

VAYIKRa



24th of 54 sedras;
1st of 10 in Vayikra

Written on 215 lines, rank: 19th

21 Parshiot; 13 open, 8 closed

111 p'sukim - rank: 26 (2nd in Vayikra)
Same number of p'sukim as Eikev

1673 words - rank: 20 (1st in Vayikra)

6222 letters - rank: 20 (1st in Vayikra)

The sedra is of average length, but its p'sukim are longer than average.

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 the 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 - 13 p'sukim - 1:1-13

[P> 1:1 (9)] G-d calls to Moshe from OHEL MOED and sets down the general rules of korbanot (sacrifices).

SDT: Note that it does not say "And G-d called to Moshe", but rather "And He called..." Vayikra is not a fresh beginning; it is the continuation of P'kudei. At the end of P'kudei, Moshe was temporarily out of touch (so to speak) with G-d (a cloud prevented Moshe from approaching Ohel Moed). Here G-d reestablishes contact with Moshe by calling to him and then speaking to him.

Notice the unique wording in this first pasuk of Vayikra; the method by which G-d communicated with Moshe was different from the prophets and all others.

SDT: Baal HaTurim says that G-d put Moshe's name before His own in the opening pasuk of Vayikra, to tell us all of the close personal relationship they had.

First among the korbanot that the Torah presents is the OLAH (of a bull), the offering that is completely consumed on the Mizbei'ach. (Almost,

but not quite - the skins of most OLOT were removed before the rest of the animal was placed on the Mizbei'ach; the skin was a gift to the kohanim.)

A common procedure in the bringing of many korbanot is leaning upon the animal (S'micha) before it is slaughtered. Many details of korbanot have psychological effects upon the one who brings the korban. The physical contact with the animal gives the korban-bringer a sober realization of the tenuousness of life (his own, not just the animal's).

After slaughter, the blood of Sh'chita is collected in a sacred vessel and is then brought to the Mizbei'ach to be poured on it. This procedure is essential for (all) korbanot. The OLAH is skinned (the skin is a gift to the kohanim, as mentioned earlier) and cut into pieces which are placed on the fire of the Mizbei'ach and there completely consumed (meaning, no one eats the meat of an Olah).

[S> 1:10 (4)] Male sheep and goats can also be brought as OLAH. The procedures are similar, but not identical.

SDT: Sacrifices from the cow family are considered to be atonements for the Sin of the Golden Calf. That with which the People sinned can now be used for sacred purposes as a redemption, atonement and Tikun - repair. We often find that the bull is the first presented, discussed,

offered, etc. This lends credence to its roll as atonement for the Golden Calf. It is the father trying to clean up his son's mess (as the Para Aduma is spoken of as the mother called upon to clean up after her son, the Eigel, calf).

SDT: The OLAH is considered by the Talmud to be an atonement for improper thoughts. The CHATAT - sin offering - is brought for (some) improper deeds. The Olah is presented first because usually, improper thoughts precede (and lead to) improper deeds.

SDT: The opening command concerning Korbanot is, "A person (singular) who offers from among you a sacrifice... they (plural) shall offer their sacrifice." Toldot Yitzchak (uncle of Rav Yosef Karo, and the one who raised him) suggests that since an individual doing a mitzva can have a positive effect on all of Klal Yisrael and the whole world, then his individual sacrifice is really ours, hence the switch to plural. Furthermore, there are aspects of Korbanot that relate to the community, even if the korban at issue is a private one. The wood for the fire, the salt of each korban, the kohanim performing the Avoda - these are all communal aspects that make an individual's korban, our korban.

SDT: The Ba'al HaTanya explains, "A person who brings from you a korban

to HaShem, from the animal..." as the requirement of a korban-bringer to sacrifice the animal within himself upon the Mizbei'ach. The Korban must be personalized and internalized for it to have the effect of bringing us closer (this is the meaning of KORBAN - KAROV) to G-d.

SDT: Daat Z'keinim says that the fact that animal sacrifices are from domesticated mammals (B'HEIMOT), and not from wild animals (CHAYOT), shows us G-d's concern for His people - that He spared us the extra bother of hunting and trapping that would be necessary if CHAYOT were among the korbanot. Similarly, bird-korbanot come only from two domesticated types of dove, and not from wild birds.

