

TZAV PARA

25th of 54 sedras;
2nd of 10 in Vayikra

Written on 169.8 lines in a Torah (38th)

8 Parshiyot - 7 open and 1 closed

97 p'sukim - 36th (3rd in Vayikra)
same as Sho'f'tim, which is a bit larger

Sources say that TZAV has TZAV (96) p'sukim. Our Chumashim have 97. Either one-off is acceptable for Gimatriya purposes, or there was a slightly different p'sukim-division way back then.

1353 words - 38th (3rd in Vayikra)

5096 letters - 38th (3rd in Vayikra)

MITZVOT

16 mitzvot; 11 positive, 5 prohibitions

The book of Vayikra has the largest number of mitzvot among the five Chumashim - 247, 40% of Taryag.

On the other hand, Vayikra is the shortest Book by far - in number of columns and lines in a Sefer Torah, number of p'sukim, words, and letters. This makes its mitzva stats even more impressive.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the



parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

Kohen - First Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 6:1-11

[P> 6:1 (6)] After the preliminary descriptions of the different korbanot in last week's sedra, we now find the description of the daily service in the Mikdash.

After burning all night, the fires of the Mizbei'ach are tended first thing in the morning (before sunrise). This first task of the day is relatively less important than other tasks, although it was enthusiastically sought after by young kohanim who vied for the honor of performing this mitzva of T'RUMAT HADESHEN [131, A30 6:3]. The kohen performing this task would remove the ashes from the Mizbei'ach fires and place them beside the Mizbei'ach. He would then change into other garments (of a slightly lesser quality than those worn for "regular" Temple service) and take the ashes to a specific "clean" place outside the camp.

The fire of the Mizbei'ach was to burn always [132, A29 6:6] and was not allowed to be extinguished ever [133, L81 6:6].

[P> 6:7 (5)] The Torah next returns to the topic of the "meal-offerings", the MINCHA. A small amount of the flour-oil mixture and all of the frankincense (L'vona) was scooped up in the kohen's hand and placed on the Mizbei'ach to burn. The MINCHA was not to be made Chametz [135, L124 6:10] (there are exceptions to this rule, notably some of the Menachot - if they are even called Menachot - that accompanied the TODA offering, which therefore was not brought on Pesach - this is why we do not say MIZMOR L'TODA, T'hilim 100, on Pesach. The other exception is/are the SH'TEI HA-LECHEM, the two-loaves offering of Shavuot).

The rest of the MINCHA is eaten by male kohanim on duty in the Beit HaMikdash at the time of the offering [134, A88 6:9].

Levi - Second Aliya - 22 p'sukim - 6:12-7:10

[P> 6:12 (5)] Each day, the Kohen Gadol is to bring a meal-offering of a tenth of an eifa of flour (plus oil & spice) - half in the morning and half before evening [136, A40 6:13].

This mincha was not to be eaten [137, L138 6:16], but rather was completely consumed on the Mizbei'ach.

[P> 6:17 (7)] The CHATAT [138, A64 6:18] was slaughtered in the same place as the "Olah" (viz. the north side of the Mizbei'ach). An integral part of a sin-offering is the eating of its meat by the kohen (kohanim) who brought it on behalf of the sinners.

SDT: Meshech Chochma points out that the kohen who dealt with the sacrifice is the one who should eat from it, because only he would know if his kavanot (thoughts and intentions) were correct or not. His eating of the sacrifice makes the statement that he indeed did and thought all that was required. (The punishment for a kohen intentionally eating of an invalid sacrifice - in this case, he being the only person who could know of its invalidity - is punishable by "death from heaven".) We see in this issue, a high level of accountability a person carries for his own actions.

On a different level, it's sort of like a Mashgi'ach certifying the kashrut of a restaurant - would he himself eat there? One would hope so.

Certain chata'ot, the blood of which blood was brought into the

Mikdash, were not to be eaten [139, L139 6:23], but rather completely consumed on the Mizbei'ach.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 28 p'sukim - 7:11-38

[P> 7:11 (17)] The Torah next discusses the Sh'lamim [141, A66 7:11], beginning specifically with the TODA. The animal sacrifice is accompanied by various types of wafers and cakes. Parts of the animal are burned on the Altar, parts are given to the kohen, and the remainder is to be eaten by the bringer of the korban, his family and friends. The korban must be eaten by midnight (actual deadline is dawn; midnight is required as a precaution against violation of the dawn deadline). It is forbidden to leave over any of the korban until morning [142, L120 7:15]; that which is left over must be burned [143, A91 7:17].

