Journal of Theology* 16, no. 1 (2007): 13-24. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001641900&site=ehost-live>

¹⁵ Ximena DeBroeck, “Becoming A Priestly People,” 43-100.

inward spirituality and morality. Second, she shows that the sacrificial act does not refer to death, but life. Thirdly, she notes that atonement is not the only reason for the sacrifice. DeBroeck argues that the עלה can be seen from a covenantal perspective. She said that the covenant between God and Israel is not about an exchange of something; rather it is a relationship between two parties. All sacrifices are gifts of love. The עלה is for relationship and a communion with God that expresses love.¹⁶

John E. Hartley provides three points on sacrifice. The first point is that sacrifice is a gift to Yahweh. Hartley argues that the term אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה, in the whole burnt offering in Lev 1, may refer to a gift since it has the meaning of “a soothing aroma.” Hartley says that smell stimulates one’s memory, and it can also cause emotion whether good or bad. A good smell may bring joy and peace whereas bad smell may arouse disgust. With this metaphor, Hartley argues that the whole burnt offering serves as a gift to God, which let God remember the offerer.¹⁷ Hartley also argues that the main importance in sacrificial system is to maintain the relationship with the holy God.¹⁸

Holiness plays an important role in one’s understanding of the sacrificial system in Leviticus. Hartley argues that holiness draws a person to God. Hartley added that the usual way for the people of God to experience holiness is through love. God’s deliverance from the bondage of Egypt shows God’s love. Moreover, God provided his people away, holiness through the law, so that they can approach him and have fellowship with him. Obedience to the law calls for love and total devotion. Sacrifice made the offerer holy and gives a way to have fellowship

¹⁶ DeBroeck, 43-100.

¹⁷ Hartley, “Leviticus,” 30.

¹⁸ Hartley, “Leviticus,” lvi.

with God. Holiness and the presence of God are closely related. Sacrifice enables the offerer to be holy so that the presence of God will be in the community.¹⁹

Ming Him Ko uses symbolic approach to interpret the burnt offering. Ko notes that the verb in 1:2 (קָרַב) is translated as ‘brings’ (NIV), which means ‘bring near’ or ‘present’. This denotes the idea of offering tribute to a king. Again, Ko argues that the word קָרָבָן refers to an ‘offering’ and is a key word for this sacrifice. Ko understands this burnt offering, therefore, as a gift given to God. Ko views the burnt offering from the perspective of parties in China where Chinese people give gifts and wishes to their loved ones. Ko explains that the gifts they offer to their friends must be best because they are token of how much they respect and honor them. Ko argues that the burnt offering is the gift we offer to our God as a token of respect and honor, and we are to give the best of our lives.²⁰

Research Methodology

The methodology used in this research is Intertextuality. Umberto Eco writes, “No text is read independently of the reader’s experience of other texts.”²¹ This describes that the text is not in isolation. This also indicates the importance and need of intertextuality in the interpretation of the text. Intertextuality, therefore, provides opportunities to see texts from multiple perspectives. Ross Cole maintains that an intertextual study opens opportunities for today's interpretation. He

¹⁹ Hartley, “Leviticus,” lvi–lxxiii.

²⁰ Ming Him Ko, *Leviticus: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary* (Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2018), 1–8.

²¹ Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1994), 20.

writes, “We have a whole Bible back again.”²² Laurent Jenny also said, “Without intertextuality, a literary work would simply be unintelligible, like speech in a language one has not yet learned.”²³

I will first discuss the definition of intertextuality before applying the method. Dale R. Hoskins defined intertextuality as the deep relationship of the scripture texts and how the text intertwined and interwoven within the text and outside of the text.²⁴ This indicates that the texts speak with each other. P. Prayer Elmo Raj said, “Intertextuality... existed as a universal phenomenon that elucidates the communicative interconnections between a text and the other and text and context.”²⁵ Further, Julia Kristeva said, “Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.”²⁶ Intertextuality, therefore, can be defined as an interrelation between texts that shapes the understanding and interpretation of an audience. Intertextuality may be seen as allusion, quotation, echo, and any other possible way used in interpreting the text.

There are different ways to approach intertextuality. Kristeva provides two axes in Intertextuality; the horizontal axis—“the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee”²⁷, and the vertical axis—“the word in the text is oriented toward an anterior or

²² Ross Cole and Paul Petersen, eds., *Hermeneutics, Intertextuality and the Contemporary Meaning of Scripture* (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2014), 3, 15.

²³ Laurent R. Hoskins quoted in Dale R. Hoskins, “Translating Intertextuality in Scripture,” Ph. D Dissertation, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2017. Available at <https://archive.org/details/2017HoskinsDale/page/n95/mode/2up>

²⁴ Dale R. Hoskins, “Translating Intertextuality in Scripture,” 1.

²⁵ P. Prayer Elmo Raj, “Text/Texts: Interrogating Julia Kristeva's Concept of Intertextuality” Refereed Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Vol. 3, (January 2015): 77-80. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273771676>

²⁶ Julia Kristeva, “Word, Dialog and Novel,” ed. Toril Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 37.

²⁷ Joseph Ryan Kelly, “Intertextuality and Allusion in the Study of the Hebrew Bible.” Dissertation, ProQuest LLC, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014.

synchronic literary corpus.”²⁸ In other words, the horizontal axis is a text connection through quotation, allusion, and parody which gives the same type of reference within the text itself. The vertical axis is through references to another text or media such as film, song, and so on.²⁹ In biblical scholarship, horizontal intertextuality is through other biblical texts and vertical is through outside of the biblical text. Mustafa Albay and Mustafa Serbes argue that intertextuality appears in different interactions, and therefore, provides two aspects of interaction which are theme-based and form-based. Theme-based interactions occurs when the content and theme are the same even though the texts are not the same. Form-based provides the same genre and style.³⁰ My research, therefore, focuses on horizontal axis, and theme-based approach.

One consideration is the question of applying intertextuality to the biblical text. Steve Moyise provides five different types of intertextuality³¹ which scholars use today to explore the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Among them, Dialogical intertextuality expresses the adequate method for my research. It expresses the influence of the text in two ways, “The new [texts] affect the old while the old affect the new.”³² It also

²⁸ Kelly, 51, 53.

²⁹ Arezu Namadi and Bahman Zarrinjooee, “Horizontal and Vertical Intertext: J. M. Coetzee’s *Diary of a Bad Year*,” *Journal of Novel Applied Sciences*, (2014): www.jnasci.org.

³⁰ Mustafa Albay, and Mustafa Serbes. “Intertextuality in the Literature.” *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies* 3, no. 4 (2017): 208–14. <https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v3i4p208>.

³¹ Steve Moyise, “Intertextuality and Biblical Studies : A Review,” Latest TOC RSS (Sabinet, January 1, 2002): 418-431. <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/sabinet/verbum/2002/00000023/00000002/art00016>. The five kinds of intertextuality are 1) Intertextual Echo- which is different from quotation and allusion, it is a faint trace of a text, it came to mind, it does not intend its readers to know the source. 2) Narrative intertextuality – it helps its reader to remember not a particular text, but a particular story. It shows the importance of stories and shaped the thinking of its readers and the way they express themselves. 3) Exegetical intertextuality- this is not exactly quoted, but the idea lies under it. For example, Paul usage of ‘circumcision in the heart’ can be traced by an intertextual exegesis that lie in the reinterpretation of circumcision in Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In these texts, the circumcision means circumcision of the heart, that is, something which is inward and spiritual because the circumcised Israel failed to keep the law. 4) Dialogical intertextuality, and 5) Postmodern intertextuality – it demonstrates that there are various interpretations in dealing with a text, and therefore it less concerned with determining a single meaning of a text.

³² Steve Moyise, “Intertextuality and Biblical Studies: A Review,” 423.

describes, "...[a] dynamic rather than a static state of affairs."³³ Dialogical intertextuality enables the reader to understand the meaning of the text since the text affect each other. Moyise writes, "An author does not 'master' a text in the sense of 'controlling' its meaning. The text fights back, so to speak, reminding the reader that it once belonged elsewhere and has certain 'right.'"³⁴ Dialogical intertextuality opens opportunities for readers to explore more meaning. The significance of Dialogical intertextuality is that "[It]opens up a space to see the continuing co-operation of these [the] surrounding texts in the production of meaning."³⁵ My methodology, therefore, is horizontal, theme-based interaction, and dialogical intertextuality.

³³ Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and Biblical Studies: A Review," 423.

³⁴ Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and Biblical Studies: A Review," 424.

³⁵ Steve Moyise, 425.

CHAPTER THREE:
UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE עֹלָה AND THE GREATEST
COMMANDMENT

The understanding of the relationship between the עֹלָה and the greatest commandment are necessary in order to understand the key argument of this thesis. Thus, in this chapter I will explore the voluntary aspect of the עֹלָה in Leviticus 1 and deal with how the עֹלָה expresses the greatest commandment. This will include a discussion of the voluntary aspect of the עֹלָה, the functions of the עֹלָה, and the עֹלָה in Leviticus 1 as an expression the Greatest Commandment. Then I will also discuss the importance of the centrality of the heart and the concept of loving God in the עֹלָה.

Understanding the Voluntary Aspect of the עֹלָה in Leviticus 1

The עֹלָה in the Old Testament appears to have a different meaning from the other sacrifice as it is the sacrifice most often offered to God in the life of Israel. Besides, the עֹלָה can be viewed as having different aspect according to its kind. Generally, the עֹלָה can be seen from two aspects: the mandatory and voluntary aspects. In my research, I will be focusing on its voluntary aspect. This is because I believe that the voluntary aspect helps us to see the relation between the greatest commandment and the עֹלָה.

The Bird's Eye View of the עֹלָה

The Name and Its Root Word

Before I proceed to discuss the whole burnt offering in Leviticus 1, I would like to give an overview of the whole burnt offering. First, I would like to discuss the name and the root

word of the עֹלָה. In the Old Testament, the word עֹלָה is used to indicate the sacrifice burnt on an altar, as an aroma pleasing to the Lord. The word עֹלָה simply means ‘which goes up.’¹ It is, therefore, surprising that no word for ‘burning’ is seen in the original word for burnt offering. It had been suggested that the original term for the burnt offering was כָּלִיל, which has the meaning of “whole, entire, or complete” and more naturally be translated as “whole offering.”² The question remains here of how the עֹלָה came into existence in the Scripture. Jacob Milgrom explained that the term עֹלָה may have been introduced with the practice of removing the skin from the offering by the priest. Therefore, the word עֹלָה would have become an acceptance term and should be translated as ‘the burnt offering’ because its meaning ‘that which ascends’ implies that the offering is wholly turned into smoke (cf. Gen 8:20 – 21, Lev 1:9, 13, 17).³

Another factor is that the Septuagint used the word ‘holocaust’ but today that word carries a specific historical meaning, i.e., the atrocities suffered by the Jews under Hitler’s rule.⁴ So the best translation, again, falls in ‘the burnt offering.’ There are three specific voluntary offerings mentioned in Leviticus, and this עֹלָה is mentioned differently than the others, and its distinctness is on burning the sacrifice completely as a whole, whereas others are partly offered and burnt, and the rest are partaken by the priests and offerer. And the emphasis on this sacrifice is based on the burning. Kurtz explained the difference of the sacrifice: that in the sin-offering the sprinkling of the blood was the culminating point while the act of burning was the

¹ *The Anchor Bible Dictionary. 5 O-Sh: ...* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 110.

² Richard E. Averbeck, “עֹלָה,” in *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1974), 404.

³ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 172-173.

⁴ John E Hartley, “Leviticus.” In *Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 4 (Dallas, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1992), 17.

culminating point in the burnt offering.⁵ Therefore, the translation of ‘the whole burnt offering’ is the most suitable for the interpretation of the עלה in Leviticus.

Kinds of the עלה

The עלה is the most frequently mentioned type of sacrifice in Hebrew Scriptures. The עלה was found first in Genesis 8:20, and it was offered by Noah. Further, the עלה was the sacrifice asked by God. It can be seen in the offering of Isaac by Abraham on the mount of Moriah (Gen 22). It has been there before Moses and continued until the second temple was rebuilt (Ezra 3:1–6). Robert J Daly argues that the עלה was a kind of sacrifice that was in play in the story of Cain and Abel.⁶ If Daly is right, then we have the first sacrifices as worship to God. Although there is no mentioning of the word עלה here in Genesis 4:4, rather we have the word מנחה which is mostly translated as grain offerings. However, the text provides ‘מברות צאנו from the firstborn of his flock ומחלבהן and their fat,’ it can be understood as blood sacrifice; the עלה is a blood sacrifice. And the reason for offering this sacrifice is not mentioned in the text. It, therefore, may be assumed to have been a voluntary offering.

The Jewish Encyclopedia provides two kinds of the whole burnt offering; 1) Stated and Occasional offering, and 2) Voluntary Offering.⁷ In the first kind, there are three different kinds of Offering; Daily Offering, Sabbath Offering, and The Festival offerings. Occasional offering includes priestly consecration (Exod 29:15; Lev 8:18, 9:12), purification at childbirth (Lev 7:6–8); the cleansing of lepers (Lev 14:19, 20); the purgation of ceremonial defilement (Lev 15:15,

⁵ J. H. Kurtz, *Offerings, Sacrifices and Worship in the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publisher, 1998), 174.

⁶ Robert J. Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 32.

⁷ Morris Jastrow, Jr., J. McCurdy, Kaufmann Kohler, and Louis Ginzberg. “Burnt Offering.” JewishEncyclopedia.com. Accessed on October 13, 2021. <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3847-burnt-offering>.

30); and in connection with the vow of a Nazarite (Num 6:11, 16). The second is the voluntary offering. The voluntary offering is an offering made by any person anytime. There is no limitation or specified date for making this offering. This kind of sacrifice was offered before and after the time of Moses, by any layperson without distinctions of persons or without restriction to mode or measure.⁸

Further, Cornelis Van Dam provides the details of animal sacrificed in the עלה. The minimum numbers of the עלה, according to him, that had to be offered to the Lord in the Tabernacle or in the Temple in a year was one hundred thirteen young bulls, thirty two rams, and one thousand eighty six lambs.⁹ Van Dam believes that there are two kinds of the whole burnt offering; the voluntary offering and legislated offering. He provides the details of the legislated offering:¹⁰

1. Every day a male lamb had to be offered as a burnt offering in the morning and another male lamb in the evening (Exod 29:38–42; Num 28:1–8).
2. Each Sabbath day two additional lambs were to be sacrificed (Num 28:9, 10).
3. At the beginning of each month (the New Moon), two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs were to be sacrificed (Num 28:11–14).
4. Each day of the Feast of Passover—Unleavened Bread, the same sacrifices as with the New Moon (Num 28:16–25).
5. At the Feast of Weeks (Feast of First Fruits) again the same as with the New Moon.
6. At the Feast of Trumpets, one bull, one ram, and seven male lambs (Num 29:2–4).
7. On the Day of Atonement, one bull, one ram, and seven male lambs (as at the Feast of Trumpets) as well as the special burnt offerings for the atonement which was one ram for the high priest and one for the people (Num 29:8; Lev 16:3, 5, 27).
8. On the Feast of Booths a variety of burnt offerings were to be sacrificed. On the first day, thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen male lambs (Num 29:12–16). With each successive day of the feast, the number of bulls decreased each day by one until on the seventh day there were seven bulls; the number of rams and lambs remained the same (Num 29:17–35). On the eighth day, there was to be one bull, one ram, seven male lambs (Num 29:35–38) just as at the Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement.
9. Burnt offerings were also required at various purification rituals; after childbirth, a lamb had to be sacrificed (Lev 12:6, 8); after cleansing of male bodily discharges or of abnormal

⁸ Morris Jastrow, et al, “Burnt Offering.” JewishEncyclopedia.com

⁹ Cornelis Van Dam, *The Burnt Offering in Its Biblical Context*, 197.

¹⁰ Cornelis Van Dam, 197.

female discharge of blood, a turtledove or a young pigeon (Lev 15:14–15, 29–30); after defilement during a Nazarite vow, a turtle dove or a young pigeon (Num 6:10–11); after being cleansed from leprosy, a male lamb or a turtle dove (or young pigeon) (Lev 14:10, 13, 19–22).

In summary, the *עלה* can be divided into two kinds: the mandatory offering and the voluntary offering. The function and its meaning may vary according to each kind.

