

PHILOTORAH

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואליהי אבותינו שתשלח מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים, רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף לפצועי המלחמה, ולנפגעי מעשי טרור ואנטישמיות בישראל ובכל מקום שהם - עם שאר חולי ישראל. אמן.

May HaShem protect our soldiers; may He send Refu'ah Sh'leima to the many injured; may He console the bereaved families and all of Israel; may He end these wars with total success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever we are.



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על כל־קרבנך תקריב מלוח:

YERUSHALAYIM in/out times for **VAYIKRA**

ג' ניסן ה'תשפ"ו • March 20-21, '26

 **5:15 PM** PLAG **4:35 PM** •   **6:28 PM** R' Tam **7:03 PM**

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales

PhiloTorah (297vayik) - 1 - all at once file

Kiddush L'vana

The molad of Nisan is/was on Wednesday afternoon, March 18th. First opportunity for Kiddush L'vana according to Minhag Yerushalayim is Motza'ei Shabbat Parshat Vayikra, March 21st.

First op for those who wait seven full days after the molad is on Wednesday night, March 25th.



The bracha is said only once a year, during the month of Nissan, on fruit trees in blossom.

It is not said on flowering trees that do not bear fruit.

Say the bracha ONLY if you are sure that the trees are fruit-bearing.

It is not said on fruit trees that already have fruit; only on fruit trees when they display the flower blossoms that precede their fruit.

It is preferable to say the bracha on at least two trees.

The bracha should be said with a sense of awe, appreciation, admiration, and joy of HaShem and the world He created for us.

We specifically acknowledge Him in the existence of fruit trees which delight our senses with their floral displays, even before they provide us with their tasty fruit. We realize that this is an extra-special gift from G-d to us.

We already know that trees are special - we had TU BISHVAT, the Rosh HaShana for Trees.

The Torah tells us, KI HAADAM EITZ HASADEH, for the human being is like the tree of the field.

Trees provide us with nourishing and delicious fruit. DAYEINU! That would be enough to thank HaShem for. And we do, every time we eat a fruit and say BOREI P'RI HA'EITZ. And when the fruit is the first of the season, we are so excited that we say an additional bracha: SHEHECHEYANU. Many fruits also have a pleasant fragrance. That's a bonus. An extra gift from G-d for our enjoyment. And we have a b'racha for that too: HANOTEIN REI'ACH TOV BAPEIROT (which is said if you are only smelling the fruit - if you are eating it, its pleasant smell is considered incidental and does not get its own bracha). There is also a b'racha for seeing a magnificent forest: SHEKACHA LO B'OLAMO. And that HaShem provided us with a beautiful, fragrant display of flowers BEFORE the tree yields its fruit - an extra bonus, which we acknowledge once a year with BIRKAT HA-ILANOT.

VAYIKRA

PhiloTorahStats



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. Furthermore,
every one of Vayikra's sedras has
mitzvot, unlike the other four Books

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 HAMA-CHAVAT. 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].

MITZVA notes

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 be 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. Why do we give Tzedaka? Because it is a mitzva. And then, because it helps others who need help.

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 on Yom Kippur. 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 SHOGEV (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 to be offered - just T'shuva (which also must accompany a Korban Chatat, when required) - 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 pareve 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].

SDT: 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.)

Bringing the Prophets to Life

Weekly insights into the Haftara by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler

Author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)

The Importance (or Not) of Korbanot

VAYIKRa - 31 p'sukim

- Yeshayahu 43:21-44:21

With the opening of Sefer Vayikra, we are introduced to the world of korbanot. In it, the Torah depicts, details and delineates the proper procedures to be observed when involved in sacrificial ritual. This first parasha of Sefer Vayikra includes the proper practices to be followed for a range of offerings, including: the diverse types of Olot, the variety of Menachot, the assorted kinds of Sh'lamim, the different sorts of Chatot and various array of Ashamot. The following parasha of Tzav depicts more practices that must be carried out when sacrificing to Hashem, including the specific tasks of the Kohanim, the choice of the sanctified utensils and where and how the sacrifice is to be taking place.

Given the litany of laws and practices of the korbanot that fill these parshot, it is more than curious to find that the haftarot of each portion do not focus on sacrifices at all.

Instead, both readings speak of Israel's corruption of the ritual service [Yishayahu 44:9-17] and how inconsequential it really is! [Yirmiyahu 7:21-22]

I would submit, therefore, that the words of our nevi'im are, indeed, targeted at the importance of the korbanot - but they do so by revealing what the essence of divine worship must be.

The popular quotation "familiarity breeds contempt" dates back to the fabulist, Aesop, some 2600 years ago, but the truth of its message pre-dated the Greek storyteller by 1000 years at Har Sinai. There, Hashem charged the entire nation to be a MAMLECHET KOHANIM, a kingdom of ministers [of G-d] and a holy nation, and, therefore, may not even approach the holy mountain due to its sanctity. The very act of approaching a source of sanctity suggests an improper closeness and inappropriate familiarity with kedusha. Unfortunately, such behavior inevitably leads to the diminishing of one's reverence toward Hashem.

It is for this reason that sanctity demands reverence and, therefore, kedusha requires separation. And this was the challenge that the Israelite nation of the prophetic era failed to meet ... and the challenge that the Jewish community in our own time must face.

It was this failure that Yishayahu condemns in our haftara.

When we carefully read through the haftara, we find that the first eight p'sukim [43:21-28] are filled with the condemnation of Israel for their failure to show the proper respect to Hashem and His worship. G-d reminds Yishayahu of how He had to punish the earlier generations for their sins - having to defile, "profane" even those "officers" who were to serve G-d - VA'ACHALEL SAREI KODESH!

The bulk of the prophet's message, however, is found in the 23 verses of perek 44. There, the navi details the various ways that the people (even the Kohanim) had desecrated the ritual service to the point of deifying the pagan gods and worshiping them! Yishayahu implies that the nation's disregard of Hashem's overwhelming power and abilities, leading them to equate Him with other "gods", was due to their loss of the reverence, respect and awe of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Indeed, Kedusha DOES require separation and distance, whether it refers to the need of keeping a respectful relationship with a parent, a teacher or a scholar. Sadly, I believe it is this "challenge of the ages" that we fail to meet in today's world.

Furthermore, I do not see this failure

as being limited to our behavior toward individuals alone but it also demands us to consider how we regard our treatment of Yeshivot, of Batei Midrash, and, most commonly, of Batei Knesset. Should we not reflect on the propriety of entering a shul for tefilla with a cup of coffee in hand to drink? Do we find it acceptable to depart the sanctuary while our litter remains on the floor? And, can we not complete our (unnecessary) conversations after the conclusion of tefilla?

Yes, we can create and develop an atmosphere of sanctity in our lives, but only when we distance ourselves from the mundane during those precious moments of holiness. Simply, we will better cherish the consecrated in our lives when separating the holy from the profane. The ancient prophets demanded this to their generation.

