

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 10 Nissan 5786,
Shabbat HaGadol, corresponding to March 28, 2026.

TORAH DIALOGUE

(p. 429 Hz) (p. 631 S) (p. 393 Hi)

TZAV יצ

[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis]

1. In the opening of this Sidrah, Hashem tells Moshe to COMMAND Aharon and his sons...(6:1). Rashi comments on the usage of the word “command,” which seems to be a stronger verb. This is to strengthen the message, since there will be a financial loss to the Kohanim when they work with the Olah (whole burnt) sacrifice. The Chizkuni explains that the financial loss here is in the case that the Kohen does something that invalidates this sacrifice, thereby causing a financial loss to the donor. Later when the Torah tells the Kohanim to bring a meal offering, it does not use the word command because since the Kohen is bringing his own meal offering, he will be careful not to err. And he definitely will not be causing any financial loss to others.

2. The Torah states that “in the place where the Olah is slaughtered, shall the Sin Offering be slaughtered.” (6:18). I always thought that the Torah was purposefully hiding the identity of the sinner. When we see the animal being sacrificed, we don’t know if it is an Olah or a Chattat (Sin Offering). This is said in the Talmud, Sotah 32. The Oznam LaTorah explains that when a person brings a Sin Offering to the Kohen, he must tell the Kohen the nature of the sin committed, necessitating this sacrifice. The Torah is instructing the Kohen not to reveal to anyone the nature of the sin committed. The Torah is protecting the donor from any embarrassment. Anybody who sees the slaughtering would assume that the donor is sacrificing an Olah (Whole Burnt) offering and not a sin offering.

3. There were 24 Houses of Kohanim that took turns in rotation serving in the Temple, one House each week. If the sin offerings were animals or birds, the meat was divided among all the Kohanim of that House. If the sin offerings were of flour, the flour was divided among them. In the case of animal offerings, the hides were divided among the Mishmar (all the Kohanim on duty that day.). Elsewhere in the Mishnah where it identifies these Houses of Kohanim by name, it mentions one House that specialized in medicines for abdominal ailments. The reason for that is that the Kohanim served in the Temple barefooted (must have been very cold during the winter months) and combined with a very meat-heavy diet is a recipe

for stomach issues. (Thank you, Lenny). We see a unique issue in life at the Temple.

4. Not all Kohanim were privileged to serve in the Temple. Those who were Tamei (impure) became impure due to something they did. Therefore they were not allowed to eat of any of the Kohanic gifts that were the result of the sacrificial ritual. But a Kohen who was disqualified because of some physical deformity could still work in some minor area in the Temple. He could partake of the meats, flour, and hides that were available to the Kohanim in his House. And when we consider the time restriction for eating sacrificial meat, it meant that all of these available Kohanim had to partake immediately in those Kohanic gifts, since once the next morning came, the leftover meats were burnt and destroyed.

5. The Thanksgiving offering was unique in the sense that most of the meat was given to the donor. Again, when we consider the time allowed to consume the meat, the donor needed to invite family and friends to participate in the Thanksgiving banquet, whereby the donor would be available to tell his invitees of the miracle or goodness that Hashem did for him. Rashi informs us of the people who were required to give such an offering: seafarers, desert travelers, captives who were freed, and those who were sick and then recovered. [RED’s note: These four categories of people are the same people who, today, are required to Bench Gomerl.]. When the host of this banquet would relate to all the event that propelled him to offer this sacrifice, he should also include any other miracles that Hashem has performed in his behalf. The donor is also permitted to offer this sacrifice because of some other good tidings that have occurred in his life for which he feels the need to thank Hashem.

6. The main purpose of this offering is to give the donor the opportunity to say thank you to Hashem for the good done for him in his life. Additional to the meat there were forty loaves of bread. All of this food had to be consumed before the next morning. Leftovers were destroyed. Hashem wanted him to make a big meal to publicize his good fortune and to praise Hashem publicly for what Hashem did for him. The banquet should have ended before nightfall, but Hashem extended the time limit to the next morning in order that he would not have to rush the dinner along. [RED’s note: The Torah Temimah wrote that there were two definitions of a DAY in Judaism. There is the normal Biblical definition And it was evening and (then) morning, one day. There is another definition. The day in the Temple was morning followed by the evening, as we see in the time for eating a sacrifice.