Levi - Second Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 1:14-2:6

[P> 1:14 (4)] OLAH can also be from birds, specifically, two types of doves. The unique procedures for bird offerings are described.

These three categories of OLAH - large animal (B'HEIMA GASA), small animals (B'HEIMA DAKA), birds (OFOT) - are counted as one positive command [115, A63 1:3].

SDT: Note that the bird offering is called OLAH LA'SHEM, a Burnt Offering to G-d. Although no one eats from an animal OLAH, the skin is

given to a kohen as one of his gifts. The dove is completely consumed on the Mizbei'ach. It is the only korban that is TOTALLY to HaShem, so to speak.

[S> 2:1 (3)] The Torah next describes the MINCHA (not to be confused with our afternoon davening of the same name), a meal offering. It consists of flour and oil with a bit of frankincense (L'vona) and differing amounts of water. (Water as an ingredient is not mentioned in the Written Word, but is part of our Oral Law.) There are several types of M'nachot that will be described in the coming p'sukim. First, some general procedures that apply to all types of Mincha are described.

[S> 2:4 (1)] Next the Torah describes the first specific type of Mincha - the MAAFEI TANUR, oven-baked.

[S> 2:5 (2)] The next type of Mincha is the pan-fried, the MINCHA AL HAMACHAVAT. Menachot differ in the method of preparation, amounts and ratio of ingredients, procedures, treatment of final product, and more. All contain the same ingredients.

SDT: Until this point in Vayikra, the Torah has described four different types of voluntary offerings, each one less expensive than the one before it. The bull is most costly, sheep and goat cost less, but more than a dove. And a flour and oil offering is the least expensive. The person who brings the korban is

referred to as ADAM, a human, the first time, and then with the pronoun he, him, his (she, her, hers). Only with the flour & oil offering is the bringer referred to as NEFESH, a soul. This, says Rashi, refers to the poor person, who is the one who would most likely bring the Mincha. It might not cost a lot, but the poor person puts his soul into his modest offering, making it no less significant than an expensive PAR.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 2:7-16

[S> 2:7 (7)] A fourth type of MINCHA is described. This one is called MARCHESHET. (It is to be deep-fried.) All meal offerings constitute one positive mitzva [116, A67 2:1, but also 2:4, 2:5, and 2:7. This mitzva does not neatly point to only one "chapter and verse"]. With meal offerings, only a small portion is put on the Mizbei'ach, the bulk of the offering is shared by the kohanim on duty in the Mikdash. MENACHOT may not be Chametz (the ones described here; there are a few types of flour-offerings that are Chametz), nor may they be prepared with leavening or honey [117, L98 2:11].

MITZVANotes

The Sefer HaChinuch hesitates to offer reasons for the prohibition of honey on a korban. He considers this

mitzva to be highly enigmatic. He then does suggest that both leavening and honey represent loftiness and arrogance, an inappropriate accompaniment for an experience that must humble the person who brings the korban. On the other hand, others suggest that this is one of the mitzvot which say to us: Don't think you can figure everything out. There are some mitzvot that defy our limited, finite knowledge and understanding. This is one of those mitzvot. We might think that honey should be put on a korban, making it sweeter, in order to enhance it. Sound logic, but we'd be wrong. We might think that leaven should be put into a flour-offering, to make it rise and hence more significant than a matza-cracker. Sound logic, but we'd be wrong. We must realize that we are to do mitzvot - all mitzvot - just because the Torah says so. This is so for all mitzvot, not just the ones that don't easily accommodate our logic.

To be most effective, so to speak, the thought expressed in the previous paragraph must be applied liberally to all mitzvot. Even a mitzva (maybe, especially a mitzva) that "makes perfect sense to us" should be treated first and foremost as a Divine Command which we must follow because "G-d says so!" Any other reason is secondary to that.

No korban may be offered without salt [118, L99 2:13]; every korban must be salted [119, A62 2:13].

This is an example - there are others - of a commandment being given in the positive form as well as a prohibition. Fast on Yom Kippur. Don't eat or drink. Leave the corner of your field uncut. Do not cut all of your field. Do not offer any korban without salt. Salt all korbanot. Each form of the mitzva - the ASEI and the LO TA'ASEI - teaches us something different and affects the attitude and kavanot of the particular mitzva.