And, I submit, they were speaking to us, as well. ✨



The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests

Vayakhel-P'kudei HaChodesh

<> Three new Unexplaineds

There is a bench with the number one on it. That's for Benching Rosh Chodesh (the first day of the new month).

Then there was a kid showing off his biceps - for CHAZAK, CHAZAK...

And there was the tops of the letters spelling the word CHODASHIM, for HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem Rosh Chodashim (the head of months).

VAYIKRa

Central to the sedra and to this ParshaPix is the Mizbei'ach and the Davka Judaica graphic of it. Many of the other element of the ParshaPix are related to the Mizbei'ach and/or Korbanot • Ferdinand the Bull represents the PAR • The cartoon sheep is for the korbanot of that animal-family • the Oakland Athletics are also known as the A's - EIZ is a goat • It is not a soap; it is a beauty bar - what? DOVE, for the bird korban • the Morton Salt girl representing the salt that was to be put on all Korbanot (She is actually called the Morton Salt Umbrella Girl and has been around

since 1911) • below the Morton Salt girl are two kidneys, two of the inner organs of the korbanot that are mentioned repeatedly in the sedra • Menachot - offerings from the plant world, are made with fine flour... • And olive oil • And the spice L'VONA - frankincense in English. That's frankincense below the flour • Menachot - meal offerings - were prepared in different ways. Some were baked in an oven • Some were fried in a frying pan... As we sing in the Shabbat day Z'mira, BARUCH KEIL ELYON... in which we poetically ask G-d to be pleased with our Shabbat observance like a MINCHA AL MACHAVAT, like the flour-oil offering on the frying pan... • The portion of a Mincha that was burned on the Mizbei'ach is a K'MITZA, a limited handful - photo of a K'MITZA • The crown represents one "type" of sinner and his korban Chatat - the king • Similarly, there is the Davka graphic of the Kohein Gadol who also has a unique Korban Chatat • the letter ALEF, which in the word VAYIKRa is written small in a Sefer Torah • here we are presenting a larger version of the ALEF. In addition, ALEF is spelled ALEF-LAMED-FEI, which has a numeric value of 111. This is the FULL GIMATRIYA of ALEF, which is based not on its letter value of one, but rather its spelled out gimatriya. Vayikra, with its little ALEF, has 111 p'sukim • the thief is discussed in the

ASHAM korban • the pie chart indicates a fifth part, CHOMESH. But that penalty mentioned in the sedra is actually a quarter (pictured to the left of the pie chart), which is a fifth of the principal plus the fourth • the bottles of water are for the water that was an ingredient in the Mena-chot, even though it isn't mentioned in the Written Torah • the cellphone with L 345, is for VAYIKRA EL MOSHE (gimatriya is 345) • Silan is D'VASH from dates and is forbidden to put onto any offering • the zodiac signs on the right side of the PP are Taurus (the Bull), Aries (the Ram), and Capricorn (the goat) - the three types of B'HEIMOT (domesticated kosher farm animals) that were used for korbanot • the constellation pictured next to the three zodiac signs is Columba, the Dove, a faint southern constellation. Here, it is for the bird sacrifices • three new Unexplaineds, the third of which is from the haftara (sort of) - this is a hint.

לע"נ

הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה ז"ל

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

Leadership and the People

VAYIKRa

The third book of the Torah is known in English as Leviticus, a word deriv-

ing from Greek and Latin, meaning, "pertaining to the Levites". This reflects the fact that in Judaism the kohanim - all direct descendants of Aharon - were from the tribe of Levi, and that the ancient rabbinic name for the book was Torat Kohanim, "the law of the Kohanim". It is an appropriate title. Whereas Sh'mot and Bamidbar are shot through with narrative, the book between them is largely about sacrifices and the rituals associated, first with the Mishkan and later with the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem. It is, as the name Torat Kohanim implies, about the kohanim and their function as guardians of the sacred.

By contrast, the traditional name Vayikra, "And He called", seems merely accidental. Vayikra just happens to be the first word of the book, and there is no connection between it and the subjects with which it deals. The truth, I will argue here, is otherwise. There is a deep connection between the word Vayikra and the underlying message of the book as a whole.

To understand this, we must note that there is something unusual about the way the word appears in a Sefer Torah in this particular instance. Its last letter, an ALEF, is written small - almost as if it barely existed. The standard-size letters spell out the word VAYIKAR, mean-

ing, "he encountered" or "he chanced upon". Unlike VAYIKRA, which refers to a call, a summons, a meeting by request, VAYIKAR suggests an accidental meeting, a mere happening.

With their sensitivity to nuance, the Sages noted the difference between the call to Moshe with which the book begins, and God's appearance to the pagan prophet Bilaam, which does not use the same form of the word. This is how the Midrash puts it:

What is the difference between the prophets of Israel and the prophets of the pagan nations of the world? ... R. Hama ben Hanina said: The Holy One blessed be He reveals Himself to the pagan nations by an incomplete form of address, as it is said, "And the Lord appeared to Bilaam", whereas to the prophets of Israel He appears in a complete form of address, as it is said, "And He called to Moshe."

Rashi is more explicit:

All [God's] communications [to Moshe], whether they use the words "speak" or "say" or "command" were preceded by a call [K'RI'A] which is a term of endearment, used by the angels when they address one another, as it is said, "And one called to the other" [V'KARA ZEH EL ZEH, Yishayahu 6:3). However, to the prophets of the nations of the world, His appearance is described by an expression signifying a casual

encounter and uncleanness, as it says, "And the Lord appeared to Bilaam."

The Baal HaTurim goes one stage further, commenting on the small ALEF:

Moshe was both great and humble, and wanted only to write VAYIKAR, signifying "chance", as if the Holy One blessed be He appeared to him only in a dream, as it says of Bilaam [VAYIKAR, without an ALEF] - suggesting that God appeared to him by mere chance. However, God told him to write the word with an ALEF. Moshe then said to Him, because of his extreme humility, that he would only write an ALEF that was smaller than the other ALEFs in the Torah, and he did indeed write it small.

Something of great significance is being hinted at here, but before taking it further, let us turn to the end of the book. Just before the end, in the sedra of B'chukotai, there occurs one of the two most terrifying passages in the Torah. It is known as the TOCHACHA (the rebuke: the other appears in D'varim 28), and it details the terrible fate that will befall the Jewish people if it fails to keep its covenant with God:

As for the survivors, I will bring such insecurity into their hearts in their enemies' lands that the sound of a windblown leaf will make them run as

if they fled the sword; and they will fall, though no one is chasing them. They will stumble over one another as if fleeing the sword, when no one chases them. You will have no power to stand before your enemies. You will perish among the nations; your enemies' lands will devour you (Vayikra 26:36-38).

Yet despite the shocking nature of the forewarning, the passage ends with a note of consolation:

I will remember My covenant with Yaakov; and My covenant with Yitzchak and My covenant with Avraham I will also remember, and I will remember the land ... Yet even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them nor despise them and annihilate them, will not break My covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God (26:42-44).