If the Sh'lamim is in fulfillment of a vow, it is eaten for two days, becoming NOTAR (forbidden left-over on the 3rd day).

Various notes:

The counterpart of the Korban Toda in our time - i.e. without a Beit HaMikdash - is BIRKAT HAGOMEIL. Admittedly, saying that b'racha in the

presence of a minyan, usually at Torah reading, is a far cry from the involvement and expense of a Korban Toda. Nonetheless, we must be grateful to HKB"H when successfully recovering from an illness, when released from prison. As to journeying across an ocean or traveling through a desert - neither might be as dangerous as such experiences once were, but a person should consult a Rav in cases that might or might not require HaGomeil.

Interesting sidepoint: HaGomeil requires a minyan to answer AMEIN and respond with the traditional statement - the Gomeil-sayer not included. This is different from, for example, saying Kaddish, where the sayer(s) is included in the required minyan.

- The difference in time-limit for eating of a TODA compared with a voluntary Sh'lamim has been discussed in various sources, and the idea seems to be that the TODA-bringer should include family and friends in the eating of the Toda with him. A shorter deadline for eating will encourage him to have more guests.

- SH'LAMIM, usually translated into English as a Peace Offering, takes the word Sh'lamim to be related to SHALOM. Some say the name of the

korban expresses the completeness of the offering, relating it to the word SHALEIM. It deserves this description because G-d (via the Mizbei'ach, so to speak) and the kohanim and the bringer of the korban all partake of it, as opposed to the other types of korbanot.

It is forbidden to eat PIGUL [144, L132 7:18]. Pigul is a type of invalid korban, where that which rendered the korban unfit for the Mizbei'ach was not something physical nor a mistake in the kohen's action, but rather an incorrect thought (kavana), of certain types. It is significant that improper thoughts alone can effect the status of a korban.

SDT: The most severe lapse in a kohen's kavana is one concerning time. A lapse regarding place of the eating of the korban, for example, still renders the korban invalid, but is less severe, punishment-wise. But, if the kohein has in mind to eat from the korban at a time when it is no longer allowed, then that mis-kavana renders the korban "Class-A Pigul" (made up term).

This indicates that the sanctity of time is somewhat greater than the sanctity of place, which fits with our previous notions concerning the sanctity of Shabbat and the sanctity

of the Mikdash.

From a long time ago - but memorable drasha by Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld z"l.

It is forbidden to eat of a korban that is tamei (ritually unclean) [145, L130 7:19]. This is punishable by makot. It is required to burn tamei korbanot [146, A90 7:19]. A person who is tamei who intentionally eats of a korban is liable to "koreit" ("cut off" by G-d).

Certain fats of kosher animals are forbidden to eat [147, L185 7:23]. This is the prohibition of CHEILEV. There are differences between the cheilev of a korban and that of a regular CHULIN (non-sacred) animal.

Eating blood of a bird or mammal is a capital offense (from Heaven) [147, L185 7:26]. Eating meat with blood still in it is a lesser offense, but nonetheless forbidden. This is why meat has to be "kasher", not just kosher.

SDT: Rashi teaches us that the specific mention of mammals and birds in the prohibition of blood teaches us that the blood of fish and kosher locust are not forbidden. Note that birds and mammals require sh'chita, and they are also the two classes of warm-blooded animals, as opposed to fish and insects - facts which may or may not be relevant.

On this note, what about the blood of a dolphin? Clearly, eating dolphin blood or dolphin meat with its blood is a no-no as far as kashrut is concerned. Not the question here. The question is, do we consider a dolphin to be a fish, because it lives its life in the water and swims like a fish (sort of), and has fins like a fish... or do we say that it is a mammal because it fits the modern definition of a mammal, the most significant characteristic being that it feeds its young with milk produced by the female of the species. What difference does it make? It isn't kosher either way. It doesn't have scales - so it isn't a kosher fish and it doesn't chew its cud (or have any hooves to be split or otherwise), so it isn't a kosher mammal. Was it created on the fifth day of creation or on the sixth? Does that make a difference and/or does that impact on the questions of the prohibition of blood and certain TUM'A and TAHARA issues that are different between fish and mammals?

All indications are that a dolphin (and a whale, and others) is considered to be among the fish on the issues of blood and tum'a. The fact that what we today call aquatic mammals breathe air with lungs and cannot get oxygen from the water via gills that they don't have, is not a factor for this issue of blood.

What about animals that spend most of their time in water but do come onto land for certain reasons? We'll leave the question of the seal and other animals for another time.

