

OHRNET

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NUMBER ONE

The first word of the Book of Vayikra/Leviticus is “*Vayikra*” (*And he called*). It is written in the Torah with a small *Aleph*. The *Aleph* is the letter that represents the will, the ego. It is the first letter of the word for “I” - ‘*Ani*’. When a person sees himself as being very small, like that small *Aleph*, then he makes room for the Divine Presence to dwell in him. His head is not swollen with the cotton-candy of self-regard. Moshe Rabbeinu was the humblest of all men. Moshe made of himself so little that he was barely in this world at all. He, as no man before or since, saw that there is only one *Aleph* in all of creation - only one Number One - Hashem. Moshe made his own *Aleph* - his ego - so small, that he merited that the Torah was given via him. To Moshe, Hashem ‘called’ - “*Vayikra...*”

• Based on Reb Bunim of P’shische

PLEASE WAIT HERE

“*Vayikra...*” (1:1)

The word “*Vayikra*” implies that Hashem called to Moshe with affection, just as the angels call to one another. Hashem called, and Moshe came. But when *Bilam*, the Midianite prophet, wanted to curse the Jewish People, the Torah says that **Hashem went to him**. If Moshe went to Hashem, surely all the more so Bilam should have gone to Hashem. So why did Hashem go to Bilam? The answer

INSIGHTS

is that when you receive an important guest, he is ushered into the sitting-room, but when the garbage man comes to the door, you go out to him so that your home doesn’t smell like a trash can!

CLOSENESS

“*When a man from among you will bring a korban...*” (1:2)

Closeness and distance are not necessarily measured in meters or miles, for people can

“*When a person sees himself as being very small, like that small aleph, then he makes it possible for the Divine Presence to dwell in him.*”

be close even when they are on different sides of the world, and they can be distant even though they may be sitting next to each other on a bus or living in the same house. Closeness is spiritual; part of the internal life.

We have no word in the English language to express the meaning of the *korbanos* which were brought in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The word ‘sacrifice’ implies that I am giving something up that is of value to me so that the other person will benefit. Obviously, Hashem cannot benefit from ‘sacrifices’, for He lacks nothing. ‘Sacrifice’ also implies having to do

without something of value. In point of fact, what we gain from the ‘sacrifice’ is infinitely more valuable than the ‘sacrifice’. The word ‘offering’ is also inaccurate: The idea of an ‘offering’ is that it appeases the one to whom it is brought. It’s like ‘buying someone off.’ A kind of bribery. The reason that we have a problem translating the word ‘*korban*’ into English, is that our ideas of ‘sacrifices’ and ‘offerings’ derive from pagan cultures. Indeed, in those cultures, the word ‘sacrifice’ and ‘offering’ were apt and accurate.

The root of the word *korban* is the same as the word ‘closeness’. It is used exclusively in relation to Man’s relationship with Hashem.

When a person brought a *korban*, he wanted to bring himself close to G-d. Being close to Hashem is the only real ‘good’ that exists. All other ‘goods’ are pale imitations, like worthless forgeries, compared to the real Good of being close to G-d. In the halls of Heaven, the problems of life solve themselves. Happiness is a barometer which rises and falls corresponding to one’s closeness to G-d. In the minds of those who have refined themselves, even suffering can become exalted to happiness when one is near to Hashem.

Today when we no longer have the closeness to Hashem that *korbanos* gave us, we still have its substitute - prayer. When we pour out our hearts in prayer, when we offer ourselves up to Hashem, we bring close both ourselves, and the world with us, to our Father in Heaven.

• Based on Rabbi S. R. Hirsch, Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin

The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus) which we start reading this week, is also known as *Toras Kohanim* – the Laws of the Priests. It deals largely with the *korbanos* (offerings) that are brought in the *Mishkan* (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings are called “*Olot*”, burnt offerings. The animal is brought to the entrance of the *Mishkan*. Regarding cattle, the one who brought the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the *Kohen* sprinkles its blood on the Altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the Altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of these are

OVERVIEW

burned on the altar, and the remainder is eaten by the *Kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the Altar and part eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or “*Cheilev*” (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins — committed by the *Kohen Gadol*, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen — are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the “questionable guilt” offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.



...כי אשמרה שבת...

KI ESHMERAH SHABBOS
"IF WE OBSERVE SHABBOS..."

"I shall study the Torah of Hashem
and it shall make me wise"

"When Jews will enter their land," complained the Torah to Hashem, "this one will run to his vineyard and the other to his field - and what will happen with me?" "Fear not" came the divine reassurance, "I have a mate for you whose name is Shabbos. On that day they will be free from their labors and will be able to study you." This *Midrash*, quoted by *Tur, Orach Chaim* 290, expresses the unusual opportunity given to a Jew who is too busy to study as much Torah as he would like during the week. By demonstrating on Shabbos that we learn whenever we have the opportunity we get credit as if we were studying Torah all week long.