The keyword of the passage is the word KERI. It appears exactly seven times in the tochacha - a sure sign of significance. Here are two of them by way of example:

If, despite all this, you still do not listen to Me - if still you walk contrary to Me - then I, in My fury, will walk contrary to you. I will punish you seven times more for your sins (26:27-28).

What does the word KERI mean? I have translated it here as "contrary". There are other suggestions. The Targum reads it as "harden your-

selfes", Rashbam as "refuse", Ibn Ezra as "overconfident", Saadia as "rebellious".

However, Rambam gives it a completely different interpretation, and does so in a halachic context:

A positive scriptural command prescribes prayer and the sounding of the alarm with trumpets whenever trouble befalls the community. For when Scripture says, "Against the adversary that oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets" the meaning is: Cry out in prayer and sound an alarm ... This is one of the paths to repentance, for when the community cries out in prayer and sounds an alarm when threatened by trouble, everyone realises that evil has come on them as a result of their own wrongdoing ... and that repentance will cause the trouble to be removed.

If, however, the people do not cry out in prayer and do not sound an alarm but merely say that it is the way of the world for such a thing to happen to them, and that their trouble is a matter of pure chance, they have chosen a cruel path which will cause them to continue in their wrongdoing, and thus bring additional troubles on them. For when Scripture says, "If you continue to be KERI towards Me, then in My anger I will be KERI towards you", it means, "If, when I bring trouble upon you in order to cause you to repent, you say that the

trouble is purely accidental, then I will add to your trouble the anger of being-left-to-chance." (Mishneh Torah, Taaniyot, 1:1-3)

Rambam understands KERI to be related to the word MIKREH, meaning "chance". The curses, in his interpretation, are not Divine retribution as such. It will not be God who makes Israel suffer, rather it will be other human beings. What will happen is simply that God will withdraw His protection. Israel will have to face the world alone, without the sheltering presence of God. This, for Rambam, is simple, inescapable measure-for-measure (mida k'neged mida). If Israel believe in Divine Providence, they will be blessed by Divine Providence. If they see history as mere chance - what Joseph Heller, author of Catch-22, called "a trash bag of random coincidences blown open by the wind" - then indeed they will be left to chance. Being a small, vulnerable nation, chance will not be kind to them.

We are now in a position to understand the remarkable proposition linking the beginning of Vayikra to the end - and one of the most profound of all spiritual truths. The difference between MIKRA and MIKREH - between history as God's call and history as one event after another with no underlying purpose or meaning - is, in the Hebrew

language, almost imperceptible. The words sound the same. The only difference is that the former has an ALEF while the latter does not (the significance of the ALEF is obvious: the first letter of the alphabet, the first letter of the Ten Commandments, the "I" of God).

The letter ALEF is almost inaudible. Its appearance in a Sefer Torah at the beginning of Vayikra (the small ALEF) is almost invisible. Do not expect - the Torah is intimating - that the presence of God in history will always be as clear and unambiguous as it was during the Exodus from Egypt and the division of the Red Sea. For much of the time it will depend on your own sensitivity. For those who look, it will be visible. For those who listen, it can be heard. But first you have to look and listen. If you choose not to see or hear, then VAYIKRA will become VAYIKAR. The call will be inaudible. History will seem mere chance.

There is nothing incoherent about such an idea. Those who believe it will have much to justify it. Indeed, says God in the tochacha: if you believe that history is chance, then it will become so. But in truth it is not so. The history of the Jewish people - as even non-Jews such as Pascal, Rousseau, and Tolstoy eloquently stated - testifies to the presence of God in their midst. Only thus could such a small, vulnerable, relatively

powerless people survive, and still say today - after the Holocaust - Am Yisrael Chai, the Jewish people lives. And just as Jewish history is not mere chance, so it is no mere coincidence that the first word of the central book of the Torah is Vayikra, "And He called".

To be a Jew is to believe that what happens to us as a people is God's call to us - to become "a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation."

Around the Shabbat Table:

- (1) Why is humility essential for hearing God's call?
- (2) Think of an event in your own life. Can you see it as both a random chance event and as a Divine call? What changes when you look at it from each perspective?
- (3) Rambam suggests that if we believe our lives are governed by chance, God will leave us to chance. Do you think our beliefs shape our reality in this way?

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Message from the Haftara

Rabbi Katriel (Kenneth) Brander
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The Pauper's Offering

VAYIKRa

The opening chapters of Sefer Vayikra introduce the sacrificial system - the intricate framework through which an individual sought forgiveness and built or restored their relationship with God. At first glance, these rites may seem distant from our contemporary religious lives. Yet embedded in these opening chapters is a subtle spiritual distinction so theologically charged that the Sages treat it as one of the Torah's most powerful statements - one that speaks directly to how we approach God even today.

When the Torah describes the ordinary person who brings an animal offering in chapter 1, it uses the word ADAM - the standard term for a human being: "When one of you [ADAM] brings an animal offering to the Lord..." (1:2). But in chapter 2, which addresses grain offerings, the Torah shifts its language. It no longer says ADAM; it says NEFESH - meaning "soul", or "self": "When one [NEFESH] brings a grain offering to the Lord..." (2:1).

The Gemara in tractate Menachot

(104b) notices this shift and interprets it in light of the fact that grain offerings tended to be brought by those of limited means, who could not afford an animal sacrifice. In the Gemara's reading, when one with so little to give makes the effort to bring even the most modest of offerings, God regards it as though he has offered his very soul [NEFESH].

This point is made even more forcefully in Vayikra Rabba (3:1), which asserts that the grain offering of a poor man is more precious to God than the most elaborate incense brought on behalf of the entire community. What makes it so is not its monetary worth but the purity of intention it represents - the willingness to give all of oneself even in times of great duress and want.

This contrast between ADAM and NEFESH - between outward ritual practice and genuine self-offering - is precisely what this week's haftara addresses on a national scale. Drawn from Yeshayahu chapters 43 and 44, it confronts the Jewish people at a moment of spiritual deprivation. Like the ADAM of chapter 1, they are present in form but may be absent in substance. Their religious practice has become hollow. God's rebuke is direct and stinging: "It is not Me you call for, Yaakov; Israel, you wearied of Me. You did not bring Me the lamb of your offering; it was not Me your

sacrifice honored" (43:22-23). This is not a people that has stopped sacrificing altogether. It is a people that sacrifices without meaning it - going through the motions of religious life while remaining spiritually detached.

And yet - and this is the pivot at the heart of the haftara - God does not abandon us. The very next verses are not a verdict but an astonishing declaration of grace: "I am I, who expunge your offenses for My own sake and will not keep your sins in mind" (v. 25). The forgiveness is not contingent on the people having earned it. It is offered for the sake of God Himself. The covenant does not wait for the Jewish people to become deserving before it holds.

Yeshayahu names the depth of the problem unflinchingly. "Your first father sinned", he says (v. 27) - a reference some commentators identify with Avraham, who in a moment of uncertainty asked, "My Lord God, how shall I know that I will possess it?" (B'reishit 15:8), revealed that even the greatest patriarch was not beyond doubt and faltering. If the founding father himself fell short, how much more so a people in the depths of political and spiritual crisis? Yeshayahu does not look away from this, but he pivots immediately to consolation: "And now listen, Yaakov My servant, Israel whom I

chose” (44:1). Even now, the relationship has not lapsed.