The *עלה* in Leviticus 1

The instruction on the whole burnt offering is written in chapter 1, and chapter 6:1–6 (8–13).¹¹ It is debatable whether these instructions are for the two different kinds of the whole burnt offering, or if they refer to only one offering. The question remains whether Leviticus 1 refers to voluntary offering or not. Jacob Milgrom argues that the whole burnt offering in Leviticus 1 is voluntary. He says, “The use of the relative conjunction *כִּי* also indicates the conditional and optional nature of the law that follows; the sacrifices discussed therein are not mandatory but voluntary.”¹² Further, Milgrom writes that the sacrifices in Leviticus 1–5 are listed from the point of view of the donors. And chapters 6–7 are written from the point of view of the priest. Milgrom calls the sacrifices in chapter 1–3 as the spontaneously motivated sacrifices.¹³

There is no doubt that the *עלה* mentioned in Leviticus 1 and 6:1–6 (Eng. 8–13) refers to the same sacrifice. However, there are some differences in them. First, the recipient of this message is different from chapter 1. In Lev 1:2, it is written as *דַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* ‘Speak to the

¹¹ The Hebrew Bible and the English translation have different verses in this chapter. The whole burnt offering in the Hebrew text is in verses 1–6, but In English translation, it is from verses 8–13.

¹² Jacob Milgrom, ed., *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed, The Anchor Bible, v. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 144.

¹³ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, Continental Commentaries (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 20.

children of Israel, whereas the chapter 6 writes צוֹ אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו “Give this to Aaron and his sons.” The ‘children of Israel’ refers to the whole community of Israel. It is, therefore, obvious that this instruction in Leviticus 1 is for both the people of Israelites and the priests but written from the view of the people.

S. Tamar Kamionkowski also argues that the whole burnt offering in chapter 6 is written especially for the priest. Kamionkowski points out that the whole burnt offering in this chapter is defined as the one that is always burning throughout day and night.¹⁴ The emphasis of the perpetual fire is vividly described in chapter 6 (6:2, 5, 6 [Eng. 9, 12, 13]). This concept of perpetual fire cannot be seen in the first chapter of Leviticus. This is because the perpetual fire comes along with the responsibilities of the priest. The priest must add wood and must take care of the fire so that the fire may not quench. This, again, is a daily duty for the priest and therefore it can be regarded as a mandatory offering. Kamionkowski also adds that this instruction in chapter 6 includes housekeeping issues which are mostly related to the priests rather than the lay people.¹⁵

Furthermore, Philip J. Budd also agrees that the עלה in chapter 1 and 6 are different in kinds. Budd calls the עלה in Leviticus 1 a private offering and chapter 6 a public offering. He said that the focus in chapter 6 is essentially on the fire on the altar.¹⁶ The fire plays a very significant role in the עלה, to let the fire die out is the biggest mistake that a priest can make. This is because in the עלה, the burning is the climax of the sacrifice. Jacob Milgrom suggests that the fire in the עלה sacrifice is from the presence of God; he calls it as ‘the divine fire.’ According to

¹⁴ S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Laress Wilkins Lawrence, and Barbara E. Reid. *Leviticus: Wisdom Commentary*, vol. 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2018), 48.

¹⁵ S. Tamar Kamionkowski, *Leviticus: Wisdom Commentary*, 48.

¹⁶ Philip J. Budd, *Leviticus: Based on the New Revised Standard Version*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: M. Pickering; W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 109.

Milgrom, the priests do not ignite the fire, but the Lord does.¹⁷ This idea can be found in 1 Kings 18 when the prophet Elijah challenged 450 of Baal's prophets on the mount of Carmel. It is interesting that the sacrifice that Elijah made was the עלה. In verse 38, it clearly states that the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the whole burnt offering (I Kgs 18:38).

Another distinction between the עלה in Leviticus 1 and others, especially in Exodus and Numbers, can be found in its ritual. Tübingen D. Kellerman said, "It is to be noted that in the ritual of Leviticus 1 it is the sacrifice who slaughters the victim, whereas in Exod 29:16 and Lev 8:19 Moses, functioning as a priest, takes over the slaughtering; in Lev 9:12 the priest is probably the subject of the שחט."¹⁸ Here the slaughtering of the animal makes the עלה in Leviticus 1 different from the עלה mentioned in others texts. Kellerman also mentions that the ritual of the עלה in Leviticus 1 includes the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice whereas other text mentions more on the burning and the sacrifice.¹⁹ This shows that Leviticus has well-organized instructions for the עלה.

I would like to include the עלה in Numbers 28. Comparing the עלה in Leviticus and Numbers, it is obvious that the instruction of the עלה in Numbers 28:1–8 demonstrates the mandatory aspect of it. The use of the word עלת תמיד indicates the mandatory aspect of it. It clearly says that the offering must be 'daily' (28:3), whereas the עלה in Leviticus 1 does not emphasize this. Cornelis Van Dam has summarized the whole burnt offering in the scripture, and according to him, the עלה in Numbers 28 and 29 are made for specific reasons.²⁰ In Number 28 and 29, we can see that the עלה is for the daily offering, the Sabbath offering, for the beginning

¹⁷ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 389.

¹⁸ Tübingen Kellerman, *Theological Dictionary of The Old Testament*, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), s.v. "עלה."

¹⁹ Tübingen Kellerman, *Theological Dictionary of The Old Testament*, 100.

²⁰ Cornelis Van Dam, "The Burnt Offering in Its Biblical Context," 197.

of each month, each day of the Feast of Passover—Unleavened Bread, the same sacrifices as with the New Moon, for the Feast of Week, the Feast of the Trumpets, for the Day of Atonement, and for the Feast of Booth. It is obvious that these are done according to God’s command.

The עלה can be found on many occasions such as in thanksgiving (Exod 18:12), as expiation for guilt (Lev 5:7; Job 1:5), to fulfil a vow (Lev 22:18; Judg 11:31), in connection with divination (1 Sam 7:9), to seek the Lord’s favor (2 Sam 24:25), and as part of the consecration of an altar (Judg 6:26; 2 Sam 24:25).²¹ William R. Scott is right when he said, “Some of the situations which call for burnt offering were thus prescribed, while others were freewill.”²² Thus, the עלה in Leviticus 1 is written as instructions for both mandatory and freewill offerings. Mandatory in a sense that birds’ offerings were for an offering for purification after childbirth (Lev 12:8). However, it seems better to me to highlight the voluntary aspect because of the level of the offerer’s involvement in the offering. Wenham argues that the offering in Leviticus 1 is about personal act of devotion of atonement.²³ This is because a sacrifice must be offered if a person commits sin, or has become defiled in some way; but here in chapter 1, the reason for sacrifice is not written. And this is reasonable with the first chapter of Leviticus. The עלה in Leviticus 1 may be, therefore, interpreted as an instruction for those who want to offer an offering to the Lord freely and voluntary.

²¹ William R. Scott, “Burnt Offering” (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), s.v. "*Eerdmans Dictionary of The Bible.*)

²² William R. Scott, 205.

²³ Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 50.

The context of קרבן ליהוה

Leviticus 1:1–2 serves as an introduction for the five offerings found in the first seven chapters. The three voluntary offerings, שלמים, מנחה, עלה, are called קרבן ליהוה in verse 2.

According to *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament* (HECOT), the word קרבן is found 80 times in the Old Testament.²⁴ It is also interesting that the עלה here is called קרבן.

There are words which describe the meaning of sacrifice such as מנחה which is used in Genesis 4:4 – 5, and זבה which is mostly used for blood sacrifice.²⁵

The root word for the קרבן is קרב, and it means ‘to draw near or come near.’²⁶ The קרבן is a general term used for the objects presented to the Lord such as sacrificial animals including bulls, calves, sheep, goats, and birds. Further it also includes portions of animals such as fat and blood, and grain and wine (Exod 29:2; Num 15:10).²⁷ J. Kühlewein said that קרב also has a causative meaning which is ‘to cause approach’ (Exod 28:1, 29:4. 8; 40:12, 14), and ‘to bring’ (Lev 2:8; Num 15:33; Josh 8:23; Judg 3:17f.; 5:25, etc.).²⁸ This describes that the root word of the offering in Leviticus has something to do with ‘being drawn near’ to God. Kühlewein continues to argue that the verb קרב served as a primary technical term in cultic language to indicate the ‘presentation’ of a gift. Therefore, Kühlewein goes for the translation of קרבן as an “offering”.²⁹ This indicates that the קרבן in Leviticus 1 refers to the sacrificial offering which is brought to the Lord.

²⁴ John R. Kohlenberger and James A. Swanson, *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament: With the New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 7932.

²⁵ זבה is found 162 times in the Hebrew Scripture and it is mostly translated as sacrifice or offering. Even in Leviticus 3, the word is used with the שלמים. Leviticus 3:1, 3, 6, 9, 10; 4:10, 26, 31, 35; 7:11—15. HECOT, 483.

²⁶ G. Johannes Botterweck et al., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 143.

²⁷ Botterweck et al., 143.

²⁸ Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds., *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 1166.

²⁹ Jenni and Westermann, 1166.

Bill T. Arnold also agrees in saying that קרבן designates that which is brought to the Lord for dedication. Arnold believes that the root word קרב has a theological meaning and significance. He argues that drawing near to God is the privilege for the priest (Lev 9:7), and by making an offering, both the priest and the offerer have the privilege of being nearer to God.³⁰ This indicates the idea that the קרבן is the offering that brings one near to God. On the other hand, it indicates that the offering brings the presence of God to the people. Norman H. Snaith also argues that קרבן means “that which is brought near and is used for the maintenance of the Temple and its services, but generally (Lev 1:2 etc.) can be used of anything ‘that is bought near.’”³¹ It is interesting that the word קרבן is only found in Leviticus, Numbers, and Ezekiel. All קרבן in these passages are mostly translated as ‘offering’ or ‘oblation’.³² Another interesting thing is in the translation of Septuagint (LXX) of the word קרבן. In LXX translation, the word קרבן is rendered as δῶρον which conveys the meaning of ‘gift or present.’ Jacob Milgrom said that it is the correct translation of the word because the word conveys the idea of gift or presenting a gift.³³ This tightens the idea of sacrifice as a gift one brings to God.

The context of the word קרבן is correctly understood when it is attached with ‘to the Lord’ ליהוה. John E Hartley argues that this statement קרבן ליהוה excludes any idea of presenting a sacrifice before the Tent of Meeting to another deity or to some powerful creature. He continues to say that this indicates that worship is given directly to the One true God, where no mediators are considered to benefit from it.³⁴ It is obvious that the phrase indicates that the offering should

³⁰ Botterweck et al., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 976–77.

³¹ Norman H Snaith, “Sacrifices in the Old Testament.” *Vetus Testamentum* 7, no. 3 (1957): 308-17. doi:10.2307/1516202.

³² According to HECOT, some are translated as ‘gifts’, but most of them are translated as ‘offering’ or ‘offerings.’ And these refers to any offering dedicated to the Lord.

³³ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 145.

³⁴ John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, 11.

be presented, or the gift should be offered to the supreme God. The word קרבן ליהוה, therefore, suggests the idea that the offerings are made to God so that the offering would be acceptable, and the offerer can have the divine presence, or the divine approaching, in his or her life. It indicates the heart of the offerer, as the offerer brings the offering as a gift.

The Use of Animals

The עלה is not possible without the sacrificial animal. Moreover, not all animals are allowed to be brought to the altar of sacrifice. This is because God is holy and only what God makes holy can be presented to Him. It is the gift to the Lord קרבן ליהוה. To have a better understanding of the phrase קרבן ליהוה, it is quite essential to talk about the animal used in the offering. The first קרבן ליהוה is mentioned as עלה. In עלה, three types of animals, according to the text, are allowed to be offered as the עלה: from the herd (vv. 3–9), from the flocks (vv. 10–13), and from the birds (vv. 14–16). The classification of the animal in Lev 1 is from the word אם which is translated as ‘if.’ This אם calls for both a different type of animal, and a different way sacrificing. The text says the animal of the sacrifice must be from בהמה (v.2).

The word בהמה is found more than 190 times in the Hebrew Bible and is mostly translated as animals, livestock, cattle, and sometimes beasts.³⁵ It is not quite clear whether or not the word found in Leviticus would mean for any animals, including wild animals. If the word בהמה means any animals, then the question remains on the holiness and functions of the sacrifice. Philip Budd argues that the word בהמה means livestock, and it is preferable to view these as ‘the domestic animals.’³⁶ It is hard to see in the scripture that wild animals were brought to the Lord for

³⁵ Kohlenberger and Swanson, *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament*, 229–30.

³⁶ Budd, *Leviticus*, 46.

sacrifice. For this issue, it is important to look back to the case of Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah because this sacrifice is עלה, and it is God who provided the sacrificial animal.

In the case of Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah, however, the scripture records that a ram איל was offered by Abraham instead of Isaac (Gen 22:13–15). And Abraham clearly said that this ram was provided by God Himself (cf. Gen 22:8; 14). Here we can see the very first animal that God Himself provides. The question, however, remains whether this animal is a domestic or wild one. Gordon Wenham said that in sacrifice, the animal represented the offerer, so here in this case the ram represented Isaac, and it was a full-grown ram, as opposed to the young ram.³⁷ Victor P. Hamilton also agrees in saying that what God provided in Abraham's sacrifice was a ram, arguing that Abraham was expecting a sheep (Gen 22:7), but God provided a ram.³⁸ This indicates that the ram was probably from a domestic one, because it was mature, and the ultimate conclusion is that it is provided by God himself for the עלה .

It can also be discussed from the perspective of the first sacrifice made by people, the offering of Cain and Able (Gen 4:2–5). The offering made by these two is recorded as מנחה. Although it is not written as the עלה, Robert J. Daly argues that the offering made by Cain and Able was a kind of the עלה.³⁹ This may be acceptable because of the use of 'the fat portion' וַיִּמְחַרְלֵבָהֶן (Gen 4:4). Burning of the fat portion clearly included the blood. Therefore, this offering can be regarded as a kind of עלה. And Genesis 4 said that Able brought from his flock צאנו. There is no doubt that Able brought his domestic flock. Again, this case can also be found in the story of Noah. This is where the word עלה first appears in the Bible (Gen 8:20). Here, it is very clear that Noah offered clean animals (8:20a). One, therefore, may not argue that these clean animals

³⁷ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16 - 50*, Word Biblical Commentary 2 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1994), 110.

³⁸ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 18-50*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 113.

³⁹ Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled*, 32.

are wild animals. This is because there is no scripture evidence that wild animals are brought to the Lord for offering and sacrifice.

R. K. Harrison said, “For the burnt offering only domesticated animals, indicating a developed stage of agricultural life, were to be presented, since wild species did not cost the donor anything.”⁴⁰ This indicates that the burnt offering is an offering that costs the offerer. Viewing it from the perspective of costing something, Harrison is right in saying that wild animal does not cost anything to the offerer. A domestic animal costs the owner because wild animals do not receive care and labor that benefits the owner. Another reason for domestic animals offered to God is discussed by Ephraim Radner. He said, “A true offering implies... something that is subject to human will and dominion, a ‘creature’ to human as humans are to God.”⁴¹ A domestic animal indeed submits to the owner, and submission to the Lord is quite essential in ancient Israelite worship.

מִזְבֵּחַ הַבָּקָר

The first category of animal which God requires for the *עֹלָה* is from the herd—בָּקָר. The word בָּקָר is found 183 times in the Hebrew Bible and translated as “herd, herds, cattle, bull, calf, and young cow.”⁴² This is the generic term, according to Jacob Milgrom, which includes all bovines. And it is listed because of its being a valuable sacrificial animal.⁴³ Bonn B. Beck argues that the word בָּקָר should be translated as an ‘ox or cow’ and it plays a special role in the law concerning animal sacrifice. Beck continues to argue that the word בָּקָר is used in three sacrifices

⁴⁰ R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus, an Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 43.

⁴¹ Ephraim Radner, *Leviticus*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 41–42.

⁴² Kohlenberger and Swanson, *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament*, 320.