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Just send your question using E-Mail to "ohr@jer1.co.il" and set the subject to "ASK THE RABBI".

We can't include all questions submitted in the column, but we do try to respond to everyone personally.

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PLEASE TREAT IT WITH DUE RESPECT.

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PARENTS WITH BREAD

Elon (not real name) <@telecomm.tadiran.co.il>
from Jerusalem wrote:

I am living with my parents now and they do not keep mitzvot nor Shabbat nor the holidays. They are respectful but they just don't know and can't be bothered to learn. Pesach is coming up. I am trying to arrange with them to go out to a kosher Hotel for the first two nights (including the Seder - hope that works out) but as far as cleaning for Pesach I don't know what to do. My parents may/may not want to clean up, and even if we try to, I'm convinced they will bring chametz [leaven] in at some point (knowingly or not).

Dear Elon,

The Torah prohibits owning chametz on Pesach. This is derived from the verse "Nothing leavened should be seen in your possession."

This prohibition applies only to chametz which you own. It does not apply to someone else's chametz — even if it's in your house.

Assuming that your parents own (or rent) the house and assuming that all the chametz in the house belongs to them, then it is their responsibility to get rid of the chametz, not yours.

Of course, chametz which you personally own you have to get rid of before Pesach. Also, any of your personal belongings in which you might put chametz require a pre-Pesach search. For example, pockets and knapsacks should be checked for forgotten candy bars or half-eaten sandwiches.

But since you are a 'guest' in your parents home — i.e., you have no ownership or legal rights over your room — you wouldn't say the blessing when searching for chametz.

I spoke to Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg, *shlita*, and he said that a child may stay at his parents home for Pesach even if they haven't removed their chametz.

The best scenario would be if you could agree with your parents to keep the house chametz-free. That way, your parents will be doing a mitzvah, and also, neither you nor your parents will accidentally eat any chametz. But this *must* all be done in a way that causes no friction between you and your parents and conveys no disrespect to them whatsoever.

You mentioned 'the first two nights' of Yom Tov. Since you live in Israel, you should consult a halachic authority concerning how many days of Yom Tov to observe.

Wishing you a *Chag Kasher V'Somayach!*

Sources:

- Exodus 13:17, Tractate Pesachim 5b
- Chayei Adam 119:18, Chok Yaakov Orach Chaim 436



• After the Return, Rabbi Mordechai Becher and Rabbi Moshe Newman, p. 80

HEAVENLY JOURNEY

<NerNCSY@aol.com> wrote:

There is a version of the Tefillat Haderech [traveler's prayer] for regular travel and a version for flying in an airplane. When you fly are you supposed to say both?

Dear <NerNCSY@aol.com>

Someone who sets out on a journey says Tefillat Haderech — the traveler's prayer. Tefillat Haderech is a prayer asking Hashem to protect us from 'accidents, wild animals, bandits, and all types of calamities that befall the world.'

When the Sages composed this prayer, different methods of travel existed — e.g., travel by foot, coach or ship. Each type of travel had it's own particular perils. Nevertheless, the Sages did not differentiate, composing only one version of the prayer for all the different types of travel.

The original version of Tefillat Haderech is as relevant to air travel as it is to travel by ship at sea, and therefore there's no need for an airplane version. So although there is a widespread custom to add a supplemental prayer for air travel, there's no need to do so.

Concerning cars: Someone once asked his rabbi why, in our day, we pray for protection from 'wild beasts' when traveling by car? From which 'wild beasts' do we need protection? "The other drivers," the rabbi answered.

And speaking of air travel: An 'entrepreneur' chartered a passenger plane to a far away island. "Big Iron Bird will fly you to beautiful land," he told the inhabitants, who climbed excitedly aboard the 'Big Iron Bird.'

When the plane began experiencing turbulence, he told the frightened passengers, "Iron Bird is hungry! Iron Bird needs gold to eat! Or else Iron Bird will fall down!" He walked up and down the aisle with a sack into which everyone emptied all their gold. Soon the sack was brimming with coins, rings and ornaments.

One of the passengers sighed as he placed into the sack a jewel-studded necklace worth \$300.

"Jarunx!" said the person next to him, "Such a great loss!"

"Yeah," said the man. "And just think, British Airways has the same flight for \$269 plus mileage perks!"

"ASK THE RABBI"
will be on leave during
the Pesach Holiday.
Please look for the
next column after Pesach.

TO OUR OHRNET READERS
The next issue of OHRNET will be a special for
Pesach and will be distributed Shabbos Hagadol.
Look for the next issue of OHRNET after Pesach.
Chag Kasher V'somayach!