This arc - frank acknowledgment of failure, followed by unconditional reaffirmation - is not incidental to the haftara. In truth, it is one reason the whole institution of the haftara exists. When foreign rulers prohibited the public reading of the Torah in synagogues, the Sages instituted the reading of prophetic portions in its place. The haftara was born out of persecution, and it carries that origin in its purpose: to say that even when access to the sacred is impeded, even when the people have fallen short of what they could be, the relationship endures. The glass is half full - not because the problems are not real, but because the love that holds the Jewish people close to God is greater than their failures.

That message has not aged. We live in a period of genuine difficulty - conflict, communal fracture, searching questions about the kind of society we are building in the land to which we have returned. There are moments when the mirror Yeshayahu holds up to ancient Israel feels uncomfortably familiar. We are not always bringing the NEFESH offering; sometimes we bring the ADAM offering - present in body, absent in soul.

But the haftara refuses to end on that note. The covenant between God and Knesset Yisrael is not transactional. It

does not expire when we fall short. It holds - not because of what we have achieved, but because of who He is, and who we have always been to each other. That is the promise Yeshayahu asks us to carry out of shul and into the week ahead. 🌌



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Bracha Mei-ein Sheva

Every Friday night, including when Shabbat is Yom Tov, after the Amida of Maariv, we say VAYCHULU. This is said with a minyan and even when a person davens on his own.

Following VAYCHULU we have B'racha Mei-ein Sheva, sort of like a miniature repetition of the Amida (which we never have for any Maariv).

This is said only with a minyan. It is not said when one davens on his own.

And when Leil HaSeder (first night of Pesach) is on Friday night, it is not said. On all other Friday nights, we have B'racha Mei-ein Sheva.

There are many non-shul minyanim on Friday nights, often in apartment buildings - especially hold-overs from Covid of a few years ago. And

especially now during wartime.

The question is: Does such a non-permanent minyan say B'racha Mei-ein Sheva, or not.

The following is from the book T'fila k'Hilchata by Yitzchak Yaakov Fuchs.

He writes: B'racha Mei-ein Sheva is not said, unless where there is a fixed minyan and a Sefer Torah. Therefore, he continues, at a one-shot minyan in someone's home, for example, it is not said, unless there is a minyan there for a number of weeks in a row, and there is a Sefer Torah.

He then writes that in Yerushalayim, the practice is to say B'racha Mei-ein Sheva even in a one shot minyan and even without a Sefer Torah.

In a footnote, the author quotes Igrot Moshe of R' Moshe Feinstein, that a minyan fixed for Friday nights (even if they don't gather to daven at any other time), says B'racha Mei-ein Sheva, even without a Sefer Torah.

Bottom line: In Jerusalem, there is support to say B'racha Mei-ein Sheva at a Friday night minyan, even temporary or one-time. Outside Jerusalem, I recommend you ask a Rav for guidance for this issue. **PTDT**

Back to VAYCHULU. With a minyan, it is ideal to say it together with the minyan, but one need not rush his own Amida in order to say VAYCHULU together with everyone.

Many who finish their Amida after the congregation has said VAYCHULU will look for another person to say it with, based on the idea that it is like EIDUT, testimony to G-d's Creation and sanctification of Shabbat. The Chazon Ish held that this is not necessary; one can say it by himself.

יומים

microULPAN

a person who travels some distance from home to work and back again on a regular basis.

In English, a COMMUTER

In Hebrew: **YOMEIM**

Walk through the Parsha

with **Rabbi David Walk**



VAYIKRA

A Walk on the North Side

This week we begin reading the book of Vayikra. The first half of this book is very sacrifice intensive, which makes it a little less accessible to those of us who are two thousand years removed from actually offering them. So, we improvise. We find all sorts of hints at ideas in the text

which can be applied to our Temple-less lives. This week we will delve into the hidden ideas apparently embedded, encased and enfolded in the Hebrew word for 'hidden'.

Here's the verse: It (the KORBAN, 'offering') shall be slaughtered before God on the north (TZAFON) side of the Altar, and Aharon's sons, the kohanim, shall dash its blood against all sides of the altar (Vayikra 1:11).

For our purposes, the critical word in those instructions is 'north', TZAFON. This term for the compass direction North also implies 'hidden' or 'covered', more about that anon.

This verse is very significant!

Why? You may ask. Because those of us who recite KORBANOT (the verses describing the daily offerings) every day, read this verse, and it's the only such verse in this week's reading.

The holy Ari Z"L explains: When we say this verse everyday with devotion it will be a SEGULA ('precious promise') to atone for all our sins, as if we have offered all the KORBANOT. All of our sins can be placed in three categories: Idolatry, promiscuity and violence ('shedding blood'). All of these categories are hinted at in our verse: 'offer it on the side (YERECH, also means 'thigh')' hints at promiscuity, 'the Altar' hints at idolatry, and 'the north' hints at violence

(connected to love of money from the verse, 'gold and silver is in the TZAFON', Iyov 37:22)

But I want to delve into this idea of TZAFON. Rav Zvi David Hoffman suggests that we borrowed this idea from idolaters who believed that their grand deity dwelled in the north. Even though we occasionally borrow from other ancient civilizations' commonly accepted ideas, this one doesn't resonate with me.

Prof Yoel Elitzur discusses the significance of the directional terms used in Biblical Hebrew. He notices that we sometimes name directions based on our relationship with the Sun. Other times we describe the directions based upon facing East, because ancient humans obsessed over sunrise. They were afraid of the night and darkness.

He finds the third category most interesting. Biblical Jews called the directions based upon the landmarks of Eretz Yisrael: This category includes YAM, referring to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and NEGEV, referring to the arid region in the south.

But what about TZAFON? He explains that YARK'TEI TZAFON (Yeshayahu 14:14) was a reference to a high mountain in Lebanon.

Okay, so we have TZAFON as north in the geography of Eretz Yisrael, but

it's used in other contexts as well to mean north, and there Prof Elitzur relies on the Radak, who explains: The path of the Sun is never on [the northern] side but rather on the southern side, and it is as if that direction is hidden (TZAFUN) from the Sun.

That is another reminder that, clearly, the Torah was written with people living in the northern hemisphere of planet Earth in mind.

This brings us to our essential idea: The TZAFON or North is mysterious and, perhaps, dangerous. Remember Yirmiyahu warns us: The word of the Eternal came to me again: What do you see? 'I see a pot that is boiling', I answered. 'It is tilting toward us from the north.' The Eternal said to me, 'From the north, disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land.' (Yirmiyahu 1:13-14)

There is profound symbolism in the details of the sacrificial ceremonies, and this extends to the directions used for the process. Rabbeinu Bechaye describes how the ascent of the kohen up the ramp (KEVES) of the altar (MIZBEI'ACH) symbolized the kohen ascending to a higher realm where new realities, different from our prosaic existence, are encountered. The place of the holiest offerings is therefore TZAFON, mysterious, secret, hidden.

