

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 3 Nissan 5786, corresponding to March 21, 2026.

TORAH DIALOGUE
(p. 410 Hz) (p. 605 S) (p. 371 Hi) (p. 544 AS)

VAYIKRA ויקרא

Leviticus 1:1

[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis]

1. The first subject described in this Parshah 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 give this sacrifice, 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.

2. 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 Minchah, 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 Temple, 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!]

3. 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. [RED's note: Tosfot 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.]

4. 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.

5. The Shelamim (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 Shelamim 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! The bottom line is that Hashem must love a barbecue! But bear in mind that Rashi comments elsewhere that eating meat is reserved to those who can afford it.

6. 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 from 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 Mitzvah 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.

7. 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 Akeidah, 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 Shelamim, 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.

8. 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 FOR PARSHAT VAYIKRA 5786

I. From the Text

1. Name the five sacrifices mentioned in this Sidrah.
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 Minchah - 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)

III. From the Rabbis

11. What is the root meaning of the word Korban, sacrifice? (Hirsch)
 12. Why is the letter Aleph in the word VAYIKRa written with a small Aleph? (Baal HaTurim)
 13. Why is the Peace offering the only sacrifice which uses the term Zevach, slaughter? (Hirsch)
- IV. Midrash
14. The Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 3:6) states that when a person brings a Minchah, meal offering, many Kohanim shall work on it. What is the Midrash teaching us?
- V. Haftarah. Isaiah
15. What will happen when Bnei Yisrael repents?
- VI. Relationships
- a) Elazar - Itamar
 - b) Avihu - Eliezer
 - c) Aharon - Calev
 - d) Nachshon - Nadav
 - e) Aminadav - Elisheva

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT VAYIKRA 5786

1. Olah (whole burnt offering), Minchah (meal offering), Shelamim (thanksgiving or peace offering), Chattat (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 Vayikar 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 Nachshon
 - e) Father Aminadav