⁴³ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 146.

such as whole burnt offering, peace offering (Lev 3:1; 22:21) and sin-offering, and in a peace offering one is allowed to use a female בקר whereas in the whole burnt offering only a male offering is allowed.⁴⁴

The real question to be considered in this verse is why only a male animal is allowed to be offered as the עלה. In the case of the הטאת, a female goat is allowed for the offering (Lev 4:28). Most scholars agree in saying that the reason for allowing only a male is because male animals are more expendable. One of the prominent voices for this idea is Jacob Milgrom who says, “The male animal is economically the more expandable, the female being the one to supply milk and offspring.”⁴⁵ It can be viewed from an economical perspective, and at the same time it can also be viewed from cultural perspective as well. Both John E. Hartley and Saya Lee argues that the reason for offering a male animal is to give the best because male animals had superior value in ancient times.⁴⁶

מִן־הַצֹּאן

Another category of animal allowed in the עלה is from the צאן. צאן is the generic term for “small cattle” and is comprised of sheep and goats.⁴⁷ It is mostly translated as “flock or flocks.” In this case, the text already gives the kind of animal offered to God. First is listed as “from the הַכֹּשְׂבִים” (v. 10). הַכֹּשְׂבִים is the plural form of כבש. The word כבש can be translated as *lamb*, as property; for sacrifice; for food.⁴⁸ Dohmen also argues that the word כֹּבֵשׁ refers to a lamb rather

⁴⁴ Bonn B. Beck, “בִּקְרָה,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 גֵּלָה - בָּדַל 2: 208-209.

⁴⁵ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 147.

⁴⁶ Saya Lee, “A Reconsideration of the Theological Significance and Application of the Burnt Offering,” 5422. And Hartley, “Leviticus,” 18.

⁴⁷ John E. Hartley, “צֹאן” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2: 749.

⁴⁸ Whitaker, R., Brown, F., Driver, S. R. (Samuel R., C. A. (Charles A. (1906). *The Abridged Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament: from A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament by*

than to sheep. He argues that the common use of ‘sheep’ to translate the word כֶּבֶשׂ fails to observe the distinction between the young lamb כֶּבֶשׂ and the adult ram אֵיל both of which are used as sacrifices.⁴⁹ The word כֶּבֶשׂ is mostly translated as ‘lamb’ in the case of the עלה (Exod 29:38; Num 28:3ff; Ezek 46:13). The word ‘one-year-old’ is attached with the word ‘lamb’ in the case of the עלה in these verses (Exod 29:38; Num 28:3^{ff}; Ezek 46:13). It, therefore, is questionable why it must be an exactly one year old animal.

To deal with this question, we have to go back to Exodus 12:5 where the Passover lamb is required by God. In Exodus 12:5, the word בֶּן־שָׁנָה is seen and is translated as ‘one-year-old’. Matthew Poole argues that though its literal translation should be a ‘son of a year’, it refers instead to a full year, and to the time ‘when it is in its rigour and perfection.’⁵⁰ Poole tried to connect the idea of being perfect as it is in Jesus Christ. Another interpretation is from Dohmen who argues that a one-year-old must mean ‘at most a year,’ since lambing takes place twice a year. And He said the preference for a young animal is determined by their normal value, and male lambs were preferred for sacrifice because of their value and availability. This is because a flock could be maintained by the tenth of the male animals.⁵¹ H. Junia Pokrifka argues that the one-year-old implies ceremonial cleanness as they were not profaned by work or breeding.⁵² This fact is indeed applied to the divine acceptance of the sacrificial lamb. Since God is holy, the offering offered to God must be holy and acceptable (Lev 22:22–24).

Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles Briggs, Based on the Lexicon of Wilhelm Gesenius. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

⁴⁹ Dohman, “כֶּבֶשׂ” in *Theological Dictionary of Old Testament*, vol 3: 50-52.

⁵⁰ Matthew Poole, “Leviticus,” in *Matthew Poole’s Commentary*, accessed on December 12, 2021. Available at [Exodus 12 Matthew Poole's Commentary \(biblehub.com\)](https://www.biblehub.com/exodus/12/matthew-poole's-commentary)

⁵¹ Dohman, “כֶּבֶשׂ” in *Theological Dictionary of Old Testament*, 51.

⁵² H. Junia Pokrifka, *Exodus: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, New Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2018), 142.

Another kind of animal listed in Levitical עלה is the העזים. The word העזים is in the masculine plural form of עז. It is interesting that the root word עז means ‘she-goat.’⁵³ There is a word for he-goat which is צפיר. The word צפיר, however, cannot be found in the Pentateuch. It appears six times in the Hebrew Bible, and they are found outside of the Pentateuch (2 Chr 29:21; Ezra 8: 35; Dan 8:5, 8, 21).⁵⁴ It may be, therefore, assumed that the word עז is used with the masculine plural ending to refer to the he-goats rather than to she-goats. The clear instructions on the animals for the עלה is to be male (Lev 1:3; 10). Goats are not preferred to be sacrificed as the עלה in the public cult, but they are brought as voluntary sacrifices by individuals (Lev 22:19; Num 15:11).⁵⁵

מורה עוף

The last category of animal allowed in the עלה is from the עוף which is translated as ‘bird.’ And from the birds, it is clearly instructed that it should be from התרים which can be translated as doves, and from the יונה – pigeon. Of all the many kinds of birds, only these two kinds of bird are allowed to be brought as a עלה. In the instruction of birds, the choice of gender is not included with the herd and the flock. The difference between התרים and יונה, as we can see, is that doves were not attached to any qualification while the pigeons were asked to be young. The text says בְּנֵי before the word יונה (1:14). And the word בְּנֵי literally mean ‘son’ as in בני ישראל (1:2). Milgrom argues that since the word יונה is found without any modifier, the בְּנֵי may be

⁵³ Whitaker, *The Abridged Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament: from A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament by Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles Briggs, based on the lexicon of Wilhelm Gesenius.* New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

⁵⁴ Kohlenberger and Swanson, *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament*, 1378.

⁵⁵ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 163.

translated as ‘young’ rather than ‘son’ or ‘kind.’⁵⁶ The question is why the pigeon needs to be young whereas the dove does not need to be.

Joseph Benson argues that the pigeon is best when they are young, but for the doves, they are better when they are mature.⁵⁷ Milgrom again gives the basic details and explanation for why the younger pigeon was preferred. He said that pigeons can live a goodly number of years, and as they grow, they become tough, and difficult or not good enough to be eaten as when they were young. Doves are good to eat at any time.⁵⁸ It is more likely as the argument of ‘a year-old-lamb.’ It is good, however, to ponder that it might also have a deeper meaning rather than from a merely food perspective. Matthew Henry argues that the dove and pigeons were chosen because of their nature which is mild, and gentle, and harmless; this shows the meekness, and innocence which are in Jesus Christ, and which are in the Christian as well.⁵⁹

Another point for the sacrifice of the bird is the simple question of ‘why birds?’ After all, the word *בהמה* includes all quadrupeds (cf. 11:2), especially four legged animals. It is questionable that birds are included in this kind of animal. It, however, can be seen that the instruction of the bird offering is from verse 14 to 17. Most scholars agree that the inclusion of birds in the *עלה* is in consideration of the poor. John Hartley said that the instructions concerning the bird offering are intended for the poor who cannot afford to offer a bull, a sheep, or a goat for the *עלה*. However, such birds were common and easily accessible to even the poorest citizen.⁶⁰ And the instruction about the bird offering in verses 14–17 vary a little from the other two instructions which I have discussed above. Especially on the demand of being ‘male and without

⁵⁶ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 168.

⁵⁷ Joseph Benson, “Leviticus 1,” *Benson Commentary: Commentary of the Old and New Testament*, accessed February 2, 2022, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/benson/leviticus/1.htm>.

⁵⁸ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 168.

⁵⁹ Matthew Henry, “Leviticus 1,” *Leviticus 1 Matthew Henry's Commentary*, accessed February 2, 2022, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/mhc/leviticus/1.htm>.

⁶⁰ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 23.

defect’, there is no such instruction for the birds offering. Ming Him Ko, argues that the exclusion of ‘male and without defect’ is because the conditions are presupposed in dealing with the whole burnt offering which makes the text not to repeat it again.⁶¹ But Hartley said that it is again for the poor so that they may have more freedom in finding a whole offering.⁶²

The animals used in the עֹלָה can be categorized into five: bull, sheep, goat, dove, and pigeons. Gordon J. Wenham mentions that these five kinds of animals are for private offerings, and one-year-old lambs were most often used for official offerings, although on some occasions rams or young bulls were preferred.⁶³ In the case of Leviticus 1, the demand for a one-year-old male lamb is not seen. It may, therefore, be assumed that the עֹלָה in Leviticus is by nature a private, voluntary offering. The use of animals in the עֹלָה of Leviticus 1, demonstrates that the offering is made available to everyone, from the richest to the poorest, from the highest to lowest class people in that time. The word אָדָם (Lev 1:2), an inclusive language which is translated as ‘anyone’ demonstrates the idea that the עֹלָה is for everyone, for both men and women in their time. By this, it is very clear that God had given them an opportunity to come near to Him. The sacrifice, therefore, is not a burden that everyone must do it, rather it is a loving action that people make to the holy One so that they have a good relationship.

The Meaning of תְּמִיִם

The word תְּמִיִם plays an important role in understanding of the עֹלָה in Leviticus 1. Most animals for the עֹלָה, except for the fowls, are demanded to be תְּמִיִם. I have discussed why birds are not demanded for to be תְּמִיִם. To have a deeper understanding of the word, I would like to go

⁶¹ Ko, *Leviticus*, 20.

⁶² Hartley, *Leviticus*, 23.

⁶³ Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 52.

to what the dictionaries say about the word itself. The word תָּמִים is found 91 times in the Old Testament and 47 times in the Pentateuch: 2 in Genesis, 2 in Exodus, 22 in Leviticus, 19 in Numbers, and 2 in Deuteronomy.⁶⁴ As we can see, only two times in the Genesis and Exodus, and the most occurrence are in Leviticus (i.e., 22 times).

In Genesis the word תָּמִים is used to refer to humans, rather than to animals as in Leviticus. The very first time the word is found is in Genesis 6:9. KJV and ASV render the word תָּמִים as ‘perfect.’ It is questionable here whether the word really mean the physical and moral state of a person or the spiritual state of a person. The interesting point here is that the word צַדִּיק is with the word תָּמִים and it is translated as ‘righteous,’ and both are in an adjectival form. Noah, therefore, is both righteous and blameless in his time. Joseph E. Coleson said, “Blameless (*tamim*) refers to Noah’s habitual practice of integrity in all his dealing with others; right relation with God and integrity of conduct in relating to others.”⁶⁵ What I can see here is that the word תָּמִים has a relational aspect. The word is used to express Noah’s relation with God and others.

Another passage that includes the word תָּמִים in Genesis is found in chapter 17. In this text, it is the Lord who say, ‘and be blameless’—וְהָיִיתָ תָּמִים; the word here appears also with the word הֵלֵךְ—which means to walk. As in the case of Noah, the word תָּמִים is found together with the word הֵלֵךְ as well (Gen 6:9). Therefore, to be blameless is closely connected with the idea of walking before God. Since God is holy, his worshippers must be holy and blameless. Gordon J. Wenham says that the *tammin* in this verse is closely connected with the word *walk*, so Abraham is expected to emulate Noah’s perfection.⁶⁶ Both Noah and Abraham waled before God, and they

⁶⁴ Kohlenberger and Swanson, *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament*, 1664–65.

⁶⁵ Joseph E. Coleson, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, New Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2012), 207.

⁶⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 20.

are תמיים. This demonstrates the idea that the word תמיים expresses the relational aspect of a person who is with God.

K. Koch also agrees that the word תמיים expresses a relational aspect. Koch said, “*Tamim* means a verifiable, unobjectionable physical quality in contrast to a maimed or sick animal. Yet the criteria were not those of neutral agriculture but were strictly related to the cult... thus *tamim* is a relational concept.”⁶⁷ It is obvious that the sacrificial lambs are brought to the Lord and only for the Lord, in the case of עלה, and this indicates, therefore, that the offerer wants a relationship with the Lord. J. P. J. Olivier also agrees that this word תמיים denotes relationship. He says:

Tamim designates the unobjectionable condition of an offering animal, one that is healthy, without defect, and free of any blemish (Lev 9:2; cf. Exod 12:5; Num 6:14; 28:19). It is further used to indicate the serenity of the unclouded relationship between God and the righteous (Gen 6:9; 17:1; Deut 18: 13; Josh 24:14), as well as the trust of a sincere and loyal relationship among human beings (Judg 9:16; Amos 5:10; cf. Ezek 28:15).⁶⁸

In Exodus and Leviticus, the word תמיים is mostly associated with animals. In Exodus 12:5, when God gave instruction for the Passover lamb, one of the qualities included is that the lamb must be תמיים. The word תמיים, here, is mostly translated as ‘without defect,’ or ‘without blemish.’ One thing for sure is that since this is a sacrificial lamb, it does not need to have any spiritual meaning for the lamb itself. H. Junia Pokrifka said that the word תמיים in this context means an animal without any defect or illness.⁶⁹ Pokrifka is referring to the physical state of the animal, either of without being blemished or without defect. J. Barton Payne also defined the word תמיים as ‘complete’ which refers to “animals which are without blemish,” Payne continues

⁶⁷ K Koch, “תמים,” *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 3: 1426.

⁶⁸ J. P. J. Olivier, “תמים,” *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 4: 307.

⁶⁹ Pokrifka, *Exodus*, 142.

to say that it is also translated with such related adjectives as ‘full, whole, upright, perfect.’ It represents the divine standard for man’s attainment.⁷⁰

Again, Bonn B. Beck argues that when the word תמים is found together with בקר, it is mostly for its physical statement of being without blemish. He said,

“The expression of *baqar tammin*, ‘ox (cow) without blemish’ is used 16 times in the OT to describe the quality essential to a sacrificial animal. The ideas included in this phrase are described in detail in Lev 22:17–25, *tamim*, ‘complete, whole, entire,’ is a technical term in sacrifice language (1:3, 10; 3:1, 6, 9; 4:3, 23, 28, 32; etc.). This ‘completeness, wholeness,’ is defined by the exclusion of six defects in 22:22 (cf. 21:18–20).”⁷¹

The argument of Bonn B. Beck indicates that the idea of being blemished is to be fully presence of the animal as a whole. On the other hand, the animal must present all the necessary characteristic of a complete animal, there must be no lacking of any of the qualifications to be selected as a sacrificial animal. S. Tamar Kamionkowski argues that a more accurate translation of the word זכר תמים in Leviticus 1 should be ‘a whole male animal,’ since the word תמים means ‘whole, or complete.’ The author argues that the word זכר is associated with תמים which indicate the idea of ‘unblemished with regard to its maleness.’⁷²

It is obvious that God is asking the male animal without blemish for the עלה, and most scholars agree that the defects are mostly physical appearances or something that are visible. Leviticus 1, however, does not mention the reason why God asks for the perfect animal. One of many ways to look at this is from the concept of holiness. John E. Hartley said that in Leviticus God reveals himself to Israel as their holy God. He continues, because God is holy, anything that relates to Him must be holy. On the other hand, a person or thing is holy only if it keeps a

⁷⁰ J. Barton Payne, “תמים”, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2: 974.

⁷¹ Bonn B. Beck, “בקר”, in *Theological Dictionary of Old Testament*, vol. 2: 214–5.

⁷² S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Laress Wilkins Lawrence, and Barbara E. Reid, “Leviticus,” in *Wisdom Commentary* vol. 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2018), 8–9.

relation with the holy God.⁷³ Ming Him Ko also argues that “be holy, because I the Lord your God, am holy” (Lev 19:2) does not mean to expel the Israelite from the presence of a holy God, rather it is for the Israelite to imitate the holy nature of God.⁷⁴ The idea, rather, is that the sacrificial animal must be blameless for the sake of the relationship between God and the offerer.

