

## CHAPTER NINE THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

Here the Jehovist and Deuteronomist go together, and stand diametrically opposed to Ezekiel and the Priest Code. And even within the limits of the Priest Code itself, an expansion of the ceremonial is traceable. Wellhausen makes substantially the following statements: —

1. According to the Jehovist and the Deuteronomist, sacrifices are a universal and extremely simple means of honoring the Deity, and conciliating his favor. They are pre-Mosaic, and along the line of Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Noah, go back to the beginnings of humanity, to Cain and Abel. The Elohist, on the other hand, represents the sacrificial worship as an immediate divine institution, characteristically Mosaic in origin.

2. With the Jehovist and in Deuteronomy the important question is, "To whom?" The Elohist emphasizes the questions, "When, where, and by whom?" In other words, the Jehovist has not, and the Elohist has, an elaborate program of ritual.

3. In the Jehovistic and Deuteronomic Codes, no other than burnt-offerings (*olah*) and peace- (or thank-) offerings (*shelem*, *zebah*, *zebah shelamim*) appear. Moreover, the *olah* constitutes no separate class for itself, but is simply the substitute in a large *zebah* (consisting of several animals) of a single whole victim for all the pieces of fat and the blood, otherwise offered to God, of each individual animal. Hence *olah* occurs almost always in connection with the *zebahim* in the singular number. That part of every *zebah* which came upon the altar (fat and blood) could appropriately be called *olah*. Still, Wellhausen admits that the term is never used in this sense, but always denotes a *olokauston*. In Ezekiel and the Priest Code the order is reversed, and *zebah* has become subordinate to the *olah*. The altar is called *mizbah-ha-olah* (the altar of burnt-offering). Two new kinds of sacrifices are added, — *chattath* (sin-offering) and *asham* (trespass-offering).

4. It is claimed that we have a gradual modification of the idea of sacrifice.

(a) The primitive conception is that of a meal in which the Deity is host, and the offerer a guest. Sacrifices are identical with sacrificial meals.

(b) Next comes the *shelem* (peace-offering) of the Priest Code with a reminiscence of the old custom, in so far as the sacrificial meal is retained. The modification consists in the giving of the breast and the right shoulder to the priest. This is a first restriction upon the conception of a meal.

(c) Then follows the *olah* (burnt-offering) of the Priest Code. Here also the priests have their part in the skin. The whole victim is burnt upon the altar, which still admits the conception of a one-sided meal, consumed by God alone.

(d) In the *chattath* (sin-offering) and *asham* (trespass-offering), even this is lost; since none of the flesh is brought upon the altar, but the whole eaten by the priests. All that could remind of a sacrificial meal, as flour, oil, wine, salt, is wanting; so that the last trace of the original idea is effaced.

5. As an example of modification within the limits of the Priest Code itself, stands the case of the offering of incense and altar of incense. The latter is unknown to the older parts of the Code, not mentioned among the utensils of the tabernacle, Exod. 25-29, but spoken of at the end, in a separate passage, evidently of later origin (30:1, etc.). The rite of the most solemn sin-offering, according to Exod. 29, Lev. 8 and 9, was not performed at this altar. On the Day of Atonement, Aaron offers incense, not on the altar, but in a censer before the mercy-seat within the veil. So also Lev. 10, Num. 16, 17. In all these chapters, the altar of burnt-offering is called *ha-mizbeah*, which precludes the existence of another altar. In the later sections of the Pentateuchal Code, the name *mizbah-ha-olah* appears; and these are exactly the passages which know the altar of incense. This whole idea of a golden altar was an after-development from that of the golden table of show-bread. Other points in which a development is traceable are mentioned by Wellhausen; e.g., the flour first used was  $\text{מִן הַמֶּלֶךְ}$  (*meal*), the Priest Code demands  $\text{מִן הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיָּרֵב}$  (*fine flour*). The old custom of boiling the meat gave place to roasting, – a refinement in the rite, of course, arising from a refinement of the eater's taste.

With reference to all these points, we would remark, –

1. If Deuteronomy lays so much stress on the centralization of the cultus, it would be naturally expected, provided this were the formative principle of the development, as Wellhausen claims, that a corresponding change would be noticeable in its sacrificial prescriptions. This, however, is not the case. We have Wellhausen's own confession that Deuteronomy falls in with the Jehovist on the whole line. This is a clear proof that the alleged discrepancies are not to be explained on the principle of development, but out of the peculiar aim of each Code in particular. In Deuteronomy, to say the least, we have positive proof that the two conceptions of sacrifice – that of a ceremonial act bound to a single place, and that of a joyful meal – are not exclusive, but mutually supplement each other.

2. The contrast that the Jehovistic legislation is only concerned with the question "to whom?" and the Priest Code exclusively emphasizes, "how, when, where, and by whom?" is by far too sharply drawn. We find with the Jehovist, provisions in the latter direction (Exod. 20:24-26, 23:18, 19). On the contrary, the Levitical law enforces principles which, according to the critics, are Jehovistic (e.g., Lev. 19:4, 5, 20:1-5).

