

1. Purity and impurity in Lev 1-16, continued

a. Clean and unclean animals in Lev 11

Guidelines for eating animals [= kashrut laws]

Land animals (created on 6th day)

11:2-3, Land animals for consumption: “Any animal that [1] has divided hoofs and [2] is cleft-footed and chews the cud”

11:4-6, Examples of #2 and not #1: camel, rock badger, hare

11:7, Examples of #1 and not #2: pig

11:8, These should not be eaten, and their carcasses should not be touched: “they are unclean for you.”

Water animals (created on 5th day)

11:9-12, Water animals for consumption: “Everything in the waters that has [1] fins and [2] scales, whether in the seas or in the streams.”

11:10-12, Water animals not for consumption: “But anything in the seas or the streams that does not have fins and scales.

11:11-12: These should not be eaten, and their carcasses should not be touched: “they are detestable to you”

Air animals (created on 5th day)

11:13-19, Examples of detestable birds: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, the buzzard, the kite of any kind; every raven of any kind; the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind; the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, the water hen, the desert owl, the carrion vulture, the stork, the heron of any kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

11:20, Insects not for consumption: “All winged insects that walk upon all fours are detestable to you.”

11:21, Insects for consumption: “But among the winged insects that walk on all fours you may eat those that have jointed legs above their feet, with which to leap on the ground.”

11:22, Examples of insects for consumption: the locust according to its kind, the bald locust according to its kind, the cricket according to its kind, and the grasshopper according to its kind.

11:23, Repetition of rules about insects not for consumption

11:26-43: Guidelines for touching animals

11:26: Land animals not fit for eating also convey impurity through touch.

11:27: Carcasses of animals that walk on paws are unclean

11:28: What happens if one touches one: wash clothes, and impurity will last only until evening.

11:29-31, Unclean swarming creatures: the weasel, the mouse, the great lizard according to its kind, the gecko, the land crocodile, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon.

What to do if something touches the carcass of an unclean swarming animal:

32: If carcass falls on something (wood or cloth or skin or sacking or so on), the thing can be dipped in water and will be unclean only until the evening, when it will be clean.

33: If carcass falls into an earthen vessel, the vessel should be broken.

34a, water from vessel conveys impurity to other foods

34b, liquid from vessel is not for drinking

35, If part of the carcass falls on something (oven, stove, etc.), it shall be broken in pieces.

36, If part of the carcass falls into a spring or cistern holding water, spring/cistern is clean, but whatever touches the carcass therein is unclean.

37, If part of their carcass falls upon seed set aside for sowing, it is clean;

38, If water is put on the seed and any part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean.

11:39-40, Addendum: what about carcasses of animals fit for consumption? If one touches it, wash clothes, and impurity will last only until evening.

11:41-43, Addendum: what about eating swarming creatures? All creatures that swarm upon the earth are detestable; they shall not be eaten.

11:44-47: Reason for these rules: For I am the LORD your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy... I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall be holy, for I am holy. This is the law pertaining to land animal and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms upon the earth, To make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.

b. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) in Lev 16

Account framed in terms of God speaking to Moses “after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died.” Aaron instructed not to come into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle whenever he wishes “or he will die; for I appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.” Entry on one day only = Yom Kippur (10th day of 7th month)

Priestly duties on Yom Kippur

- Purpose, according to Lev 16:32-34: “The priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the linen vestments, the holy vestments. He shall make atonement for the sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the people of Israel once in the year for all their sins.”
- High priest takes bull + two goats = Lots cast, “one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel.” Bull and goat for the Lord sacrificed within sanctuary, while other goat remains alive.