God wants us to be holy, and we are to imitate his holiness. Douglas K. Stuart explains why the Passover lamb must be תמים. He said:

Lame, spotted, and off-colored animals are just as tasty as perfect ones. The meat of an animal with a split ear or a blind eye is not affected by the defect. Thus the reason for demanding a perfect sacrifice rested not in the quality of the meal but in the symbolic purpose: animal served as a reminder of the eventual deliverance that a perfect God perfectly provided for his people as part of the process of making them holy like himself.⁷⁵

This can be drawn to the עלה as well because as we can see in Leviticus 1 that the purpose is for divine acceptance (v.4), an aroma pleasing to the Lord (vv. 9, 13, and 17). And the function of the sacrifice tells us that it can also atone for the offerer (v.4). These indicates that the sacrificial animal expresses the gift of an offerer to the Lord, and it should be תמים, because it is for the Lord, and it comes out reverence and love. Noah was תמים, and God was with him (Gen 6:9), Abraham was תמים, and God made a covenant with him (Gen 17:1). In Deuteronomy 18:13, the word תמים is used to indicate a person’s spiritual condition.⁷⁶ Now, in order to be accepted by God, the sacrifice must be תמים. The meaning of תמים is not defined by the P source, but it is defined by the H source⁷⁷ indirectly, by giving the list of a series of defects (מום).⁷⁸ And these are closely related with the context of divine acceptance which I will touch upon later in my

⁷³ Hartley, *Leviticus*, lvi–lvii.

⁷⁴ Ko, *Leviticus*, 8.

⁷⁵ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 275.

⁷⁶ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 147.

⁷⁷ P stands for the Priestly Source and H stands for the Holiness Code.

⁷⁸ Kamionkowski, Lawrence, and Reid, *Leviticus*, 8.

research. This indicates that God wants a perfect offering in a sense that the best human can afford to worship him, and to imitate his holiness.

The Work of The Priest and the Offerer

The work of the priest and the offerer plays an essential role to the understanding of the voluntary aspect of the עלה. As three categories of animals are given in the text, the work of the priest and the offerer differ slightly, but not much in the case of herd and the flock except for the birds. Jacob Milgrom reconstructs the ritual procedure of the עלה in this way:

After the offerer has performed the hand-leaning rite and slaughtered his animals, the officiating priest dashes the animal's blood—collected by his fellow priest(s)—upon all the sides of the altar, while the offerer skins and quarters the animal and washes its entrails and skins. Once the priests have stoked the altar fire, laid new wood upon it, and then laid the animal parts, the officiating priest supervises the incineration of the sacrifice.⁷⁹

This is the briefing of the work of the priest and the offerer based on the herd and the flock, in the case the birds, it is mostly done by the priest himself. There are many works for the priest and the offerer as we can see. Hartley also listed seven steps⁸⁰ in the ritual of the עלה. I, however, will not discuss all the works done by both the priest and the offerer. I will rather focus on a certain rite which will express the voluntary aspect the עלה.

⁷⁹ Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 21.

⁸⁰ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 15–16. The seven steps are: 1. Presentation הקריב (vv. 3, 10, 14), 2. Laying a hand on the animal's head סמך (v.4a), 3. Slaughter שחט (vv. 5a, 11), 4. Manipulation of blood זרק (v. 5b, 11b), 5. Cutting of the animal נתה (vv. 6, 12a), 6. Washing of the innards and legs רחץ (vv. 9a, 13a), and 7. Burning of the fat הקטיר (vv. 9b, 13b, 17). The difference between Jacob Milgrom and John E. Hartley is that Hartley includes 'presentation' whereas Milgrom omits this.

The Meaning and Function of Laying on of Hands

The rite of laying on of the hands is prescribed not only for the *עלה*, but also for the *שלמים* (Lev 3:2, 8, 13), and the *הטאת* (Lev 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33). After the offerer had brought the sacrificial animal, this is the first thing that the offerer had to do. The co-working of the priest and the lay man in this sacrificial act denotes the significance of the divine worship of Israel. Cornelis Van Dam said that the difference between the Israel and the other cult in their surrounding is that in Israel cult, the offerer, and the priest work together whereas in the other cult, the priest did it all alone by himself, the people are kept out of the act of worship.⁸¹ There are many interpretations of the meaning of the function of laying hand. And I would like to begin with the argument of Sylvain Romerowski.

Sylvain Romerowski argues that the meaning of laying hand is explained by Moses himself in Lev 6:21 where it shows that the act symbolized the transferring of sins unto the animal. He argues that the laying hand appears in verse 4 where the word *kipper* is mentioned. For him, since the word *kipper* is there, the meaning of laying hand should be interpreted as it is interpreted in *Yom Kippur*.⁸² Romerowski holds more to the interpretation of the ‘transference of sin to the animal.’ There is a conflict, however, with the sacrifice being *תמים*, since the *עלה* is totally given to God. If the sin of the offerer is transferred to the animal, then the animal will be unclean. How can an unclean animal be offered as a gift to God? In the case of *Yom Kippur*, the goat which the offerer laid his hand upon is not offered to God but sent out into the wilderness (Lev 16:10).

Another argument on this idea is that the laying of single or two hands. John E. Hartley argues that the use of the word *יד* indicates a singular form, therefore it means that the offerer

⁸¹ Cornelis Van Dam, “The Burnt Offering in Its Biblical Context,” 200.

⁸² Romerowski, Sylvain. “Old Testament Sacrifices and Reconciliation,” 17.

laid his hand, not his hands, the plural form.⁸³ In the case of the scapegoat, the text says, “He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task (Lev 16: 21, NIV).” The sin is transferred to the animal when the two hands are laid upon the head of the animal.⁸⁴ But in Leviticus 1, it is a singular hand (v. 4).

Another interpretation of the rite is ‘identification.’ The offerer identified himself with the sacrificial animal, it is “intended to penetrate with the soul of the offerer,... or the animal, turning to into smoke, brings the offerer nearer to God.”⁸⁵ Dennis F. Kinlaw agrees this view. Kinlaw argues that this sacrifice is to make atonement for him, so the offerer is identified with the animal. The death of the animal brings atonement for him.⁸⁶ The problem with this view is the atonement itself. This is because for the atonement for sin, there is a specific offering, the *הטאת*. It is also questionable for what kind of sin the *עלה* atones. For, this I will be discussing in a more detail in my topic on the concept of atonement.

Another perspective on this rite is the idea of ‘substitute.’ Phillip Jenson argues that the laying on hand indicates the meaning of a substitute, the death of the animal takes place instead of the sinner, and therefore the sinner is accepted.⁸⁷ R. K. Harrison also agrees that the laying of hand indicates a substitute, whereby the offerer symbolically gives himself to the Lord. The

⁸³ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 20.

⁸⁴ Yaw Adu-Gyamfi, “The Live Goat Ritual in Leviticus 16.” *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 112, no. 1 (2013): 1–10. Yaw Adu-Gyamfi argues that the laying of two hands signifies the transfer the sin of the people, rather than the transfer of ownership. This two-hands laying may signify representation; one for the high priest and family and the other for the people.

⁸⁵ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 151.

⁸⁶ Dennis F. Kinlaw, “The Book of Leviticus,” in *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1969), 327.

⁸⁷ Philip P. Jenson, “Levitical Sacrificial System,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 28.

animal substitutes for the offerer.⁸⁸ There is a connection between the עלה and the substitution. In Genesis 22, God asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac as the עלה, but when the time came, God provided a ram in place of Isaac. John Calvin said that this is not a sign of consecration, it is for the atonement of the offerer. Calvin argues that the hand laying indicates substitution. By laying hand, the sacrificial animal substituted for the offerer for his divine acceptance and his atonement.⁸⁹

The last view on this rite is ‘ownership.’ Jacob Milgrom holds this interpretation, and he argues that the word should be interpreted as ‘lean hand’ rather than ‘put hand’. This is because Milgrom believes that the placing hand is an expressing of blessing. In the case of Jacob and the sons of Joseph, Jacob places his hand on them, the object is on the head, and it rests on the head lightly (cf. Gen 48:14, 18). Milgrom argues that סמך here implies pressure, not just leaning. It, therefore, may indicate ownership.⁹⁰ Roland De Vaux also argues that the rite of laying hand indicates its ownership. He writes: “The gesture does signify more than an abandonment of the propriety rights over the victim, such as the *manumission* of Roman law. In laying on of hand on the animal’s head, the offerer attests that the victim is his indeed, that the sacrifice which is about to be presented by the priest is offered in his name, and that the benefits accruing from it will return to him.”⁹¹ Vaux is right in saying that the benefit of the sacrifice will return to the offerer because the achievement of atonement and being acceptable to the Lord follows right after the rite of hand laying.

Another way to look at the idea of ownership is from the perspective of the nature of the עלה. Cornelis Van Dam writes, “By laying his hand on the animal, the Israelite accentuated the

⁸⁸ Harrison, *Leviticus, an Introduction and Commentary*, 45.

⁸⁹ Jean Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Wilmington, DE: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1999), 324.

⁹⁰ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 151.

⁹¹ Roland de Vaux, *Studies in the Old Testament Sacrifice* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964), 28.

fact that he was not just giving this animal to God as a gift, but that he was offering and dedicating himself, his entire being to God as a sacrifice. The primary intent of the burnt offering is to give to God a gift, ultimately of oneself, although the aspect of atonement is certainly there as well (cf. Lev 16).”⁹² As gift given not compulsorily, it is given out of love and reverence, the sacrifice in the עֹלָה is given out of love and reverence. The idea of ownership conveys the meaning of giving as a gift, out of love and reverence. This rite of laying hand can be seen in three offerings: the עֹלָה (Lev 1:4); the שְׁלָמִים (Lev 3:2, 8, 13), and the חֲטָאֵת (Lev 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33). Among the three offerings, the laying hand is performed with the two voluntary offerings. In the חֲטָאֵת, the purpose for the sacrifice is clearly mentioned and it is for the atonement of sin whereas in the two sacrifices, the purpose of atonement is not indicated as being primary. I, therefore, argue that the rite of laying a hand on the head of the sacrificial animal indicates the ownership of the offerer. The offerer brought his own animal to offer up to the Lord. This is also related to the idea of ‘costing’ which I will discuss in my other topic on ‘the centrality of the heart.’

The Burning of the Sacrifice

One of the most important things in the עֹלָה can be seen in its burning process. The work of the offerer and the priest can be distinguished by this: the priest does all the works related to the altar, such as arranging the wood, sprinkling the blood around the altar, arranging the parts of the animal on the altar, and the burning of the sacrifice. The other works such as slaughtering the animal, skinning the animal and cutting it into pieces, washing the entrails and the legs are done by the offerer (vv. 4–13). In the case of birds, however, the works are mostly done by the priest.

⁹² Cornelis Van Dam, “The Burnt Offering in Its Biblical Context,” 202.

Most scholars agree that the priestly work on the bird's sacrifice is done by the priest himself because of the size of the bird which does not require the offerer's help.

In this 'burning the sacrifice,' I find three things important for understanding the voluntary aspect of the עלה; they are the altar מזבה, the fire אש, and the burning הקטיר (v. 9). I would like to begin with the altar מזבה. The altar is mostly associated with the burnt offerings. The altar is mentioned in the first sacrifice made by a human (Gen 4: 3–5). However, we can assume that there may have been an altar, because Able brought the fat portion of his animal as offering, and there are references that this fat portion are burnt on altars (Lev 3:16; 9:20). Noah built (Gen 8:12) an altar, Abraham built an altar (Gen 12:7, 13:8; 22:9; 26:25), and Moses built an altar (Exod 17:5). But their purposes of building altars are different. One thing in common is that they have a reason to build an altar and worship took place. The altar in the Tabernacle is built in accordance with God's instruction. Moses received this instruction on Mount Sinai, and the altar of burnt offering was designed for animal sacrifice. It was about seven and half feet square and four and half feet tall, with horns in each corner, and was made with acacia wood and overlaid with bronze (Exod 38:1–2).⁹³

There are two altars in the tabernacle: one is the altar of burnt offering which is also called the bronze altar which stood in the court of the tabernacle east of the tent, near the entrance (Exod 27:1–8; 38:1–7; 40:6–7, 29–30). And another altar is the altar of incense made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, which was inside the holy place, inside the tent outside of the holy of holiest place (Exod 30:1–10).⁹⁴ Most of the animal sacrifices are burnt on the altar of burnt offering. The animal's head, fat portion, and the animal's entire body are carefully arranged by the priest on the altar. The most significant with this is that everything is burnt on

⁹³ Harbert Wolf, "מזבה," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1: 234.

⁹⁴ Richard E. Averbeck, "מזבח," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, vol. 2: 897.

the altar. The altar consumed everything.⁹⁵ This is not the case in other voluntary offering. In the offering of מנחה and שלמים, only a portion is offered and burnt. With the burning of all on the altar, the significance of the fire comes.

In Leviticus 1, the fire is mentioned in verse 7 and the text uses the word נתן which means to ‘give, put, or set,’ and most Bible versions use the word ‘to put.’ A question can be raised whether this fire is being started by the priest or not. John Wesley believed that this fire comes from heaven (Lev 9:24). He said that the word נתן here should be translated as “put fire, or dispose the fire, that is, blow up, and put together, so as it might be fit for the present work.”⁹⁶ Wesley also said that since this fire came down from heaven, it is to be carefully preserved, and all other fire is not allowed.⁹⁷ Jacob Milgrom also agrees in saying that this fire is a divine fire, and not letting the fire die out is to have divine acceptance for all subsequent sacrifices.⁹⁸ The perpetual fire is mentioned in Leviticus 6 with a very strict warning that the fire must be kept on, it must not go out. Why is this? It is because the fire represents the presence of God.

God was in the burning bush when he talked to Moses (Exod 3:2), the pillar of fire served as divine presence in the wilderness (Exod 13:21–22). John Wesley said that this divine presence in the wilderness is a pre-manifestation of the Christ that dwells among us.⁹⁹ As Christ lives in us and does not leave us, so the divine fire can be understood in a similar way. The fire in the עלה manifests the divine presence, and burning the sacrifice in the fire indicates a giving up to the Lord. The burning in the עלה is significant because it expresses the love and willingness of the offerer. The burning of the sacrifice is mentioned as הקטיר—which is derived from the root word

⁹⁵ R. Laird Harris, “Leviticus,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with The New International Version of the Holy Bible*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 538.

⁹⁶ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Bristol: William Pine, 1765), 345.

⁹⁷ Wesley, 1:346.

⁹⁸ Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 68.

⁹⁹ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, 1:240.

קטר, that can be translated as “make sacrifices smoke, send them up in smoke.”¹⁰⁰ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch argue that the act of burning is not to destroy the animal or turn it into ashes; but, rather, through the process of burning, to cause a sweet aroma which ascends to heaven, as an ‘ethereal essence of the sacrifice’ to the Lord.¹⁰¹ The burning is attached to the word אֶת־הַכֹּל which means ‘all’ on the מִזְבֵּחַ—which conveys the idea that the offerer gives everything to the Lord. This giving up of all can only be seen in the case of the עֹלָה. J. H. Kurtz said, “The complete burning of the animal was the crowning point of the whole burnt offering. This would aim at creating a consciousness of the calling of self-gift to God.”¹⁰²

The Context of Divine Acceptance

Divine acceptance plays the key point in the עֹלָה. Gordon J. Wenham said that divine acceptance is the general aim of the sacrifice. And to be at peace with God is the goal of sacrifice.¹⁰³ In the Psalms and other prophetic writings, divine acceptance of the sacrifice is mentioned as the important fact for the answers of their prayers. Some examples may be seen in, Ps 40:14 (Eng. 13); 77:8 (7); and 85:2(1), where the Psalmist prays to God to accept his people and answer their prayers. Furthermore, one of the greatest threats or fears for the people of God in the times of the prophets is that God will not accept their offerings. God was trying to warn them to live in His will or He would not accept their offerings (Jer 14:12; Hos 8: 13; Amos 5: 22).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ R. Whitaker, et al. *The Abridged Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament: From a Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*.

¹⁰¹ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, “The Third Book of Moses (Leviticus),” *Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/leviticus/1-7.htm>

¹⁰² Johann Heinrich Kurtz, James Martin, and Johann Heinrich Kurtz, *Offerings, Sacrifices and Worship in the Old Testament*, 1st publ. 1863, reprint (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 58.

¹⁰³ Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 55–56.

¹⁰⁴ Wenham, 55–56.