3. That sacrifices were originally extremely simple in their ritual, and pre-Mosaic in their essential features, does not prove any thing against the Mosaic origin of the Priest Code. The Levitical law nowhere asserts that Moses for the first time instituted sacrifices: it simply states that the ritual system, as adapted to Israel's new position as God's Covenant-people, dates from the Mosaic period.

4. That the *olah* did not originally constitute a separate class of sacrifices for itself, requires stronger proof than Wellhausen has been able to produce. All that he shows, is that *olah* and *zebahim* were frequently combined. This, however, is also the case in the Priest Code. The impossibility of considering the *olah* as a subordinate part of the *zebah* is manifest; because the fat and blood of an individual *zebah* are never called *olah*, as Wellhausen is obliged to admit. The term is exclusively employed of whole-burnt offerings,  $\text{ολοκαυστα}$ . It is plain, then, that the specific difference lies not in the coming upon the altar: in other words, *olah* and *zebah* are *essentially* distinct.

5. It is true that in the Jehovistic Code, only burnt- and peace-offerings are mentioned (Exod. 20:24, 24:5). But, on the one hand, nothing can be inferred from two passages: on the other hand, as the Levitical Code had not yet been promulgated, the Covenant-law retained provisionally the older practice and *ritus*.

6. Concerning Wellhausen's denial of the actual existence of the altar of incense, we remark, —

(a) It cannot be maintained that Exod. 30:1-10 is out of place, and proves itself by this position a later appendix. The description of the utensils of the tabernacle began with the ark, and ended with the altar of incense; because both constituted, as it were, the two polar points of the sanctuary. Hence the altar is called **קֹדֶשׁ קֹדְשִׁים** (*Holy of holies*), in preference to the candlestick, and table of showbread.

(b) That the altar is not mentioned in connection with the most solemn rite described in Exod. 29 (consecration of the priests commanded), Lev. 8 (the same executed), and Lev. 9 (entrance of Aaron and his sons upon their actual service), need not surprise us when we remember, that in all these cases, the priests, while still undergoing the rite of consecration, are not treated as priests. Hence the prescription of Lev. 4, to put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of incense, did not apply here; because, *de facto*, Aaron was not a high-priest as long as the induction to his office lasted. Only for the sin-offering of the high-priest and the whole congregation, was the blood put upon the altar of incense (Lev. 4:22, *seqq.*).

(c) When, according to Lev. 16, Aaron on the Day of Atonement brought incense in a censer before the mercy-seat, we surely could not expect him to have carried the heavy altar within the veil. And that coals are taken from the altar of burnt-offering is equally natural. Even the fire for the daily offering of incense was taken from this altar. The only remaining difficulty is, that in chap. 16 only one altar is mentioned as being sprinkled with blood. "The altar that is before the LORD" seems to denote the *olah* altar. Universal tradition has referred it to the altar of incense; and so does Delitzsch (Luth. Zeitschr., 1880, iii. p. 118), who adds the remark, that the name is exclusively used of the golden altar in the holy place. The context, however, plainly contradicts this: from ver. 14-20 the order is the same as in the recapitulation of ver. 33. In the latter verse the altar cannot but designate the *olah* altar. Accordingly we must understand ver. 18 in the same sense. The chapter distinguishes throughout between (a) the holy place (here the Holy of holies), (b) the tabernacle of the congregation, (c) the altar that is before the LORD, which can only mean the altar in the court.

The true explanation why the altar of incense is not specially mentioned, is that it was included under the general term, "the tabernacle of the congregation," together with the candlestick and table of showbread. On the contrary, the *olah* altar is marked out, because it was the only thing in the court to be atoned for. The phrase "before the LORD" is evidently intended in a wider sense here, to denote that the altar of burnt-offering stood in front of the whole tabernacle, God's dwelling-place.

(d) Lev. 10 and Num. 16, 17, as extraordinary or unlawful transactions, do not come under consideration here.

(e) It is untrue that the name *ha-mizbeah*, applied to the *olah* altar, precludes the existence of another

altar. The former could be appropriately designated by that name, because it was the place of sacrifice, if not exclusively, yet *par excellence*.

(f) No more difficulty is created by the fact, that those sections of the Pentateuch which show acquaintance with the altar of incense, use the more definite name for the *olah* altar, whilst those which do not know the former, call the latter *ha-mizbeah*. The simple explanation is, that, in passages where both altars are referred to, a closer distinction was necessary to prevent confusion. In other passages, where only the *olah* altar was mentioned, this was superfluous, and the simple name *ha-mizbeah* was sufficient to indicate that the altar *par excellence* was meant.

(g) Wellhausen alleges that the idea of a golden altar is a mere development of that of the golden table of showbread, and finds confirmation for this theory in Ezek. 41:22. "The altar of wood," etc.; "this is the table that is before the Lord." The fact is, that in Ezekiel's sanctum, neither candlestick nor table of show-bread appears, — which once more proves how absurd it is, to draw from his Thora any inference as to the state of the ritual in his days. The statement in ver. 22 applies to nothing else than to the very altar whose existence Wellhausen denies. It is certainly more probable that the prophet called the altar a table, than the table an altar. The designation of the altar as a table is warranted by post-exilic usage. Furthermore, Ezekiel clearly distinguishes two altars in the temple (9:2).