WHEN BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER

THE RULE:

Blood of a sacrifice mingles with water. If the mixture still retains the color of blood, even though the majority is water, it is still considered valid for sprinkling on the altar

THE EXCEPTION:

This is true only if the water fell into the blood. If the blood fell into the water, however, each drop lost its status as sacrificial blood when it lost its color and cannot regain this status even when it is joined by the following drops in transforming the color of the mixture.

THE PARALLEL:

The blood of a fowl slaughtered not for sacrificial purpose must be covered with earth and a blessing is made before covering it as in the case of every mitzvah.

THE QUESTIONS:

What if the fowl's blood mingles with water? Will the same distinction apply as in the case of the sacrifice?

THE ANSWER:

Rabbi Papa rules that in regard to the mitzvah of covering the blood it will still be incumbent on the slaughterer even if the blood fell into the water. The sacred status of **sacrificial** blood is lost forever once it was at a stage where its color disqualified it from the service. However, in

regard to *mitzvos*, there is an unresolved question in the Talmud as to whether temporary disqualification creates permanent rejection. As is the case of every Torah law we must take a stringent approach and perform the *mitzvah* of covering the blood even if the obligation is in doubt. The commentaries point out that there will still be a practical difference whether the blood fell into the water or vice versa. When blood falls into water there is a doubt as to whether it has been permanently disqualified so even though we perform the mitzvah out of doubt we do not make a blessing in such a case since a blessing is never made in the case of

The *asham taluy* is mentioned in *Vayikra* 5:17-19. It is a sacrifice brought by a Jew who has some doubt as to whether he actually committed a sin involuntarily. The classical case is where he has before him two pieces of fatty meat, one which is kosher and the other forbidden with a penalty of *karet* (early death). He is unaware that either of them is forbidden and eats one of them. He subsequently learns that one of them was indeed forbidden, but he is unaware which of them he ate. He brings an *asham taluy* (a doubtful sin-offering) until he can determine whether he actually ate the forbidden piece involuntarily and then he must bring a regular *chatass* sin offering.

Rabbi Eliezer reasons that the *asham taluy* cannot be viewed as a mandatory sacrifice, because if it were it would achieve the necessary atonement and render superfluous the bringing of a *chatass* at a later stage. He therefore rules that a man may voluntarily offer an *asham taluy* every day just in case he may have involuntarily sinned even if he is not aware of such a circumstance.

His view is rejected, however, because we do not find any sin offering offered voluntarily. The reason why a person is required to bring such a sacrifice before he is certain that he ate the forbidden meat is that the Torah had pity on the involuntary sinner and gave him the opportunity to gain the protection of a sacrifice against any suffering which he may deserve for his carelessness until he determines that he actually committed the involuntary sin and then achieves the absolute atonement of the *chatass*.

• Zevachim 77a



Insights, explanations and comments for the seven pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle.

doubt. If the water falls into blood and the mixture retains the color of blood it is covered with a blessing because then the obligation is an unquestioned one.

• Zevachim 78a

THE DUBIOUS SINNER

The position of Rabbi Eliezer on the sacrifice known as *asham taluy* is cited by the Talmud and a suggestion is made that the opinion which disagrees with him (and the one which is accepted by the *Halacha*) is that of Rabbi Shimon.

1. Why did Hashem "call" to Moshe as an introduction to a new communication?
2. May a non-Kohen assist in bringing an animal *Korban*?
3. The *Kohanim* were commanded to bring fire on the *Mizbe'ach*. From where else did the fire come?
4. At what stage of their development are *turim* (turtledoves) and *bnai yona* (young pigeons) unfit as *Korbanos*?
5. How does the *Kohen* slaughter a bird offering?
6. Why does the Torah use the term "nefesh" (soul) in connection with the bringing of a *Minchah* (meal) "free-will offering"?
7. When a person vows to offer a *Minchah*, what must he bring?
8. How much of the free-will *Minchah* offering is burned on the *Mizbe'ach*?
9. May a non-Kohen assist in a *Minchah* offering?
10. When does the Torah permit the bringing of leavened bread as an offering?
11. What kind of grain comprised the meal offering of the *Omer* (first offering of the new grain-crop)?
12. Why is the peace offering called a "*Shlamim*"?
13. For most *Korbanos*, the *Kohen* may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the *Mizbe'ach*. For which *Korban* may he apply the blood only with his finger?
14. Who is obligated to bring a *Chatass* (sin offering)?
15. The Torah says that if the entire congregation of Israel errs and a sin results, then an offering has to be brought. Who is the "entire congregation of Israel"?
16. For which sins is one obligated to bring a *Korban Oleh V'yored*?
17. How does a flour sin-offering differ from a *Minchah* offering?
18. What is the minimum value of a *Korban Asham*?
19. When a person misuses holy property, how much must he pay to reimburse the Temple treasury?
20. Who is required to bring a *Korban Asham*?