The Context of רצון

The concept of divine acceptance lies in Lev 1:3–4. And this verse has an ambiguous meaning whether it is for divine acceptance or some one's own freewill. To better understand this, I would like to give a brief study of the word רצון. The word is found 56 times in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁰⁵ The word רצון has three major meaning, according to William White:

The primary one is the 'favor' or 'good will' of God (Deut 33:16; Isa 60:10; Ps 5:13 (Eng. 12). The root also refers to the pleasure or favor of kings (Prov 14:35; 16:13, 15) and all human (Prov 10:32; 11:27). The second shade of meaning is the 'delight' or 'acceptance' of individual (Exod 28:28). This idea can also be seen in Leviticus. The third shade of meaning is 'desire' and 'pleasure' in the specific sense of 'will' as the will of God (Ezra 10:11; Ps 40:9 .. also read Gen 49:6).¹⁰⁶

By this, it is obvious that the word has both the meaning of acceptance and freewill.

There are two possible ways of translating the phrase יהוה לפני לרצנו in verse 3. The first translation has something to do with the idea of acceptance. This is used by most Bible translation such as NIV, RSV, NASB, NLT, and others. John E. Hartley said, "רצון functions as a technical, cultic term to identify a sacrifice as having efficacious merit."¹⁰⁷ His argument is more on the sacrifice itself; he tries to prove that the sacrifice becomes רצון when it is offered according to the prescribed ritual. By this he meant that the word רצון should be interpret as 'acceptance'.¹⁰⁸ Charles John Ellicott argues that the phrase יהוה לפני לרצנו should be translated as 'he may be accepted before the Lord.' Ellicott argues that this meaning is unmistakably set forth

¹⁰⁵ Kohlenberger and Swanson, *The Hebrew English Concordance to the Old Testament*, 1492.

¹⁰⁶ William White, "רצון," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2: 859.

¹⁰⁷ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 19.

¹⁰⁸ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 19.

in Leviticus 22:19–21. In this text, it clearly says that a sheep or goat may be accepted on a person's behalf.¹⁰⁹

Another question comes to the fore regarding the idea of acceptance. Does 'acceptance' refer to the offerer or to the offering? The NIV translates the phrase as 'so that *it* will be acceptable' referring to the acceptance of the animal, putting the word '*he*' at its footnote, whereas others translations such as the RSV and NLT render 'he' referring to the acceptance of the offerer. R. Laird Harris agrees that this phrase points to divine acceptance, and this phrase indicates the acceptance of the offerer rather than the offering itself. Harris argues that the Hebrew construction suggests that what God accepts is the offerer.¹¹⁰ Nobuyoshi Kiuchi argues that רצון means 'favor' and when it constitutes a phrase, it indicates the offerer's acceptance by divine favor. Kiuchi also indicates Leviticus 22:19 as a reason for translating this word as acceptance.¹¹¹

The second translation of the phrase יהוה לפני יהוה in verse 3 is 'his own freewill.' The KJV renders, the phrase as follow: "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" (v.3 KJV). Here the word רצון means 'voluntary will.' This translation vividly portrays the עלה in Leviticus 1 as a voluntary offering, an offering made to the Lord as someone's freewill. Jacob Milgrom argues that the word 'acceptance' in verse 3 and verse 4 is not the same. The word in verse 3 is related to the blameless of the animal and the

¹⁰⁹ Charles John Ellicott, "Leviticus 1," in *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, accessed on January 17, 2022. [Leviticus 1 - Bible Study & Commentary - Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers - Charles John Ellicott - BiblePortal](#)

¹¹⁰ Harris, "Leviticus," 538.

¹¹¹ N. Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 56.

word in verse 4 is related to the hand-leaning of the offerer.¹¹² If Jacob Milgrom is right, then the two רצון are not the same. Therefore, the first רצון may be interpreted as ‘his own freewill.’

Furthermore, the first word רצון is followed by the word לפני יהוה which can be translated as ‘before the Lord.’ Here, the word ‘before the Lord’ gives a hint for translating this phrase as his own will rather than as being accepted. Thomas J. King argues that לפני יהוה generally refers to the entrance of the Tent of meeting. King writes, “Before the Lord [לפני יהוה] can, however, refer to more specifically to areas closer to God’s presence in the holy of holies... the holy place inside the tent of meeting.”¹¹³ Therefore, presenting the animal before the Lord is understandable. Also in verse 5, we read that the animal is to be slaughtered before the Lord. Timothy M. Willis said that the word before the Lord in verse 3 and verse 5 have the same meaning. Willis argues that the most important point for this is that the Lord is watching the act of worship.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the translation of “He shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD (KJV)” is more appropriate to understand the voluntary aspect the עלה. John Calvin also translated the word רצון in verse 4 as, “his own voluntary will.”¹¹⁵

John Gill writes, “...and he shall offer it of his own voluntary will; not forced or compelled to it, or with any reluctance, but as a pure freewill offering.”¹¹⁶ This is a very beautiful understanding of the voluntary aspect the עלה. The sacrifice that the person offers in the עלה is not from a desire to get forgiveness of sin, rather it is because the offerer wants to have a relationship with God. It can be seen as the basic idea and motive of sacrifice. One of the

¹¹² Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 153.

¹¹³ Thomas J. King, *Leviticus: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, New Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2013), 51.

¹¹⁴ Willis, *Leviticus*, 6.

¹¹⁵ Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, 322.

¹¹⁶ John Gill, “Leviticus,” in *Gill’s Exposition*, accessed on January 16, 2022.
<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/leviticus/1-3.htm>

purposes of sacrifice is to have the presence of God. As the holy God cannot stay with the unholy people, the people must be holy and acceptable to the holy God. The sacrifice helps the person to become holy and acceptable. The voluntary aspect of the עלה describes the love and reverence of the offerer.

The Concept of Atonement

To understand the function of the עלה, it is important to know the meaning and function of the atonement described in verse 4. Leviticus 1:4 says, “He shall lay his hand on the head of the whole burnt offering, and it shall be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.” The word ‘to make atonement for him’ indicates the purpose of the עלה. Wenham said that this is the obvious clue to the purpose of the whole burnt offering in Leviticus. It is clear enough that the עלה atones for the sin of the worshipper. Then a question arises: for what kind of sin does the עלה atone? There is already the purification offering and reparatory offering. The atonement in the עלה, however, is slightly different from these two offerings. The purification offering deals with a specific sin that makes the offerer unclean: i.e., the sin related to defiling the tabernacle. The reparatory offering atones for the sin that is caused by breaking the law of social relationship. The עלה atones for the sin in general, not for specific sins. For Wenham, the whole burnt offering is a ransom.¹¹⁷

I would like to consider the root of the word ‘atonement’ to comprehend its meaning and why the atonement is included in the עלה in Leviticus 1. R. Laird Harris notes that the word כפר, which means ‘to make atonement’ is used almost fifty times in Leviticus in a similar context. For the entire Old Testament, it is used more than forty times. Most of the time, it is the priest who

¹¹⁷ Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 59.

makes the atonement through the sacrifice. The literal meaning of the word is to cover, however, it is interesting that the word is not used in its literal sense. The verb derived from the noun means ‘to give a ransom’ or ‘to atone by substitution.’¹¹⁸ The word occurs 103 times as a verb and 78 times in the Pentateuch, 75 times in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers the word carries the sense of priestly atonement.¹¹⁹ A. Noordtzii also argues that the verb in verse 4 carries the idea of ransom. Noordtzii said that the Hebrew verb *kipper* contains the idea of sweeping away. The idea that the sin is wiped away, through the mediation of the priest, with the aid of the life-giving blood from before the eyes of God; and God no longer sees the sinful person anymore.¹²⁰ The word כפר in Lev 1:4 is found together with the word סמך. In Lev 16, the כפר is found together with סמך (v 21). Sylvain Romerowski argues that the word כפר in verse 4 should be interpreted as, “The animal took the place of the Israelite in order to bear his guilt and pay for his sins in his place.”¹²¹

John E Hartley and Dennis F. Kinlaw approach the idea of atonement from the perspective of earning ‘acceptance.’ Hartley writes, “The greatest concern was that the sacrifice be made in a way that God would accept it. An acceptance sacrifice meant that Yahweh received the animal as expiation for the offerer’s sinful disposition. Finding atonement through his offering, a person might approach the presence of the holy God with confidence. He was free to present the other offerings.”¹²² Hartley argues that the purpose of the sacrifice may be seen in divine acceptance. The atonement here, therefore, is for the purpose of divine acceptance. Dennis F. Kinlaw also writes, “The purpose again is in terms of nearness to God; it indicates

¹¹⁸ Harris, “Leviticus,” 538.

¹¹⁹ P.A. Nordell, “Old Testament Word-Studies; 7. Sacrifice and Worship,” *The Old Testament Student*, 8, no. 7 (1889): 261, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3156530>.

¹²⁰ A. Noordtzij, *The Book of Leviticus*, Bible Student’s Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1982), 33–34.

¹²¹ Sylvain Romerowski, “Old Testament Sacrifices and Reconciliation,” 17.

¹²² Hartley, *Leviticus*, 24.

‘acceptance,’ or ‘atonement.’ This nearness, of course, is not spatial but spiritual and personal. Such nearness cannot come without sacrifice.”¹²³ It is obvious that when a person is made clean, he or she is accepted to worship God, and to be in the presence of the Lord. Anna Suk Yee Lee argues that the atonement has the meaning of purgatory as well. Lee argues that after the sacred space and the offender are purified, they can be in the state of being pure and holy which is required for God’s presence.¹²⁴ John H. Hayes also argues that the atonement brings the restoration of the right relations between God and Israel through the cleansing of the sanctuary.¹²⁵

Suk Yee Lee continues to argue that the atonement rite should result in forgiveness.¹²⁶ This can be argued from the perspective of the motive of atonement. On the one hand, it is questionable if the offerer of the *עֹלָה* wanted to receive forgiveness through the *עֹלָה*. Besides, it is doubtful that the purpose of the *עֹלָה* is to receive forgiveness. The idea of ransom indicates that God is angry with unholy people, so the people need to bring sacrifice so that the wrath of God may be removed. Thomas J. King argues against the idea that the wrath of God is being removed by the sacrifice. He argues that the motive of atonement is the love of God, not the wrath of God. He quotes from John 3:16 to show that God gives us his only begotten son because of love. King argues that if the motive of atonement is wrath, then we should read, John 3:16 as saying, “For God was so angry that he gave his only begotten love.”¹²⁷

¹²³ Kinlaw, “The Book of Leviticus,” 327–28.

¹²⁴ Anna Suk Yee Lee, “Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Old Testament Sacrifice,” *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry*, 13 (2012 2011): 31.

¹²⁵ John H. Hayes, “Atonement in the Book of Leviticus,” *Interpretation* 52 (January 1998): 5, <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000908101&site=ehost-live>)

¹²⁶ Lee, “Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Old Testament Sacrifice,” 32.

¹²⁷ King, *Leviticus*, 49.

In the *עלה*, the offerer does not expect to be forgiven. His or her sacrifice was not to appease the wrath of God; rather, it is given out of joy, gratitude, love, and reverence. Hartley writes, “The worshipper is not seeking forgiveness for some specific wrongdoing. Instead, she or he is motivated by the circumstances of the time to honor the Lord.”¹²⁸ When the *עלה* is offered as a community or in a festival, the intention may be different. However, when a private *עלה* is made, the intention is to express honor, love, to get closer, and to have relationship with God. R. K. Harrison writes, “Private sacrifices would be offered in order to express thanksgiving, the desire for renewed fellowship with God.”¹²⁹ Therefore, I would like to argue that the atonement in the *עלה* is achieved not because of the sacrifice is made for the purpose of atonement, but because of it is offered out of love and reverence.

The Meaning and Function of *אשה*

The word is *ʾisseh* *אשה*, which I believe expresses the function of the offering, is translated with two different meanings. This word appears three times together with the phrase *ריח-ניחוח ליהוה* (v. 9, 13, 17). The first translation of the word *אשה* is ‘an offering made by fire.’ This translation can be seen in the KJV, NASB, and NRSV. The translation of the offering made by fire is based on the word *ʾisseh* *אשה*. Roland De Vaux writes, “The holocaust is called *isseh* (Lev 1:9, 13, 17)...but it seems certain that the priestly writers connect it with *és*, ‘fire’, and that by it they understand all offerings consumed wholly or in part by fire.”¹³⁰ Philip J. Budd, however, argues that the translation of food can be problematic because The word can denote the baked cake (Lev 2:10), flour (Lev 23:13), and the bread of the presence of the Lord (Lev 24:9).

¹²⁸ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 7.

¹²⁹ Harrison, *Leviticus, an Introduction and Commentary*, 42.

¹³⁰ Vaux, *Studies in the Old Testament Sacrifice*, 31.

These are not the fire offerings. Although these are referred to as אֵשֶׁה, there is no mention of fire in this context.¹³¹

Another translation is ‘food offering.’ H. Cazelles argues that the word comes from the Sumerian *e`*s and designates ‘the food’ offered to the Lord.¹³² The reason for translating as food offering lies beyond this. This is because the word אֵשֶׁה is also used to indicate the wine libation (Num 15:10), and the showbread (Num 24:7, 9). And the offering which burns on the alter, such as the purification offering is never called a אֵשֶׁה.¹³³ This translation also links with the idea that the עלה is a gift to God. The word אֵשֶׁה is associated with divine acceptance as well. Jacob Milgrom, therefore, suggests translating this word as a ‘food gift.’¹³⁴ Nobuyoshi Kiuchi provides another translation for the word אֵשֶׁה. Kiuchi argues that the term אֵשֶׁה is distinct from the word ‘fire’ as it is usually translated. Kiuchi opposes translating this word as ‘food offering’ because אֵשֶׁה overlaps with food in 3:11, 16. Kiuchi believes that the difference between *es* and *isseh* suggests what fire brings about, which is burning. Kiuchi, therefore, translates this as ‘an offering for annihilation.’¹³⁵ The word is best understood together with the phrase רִיח־בְּנִיחֹה which I will be discussing next.

The concept of רִיח־בְּנִיחֹה

The rendering of the phrase רִיח־בְּנִיחֹה is not as controversial as with the word אֵשֶׁה. The phrase is a technical term used in the sacrificial system. Most translators agree that this phrase indicates the sweet smell that reaches God. The word to be considered here is בְּנִיחֹה. The word

¹³¹ Budd, *Leviticus*, 50.

¹³² Vaux, *Studies in the Old Testament Sacrifice*, 31.

¹³³ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 160.

¹³⁴ Milgrom, 160.

¹³⁵ Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, 52.

ניחוח basically means ‘rest.’ This word is found forty-three times in the Old Testament and only used in this phrase.¹³⁶ Joe M. Sprinkle argues that ניחוח can be rendered as “soothing” or “tranquilizing” which can be interpreted as the sacrifice appeases any possible anger that God might have, makes the offerer acceptable, and grants his requests.¹³⁷ This view suggests that the עלה is intended to appease the wrath of God, therefore it indicates the view of ‘ransom.’ Alex Deasley argues that the phrase a “pleasing odor” is usually accompanied by the verb *kipper*, ‘to make atonement,’ which indicates the idea that the sacrificial animal substitutes for the life of the offerer. The phrase a ‘pleasing odor’ relates to the atonement.¹³⁸

Nobyoshi Kuichi and Timothy Willis believe that this phrase indicates a meaning of ‘acceptance.’ They write, “The fact that a soothing aroma is often related to רצון in other parts of the OT (Lev 26:31, 34; Ezek 20:40–41; Amos 5:21–22) also lends support to the interpretation that *kipper* in v. 4 refers to the symbolic meaning of all the succeeding ritual acts.”¹³⁹ Kuichi’s view on this questions indicates a view of atonement, not as ransom, but in connection with ‘acceptance.’ Timothy Willis takes a more direct way to indicate the view of acceptance. Willis writes, “The statement that a sacrifice is a “pleasing odor to the Lord” seems to accept the common ancient Near East idea that gods consumed a sacrifice by breathing in its smoke... Traditional theologians typically assume that this is an archaic expression... The expression probably intends to communicate the Lord’s approval and acceptance of the sacrifice, but nothing more.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Harris, “Leviticus,” 539.

¹³⁷ Joe M. Sprinkle, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 8.

¹³⁸ Alex Deasley, “Holy Sacrifice,” n.d., <https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-5-1/708-v5n1-deasley/file>.

¹³⁹ Kuichi, *Leviticus*, 58.

¹⁴⁰ Willis, *Leviticus*, 7.