[P> 7:28 (11)] What follows are more details of the SH'LAMIM: what parts go on the Altar, what parts go to the kohen, etc.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 8:1-13

[P> 8:1 (36)] Having set down the rules, G-d now commands Moshe to take Aharon and his sons, the garments of the kohanim, the sacrificial animals, and the anointing oil, and perform the inaugural ceremonies for the Mishkan in the presence of the People, as Moshe was commanded to gather them. Moshe dresses Aharon in the garb of the Kohen Gadol, anoints him, the Altar, and the vessels of the Mishkan. He also dresses Aharon's sons.

Chamishi 5th Aliya - 8 p'sukim - 8:14-21

A bull as a sin-offering is brought and Aharon and his sons "lean" on it. (This is a vital element of most personal korbanot. It facilitates a psychological identification with

the animal and adds meaning to the act of the sacrifice.) Leaning (S'MICHA) is accompanied by confession (VIDUI) or words of praise to G-d, depending upon the type of korban. The bull was slaughtered and part of its blood was put on the corners of the Mizbei'ach and on its base. Parts of the bull were placed on the Mizbei'ach; the remainder was burned outside the camp.

The first of two rams was next offered, as an OLAH.

It is very important for us to understand that Korbanot were not "abra-cadabra, we're forgiven" offerings. It doesn't work like that. Never did. A Sin Offering, whipping by the Sanhedrin, even a death penalty, had to be accompanied by real T'shuva and Vidui. Without the heart in the korban-equation, the people were continually castigated by G-d for hollow meaningless acts and lip service. The ceremonies have deep significance and meaning, but the heart and soul of a person must truly be involved, otherwise the korban is less than nothing.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 8 p'sukim - 8:22-29

The second ram was then offered

(as a SH'LAMIM called EIL HAMILU'IM) and several procedures, as specified in the Torah, were followed. Note: Moshe Rabeinu was an active participant in the 7-day inauguration period for the Mishkan. Thereafter, Aharon and his sons (and all kohanim) are the ones who perform the sacred service of the Mikdash.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 7 p'sukim - 8:30-36

Further anointing of Aharon, his sons, and their garments. Then Moshe told them to prepare part of the meat for eating with the accompanying cakes and wafers. That which was left over was to be burned. During the 7 inaugural days, the kohanim were not to leave the Mishkan; they remained there as honor-guards.

SDT: Rashi reminds us that in addition to this one-time isolation of 7 days, there were two other times the Kohein Gadol was isolated for a 7-day preparatory period. One is the week before Yom Kippur - this was every year, of course. And the other was for the preparation of the Para Aduma - this was once in a (long) while - Para Aduma was not a common event. This idea is alluded to by the words LA'ASOT (Para) and L'CHAPEIR (Yom Kippur).

Aharon and his sons did all that G-d had commanded via Moshe.

Maftir - 2nd Torah - 22 p'sukim; Bamidbar 19

Parshat Para is read on the Shabbat before Parshat HaChodesh which presents us with the mitzvot of Korban Pesach, because the most common and important time for ritual purification on the part of most of the people was around the beginning of Nissan, as part of one's preparation to be in Jerusalem for Pesach and to bring and eat KP. Parshat Para from Parshat Chukat, contains the mitzvot of Para Aduma - that is, the preparing of the potion from the ashes of the Red Heifer, the general mitzva of the concept of ritual impurity from contact with a corpse, and the mitzva of purifying oneself with the Para Aduma potion.

Haftara 33 p'sukim Yechezkeil 36:16-38

S'faradim end 2 p'sukim earlier

The Haftara takes the concept (from the Maftir) of an individual becoming TAMEI and requiring purification with special water as an analogy for the people of Israel who defiled themselves with the sin of idolatry and other sins, and their

(our) need for a purification process with "G-d's spiritual waters of the Torah".

[In Va'eira, we find G-d's promise to take us unto Him and then He will bring us to Eretz Yisrael; in the haftara, the order is switched.]

There is a "hard" message in this haftara, among others.

G-d expresses His great disappointment with the people of Israel. And He punished them (us) very harshly. But then He says that His name was being desecrated among the nations of our dispersion, because the nations mockingly asked about the great nation of G-d and how low it had sunk.

So G-d decides, so to speak, and announces that He will redeem the people of Israel, even if they (we) don't deserve it, for His own sake.

This is hard reproach, indeed. But rather than discourage us, it should spur us on to put the lie to this prophecy - so to speak - by being worthy of redemption on our own merit.

The last p'sukim refer to a multitude of sheep - for sacrifices... This is a reminder of the large number of sheep brought to Yerushalayim for Korban Pesach.