Remember the name given by Par'o to Yosef HaTzadik? Tzafnat Pane'ach! Which means, according to Onkelos: The one to whom hidden things are revealed. In other words, the decipherer of riddles. Yosef unravels the TZAFON, the hidden.

So, significant things are often TZAFON, mysterious. Truly important ideas must be worked out, investigated, solved!

As we enter the month of Spring, when the natural world comes back to life, we should stay attuned to hints in the air and secret things around us. As one who suffers from hay fever, boy, am I aware of changes in the air. But our antennae should be also affixed to the great celebration looming, and hiddenness is in the offing. First, many hide the CHAMETZ as a prelude to its total disappearance and destruction. But, much more significant, we have hiddenness at the Seder.

The eating of the AFIKOMEN (Greek for 'dessert') is called TZAFUN as one of the stages of the Seder process. Why? Well, because the little kids hide it. But also because it contains deep secrets. The deepest, darkest secret is: This might be the essential eating of Matza at the Seder.

There are a plethora of ideas about the significance of eating the Afikomen:

1. Does it replace the Paschal Lamb?,
2. Is it the fulfillment of the Mitzva to eat Matza,
3. Is it a separate decree to end the night with Matza on the palate?

The Shnei Luchot Habrit (Rav Yitzchak Halevi Horowitz, 1565-1630) suggests that it might be the obligatory consumption of the Matza, and therefore there should be no talking between the initial blessing over Matza and the eating of the Afikomen. Was his Seder very short or very quiet?

In any case, the Afikomen is a mystery. It is TZAFON! In Judaism, we live with and love mysteries! 🙏

Rav Kook Torah



by Rabbi Chanan Morrison
www.ravkooktorah.com

The Goal of Sacrifices

Summary: The offerings of Israel aspire to heightened realms of Divine providence and prophetic communion - unlike No'ach's offerings, which aimed only to preserve the physical world.

Sacrifices are not an innovation of the Jewish people. No'ach also

offered sacrifices to God. However, not all offerings are equal. The Midrash employs the following parable to illustrate this idea:

There was once a king who hired two chefs. The first chef cooked a meal that the king ate and enjoyed. Then the second chef cooked a meal that the king ate and enjoyed. How can we know which meal the king enjoyed more? When the king subsequently commanded the second chef, Make for me again the dish that you prepared, we realize that the second meal was the king's preferred dish.

In other words, by the fact that God commanded the Jewish people to offer sacrifices, we know that God prefers their offerings to those which No'ach initiated on his own accord.

But how do we evaluate the relative worth of different sacrifices? What distinguishes the service of Israel from that of No'ach?

Two Goals of Offerings

The key to assessing an offering is to examine its purpose. The more elevated the goal, the more acceptable the offering. No'ach's objective in offering sacrifices after the Flood was very different than that of the Jewish people. No'ach sought to preserve the physical world, to protect it from Divine retribution. No'ach's offerings achieved their goal - "God smelled the appeasing

fragrance and said to Himself, 'Never again will I curse the soil because of man'" (B'reishit 8:21).

The offerings of the Jewish people aspire to a far greater objective. Their goal is to enable Israel to merit heightened levels of Divine providence and prophecy. The Torah explicitly sets out the purpose of the Temple service: "Make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst" (Sh'mot 8:25).

Fragrance and Bread

The difference between No'ach's offerings and those of Israel is reflected in the metaphors that the Torah uses to describe them. No'ach's offerings had an "appeasing fragrance" (REI'ACH NICH'O'ACH), while those of Israel are referred to as "My bread" (LACHMI). What is the difference between a fragrance and food?

When an animal consumes vegetation, the plant life is absorbed into the animal and becomes part of it. In this way, the plant has attained a higher state of being. When a human consumes an animal, the animal is similarly elevated as it becomes part of that human being. This transformation to a higher state through consumption parallels bringing an offering with the objective of attaining a higher state of existence. The offerings of the Jewish people

are called "My bread", since the magnitude of change to which they aspire – perfection as prophetic beings – is similar to the transformations of plant to animal and animal to human.

The offerings of No'ach, on the other hand, had only an "appeasing fragrance". They produced a wonderful scent and appealed to the natural senses, but they did not attempt to effect a fundamental change in nature. Their purpose was to maintain the world, to refine humanity within the framework of its natural moral and intellectual capabilities.

In fact, the offerings of the Jewish people encompass both of these objectives. They are described both as "appeasing fragrance" and as "My bread," since we aspire to perfection in two areas – natural wisdom and Divine prophecy.

*Sapphire from the Land of Israel.
Adapted from Midbar Shur, pp. 155-158*

The Daily Portion - Sivan Rahav Meir

First of all – a term of endearment

We are on the eve of Pesach, and there are days filled with tasks, challenges and activity. How do you address someone when you ask them

for something? How do we begin to instruct our children, or make a request at work or at home?

This coming Shabbat, the Book of Vayikra will begin to be read in synagogues throughout the Jewish world. And before all the laws and instructions that fill this book, Rashi comments on the very first word – VAYIKRA ("And He called"). Before God gave Moshe any commands, He simply called out to him:

"Before every statement, every utterance, and every command – a calling came first, a term of endearment."

Before all the instructions and commandments, God calls to Moshe with warmth, with love, with gentleness. First comes closeness and a personal connection. Only afterward come dozens of commandments and detailed, practical instructions.

Our commentators explain: if this is how it is between God and Moshe – then surely this is how it should be for each and every one of us. We should lead with a warm and affectionate tone, even when saying difficult things, even when making requests.

You are invited to put this into practice right now.

Send your friends this link so that they can receive Sivan Rahav-Meir's content too: tiny.cc/DailyPortion



by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

VAYIKRa

The Right to Pray

Religion places great stress on prayer.

Much is said of the duty, the power and the vocabulary of prayer. But what about the right to pray? Am I entitled to offer prayer?

The Midrash recognises this problem when it notes that Vayikra ends, "If a person sins and deals deceitfully with his fellow in the matter of a deposit or pledge, or through robbery, then he shall restore that which he has taken", whilst Tzav begins:

"Command Aharon and his sons: This is the law of the burnt offering..."

The Midrash remarks that only if you have observed the first law can you carry out the second. Only if you have morally clean hands can you bring an offering to the Almighty.

In similar fashion, some siddurim begin with the verses, V'AHAVTA L'REI'ACHA KAMOCHA (Love your neighbour as yourself) and V'AHAVTA ET HASHEM ELOKECHA (Love the Lord your God); only if you have fulfilled the first can you hope to fulfil the second.

You have to earn the right to pray by first trying to live a life of integrity.