Jacob Milgrom is in favor of translating the phrase as a ‘sweet savor’ because of the rabbinic explanation of the phrase as a ‘pleasure’ and the rendering of the LXX. For Milgrom, it is just a sweet savor.¹⁴¹ Hartley supports the translation of רִיח־נִיחֻחַ as a ‘soothing aroma’ or a ‘sweet smelling fragrance’. The sweet odor of sacrifice that ascends to heaven pleases God. Hartley agrees that this metaphor is anthropomorphic, as it is in other places in the Old Testament, like with ‘the hand of God.’ Hartley affirms that the smell arouses a person’s memory and reaches down into one’s deep emotions.¹⁴² He writes,

The phrase רִיח־נִיחֻחַ means that the aroma arising from the sacrifice moved Yahweh to be favorably disposed to its presenters. Should Yahweh be angry, the aroma placated his anger. More importantly it stimulated his memory. There is an intimate tie between smell and memory. Memory was a key catalyst in the dynamic interplay between Yahweh and his people. When the people of Israel sought to stir Yahweh’s memory, they sought to have him act toward them in light of his past commitments, beginning with the promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3; cf. 26:42). Whom Yahweh remembered, he blessed.¹⁴³

This supports the idea that the עֹלָה is a sacrifice for expressing love and honor, rather than an appeal for forgiveness.

The Function of the Voluntary Aspect of the עֹלָה

To understand the relationship between the עֹלָה and the greatest commandment, it is important to understand the function of the עֹלָה. The function of the עֹלָה, however, is not clearly mentioned in the text. Scholars are still debating both the function and purpose of the עֹלָה. The text provides detailed instructions for the עֹלָה but does not give a clear explanation of its meaning and function. Martin J. Selman writes, “Ancient scribes were in fact much more concerned with giving detailed practical instruction to those carrying out the rituals than with explaining the

¹⁴¹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 163.

¹⁴² Hartley, *Leviticus*, 22–23.

¹⁴³ Hartley, *Leviticus*, lxviii.

inner meaning of such rituals to people who did not share their cultural presuppositions.”¹⁴⁴ This is also true in the case of most Old Testament sacrifices. Especially in the case of the עֹלָה in Leviticus 1, the whole chapter is full of instructions on the ‘how’ rather than explaining the meaning and function of this sacrifice. Therefore, I would like to discuss the background of the sacrifice to help the reader to understand the function of the עֹלָה.

The Summary of the Function and Purpose of Sacrifices in the Ancient Near East (ANE)

Sacrifices in the Ancient Near East is a very broad topic in itself. I will not discuss in detail the subject of all the sacrifices offered in the Ancient Near East (ANE, throughout this thesis). I believe that understanding the purpose of ANE sacrifices helps one see the nature and purpose of the עֹלָה. This is because the עֹלָה is the most ancient sacrifice; it dates back even before the Israel cult was established.¹⁴⁵ Of many choices, I would like to begin with the sacrifices offered by ancient Arabs. W. O. E. Oesterley said that most of the sacrifices presented by ancient Arabs are a form of gift-sacrifice. The ancient Arabs thought that the sacrifices they made were partaken of by the deity; for example, the blood offering to the god was a form of gift and they thought that the god drank it.¹⁴⁶ As they offered their offering as a gift, they also expected divine protection in return. One example is the offering of the hair. After a baby was born, the first cutting of the infant’s hair was made in the form of a sheep. This was done to remove the evil from the child and to dedicate the child to the communal god for divine protection. Thus, the

¹⁴⁴ Martin J. Selman, “Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Robert T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 89.

¹⁴⁵ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 18.

¹⁴⁶ W. O. E. Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel: Their Origin, Purposes and Development* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937), 48–49.

purpose of the gift-offering among the ancient Arabs was to pay homage, to gain his favor in return, and to remove the wrath of the deity which may have been aroused without any intention.¹⁴⁷

Ancient Arabian sacrifice can also be found in the form of the communion-sacrifice.

Oesterley writes:

In the oldest known form of Arabian sacrifice as described by Nilus, the camel chosen as the victim is bound upon a rude altar of stones piled together, and when the leader of the band has thrice led the worshippers round the altar in a solemn procession accompanied with chants, he inflicts the first wound, while the last words of the hymn are still upon the lips of the congregation, and in all haste drinks of the blood that gushes forth. Forthwith the whole company fall on the victim with their swords, hacking off pieces of the quivering flesh and devouring them raw with such wild haste that in the short interval between the rise of the day star which marked the hour for the service to begin, and the disappearance of its rays before the rising sun, the entire camel, body and bones, skin, blood and entrails, is wholly devoured.¹⁴⁸

Oesterley explains the ritual in this way. He said that the meaning of devouring the raw flesh indicates a way of literally sharing of life. The raw meat is called 'the living flesh' in Hebrew and Syriac, and partaking of the raw meat, while it still has life expresses the establishment of communion among the worshipers. Since the blood was shed on the altar, which implies the divine partaking of it, the sacrifice also establishes communion between the deity and the worshippers. Oesterley, therefore, affirms that the primary purpose of all Arabian offerings was to 'contact and unity' with the deity.¹⁴⁹

Another thing one cannot miss, in studying Ancient Near East sacrifices, is 'sacrifice in Mesopotamia.' Martin J. Selman explains the nature and purpose of sacrifice in Mesopotamia. He describes the influence the temple wielded in Mesopotamia and how offerings were given to the temple and sacrifices were made to the gods. Like in the Old Testament, the offerings were

¹⁴⁷ Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel: Their Origin, Purposes and Development*, 51.

¹⁴⁸ Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel: Their Origin, Purposes and Development*, 52.

¹⁴⁹ Oesterley, 53–54.

used for the upkeep of the temple, and the herds, sheep, and goats were given for the business and administration of the temple. Sacrifice is a term reserved for what is presented to a god. Unlike in Israel, sacrifices were offered without utilizing an altar, and the priest used the offerings which were already in the temple. The act of sacrifice was totally performed and served by the priest.¹⁵⁰

Martin J. Selman notes that the main characteristic of Mesopotamian sacrificial practice is found in its emphasis on the caring for and feeding of divine images. This view was influenced by the idea that human-made images represented the gods and the deities had a greater concern for their own mundane needs than for the people. To fulfill the deity's need, meals were given every day. Four meals were given per day, and the size of the meal was far more important than the variety of the menu. The term used for meal was *naptanu* which was also used to indicate an ordinary meal. The question is how can the deity partake of his meals? And how did ancient Mesopotamian think that their gods ate these offerings? It is simple. The deity was thought to partake simply by looking at the food.¹⁵¹ The feeding of god indicates that the sacrifices were made to take care of the deity, and it expresses the interdependence of gods and human beings.

The Assyrian ritual called *tākultu* which we know about from a text from the Neo-Assyrian period, demonstrates the purpose of sacrifice in ancient times. In this ritual, the king of the city of Ashur offered sacrifices to the chief deities and pronounced blessings on the land, the people, the town, and for the king. Then all the deities were asked to pour out blessings to the king of Ashur as a result of the *tākultu* meal. This indicates that the real purpose of the ritual meal was to secure the welfare of the land and king. Rituals in Mesopotamia varied according to circumstances. Many of them were concerned with the removal of evil, and for troubles such as

¹⁵⁰ Selman, "Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East," 90.

¹⁵¹ Selman, "Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East," 90–91.

sickness or evil spirits. There were rituals concerned with purity and fertility as well. Mostly, the purpose of the sacrifices in Mesopotamia focused more on meeting human needs than on meeting the needs of the gods.¹⁵²

All of the sacrifices given by the Babylonians and Assyrians were fire-offerings. There were sacrifices which express homage to the god. This kind of sacrifices were also offered in the dedication of a temple. During the offering sacrifices, music was played. There was also a life-given type of sacrifice among the Babylonians and the Assyrians. This sacrifice was based on the idea that the deity, like a human person, died, and therefore the gods needed nourishment to keep them alive. The food was intended to keep and nourish the gods, while the death of the sacrificial animal provides life to the deity.¹⁵³ Another sacrifice in the ANE is the sacrifice of Syrians and Canaanites. Martin J. Selman describes that the many ways sacrifices were made in Syria. Each city seems to have had its own emphasis and traditions. Most sacrifices were seen as gift-offerings. Three types of gifts were made, namely 1) animals, 2) vegetables products including wine, and bread or grain, and 3) minerals.¹⁵⁴ Human sacrifice is also found in this area. Other scholars, like Dussad, argue that the Canaanites, even before the Semites, practiced sacrifices with these three ideas of communion, propitiation, and gift.¹⁵⁵

I would like to end this topic with Robert J. Daly's six characteristics of a sacrifice in Greco-Roman and Semitic-Hebrew civilizations which hints at the general purpose of sacrifice in the ANE. They are as follow:

- 1) The words describing sacrifice generally have no secular significance; they are used to describe strictly religious rites and objects. 2) these words generally do not connote reluctance, sadness, or deprivation, but rather, joy, festivity, or thanksgiving. Sacrifices

¹⁵² Selman, "Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East," 91–93.

¹⁵³ Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel: Their Origin, Purposes and Development*, 55–59.

¹⁵⁴ Selman, "Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East," 96–97.

¹⁵⁵ Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel: Their Origin, Purposes and Development*, 64.

are usually performed gladly as expressions of the attitudes of human beings towards their God or gods. 3) Proper sacrifices are always as large as possible. 4) Sacrifices are offered by human beings to their gods or god. The emphasis is on the *giving*, not on the giving up. 5. Sacrifices are offered both to secure boons and to express thanksgiving for boons received. 6)... No significance is attached to the death of the animal. Its death, in itself, effects nothing.¹⁵⁶

In summary, the sacrifices offered in Ancient Near East varied according to traditions and circumstances. Viewing them from the top, we can find some similarities, especially regarding the purposes for the sacrifice. W. O. E. Oesterley provides three theories concerning sacrifices in the ANE. They are 1) Gift-theory, which understands the sacrifice as gifts offered to supernatural powers, 2) Communion-theory, which views the sacrifice as a means of communion, and 3) Life-theory which describes the sacrifice as a means of giving life.¹⁵⁷

The Significance of the עלה from the ANE sacrifices

Studies in the ANE sacrifices shows that the purpose of sacrifices in the ANE and the purpose of the sacrifice in scripture share some similarities. Martin J. Selman argues that the *ʿslmm* sacrifice in Syria shares a similarity with the Hebrew *zebah selamim* (peace offering), since both sacrifices were eaten by the worshippers.¹⁵⁸ This, however, does not mean that all the sacrifices in the scripture were derived from pagan worship. There are some great differences between sacrifices in the ANE and those in scripture. I would like to discuss, for example, the difference between the sacrifices of the ANE and the עלה. This, I believe, will help the reader understand the function of the עלה.

¹⁵⁶ Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled*, 26.

¹⁵⁷ Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel: Their Origin, Purposes and Development*, 22–24.

¹⁵⁸ Selman, “Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East,” 97–98.

Jacob Milgrom provides three facts about the enormous difference between ANE and Old Testament sacrifices. The first point revolves around the idea of ‘food offering,’ that the divine indeed partakes in the sacrificial meal. Milgrom argues that the idea of a literal partaking food by God cannot be found in scripture. Milgrom argues that all the offerings, including the עלה, were prohibited inside the tent (Exod 30:9). All food gifts sacrifices were removed from the tent, and therefore the idea of God partaking the sacrifice is not seen (Ps 50). The second point concerns the rules governing the worship service. In the Israelite cult, the entire sacrificial ritual was conducted in ‘silence’ whereas pagan sacrificial ritual includes music and others such as magical incantations. Silence in the ritual act indicates the distance between the Israel’s rites from pagan ceremonies whose sacrifice is given with magical incantations. The last point is about ‘the partnership with the laity.’ This participation is directly connected to the עלה. In pagan ritual, all work is done by the priest alone, while the worshipper is kept to the side; whereas in the עלה, the offerer and the priest work together.¹⁵⁹

The context of covenant makes Israel’s sacrifice different as well. In Israel, most important sacrifices are related to the covenant. Ximena DeBrock writes, “The overall conclusion concerning the function of sacrifice can only be understood in the context of the covenant, which is first revealed in the Torah.”¹⁶⁰ And Debrock argues that the covenant between and God human beings was not only about an exchange of something; rather, it concerns a relationship that expresses love and communion.¹⁶¹ Martin J. Selman clearly states, “Nothing outside of the OT remotely corresponds to the covenantal context of Israelite sacrifice, either in

¹⁵⁹ Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 21–22.

¹⁶⁰ Ximena DeBroeck, "Becoming a Priestly People, 102.

¹⁶¹ Ximena DeBroeck, 102.

theory or in practice.”¹⁶² When Noah sacrificed the עלה, right after that God made a covenant with Noah (Gen 8:20–9:17).

The Voluntary Aspect of the עלה as an Expression of the Greatest Commandment

Understanding the voluntary aspect of the whole burnt offering is the key to understanding the theme of my thesis. In examining this topic, I will deal with the relationship between the whole burnt offering and the greatest commandment. Then I will discuss the centrality of the worshiper’s heart, and how the concept of loving God in the whole burnt offering should be understood.

The עלה and the Greatest Commandment

The greatest commandment is taken from the word of Jesus (Matt 22:37–38; Mark 12:28–30). When the teacher of the law asks about the Greatest Commandment, Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment” (Matt 22:37–38). This is a quote from Deuteronomy 6:5. In Mark 12:28–30, it is obvious that Jesus quoted this from Deuteronomy 6 because Mark includes this phrase: “Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (cf. Deut 6:4–5). To love God with all one’s soul, mind, and heart to express love to God. To put it in another way, it is a human being’s love for God. In Deuteronomy, the word אהב is used (Deut 6:5), and this word cannot be found in Leviticus 1 because this chapter describes the ritual rather than serving as a commentary on rituals. James Watts said that it is written in a ‘convention,’ that everyone

¹⁶² Selman, “Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East,” 101.

already knew its meaning and accepted it.¹⁶³ The expression of love to God, therefore, in the *עלה* can be found in the actual performance of this rite and in the people's understanding, especially in how they express love to God in their daily lives. I would like to give a brief description of how Israel in the Old Testament expressed love to God.

Françoise Mirguet argues that the love expressed in Biblical Hebrew and modern conceptions of human experience are not identical. Miguet continues to argue that the command to love God is expressed and interpreted as covenantal love which calls for loyalty to the divinity and includes obedience to the commandments.¹⁶⁴ Mirguet's argument implies that the expression of love offered by the people of Israel implies an expression of loyalty to God and obedience to his commandments. Most scholars agree that the *עלה* serves as an expression of loyalty and homage to God. It is interesting that only *עלה*, out of five sacrifices, is allowed to the strangers in the land to offer (Lev 17:8; 22:18). Herman Schultz argues that this is a way of expressing reverence for God by strangers.¹⁶⁵ This indicates that the *עלה* is given as an expression of loyalty and love to God.

Daniel Day Williams discusses the difference between the divine love expressed in the people of Israel and the love expressed to God by the people of Israel. He argues that faith and love are connected in relationship with God. Williams writes, "...from the beginnings of the Hebraic faith human passion was always taken up into a fully personalized relationship where feeling, emotional desire and fulfillment were not rejected, but where their meaning was found in

¹⁶³ Watts, "ʿĪlāh: The Rhetoric of Burnt Offerings," 63–67.

¹⁶⁴ Françoise Mirguet, "What Is an 'Emotion' in the Hebrew Bible?" *Biblical Interpretation* 24, no. 4/5 (August 2016): 442–65. doi:10.1163/15685152-02445P02

¹⁶⁵ Hermann Schultz, "The Significance of Sacrifice in the Old Testament." *The American Journal of Theology* 4, no. 2 (1900): 257-313.

a personal order which absorbed them into a larger pattern of devotion and loyalty.”¹⁶⁶ The expression of human’s love is in showing loyalty to God. William argues that God expresses divine love is in His concern for and care for His people, as we see, especially in the covenant. Human being expresses their love for God, in their faithfulness to the covenant. Besides, as William argues, what God really requires in the sacrifice is love, and faithfulness—not the sacrifice itself. For Israel’s love is like the morning cloud, and the dew that disappears quickly (Hos 6:4, 6).¹⁶⁷

Williams is right in saying that love is what God looks for in the sacrifice. It is interesting that, in this verses (Hos 6:4, 6), both love and the whole burnt offering are found together. It could have been other sacrifices such as מנחה, שלמים, חטעה, or אשם. G. I. Davis argues that this so because burnt offerings were more costly offerings, the community or individual could offer.¹⁶⁸ The point here is that the more costly offering should be accepted by God; but, since it lost its meaningfulness (i.e., to give an offering in love and obedience), God does not accept it. H. D. Beery argues that the meaning of the prophetic word—that God desires ‘love and the knowledge of him’ rather than the whole burnt offering—is that the human needs to respond holistically, which is to say with all one’s heart, mind, and soul. This cannot be substituted by any others. Sacrifices and whole burnt offerings were to carry those meanings.¹⁶⁹ This indicates that the concept of love was embedded in the עלה.