Also in making a Blessing for learning Torah. It is also morning followed by evening.]

7. Sustaining the Kohanic families fell upon the nation to give certain gifts to the Kohanim (and Leviyim). It was in essence required of the Levitical family to go from silo to silo to make a living. They were given the encouragement and persuasion to do this from these descriptions in the Torah. These Levitical families did not possess a family heritage in Eretz Yisrael. The Torah tells us of the 48 Levitical cities given to these families spread out in Eretz Yisrael. 42 cities and the 6 Cities of Refuge. Rabinically, we are informed that there were Kohanic cities in Eretz Yisrael. We possess only one place in all of Rabbinic literature that lists all these Kohanic cities. In the Ashkenazic version of Kinot on Tisha B'Av morning, written by R. Elazar HaKalir, there is one Kinah which lists them all.

8. MIDRASH. Rav Huna said two things. The first was that all the Exiles will be gathered back to Israel through the merit of the study of Mishnah. The second was that when Hashem sees that Bnei Yisrael are engaged in the study of Mishnah, it is as if we were offering up sacrifices.

QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT TZAV 5786

I. From the Text

1. What is the first Mitzvah that the Kohen performs each day? (6:3)
2. What did the Kohen need to do before taking the ashes to outside of the camp? (6:4)
3. Where was the Chattat (sin offering) slaughtered? (6:18)
4. For how long may a donor eat his Shelamim (Peace/Thanksgiving offering)? (7:16,17)
5. What punishment is given to a person who ate his Shelamim offering while he was Tamei (impure)? (7:20)

II. From Rashi

6. Why did the Kohen need to change his clothes before taking out the ashes? (6:4)
7. How often did a regular Kohen and the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) bring a Minchah (Meal offering) (6:13)
8. Who was allowed to eat of a Shelamim sacrifice and where may he eat it? (7:19)
9. What was in the Urim V' Tumim? (8:8)
10. What clothing did Moshe wear during the seven day consecration period of the Kohanim? (8:28)

III. From the Rabbis

11. What kind of monetary loss is there in offering the daily Tamid sacrifice? (Gur Aryeh)
12. How much wood would the Kohen add to the Altar fire each morning? (Yoma 27b)
13. Who was allowed to slaughter the animal for a sacrifice? (Sifra)

IV. Midrash

14. For how many years was the Altar of Moshe's Mishkan used continuously (with the fire burning the whole time)?

V. Haftorah. Shabbat HaGadol. Malachi

15. Who will herald the coming of the Mashiach?

VI. Relationships

16.
 - a) Nadav - Itamar
 - b) Lemech - Shem
 - c) Dinah - Menasheh
 - d) Levi - Moshe
 - e) Yehudah - Chetzron

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT TZAV 5786

1. Terumat HaDeshen. Removing the ashes from the Outer Altar.
2. He had to take off his Kohanic clothes and put on older, more worn-out Kohanic clothes.
3. In the same place that the Olah (Whole-Burnt offering) was slaughtered. North of the Altar.
4. For two days.
5. Karet: premature death
6. The Kohen did not want to dirty his regular Kohanic clothing.
7. Regular Kohen: once, on the first day that he served in the Holy Temple. Kohen Gadol: Every day in his career.
8. Anybody may eat it, anywhere in the city of Yerushalayim.
9. A slip of parchment upon which was written the secret name of Hashem.
10. The white clothing of a regular Kohen.
11. The Kohanim performing the ritual sacrifice got no meat in return for their work.
12. Two logs of wood.
13. Anyone, even a non-Kohen, a woman, a convert, or a gentile slave of Jews.
14. For 116 years (39 years in the desert, 14 in Gilgal, 13 in Nov, and 50 in Givon.)
15. The prophet Eliyahu.
16.
 - a) Siblings
 - b) Grandfather Lemech
 - c) Aunt Dinah
 - d) Grandfather Levi (through Yocheved, Levi's daughter)
 - e) Grandfather Yehudah

Torah Dialogue Sponsors: Edward & Jamie Czinn
 in memory of his sister, Aliza Czinn Sherman - Liebat Bunem Tzvi z"l