I Didn't Know That!

Offerings have to be brought without any blemishes. The unblemished state of an offering symbolizes that when a Jew seeks to come closer to Hashem, he should do so with all of his faculties, with nothing omitted.

• Rabbi S. R. Hirsch

Bonus Question ?

The only Name of Hashem that is used throughout the Torah in connection with animal sacrifices is the 4 letter Name - the Name representing His attribute of Mercy. Why is only this Name used?

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated.

- 1:1 - As a sign of affection.
- 1:5 - A non-Kohen may assist in the *avoda* until "receiving the blood". From then on, the *avoda* is the exclusive duty of the *Kohanim*.
- 1:7 - The fire also descended from heaven.
- 1:14 - When their plumage becomes a golden color. At that stage the *bonei yona* are too old and the *turim* are still too young.
- 1:15 - Through the process of "*melika*." With his fingernail the *Kohen* cuts the nape of the neck.
- 2:1 - This *Minchah* is usually brought by the poor. Hashem values it as if the person has offered his entire soul (*nefesh*).
- 2:1,2:2 - Fine wheat flour mixed with oil on which frankincense is added.
- 2:1 - A "*kometz*" (fistful) of the fine flour and oil mixture and all the frankincense.

- 2:2 - A non-Kohen may mix the *Minchah* until the taking of a "*kometz*" (fistful). From then on, the *avoda* is the exclusive duty of the *Kohanim*.
- 2:12 - On Shavuos.
- 2:14 - Barley.



- 3:1 - Two reasons: a) It brings "*shalom*" (peace) to the world. b) It also creates peace between the *Mizbe'ach*, the *Kohen*, and the owner of the *Korban* since each receives a share.
- 3:8 - The "*Chatass*".
- 4:2 - A person who transgressed a negative commandment must bring a *Korban*

Chatass. This only applies to negative commandments whose intentional violation is punished with *Kares*.

- 4:13 - The Sanhedrin.
- 5:1-4 - a) One who refrains from giving evidence when implored by oath; b) One who enters the *Beis Hamikdash* or eats *Kodesh* food after unknowingly contracting "*tuma*" (spiritual impurity) by touching certain "*tamei*" (spiritually impure) things; c) One who unknowingly violates his oath.
- 5:11 - The flour sin-offering has no oil or frankincense.
- 5:15 - Two shekels.
- 5:16 - The value of the article plus one fifth more.
- 5:17 - A person who is in doubt whether he unintentionally transgressed a negative commandment must bring a *Korban Asham*. This only applies to negative commandments whose intentional violation is punished with *Kares*.

Recommended Reading List

RAMBAN	117	Symbolism of Leaven and Honey
1:9 Reason for <i>Korbanos</i>	119	Salt
1:10 Bulls and Goats	123	<i>Korban Oleh V'yored</i>
1:14 Birds	125	A Sinner's Offering
2:2 Role of the <i>Kohen</i>	127	The Sin of Carelessness
2:11 The Problem of Leaven		
2:14 Why "If"?		
SEFER HACHINUCH		
95 Concept of <i>Korbanos</i>		

Bonus Answer!

Ancient idolaters believed that animal sacrifices were a means to appease a judgmental and vengeful god. The Torah teaches us that sacrifices are a means to draw closer to a Merciful God.

• Rabbi S. R. Hirsch

HAFTORAH: Yishayahu 43:21 - 44:23

AN EYE TO ETERNITY

"**S**hver zu zein a Yid" runs an old Yiddish expression - "It's difficult to be a Jew." If you set your sights low and focus only on this world and its tribulations, you will certainly find it *shver* to be a Jew. But if you raise your gaze and focus on eternity, you will realize you have been given the greatest gift there is. The opportunity to be close to G-d. Someone who truly wants to do the will of Hashem doesn't understand the meaning

of weariness. To him, the 'yoke' of Torah and mitzvos is a crown of solid gold overlaid with pearls placed on the head of a

"But you did not call to Me, O Yaakov, for you grew weary of Me, Yisrael." (43:22)

king, which, while weighty, is none the less dear and extremely desirable.

However, when a person's motives for

doing mitzvos are not altruistic, rather he performs them for ulterior motives, or he does mitzvos out of mere habit, then the gravity of Torah and mitzvos weighs like a heavy burden around his neck. Thus, he becomes wearied and exhausted extremely quickly. If "*you grew weary of Me, Yisrael*", it is a sure sign that "*You did not call to Me, O Yaakov*"...

• Based on *Mayana shel Torah*

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