¹⁶⁶ Daniel Day Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), <https://www.religion-online.org/book-chapter/chapter-2-love-in-the-biblical-tradition-the-hebrew-faith/>

¹⁶⁷ Daniel Day Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love*.

¹⁶⁸ Graham I. Davies, *Hosea: Based on the Revised Standard Version*, The New Century Bible Commentary (London: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 170.

¹⁶⁹ H. D. Beeby, *Grace Abounding: A Commentary on the Book of Hosea*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Handsel Press, 1989), 75–76.

Ishaya Mallo Makpu said that a human's love to God is something that depends on God's prior love, and a person responds to this love with thankfulness and gratitude for what God has done for him or her.¹⁷⁰ This idea can be found in the עֹלָה as well. The עֹלָה can be an expression of thanksgiving (Lev 22:18), to express gratitude for what the Lord has done.¹⁷¹ R. K. Harrison, argues that private sacrifices were offered to express thanksgiving and to have a renewed relationship with God.¹⁷² In the case of the sacrifice for ritual cleaning and for women in childbirth, it is arguable that they offered the עֹלָה, not because the עֹלָה heal them or cleanse them from uncleanness; rather, they offered this sacrifice because they were healed and cleaned. Allen P. Rose argues that in the case of Noah, the flood did not change human nature, nor did God change. Rather, it expressed people's faith and submission to God through sacrifice; God smelled the sweet odor, and He was pleased.¹⁷³ It is mostly the faith and love expressed in the sacrifice that matters.

Another connection between עֹלָה and love can be found in the process of cutting the victim into pieces and burning everything on the altar. Irene Nowell argues that the purpose of cutting the animal into pieces and of totally burning the sacrifice is to find God's favor and to have unity with Him, "to express one's total love of God."¹⁷⁴ The burning of everything in the עֹלָה indicates giving all to God. This is what James Watts calls 'a self-less devotion.'¹⁷⁵ The idea of self-less devotion is the key to understanding the voluntary aspect of the עֹלָה. Ephraim Radner

¹⁷⁰ Ishaya Mallo Makpu, "The Concept of Love in the Old Testament Salvation History: A Panacea for the 21st Century Development," *Continental J. Arts and Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2017): 28, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.822772>.

¹⁷¹ Bailey, *Leviticus*, 22.

¹⁷² Harrison, *Leviticus, an Introduction and Commentary*, 42. Harrison believes that the עֹלָה in Leviticus 1 is for personal sacrifice rather than for group because the subsequent description of day atonement (16:1–34) and the feast of holy season in 23:1–44.

¹⁷³ Ross, *Holiness to the Lord*, 76.

¹⁷⁴ Irene Nowell, "Sacrifice in the Book of Leviticus." *Bible Today* 54 (2) (2016): 81–87.

¹⁷⁵ Watts, "'Ölāh: The Rhetoric of Burnt Offerings," 72.

writes, “Love determines the nature of burning. So, the sweet aroma of the burnt offering (Lev 1:9, 13, 17) – of all offering – is made in the giving of self in love.”¹⁷⁶ George Davison also argues that the first communication that came out of the tabernacle was about sacrifice, which serves as a bridge for the distance between God and human beings. This indicates that God is offering a way to return home for his people in the delight of His heart of love.¹⁷⁷ What Davison argued for can be understood in this way: God has provided a way to be with Him by love and the offerer responded it with love by offering sacrifice, a gift in which everything is totally given to Him.

The Centrality of the Heart

The text of Leviticus 1 does not provide any theological explanation of the rite of the *עֹלָה*. It is purely an instruction on how to do a sacrifice. Besides, the words for ‘the centrality of the heart’ cannot be found in the text itself. Then, how can it be interpreted as expression of love and honor? Although the text does not provide the word of heart, there are hints which indicate the centrality of the heart in Leviticus 1. Timothy Willis argues that the phrase, ‘the acceptance of the Lord’ (1:4), indicates the centrality of the heart. Willis argues that, although the word *תָּמִים*, describes the physical state of the animal offered to God, the ultimate criteria is the spiritual state of the offerer.¹⁷⁸ Willis provides two possible interpretations: first, every animal produces the same odor to the LORD. Willis argues that three types of animals (from herds, flocks, and birds) produce the same sweet odor before the Lord (1: 9, 13, 17). Therefore, the size of the animal did not matter, but the sacrificial animal was totally connected with the one who brings it. The

¹⁷⁶ Radner, *Leviticus*, 45.

¹⁷⁷ George Davison, “The Burnt Offering: Leviticus 1,” n.d., 2, <https://biblecentre.org/content.php?mode=7&item=389>.

¹⁷⁸ Willis, *Leviticus*, 8–9.

second, it is the responsibility of the person bringing the animal to ensure the worthiness of the animal. Animals cannot make acceptable by themselves. The choice and the presentation of the animal is with the offerer. Ultimately, the spiritual or moral state of the heart of the offerer effects the sweet odor.¹⁷⁹

Nobuyoshi Kiuchi also argues that the heart of the offerer plays an important role in the עֲלֵה. Kiuchi said, “The central message of the offering [the עֲלֵה] is that a man cannot be accepted by the Lord without complete surrender and a laying bare of his egocentric nature before the Lord.”¹⁸⁰ Thus, to be accepted by the Lord, the offerer’s heart has to be holy. Further, Kiuchi affirms that the word תָּמִים does not imply moral perfection for the human person. While the word תָּמִים indicates the unblemished state of animal, Kiuchi argues that the same adjective was used to indicate the life of Noah and Abraham whose lives are not morally perfect or blameless (Gen 6:9, 17:1). Kiuchi affirms that the word תָּמִים would more likely refer to the offerer’s heart, ‘the perfect sincerity’ or ‘wholeheartedness.’¹⁸¹ Besides, Kiuchi also argues that the act of burning demonstrates the extinction of the uncleanness in the offerer’s heart. Kiuchi writes, “The last act, burning the offering on the altar, including the head and fat, symbolizes the extinction of the offerer's worldly values (cf. Gen 37:23; Ezek 16:39; 23:26; Hos 2:5; Mic 3:3), which simultaneously functions as a soothing aroma to the Lord. It is clear that the Lord abhors what is in the heart of the offerer.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Willis, 9.

¹⁸⁰ Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, 60.

¹⁸¹ Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, 55.

¹⁸² Kiuchi, 58.

Saya Lee gives three reasons for why the עֹלָה is the most important and representative sacrifice in the Old Testament.¹⁸³ And one of the points is the centrality of the heart of the offerer. Lee writes, “The worshiper is more important than the offering. The rich devote a cattle, the middle class devotes a sheep or goat, while the poor devotes birds. The value of birds is never lighter than a cattle, sheep, or goat. The important thing is the heart of the giver. Rather than offering with a stingy heart, it is more important to give with a volunteering heart and gratitude.”¹⁸⁴ Lee provides another point for the centrality of the heart in the עֹלָה. Lee argues that in the offering of birds the victim was torn from its body to its wings, but it was not torn apart. This made the offering look bigger. This indicates the heart of the offerer, to offer God something even bigger and better.¹⁸⁵

The centrality of the heart in the עֹלָה is well expressed in the actual performing of the sacrifices rather in the instruction itself. In the case of King Saul, it is clearly said that the purpose of God’s accepting the עֹלָה was based on the obedience of the offerer, not the sacrifice itself (1 Sam 15:22). This idea is expressed in the Psalms and the writings of the prophets. In the Psalms, the עֹלָה can be found in different contexts. Among Psalms, these verses 51:16, 19 demonstrate the importance of the heart of the offerer. Nigel B. Courtman argues that Psalm 51 indicates that a true self-offering in repentance and thanksgiving is more important than an actual physical act of sacrifice.¹⁸⁶ In the writings of the prophets, the most critical comment the prophet made about the sacrifice is the lack of the offerer’s the heart and the obedience to the law (Isa

¹⁸³ Saya Lee, “A Reconsideration on the Sacrifices of the Old Testament: Focusing on the Burnt Offering,” *Neo-natural Volatiles & Essential Oils Journal*, 2021, 899. The three points are 1) the importance of the centrality of the heart. 2) the burnt offering must be intact and complete. 3) All services should be joined together by the priest and the congregation.

¹⁸⁴ Lee, “A Reconsideration on the Sacrifices of the Old Testament: Focusing on the Burnt Offering,” 899.

¹⁸⁵ Lee, 891.

¹⁸⁶ Nigel B. Courtman, “Sacrifice in the Psalms,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Robert T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 52.

1:11–15; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6–8). Ernest C. Lucas argues that the prophets did not reject the materials of the sacrifices, rather they put an emphasis on the relationship between God and Israel. The sacrifice, which expresses a homage and gift to God, should be expressed in daily life through obedience. The Lord was looking at the life of the person who offered, not the sacrifice itself.¹⁸⁷

The centrality of the heart can also be found in the aspect of holiness. Allen P. Ross notes that the main subject of the book of Leviticus is the holiness of God, although it does not start with that, the idea is assumed in every institution of the rituals. And the ritual of the *עלה* reveals that one cannot approach the holy God without holiness. The sacrifice atones for the sin offerer and makes the offerer holy and acceptable to the Lord.¹⁸⁸ Ming Him Ko views the *עלה* from the perspective of parties in China where Chinese people give gifts and wishes to their loved ones. He said, “The Holy One receives holy (or complete) gifts from holy persons.”¹⁸⁹ The question to be considered is, ‘does God require the holiness of animal or the holiness of a person?’ One thing is for sure: God does not need a relationship with the animal. Nowhere in the scripture does it say that God longs for a relationship with the animal. It is always with human beings. And the holiness required in the *עלה* is not simply the physical state the offerer, but also the mind and the heart, which builds a relationship between God and the offerer.

Alfred Marx agrees that what God wants in a sacrifice is to build a relationship with Him. Marx argues that the word *קרב* *hip'il* indicates the purpose of the *עלה*, which is to establish a relationship with the Lord by means of sacrifice. The word emphasizes the presentation of the

¹⁸⁷ Ernest C. Lucas, “Sacrifice in the Prophets,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Robert T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 70–72.

¹⁸⁸ Ross, *Holiness to the Lord*, 44–45, 86.

¹⁸⁹ Ko, *Leviticus*, 21.

Lord and, therefore, suggests the idea of nearness.¹⁹⁰ The centrality of the heart is expressed in the relational aspect of the *עלה*. As Ross has argued, the need of holiness of the offerer demonstrates the need of a relationship with the holy God. In the text, the centrality of the heart can be found in verse 4, especially in the expression *ונרצה לו*, which is translated as ‘it will be accepted on behalf of him.’ The word *רצון* in this verse refers to divine acceptance. R. K. Harrison argues that the word indicates the priestly pronouncement that the atonement has been made, and the offerer, therefore, is free to approach God as a holy person. Harrison interprets this in the light of Paul’s teaching on being a living sacrifice, where Paul emphasizes being holy and acceptable to God (Rom 12:1 – 2).¹⁹¹

In summary, the *עלה* was offered as a gift to God that expressed love and honor. This calls for the importance of the heart of the offerer. It is God who expresses love to the people first. Cornelis Van Dam argues that the main reason for all sacrifices is because God wanted to live with His people.¹⁹² The desire to have a relationship indicates the love of God. This is hard to find in the immediate text because the text emphasizes prescription more than explanation. However, we find plenty of evidence that God looks at the heart, not on the sacrifice itself. Examples can be found in the Psalms and the writings of the prophets. In the text, the divine acceptance indicates the heart of the offerer. God does not accept the animal alone,¹⁹³ God accepts the offerer. The *עלה* serves as an aroma to the Lord. God does not accept the ritual alone;

¹⁹⁰ Alfred Marx, “The Theology of the Sacrifice According to Leviticus 1-7,” in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*, ed. Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kugler (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 111–12.

¹⁹¹ Harrison, *Leviticus, an Introduction and Commentary*, 45.

¹⁹² Cornelis Van Dam, “The Origin and Character of Sacrifice in Scripture.” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 7 (January 1991): 3–16.

¹⁹³ Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, 62. Kiuchi argues that the identification of the animal with the offerer indicates the heart of the offerer. Kiuchi trying to explain that when God accept, it is not only about the sacrifice.

God accepts the offerer along with his offering. This is because the עלה in Leviticus 1 is not offered as a mandatory, but as a voluntary one.¹⁹⁴

The Concept of Loving God in the עלה

The concept of loving God in the עלה can be found in the attitude of the offerer to the offering. To put it in another way, the concept of love is found in the concept of ‘cost’. This is found in 2 Samuel 24:24, ‘But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So, David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them’ (NIV). This indicates King David’s heart of love for God. Gary Garner said that for King David, the sacrifice that does not cost him is not a sacrifice at all. To be worthy of the Lord, the sacrificial animal must be not only be blameless but also costly for offerer. The case of David indicates the love and honor David had for the Lord as he took the sacrifice seriously.¹⁹⁵

Alexi E. George also argues that the sacrifice made by the offerer was never cheap, rather it costs something for the offerer. Being valuable and costly makes the sacrifice worthy enough for the Lord to accept the offering. George argues from Asian perspective that animals are expensive and costly to the offerer. Even the birds (Lev 1:14–17), since they were domestic animals¹⁹⁶, they are costly, to be precise, it cost more than putting a cion in the offering. This expresses the supreme value of relationship between God and the offerer.¹⁹⁷ This may be the reason why wild animals were never brought to the Lord. John E. Hartley also agrees that the

¹⁹⁴ Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 50.

¹⁹⁵ Gary Garner, “Attitudes to Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Accounting for the Differences,” 2003, 10, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.569.710&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

¹⁹⁶ Alexi E. George, *Leviticus: South Asia Bible Commentary*, 135–70. George argues that birds in ancient times are like chickens today. Domestic animals were part of agriculture in the nation of Israel.

¹⁹⁷ Alexi E. George, *Leviticus: South Asia Bible Commentary*, 135–70.

sacrifice costs the offerer. He argues that the sacrifice is a costly gift which is taken from the shepherd's property or a farmer's wealth, and when the offerer makes this offering, it is with faith and trust that the Lord would meet the offerer's need.¹⁹⁸ The idea of cost is here vividly expressed. H. H. Rowley argues that the purpose of the *עלה* originally expresses the idea of showing homage whereas the costly gift is given to God. Rowley argues that costly gift helps to win the favor of God.¹⁹⁹ It is difficult to present a valuable gift to one we do not love or respect. To win one's favor results from the offerer's love and reverence.

The concept of loving God can also be found in obedience to the Lord. Daniel Day William affirms that what God wants from human beings is obedience to the moral requirements which God has established as laws.²⁰⁰ Philip J. Budd affirms that Leviticus 1 is giving a law for sacrifice, and the tent meeting is a place where laws are given and received.²⁰¹ By following exactly what is said, the offerer is showing his complete obedience to God. The description of unacceptable animals listed in Leviticus 22:17–25 indicates the failure to bring the sacrificial animals listed in Leviticus 1. One of the accusations of the prophet Malachi about God's not accepting the sacrifice concerns the sacrificial animals' physical disabilities which indicates that the offerors were careless and disobedient to what God has said (Mal 1:6–14).

By obeying what God has commanded, the offerer fulfilled everything, and therefore the sacrifice was accepted by God as a sweet odor. To obey is better than sacrifice indicates that the offering is only accepted when it is done according to what God had told them to do. Françoise Mirguet said that to love God implies loyalty to God and obedience to his commandments.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 24.

¹⁹⁹ H. H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Forms and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 120.

²⁰⁰ Daniel Day Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love*.

²⁰¹ Budd, *Leviticus*, 45.

²⁰² Françoise Mirguet, "What Is an 'Emotion' in the Hebrew Bible?" *Biblical Interpretation*.