One element of the "two sides of the coin" mitzva-pairs, is this. The main motivation to avoid transgressing a prohibition is YIR'A. Fear, reverence. Fear of G-d. Fear of Heaven. Fear of sin. Fear of punishment. The main motivation for fulfilling a positive command is (should be) AHAVA - love of G-d. Love of Torah. Love of mitzvot. Our life of Torah needs a strong dose of both YIR'A and AHAVA.

[S> 2:14 (3)] Another type of MINCHA is next described. This one is made from the first grain, and it involves roasting in a perforated vessel.

SDT: Our table is like the Mizbei'ach. A famous saying with many different manifestations. We salt our HaMotzi bread because we are expected to add an element of spirituality to an otherwise very

mundane act of eating, by connecting it to Temple Service. Salt is a preservative and salt itself does not spoil. As such, it represents an element of the eternal in this temporal world. This explanation is borrowed from that which is written about the mitzva of salting korbanot, but it applies well to our everyday minhag regarding salt.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 17 p'sukim - 3:1-17

[P> 3:1 (5)] The next type of korban presented in the Torah is the SH'LAMIM, known in English as a Peace Offering or Complete Offering. (Both names are based on a play on the word SHALOM or SHALEIM.)

The element of completeness that is special to the Sh'lamim in that part of the korban is burned on the Mizbei'ach, part is given to the kohen as one of his gifts, and part is returned to the korban's owner for him and his family to eat. "Everyone" benefits from a Sh'lamim. In that respect, it is the complete korban. Sh'lamim can be brought from male and female animals, of cow, goat, or sheep. The Torah outlines the procedures for SH'LAMIM, which are basically similar, but with some differences from animal to animal.

[P> 3:6 (6)] Sometimes, goats and sheep are lumped together as TZON, animals of the flock. They are referred

to as B'HEIMA DAKA, the smaller livestock, as opposed to CATTLE, B'HEIMA GASA. In the case of Korbanot, there are differences between the two and therefore, they are treated separately. The details of the Sh'lamim of sheep is presented first. Male or female. S'micha. What goes on the Mizbei'ach, etc.

[P> 3:12 (6)] Then Sh'lamim from goats is presented. On close inspection of the p'sukim (without checking in Mishna or Gemara), the only difference between the sheep and the goat is the ALYA, the fat of the tail area. In a sheep, it is offered on the Mizbei'ach and for the goat, it is not mentioned.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 26 p'sukim - 4:1-26

[P> 4:1 (12)] The next category of korban presented by the Torah is the CHATAT, the Sin Offering. There are different sub-categories. A Kohen Gadol who inadvertently caused the people to sin (certain sins) is required to bring a bull as an atoning sacrifice. The procedures of this Chatat of the Kohein Gadol are very elaborate and detailed in the Torah's text. One realizes how very serious this kind of mistake is considered.

[P> 4:13 (9)] Similarly (but with differences), if the Sanhedrin errs in a decision which causes wide-spread sinning (again, only of certain sins), then the leaders of the people are to bring a bull as a sacrifice [120, A68

4:13] (and not each person who acted upon the pronouncement of the Sanhedrin).

[P> 4:22 (5)] A leader of the people (the king, the Nasi) brings a male goat as his CHATAT. In all cases, the CHATAT is brought for SHOGEH (inadvertent) violations with some level of negligence on the sinner's part that resulted in the sin. A CHATAT is NOT brought for intentional violations. Nor is a CHATAT brought for all sins - only for those whose intentional violation is a capital offense.

SDT: When a leader of the people shall sin... ASHER NASI YECHETA. The initials of this phrase spell ANI (I, me!) What is likely to lead a leader astray? His focusing on himself and his losing sight of his responsibilities to the community he leads.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 19 p'sukim - 4:27-5:10

[P> 4:27 (5)] The final sub-category of CHATAT is for the individual who inadvertently violates certain types of prohibitions [121, A69 4:27]. For example, a Jew who violates a Torah prohibition of Shabbat because he is unaware that the particular act is forbidden or because he forgot momentarily that it was Shabbat - this requires the bringing of a Korban CHATAT. The CHATAT of an individual is a female sheep or goat.