-OZ

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Sedra Highlight

- Dr Jacob Solomon

VAYIKRa

Sefer B'reishit is known as Sefer HaY'tzira, the Book of Creation, whose main content tells us of the lives and works of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, the three prototypes whose lives demonstrated the ideals of our people. Sefer Sh'mot is Sefer HaGeula, the Book of Redemption; physically, from slavery in Egypt, and spiritually, as the people who in their newly-found freedom chose the opportunity live by the Torah, the Creator's instructions. The brit, the Covenant, is that Am Yisrael in living according by the Torah will be bringing the Creation closer to the Almighty. In turn, the Almighty promises to give His special support and blessings. In due course, as Yeshayahu advocates, the ideals of Am Yisrael will inspire and get following from other nations and peoples.

Sefer Vayikra in turn goes under the name of Torat Kohanim, the laws appertaining to the Kohanim. This

appears strange at first glance. Firstly, although the Kohanim handle and due-process the various types of offerings, it is the people who bring them, and for that you not only don't need to be a kohen, but with some categories of korban you don't even need to be Jewish. In addition, the laws of kashrut, metzora, nida, shmita as well as gilui arayot (forbidden physical relationships) apply to all Klal Yisrael, kohen or not. Moreover, the prohibitions of gossip and lashon hara are equally relevant to everyone and are hallmarks of civilized and decent society and behaviour.

So as a possible approach, we, Am Yisrael, can consider our role as being kohanim within the wider Creation, irrespective of whether we are of kohen-linear ancestry or not. In receiving the Torah, G-d tells us that we are taking on the status of being a MAMLECHET KOHANIM V'GOI KADOSH, a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation. For in assiduously following the Torah's teachings, we perpetuate the work of our forefathers living in harmony with the Creation and thus we strive to live in harmony with the Creator. The entire Halachic framework may be seen in this light and although emphasized in this aspect by Chasidism and Kabbalists is actually fundamental to everything that we do. The observance of a mitzva creates resonance

with the Creation, and the opposite creates dissonance, a sense of being out of synch with the Creation. And, it follows, the act of sincere teshuva is one of restoring harmony within the Creation.

Let's take this idea a stage further. Nearly the entire content of Sefer Vayikra, a.k.a. Torat Kohanim defines our people's ideal way of life and its routines, day in and day out. Not only the korbanot, but Shabbat, Chagim, kashrut, taharat hamishpacha, and making sure that the poor are taken care of without impoverishing the better off. All these characterise the functioning of the MAMLECHET KOHANIM V'GOI KADOSH. But, as Sefer Vayikra strongly implies, the whole structure can only exist where the substratum of derech erez fully functions. We cannot be a goi kadosh without it. That includes taking a positive attitude towards the needs of those around us and further afield as far as suitable and possible, as well as correct behavior in personal and business relationships as guided by the Torah. For example a rich man cannot sleep with a commoner's wife and then make it up to the husband with financial compensation as was the common practice of other nations of the time. The Torah sets one standard incumbent on everyone, not one law for the privileged and another for everyone else. In that example, gilui arayot causes severe dissonance

in the Creation. Accepting that as reality is part of Kabbalat HaTorah whether we understand the reasons or not.

So in sum, Sefer Vayikra - a.k.a. Torat Kohanim - shows our people as a MAMLECHET KOHANIM V'GOI KADOSH what are the way-of-life practices that, when carried out correctly, bring resonance between the Creator to His People and ultimately, as kohanim to the world, to earn the respect and engage humanity at large. 🌿📖

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

Graciously shared with PhiloTorah

VAYIKRa

With the Holiday of Pesach approaching, we begin the third book of the Torah, Sefer Vayikra. The focus of this book is the commandments concerning Korbanot - the sacrifices offered in the sanctuary, brought from the animal, vegetable, and the mineral world. All brought on the Mizbei'ach.

The name Leviticus that means the laws of the tribe of Levi. The Talmud refers to it as Torat Kohanim, the laws of the kohanic family. The contemporary world negated the idea of animal sacrifices as too primitive.

Today, the remnants of the idea of sacrifices are limited to biblical references in our morning and Musaf tefilla. The medieval philosopher, Rambam, tried to see the biblical commandment of sacrifices as a concession to religious practices of the time.

Better to G-d, than to some idolatry and better a lamb and not a child. Rambam does not negate G-d's command in this area, but it is obvious that it is challenging to him.

However, I saw a very interesting idea that rejects Rambam's course of thinking. Perhaps, one can say that sacrifices are innately and intrinsically important in the Jewish worldview, though their purpose may be so subtle and hidden from all but the most committed. The actual biblical term used for sacrifice, KORBAN, is from the root, which means to approach or to come near. The purpose of our sacrifices is to bring man a little closer to G-d. Whatever is living or, for that manner, not living, animal or mineral, all of creation, all is His. That farmer who brings his lamb all the way to Jerusalem to offer to a G-d he cannot see, hear or understand, offering a part of himself translated as in two different ways.

The words in the verse can be ADAM KI YAKRIV MEIHEM (Vayikra 1:2)

"If one from among you shall

sacrifice" or it can be read "If one sacrifices, let it be of himself".

The entire animal in us brought upon the altar. The animal kingdom, created as it was for the service of humankind, reaches its highest level when it substitutes for all that is animal within man. Some see the Korban with symbolism.

Others see it as a stage in our spiritual development. Others request that we set aside our understanding all together.

Who is correct? Who grasps the real concept of sacrifices? We may need to wait until the Temple is rebuilt to fully understand.

The forthcoming Pesach Sacrifice brings the topic down to bear. Korbanot, in general, represents one of many areas in which we must surrender our complete understanding to the awesome mystery of the Creator of our Universe. Now, on the threshold of the Holiday of Pesach, the need to relinquish our intellect to the power of our Redeemer is clearer now than ever before. 🙏

The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

VAYIKRa 5783

Children

While Pesach is still some 2 weeks away, it is rather clear that the Book of Vayikra provides the broad biblical context for the Pesach festival. The Vayikra readings both precede and follow this holiday. Is this intersection of Pesach and Vayikra just coincidence or does it reflect some deeper idea?

In the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Pinchas 247), R. Dosah asks why the custom was to select the Book of Vayikra to begin the teaching of Chumash to youngsters. His answer was, "let the pure children come and study the subject matters of purity", (i.e., the sacrificial order and subsequent topics of tahara). Apparently, the study of Vayikra was linked with the child. And so too is Pesach.

When we consider the Pesach Seder, it is quite clear that children occupy a central role. Many of our customs were specifically designed to arouse the curiosity of the child and encourage the youngsters to ask questions. As the Talmud tells us in (Pesachim 114b-115a), the washing without a bracha (Urchatz), the Karpas, the various dippings, the hiding of the Afikoman, and the removing of the Seder Plate prior to

the Ma Nishtana, were all intended to keep the children awake and engaged in the Seder drama and accompanying activities; and then, of course, let's not forget the Ma Nishtana itself and the Four Children.

Rav Soloveitchik, however, suggests a far deeper message in this confluence of Pesach and the child.