Joshua also said that to love God is to obey his commands and to serve Him with all heart and soul (Josh 22:5). And it is clearly stated that those who do not bring the עֵלֶה to the tent Meeting must be cut off from his people (Lev 17:8–9). This indicates that following regulation, obedience to what God says, plays crucial in the עֵלֶה. Those who love the Lord follow and obey what He commands.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE עֹלָה AND TODAY'S CHRISTIANITY

In this chapter, I will explore the continuing significance of the עֹלָה in the New Testament and for today's churches. Further, I will discuss how the עֹלָה is seen in the New Testament, and how the sacrifice is taught in the New Testament. Then I will also discuss how today's believer should understand the עֹלָה, and what significance we can draw out from it for our daily lives.

The עֹלָה and The New Testament

The New Testament does not provide much information or explanation about the עֹלָה. The עֹלָה is mentioned directly twice in the New Testament (Mark 12:33, Heb 10:6–8) where both paraphrase quotations from the Old Testament. There are other passages which indicate the עֹלָה even though the עֹלָה is not explicitly mentioned (Luke 2:24, cf. Lev 12:6; Luke 17:14; cf. Lev 14:2ff.; Acts 21:26; cf. Num 6:14).²⁰³ The New Testament writers do not put an emphasis on the meaning of the עֹלָה because the sacrifice had permeated the life of the Israel, and it was well understood by the people that they do not need to repeat it again. Besides, the sacrificial death of Christ made the perfect sacrifice that New Testament believers were not required. Furthermore, the literal sacrifices of Pentateuchal Law were still being practicing in the time of the NT and continued until the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.²⁰⁴

How the people in the NT understood the עֹלָה can be found in the question of the teacher the law in Mark 12:33. This is the only passage in NT in which the whole burnt offering and the greatest commandment are seen together. Matthew and Luke do not provide the עֹלָה and other

²⁰³ Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 63.

²⁰⁴ Robert T. Beckwith, "Sacrifice in the World of New Testament," in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Robert T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 107.

sacrifices. The phrase, ‘is more important than’ signifies the meaning of the עלה. Jesus confirms that it was the true meaning of the עלה and other sacrifices.²⁰⁵ The עלה should be understood in the light of expressing love, obedience, and loyalty to God, and showing mercy to the people. Kent Brower believes that this echoes scriptures from the Old Testament which describe the significance of obedience (1 Sam 15:22, Jer 7:22–23), seeking justice (Isa 1:10–17), and love (Hosea 6:6).²⁰⁶ Further, Grant R. Osborne argues that Mark 12:33 is the Christian Shema and that the description of the Christian Shema as being more important than the עלה and the other sacrifices in the OT indicates that the “sacrifices are essential, but the sacrifices of the heart are even more so.”²⁰⁷

It may be understood that in the NT period, believers may have captured the meaning of the עלה as involving more of an importance to the heart, rather than the actual performing of the sacrifice. One of the reasons for this insight is that Christ’s death fulfilled the meaning of the עלה. Alex Deasley quotes I. H. Dalferth, “Although sacrificial language is neither frequent nor prominent in most of the New Testament writings, the whole of the New Testament is permeated by sacrificial thought and symbolism.”²⁰⁸ Wenham said that the passages in NT do not try to talk about the importance of the whole burnt offering in the NT theology, rather they describe the self-sacrifice of Christ on the cross.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ “When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely” indicates that the answer satisfied Jesus (Mark 12:34). Jesus comment that ‘you are not far from the kingdom of God’ follows right after this. This comment can be compared to Jesus’ answer to the young man in 10: 17–22. There the comment of Jesus was totally different from the comment here in 12:34 (cf. 10:24–25).

²⁰⁶ K. E. Brower, *Mark*, New Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2012), 318.

²⁰⁷ Grant R. Osborne, *Mark*, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 220.

²⁰⁸ Deasley, “Holy Sacrifice,” 4.

²⁰⁹ Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, 64.

The Four Gospels unitedly describe the importance and necessity of the death of Jesus and view it as the sacrifice of the New Covenant.²¹⁰ The idea of sacrifice, especially the עלה, is viewed in light of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. John E. Hartley writes:

While much of the language of the NT about the sacrificial death of Christ is general making it hard to make connection with the specific sacrifices of the OT cultic legislation, the death of Christ may be compared to a whole burnt offering. Like the animal required of this offering, he was a male, without defect (1 Pet 1:18–19). Having lived in complete obedience to God, he was blameless. For this reason, his sacrifice was far superior to any of the offerings presented under the old covenant (Heb 9:23–26). On the altar of the cross Christ gave himself up entirely to God his Father (Rom 8:32). Like a whole offering Christ death was a 'soothing aroma' to God (Eph 5:2).²¹¹

The language of Paul conveys the idea of the עלה in some of his letters. Paul's encouragement of the believers concerning sacrifice sheds light on the עלה in Leviticus 1 (Rom 12:1–2). The ideas of a holy, pleasing, and acceptable sacrifices are found in this verse. R. K. Harrison affirms that Paul was urging the believers to live a life that is acceptable to God.²¹² Hartley believes that when Paul talks about the living sacrifice, he had the עלה in mind. Hartley compares the entire burning of the עלה and the believers' presentation of his whole life to the requirements of being holy and free from defect and being a pleasing aroma to God.²¹³ Ephraim Radner argues that Paul's writing about love in 1 Corinthians 13 alludes to the idea of the עלה in Leviticus 1. Paul wrote, "If I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing," (1 Cor 13:3). Love determines the nature of burning. The עלה is made a sweet odor of the self in love, first in Christ

²¹⁰ Peter M. Head, "The Self-Offering and Death of Christ as Sacrifice in the Gospels and the Acts the Apostles," in *Sacrifice in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 123–24.

²¹¹ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 25.

²¹² Harrison, *Leviticus, an Introduction and Commentary*, 45.

²¹³ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 25.

to those who live in the Son's offering. And the believers are urged to live in love, as Christ loved us, and give himself as the fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God (Eph 5:2).²¹⁴

Another issue that is discussed in the NT concerning the *עלה* is the sacrifice of Abraham. Hebrews 11:17–19 describes the sacrifice of Abraham as faith. Much of the discussion about this revolves around Abraham's willingness to offer his beloved son to God as a whole burnt offering. The first Christians connects the importance of the self-willingness the offerer both to Abraham's sacrifice and to the self-sacrifice of Christ.²¹⁵ This indicates how the NT period understands the *עלה* in light of Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross. Since the death of Christ supersede the *עלה*, the sacrifice made once for all (Heb 10:10), the believer in NT times does not need to bring animals for sacrifice any more.

The *עלה* and Today's Churches

The actual performance of sacrifice was never important for Christians. The first generation of Christians participated in the sacrificial system because they maintained their identity as Jews. But there is no place in the NT that mentions that Gentile Christians participated in Jewish sacrifices. And the destruction of the temple in AD 70 led to the end of the sacrificial system. Thus, these questions can be raised: If the sacrificial system is obsolete, why does the scripture still have the instructions of the sacrificial system, and why should we study it? What are the facts or principles that can be drawn from the sacrifices, especially the *עלה*? Alex George, quoting scripture, argues that Jesus has not come to abolish the law, rather he comes to fulfill it (Matt 5:17). George argues, therefore, that the principles behind the sacrifices are still applicable to today's churches. He argues that the *עלה* was offered by the Israelite to

²¹⁴ Radner, *Leviticus*, 45.

²¹⁵ Beckwith, "Sacrifice in the World of New Testament," 107–9.

express their commitment to God and his laws, their devotion to Him and their desire to be in the presence of the Lord.²¹⁶

Obed Lewi Yusuf and Nathan Chiroma argue that Christ has already fulfilled the law of sacrifice, and the NT writers, especially in the Epistles, set aside the actual offering of animal sacrifices. Thus, the principles behind the Levitical sacrifice can be applied in today's churches. Yusuf and Chiroma argue that principles can be found in the book of Hebrews that the Levitical sacrificial system is "...avail to temporary means of relating to God and receiving the forgiveness of sin pending the ultimate sacrifice by Jesus which will offer ultimate salvation from sin."²¹⁷ The point they make is that the Levitical sacrificial system is part of divine inspiration, and therefore useful for teaching Christians the value of the sacrifice Jesus made.²¹⁸ The same principle is applied to the עלה as well. Although it's former actual practice is no longer applied now, the principle behind the sacrifice remains.

E. Reim also provides another explanation of the significance of the עלה for Christians. Reim argues that the עלה, as one of the blood sacrifices in the OT, served as a voluntary expression of love and reverence of a Covenant People to their God. It can be seen in the light of a true worship as mentioned in John 4:24. Since the עלה also expresses the total dependence of the human being to his or her Maker, it is a way of worshipping God in spirit and in truth. It is worshipping God with a life that is holy and acceptable to Him (Rom 12:1), giving God a sacrifice of praise, the fruits of one's lips, continuously which pleases Him (Heb 13:15f.).²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Alex George, "Leviticus," in *South Asia Bible Commentary* (Rajasthan: Open Doors Publications, 2015), 141.

²¹⁷ Obed Lewi Yusuf and Nathan Chiroma, "Sacrifices in Leviticus (1-8) and Its Contextual Relevance for the Christian Community," *Journal Advanced Education and Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2021): 15.

²¹⁸ Yusuf and Chiroma, 15.

²¹⁹ Edmund C. Reim, "The Blood Sacrifices of the Old Testament," 2015, 5, <http://essays.wisluthsem.org:8080/handle/123456789/3978>.

David M. Levy provides an interpretation of the עלה for Christianity today. He describes the bringing of the offering (קרבן) which means ‘brought near,’ as indicating that the offerer acknowledges God and desires to follow Him in complete consecration through obedience to His will. The same is true for believers today, since they are urged to offer their life voluntarily to the Lord’s service. Levy continues that the voluntary nature of the עלה speaks of Jesus’ willingness to leave the glories of heaven and chose to come to us (Phil 2:5–8; Heb 10:5–7). The identification of the animal is a picture of the believers’ identification with Christ, while the washing of the animal’s organs and legs symbolizes the inward and outward cleansing of the sacrifice, which presents a dual picture of the walk of the Christ and the believers. The sweet odor speaks of the Christian as being an aroma which pleases God. Paul speaks of Christ’s works as a sweet aroma (Eph. 5:2), in which Paul refers to Christ’s voluntary obedience to the will of His Father. Similarly, the life and testimonies of believers are a sweet aroma to God (2 Cor 2:15–16).²²⁰

Allen P. Ross argues that the ongoing significance of the עלה was the maintenance of the relationship with God. Through the עלה, the Israelites were having relationship with God. Ross said that for Christian the עלה carries a greater theological significance; the *typology* in the sacrifice points to Jesus Christ. In ancient Israel, faith was expressed by sacrifice. In today’s church, a believer is “someone who has appropriated the sacrifice of Christ by faith and is therefore said to be in Christ.”²²¹ What Ross tries to point out is that through Christ, the believer

²²⁰ David M. Levy, *The Tabernacle: Shadows of the Messiah: Its Sacrifices, Services, and Priesthood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2003), 101–5.

²²¹ Ross, *Holiness to the Lord*, 96.

becomes accepted by God. And this is the eternal plan of God, first revealed in the עלה and later fulfilled in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.²²²

Mitchel Modine provides an explanation of the עלה in today's context by saying that the daily devotion and prayer for the protestant may be understood in the light of the עלה since the daily connection with God remains important in today's Christianity.²²³ The idea of offering lips as sacrificed is found in Hosea 14:2, and in the NT the offering of praise and the fruits of one's lips are mentioned in Hebrews 13:15. And in Revelation 8:4, the prayers of the saints together with the smoke of incense went up to God. This demonstrates that the offering made by Israel to God can be understood in light of prayer offered to God today. Though Mitchel Modine's interpretation is based on the עלה תמיד which is found in Number 28:1–8, the function of the עלה as procuring divine acceptance, and being a sweet odor sacrifice, indicate that the voluntary aspect can also be interpreted in a similar way.

However, there is a slight difference between the voluntary עלה and the daily עלה תמיד. While the עלה תמיד requires a time schedule, the voluntary offering is not limited to time and schedule. The sizes of the animal did not matter to the sacrifice. Rather, the sacrifice is a sweet odor that pleases God. John Wesley understands the word 'sweet aroma' as an expression of the two great commandments.²²⁴ The voluntary aspect of the עלה expresses one's love for God with all one's heart, mind, and soul because the offerer did not expect anything back from God. The offerer gave everything to God without any specific purpose, such as to gain good health, wealth, or forgiveness of sin. It was offered out of love, obedience, and reverence. As believers today, who do not need to bring animals and offer sacrifice, our sacrifice can be the act of giving our

²²² Ross, 96–96.

²²³ Mitchel Modine, *Numbers* (Carlisle, U.K.: Langham Global Library, 2018), 148.

²²⁴ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, 1:347.

life totally to Christ and living a life that pleases God. Jesus said, “In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples” (Luke 14:33, NIV). This cannot be done without love and faith. The greatest gift that God has given is His Son; the greatest gift we can give back to God is loving Him with all our hearts, minds, and soul. John E. Hartley writes, “Although NT believer no longer brings animal sacrifice at the Temple, the worship of God through Christ requires complete devotion as did the worship of Yahweh. The OT believer expressed his devotion and trust by making sacrifices from his herd. The NT believer, a priest, must also spontaneously express his love and trust in God.”²²⁵

²²⁵ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 25.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The עֹלָה in Leviticus 1 may be seen differently from the daily עֹלָה, the Sabbath עֹלָה, and the festival עֹלָה because of its emphasis on the voluntary aspect. The voluntary offering does not call for a reason to offer a sacrifice nor does it make a schedule for the offering. It can be presented as the offerer's heart. The עֹלָה is called the קָרְבַּן which indicates that this sacrifice is brought as gift to the deity with the purpose of being near to God. The choice of the animal reflects that the offering is to be accepted by God. Divine acceptance plays an important role in the עֹלָה because this indicates the offerer's acceptance to the Lord and the purpose of the sacrifice. The offering is accepted as the sweet odor to the Lord when it is given out of love and reverence.

This voluntary aspect of the sacrifice makes the עֹלָה different from other sacrifices which were offered to gain divine blessing in return. The voluntary aspect of the עֹלָה can be found in its center in the heart of the offerer. This is expressed by the desire of the offerer to present a costly offering rather than a cheap offering. The offering does cost the offerer. Through the prophets, God was telling the people that the sacrifice must be offered in love. This indicates how God wants the people of Israel to see sacrifices and offerings. Israel expressed their love to God by obeying what the God has commanded. Faith and obedience were how the Israelites expressed their love to God. Robert L. Deffinbaugh said that the faith and obedience that the Israelites

expressed through sacrifice and offering is the same faith and obedience that Jesus asks of today's Christians.¹

By the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross, believers are made holy and acceptable before God. Christ's death is a sacrifice made for all; all the sacrifices are fulfilled in Christ. There is, however, an ongoing aspect that can be drawn out from the עֹלָה. The עֹלָה helps us to understand the self-willingness of Christ to sacrifice himself for us all. As the עֹלָה is offered as an expression of love and honor, not expecting any return from God, it shows that our worship of God should be based on love and honor, rather than hoping for blessings. As the עֹלָה is burnt totally before God, Jesus asks us to give up everything for Him (Luke 14:33). This, giving of all, is regarded as the greatest gift we can give to God (cf. Mark 12:41–44).

Recommendations

For further study, I found that research into the relational aspect of the עֹלָה, especially in its expression of love to one's neighbor, needs to be researched. Walter Bruggeman argues that the rituals are centered on the relationship with God, but the expression of that relationship is lived out in relationship with one's neighbor. He argues that a vertical relationship with God and a horizontal relationship with one's neighbors need to exist in harmony.² As Israelites live as a community, research into the relational aspect of the עֹלָה, which is 'the עֹלָה as an expression of the second Greatest Commandment,' still needs to be done.

¹ Robert L. Deffinbaugh, "2. The Law of Burnt Offerings (Leviticus 1:1–17)." 2. The Law of Burnt Offerings (Leviticus 1:1–17) | Bible.org. Accessed October 19, 2020. <https://bible.org/seriespage/law-burnt-offerings-leviticus-11-17>.

² Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 214.

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