Clarification... If a person sees brown leaves on a house plant and pinches them off on Shabbat to enhance the growth of the plant, he has violated a Rabbinic prohibition. This Rabbinic prohibition is based on the fact that the act is essentially the same as, and for the same purpose as, pruning leaves on a bush growing in the ground. Pruning is a Torah prohibition. The ban on doing the same with house plants is one of many protective measures of the Sages to protect the Torah from violation. When the person learns of his error, no Korban is required - just T'shuva - because the act was not a Torah violation. But doing the same with one's rose bushes IS a Torah violation and would require a CHATAT, in addition to T'shuva.

Also, if a person mistakenly cooked meat in butter, thinking it was parve margarine, this would be a SHOGEV violation of a Torah law, but no CHATAT is brought, because cooking meat in milk is not a capital offense (it is only punishable by Makot).

[P> 4:32 (4)] In the previous parsha, the "animal of choice" for a Chatat was presented first. It is a female goat. This parsha continues with the other acceptable animal for an individual's Chatat, a ewe (female sheep).

[P> 5:1 (10)] Another category of sacrifice is the KORBAN OLEH V'YORED [123, A72 5:1], a sliding-

scale guilt offering. An example of a sin requiring this korban is suppression of testimony or lying under oath about it.

Testifying is an obligation [122, A178 5:1].

The form that the korban takes depends upon the financial means of the sinner - goat/sheep, doves.

With birds, the kohen must be careful not to sever the head when he performs M'LIKA, the bird-korban equivalent of Sh'chita [124, L112 5:5].

SOT: The main animal for a communal CHATAT (as in the Musaf of Rosh Chodesh and Chagim) or an individual CHATAT, is the goat. This brings to mind the use of the goat by Yosef's brothers to deceive their father by dipping Yosef's coat into goat's blood. The CHATAT for all times contains a reminder of the terrible behavior of brother against brother. (Yaakov also used a goat to deceive his father, when he posed as Eisav to receive the bracha.)

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 16 p'sukim - 5:11-26

[S> 5:11 (3)] For those who cannot afford doves, the ASHAM (guilt offering) is to be brought from flour. In this case (as opposed to MENACHOT), no oil [125, L102 5:11] or spice [126, L103 5:11] is used.

[S> 5:14 (3)] The ASHAM for sacrilege is a ram. In addition, the violator, who has used the sacred for his own benefit, must make restitution and add one-fifth of the value as a penalty [127, A118 5:16].

Actually, one fourth is added, an amount that becomes one fifth of the total amount. E.g. 100 worth of use + 25 penalty = 125 total payment, the addition of 25 being one fifth of the 125. This is how the penalty called CHOMESH is calculated.

[S> 5:17 (3)] A variation of the ASHAM is brought when one is not sure if he violated the particular prohibition or not. The Conditional Asham - ASHAM TALU'I - is a ram [128, A70 5:17].

[S> 5:20 (7)] The thief is commanded to return that which he stole [130, A194 5:23].

The bringing of the ASHAM for all the specific types of violations is a positive mitzva [129, A71 5:21 - **there are other p'sukim that input into this mitzva, since there are different types and reasons for bringing an ASHAM**].

Thus the Torah ends its introduction to the different types of korbanot.

Haftara - 31 p'sukim - Yeshayahu 43:21-44:21

From the sedra, we receive our first introduction to korbanot. The haftara contains two kinds of rebuke to the

people, who have been exiled. First, that even when not "burdened" by the various korbanot (since they are in exile and without a Beit HaMikdash), they do not properly pray or repent their ways. Secondly (which really comes first) the people had not offered korbanot properly - sometimes to idolatry, sometimes insincerely to G-d - when they had the opportunity.

G-d does and will favor and redeem us, even when we don't deserve it. (Nonetheless, it is far better to act in such a way as to be worthy of G-d's love of us and His many acts of kindness on our behalf, for His own sake.)

From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein z"l

The only thing that most of us learn from experience, is that we don't.

Our thoughts are always in danger of being turned, by the words used to express them, into mere skeletons of their original selves.