One of the persistent dilemmas facing the religious adult is trying to deal with the jadedness and ennui that afflicts our mitzva observance. The feeling of "been there, done that" sadly empties our religious life of the spiritual excitement - the sheer awe that ought to accompany our sh'mirat hamitzvot. This is no more evident than at the Pesach Seder. Let us consider: as adults, will the Seder present us with anything new, some topic that we haven't already heard? We all know the story, and the rituals appear to hold no surprise for us whatsoever.

Rav Soloveitchik often speaks of our obligation to become "Gd intoxicated, Gd thirsty". The Torah calls upon us to seek HaShem, to search for Him, to yearn to connect with Him on the deepest of levels. Now, if you had to identify the one person whose entire persona displays that enthusiasm, that curiosity, that innocent astonishment, it would be the child. It is the child who proverbially asks, "Why is the sky blue?" For the child,

everything is new and fresh. A sense of wonder and amazement pervades his entire personality. For the young, life is a thrilling adventure with all sorts of discoveries beckoning.

The reason why children take center stage at the Seder is not merely to keep them occupied and involved. Rather, the child-focus signals a command to all adults to transform once again into a child. The mandate is not to become childish, but child-like. We are enjoined to connect with our inner-child and experience anew the beginnings of our becoming a people. We are invited to relive the great drama of the Exodus. We are called upon to suffer the pain of our ancestors' slavery in Egypt, and then to exult in the ecstasy of their redemption. We are told it is actually possible to re-experience this event which occurred thousands of years ago, that we can genuinely feel awash by its sacred history. By recapturing our youth, by becoming child-like again.

And so, both with the Book of Vayikra and the festival of Pesach, the image of the child is evoked. The time is Spring and the stirrings of youth are in the air. Is it realistic to think that an old man can become young again? Absolutely. The moment we allow the past to come alive and impact us, the instant we connect with our heritage, we are transformed and reinvigorated, and new beginnings await.

There is something else we can learn from the child. When a child gets bruised, he may cry a bit but then immediately recovers and moves on. He forgets the hurt, begins to smile and looks to his next adventure. Not always so when we mature.

Very often, as adults, when we stumble and fall, when we struggle and fail, depression sets in. We feel overwhelmed, and we find it difficult to pick ourselves up and move forward. But if the adult has never lost his child-like essence, then no matter the setbacks, no matter the difficulties, he will rebound with vigor and resolve. Nothing can defeat his determination to look toward the promise of new tomorrows with exciting possibilities. Just like the child!

Spiritual Awareness

As we begin our study of the korbanot in Vayikra, it is worth noting that for the most part, the Sin and Guilt offerings (Korban Chatat and Asham) could not be brought for the intentional violation of any mitzva. Only if as a result of plain negligence, a sin was committed, can a sacrifice atone for the error. How may we understand this ritual solution for such mistakes?

There is a reason why people are negligent. Shogeg (negligence) happens because a person is simply

careless about his/her behavior. He demonstrates a lack of awareness, seemingly oblivious or blissfully ignorant about the consequences of his actions. With such insensitivity, the person will inevitably transgress, not flagrantly, but inadvertently. To such an individual, the Torah said: "Bring a korban and you will be forgiven." How, though, does a sacrifice prevent such future negligence?

When the sacrifice was brought, its owner was required to clearly articulate and confess the sin in the presence of the kohanim. The animal was then sacrificed, and - as Ramban (1:9) understood it - with each stage of the offering, the person was to vicariously see himself as the korban, with the animal a mere substitution. Thus, the very experience of the entire sacrificial ritual left a powerful impression on the person. His spiritual awareness would now be heightened. His religious and ethical consciousness would be sensitized. In a word, he/she would probably not make the same mistake again.

Today, sadly, there is no Beit HaMikdash and no sacrifices, but we can help cure our religious and ethical negligence by deepening our awareness about the right and good through study and prayer. Think about it: The more we are informed through study and the more we are sensitized through heartfelt prayer,

the importance of not "messaging up", the better we become - the greater!

And when we engage in and sacrifice for such study and prayer, we are gifted with the same thrilling reward enjoyed by our ancestors in Temple days. HaShem visits us; He comes close to us (karov - korban), and we are forgiven. 🙏



GM VAYIKRA

One of the nail-biting p'sukim in the parsha of the Akeida (even if you already know how it ends) is B'reishit 22:9 in Parshat Vayeira -

וַיִּבְנוּ אֶל־הַמִּקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לוֹ
הַאֱלֹהִים וַיָּבֵן שָׁם אֲבֹרָהֶם
אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד
אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
בַּמּוֹעֵד לְעֹשֶׂים:

When they finally came to the place designated by God, Avraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood. He then bound his son Yitzchak, and placed him on the altar on top of the wood.

Don't try that at home - as the expression goes. It was a one-time episode in the lives of Avraham and Yitzchak - never to be repeated. But with tremendous lessons for their offspring, throughout the generations. The pasuk does have an interesting GM at 5359 - which relates to korbanot that we are commanded to bring, over and over again -

וְכָל־קָרְבַּן מִנְזוֹתֶיךָ בַּמֶּלֶחַח תִּמְלֹחֻהוּ וְלֹא
תִּשְׁכַּחַת בְּמֶלֶחַח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַל
מִנְזוֹתֶיךָ עַל כָּל־קָרְבָּנֶךָ תִּקְרִיב בְּמֶלֶחַח:

Moreover, you must salt every meal offering. Do not leave out the salt of your God's covenant from your meal offerings. [Furthermore,] you must [also] offer salt with your animal sacrifices.

That's more like it. Which is why the Akeida was a supreme test of Avraham's faith.

USFUNEI T'MUNEI CHOL is the title of my book of Gimatriya Matches - IY"H and BE"H. The title translates to Hidden in the Sand. That's how I feel about my Gimatriya searches. Like walking along the beach with a metal detector. Beep-beep-beep. Lean down and find something. Usually, nothing of note. But sometimes you find something special.

RED ALERT!

VAYIKRa

*by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -
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DIVREI TORAH

- The first subject described in this Parsha is the Olah, the whole burnt offering that is totally consumed by the fire on the Outer Altar. The Torah does not detail why the donor is offering this sacrifice. Our Sages itemize four different occasions for which someone would bring an Olah, and they all boil down to someone who wants to raise his spiritual level. Rav Hirsch understands the Olah name reflects the meaning of the Hebrew word Olah, to go up. The donor wishes to elevate himself in the spiritual area. Three of the four reasons that our Sages itemize are sinful thoughts that the donor has, and these sinful thoughts have prevented him from becoming closer to Hashem. Hence he has come to desire to offer this sacrifice.

- The Torah gives us three categories of Olah offerings: cattle, sheep, or fowl. The bird sacrifice was reserved for a person who could not afford an animal. If a wealthy person brought a bird offering, it would not result in his gaining any atonement for his sinful thoughts. It is Hashem who makes this decision as to the acceptability

of the offering. The same is true about the next mentioned offering: the Mincha, the meal offering, which also is reserved for the person who cannot afford even the bird sacrifice. No one stands at the door of the Mishkan or at the Beit aMkdash, to examine the financial status of the donor. This is strictly between the donor and Hashem. [Later in the Torah, when we are dealing with a mandatory Chatat, sin offering, then a Kohanic evaluation of the financial status of the donor comes into play!]