Sacrifices:

- Yom Kippur as yearly re-consecration of sanctuary: The sacrifice of the bull and the goat for the Lord serve to cleanse the Tabernacle/Temple by atoning for the high priest, priesthood, and people.
- The bull is sacrificed as a sin offering for the high priest, to make atonement for “himself and for his house.” Unlike other sacrifices he goes “inside the curtain” (i.e., in the Holy of Holies) and sprinkles blood from this sacrifice on the mercy seat (= lid of ark of the covenant, which contains the tablets of the Law).
- The goat for the Lord is sacrificed as a sin offering for the people and its blood is similarly sprinkled.
- Because the Holy of Holies is the most sacred of sacred spaces, the high priest's entry requires specific preparations: purification offering, wearing holy vestments (holy linen tunic, linen undergarments next to his body, linen sash fastened, and linen turban), having bathed. Exit from sacred space also requires specific preparations: after high priest leaves Holy of Holies, he must take off linen vestments and leave them there; bathe in water in a holy place; put on vestments.
- Contact with this level of sanctity is dangerous: “he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the covenant, or he will die.” (16:13-14).

Scapegoat:

- The other goat (= scapegoat) is then sent out into the wilderness alive for atonement: “Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and sending it away into the wilderness by means of someone designated for the task. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.”
- The “wilderness” stands in symbolic contrast to the sacred space of the camp (=Israel). Hence, the one who sets goat free must wash before coming into the camp. Likewise, what remains after the sacrifice of the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering (i.e., the one for the Lord, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place), is taken outside the camp and consumed in fire. The one who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward may come into the camp.

Israel's duties on Yom Kipper:

- To deny themselves and do no work.
- Purpose, according to Lev 16:30-31, “For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD. It is a Sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall deny yourselves; it is a statute forever.”

2. Lev 17-26 = Holiness Code

Whereas Lev 1-16 is framed as instructions for priests, Lev 17-26 is framed as instructions to the people.

17: Slaughter of animals

- Israelite slaughter of animals outside of sacrificial system = bloodshed. Proper slaughter of animals means the blood and fat are given to God.
- No eating of blood whatsoever: “If anyone of the house of Israel or of the aliens who reside among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood, and will cut that person off from the people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement... For the life of every creature--its blood is its life.” While hunting animals to be eaten, their blood should be poured on the earth and covered with earth.
- Accordingly, impurity incurred by eating carrion or animals torn by wild animals (those who eat much wash their clothes, and bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the evening).

18: Forbidden sexual relations

- Framed as separation, i.e., not doing “as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived” and “as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you.”
- Acts forbidden = Incest; sex during menstruation; adultery; male homosexuality; bestiality; possibly masturbation (giving one’s seed to Moloch).
- Moral impurity: these acts defile the land. The alleged Canaanite practice of them is cited as an example of what happens when the land is defiled: “I punished it for its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.”

19: Living a holy life

- Ethical, legal, practical, cultic all intertwined = e.g., proper sacrifice (eaten on same day as offered); leaving extras of the harvest for the poor; no stealing or lying or cheating; no reviling of deaf or blind; no unjust legal judgment (whether partiality to the poor or favoritism to the rich); no slander; no hate or vengeance or grudges “but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”
- Also: no mixing of different kinds; guilt incurred by a man’s sexual relations with a slave woman; setting agricultural cycle (no picking fruits every year); no magic or divination; no self-inflicted wounds or tattoos; respect for elders; no oppression of foreigners who live amongst them (“The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God”); honesty in business, etc., etc..

20: Penalties

- Death = giving seed to Moloch (child sacrifice), cursing their mother or father; adultery, incest, male homosexuality, bestiality (both parties in each case);
- Cut off from people = magic; sexual relations with step-siblings; sexual relations during menstruation
- Other: Punishment = sexual relations with uncle’s wife; Moral impurity = sexual relations with brother’s wife
- All cases cited above involve moral impurity: “You shall keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and observe them, so that the land to which I bring you to settle in may not vomit you out.”
- These commandments are connected to Israel’s status as separated for the sake and service of God: “You shall not follow the practices of the nation that I am driving out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. But I have said to you: You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the LORD your God; I have separated you from the peoples. You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; you shall not bring abomination on yourselves by animal or by bird or by anything with which the ground teems, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine.”

21-22: Instructions to priests

23: Sacred calendar

24: Miscellaneous priestly laws

25: Sabbatical year and year of jubilee

26: Blessings and curses

4. Lev 27: Religious Vows