- When discussing the Olah, the Torah uses the word ADAM for the word Man instead of the normal word ISH. Rashi comments that just as ADAM, the first man, did not offer a stolen animal for a sacrifice, so are we required to acquire our animal sacrifices in an honest fashion. I would suggest a different thought in this regard. Just as Adam was not permitted to eat meat, so too was no human permitted to eat from the Olah sacrifice. That was the case. The entire animal was consumed by the fire on the Outer Altar. Neither the donor nor any of the Kohanim were permitted to eat the meat. [Note: Tosefot wrote that Adam was not permitted to kill an animal, but if he found a dead animal in the field, he was permitted to eat the meat. There is also a Midrash that states that angels would grill meat in the Garden of Eden and make wine for Adam to eat heartily in the Garden.]

- Salt. The need for salt in the sacrificial world sparks some interesting comments from classical commentators. The Ramban states that salt has primarily two consequences. One is that it destroys plants, preventing them from growing. The other property that it possesses is that it preserves food. So it has positive and negative features. Ramban applies these properties to the Jewish nation. The Covenant of Salt can help preserve Israel, and if used incorrectly it can be destructive. Salt (sodium chloride) is vital for the human body. It conducts nerve impulses, contracting muscles and balances fluids. Yet, if one consumes too much salt, it causes fluid retention leading to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and kidney damage. This dual capacity that salt possesses is critical knowledge for humans. Hashem dictates the Covenant of Salt to make us aware of our usage of salt in our lives.

- The Sh'lamim (Peace Offering) is unique because of the amount of meat that is given to the donor. The meat must be eaten on the day that it is offered and the following day, up to the following night. Any meat left over to the third day must be burned, wasted. So if a person offered a bull for his Sh'lamim sacrifice, he better have scheduled a major meat meal for

his family and friends. One bull will provide a great deal of meat. In an article published by the Star K, the author noted that each Pesach sacrifice was a young lamb. Its meat is tasty and gives off a pleasant aroma. Mutton is from an older lamb and smells terrible when grilled. The Torah knew its meat when directing us what to sacrifice! But bear in mind that Rashi comments elsewhere that eating meat is reserved to those who can afford it.

- When the Torah commands us to slaughter a Chatat, Sin offering, it says that we should slaughter the animal in the same place that we slaughtered the Olah, Whole Burnt offering. Rav Moshe Feinstein connected these two offerings in the following way. Each of these sacrifices is connected with sin. The donor is not allowed to eat from either sacrifice. Man's mission in this world is to live a life of holiness. Sin represents a failure in this mission. He has failed to elevate his life with the infusion of holiness. Hence he may not eat of either sacrifice. In the Sin offering, he sees the Kohanim eat from it, with holiness. Taking Rav Moshe's words to another level: We are expected to elevate our meals to a Seudat Mitzva by adding a Dvar Torah to our meals. In this way we raise our standard of life to include sanctity. We eat food, which gives sustenance to our bodies, and at the

same time, gives sustenance to our souls.

- Leaning on the animal is a ritual that is required in sacrifices, confessing our sins in the process. This is understood by commentators that the donor is projecting his life into the life of the animal. He should recognize that perhaps he should be the one to be slaughtered for his sin. Instead he is given the opportunity to offer an animal in his place. This is similar to the scene of the Akeida, the aborted sacrifice of Yitzchak, where a ram was offered in his place. A meaningful Leaning should result in this confession of what he has done wrong. In the case of a Sh'lamim, where there was no sin, he should have in mind as he leans on the animal that he is celebrating Hashem's Grace that he has experienced. Hashem has exhibited a form of Grace, where He has possibly granted us success in a case where maybe we did not deserve it.

- MIDRASH. Once a woman brought a handful of fine flour, and the Kohen disliked her, saying: What is there in this to offer up? What is there in this to eat? It was shown to him in a dream. Do not despise her! It is regarded as if she has sacrificed her own life. This is what is meant by calling the donor a NEFESH, for he was offering up his own life.

Questions by RED

From the text

1. Name the five sacrifices mentioned in this Sidra.
2. There are several Biblical names for Hashem in the Torah. Which name is used exclusively for Hashem for the discussion of sacrifices? (1:1...)
3. What must be placed on every Mincha - meal offering? (2:13)
4. What is the main difference between the first three sacrifices mentioned and the Sin and Guilt sacrifices mentioned last?
5. If a ruler of Israel sins accidentally, what kind of animal does he offer? (4:23)

From Rashi

6. What is learned from the Torah's use of the word ADAM instead of ISH, both meaning person? (1:2)
7. A donor brings a sacrifice, who slaughters the animal? (1:5)
8. Why is a Peace offering referred to as a Sh'lamim? (3:1)
9. Why were the barley kernels parched slightly over fire? (2:14)
10. For what sin is a Sin offering (CHATAT) brought? (4:2)

From the Rabbis

11. What is the root meaning of the word Korban, sacrifice? (Hirsch)

12. Why is the letter ALEF in the word VAYIKRa written smaller than regular? (Baal HaTurim)

13. Why is the Peace offering the only sacrifice which uses the term ZEVACH, slaughter? (Hirsch)

From the Midrash

14. The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 3:6) states that when a person brings a Mincha, meal offering, many Kohanim shall work on it. What is the Midrash teaching us?

Haftara - Yishayahu

15. What will happen when Bnei Yisrael repents?

Relationships

- a) Elazar - Itamar
- b) Avihu - Eliezer
- c) Aharon - Kalev
- d) Nachshon - Nadav
- e) Aminadav - Elisheva

ANSWERS

1. Olah (whole burnt offering), Minchah (meal offering), Sh'lamim (thanksgiving or peace offering), Chatat (sin offering), and Asham (guilt offering).
2. The Y-H-V-H, the name of a merciful Hashem.
3. Salt.
4. The first three are voluntary; the last two are obligatory.
5. A male goat.
6. Just as Adam brought offerings that were his (he didn't steal them), so, too, we must bring animals that were acquired honestly.
7. Anyone (male, over 13 years old) may slaughter the animal.
8. This sacrifice brings peace to the world. It brings portions to the Altar, to the Kohanim, and to the donor.
9. So that they can be ground easily.
10. It is for a sin done accidentally. If done on purpose, the punishment is lashes, or Kareit.
11. Korban is KAROV, to be near i.e. a sacrifice is meant to bring the donor close to Hashem.
12. To show Moshe's humility. Moshe wanted to write the word VAYKAR which means by chance. Hashem wanted the word VAYIKRA meaning with affection.

13. Rashi translates the word ZEVACH to mean a feast. Hirsch wrote that the donor would invite his family and friends to eat a big meal with him, at which time he would praise Hashem.

14. That even a poor person's meager offering commands many Kohanim, showing the offering's importance.

15. Hashem will erase our sins.

Relationships

- a) Brothers
- b) First Cousins
- c) Brothers-in-Law
- d) Uncle & Nephew
- e) Father & Daughter