

**CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL
OF THE PALISADES**

קהילה קדושה בית ישראל של הפליסידס

*An egalitarian Conservative community
where 'welcome' is not just a word!*

PARSHAT VAYIKRA

MARCH 25, 2020 - NISAN 3, 5780

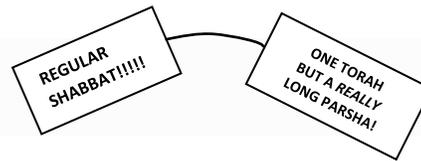


**If his offering is of the flock, of the sheep,
or of the goats, for a burnt offering he shall
offer a male without blemish... Leviticus 1:10**

**The Sacrifice of the Old Covenant
(painting by Peter Paul Rubens)**

רִלְכָה אֵל

PARSHOT VAYIKRA
TORAH – LEVITICUS 1:1 – 5:26
HAFTARAH – ISAIAH 43:21 – 44:23



VAYIKRA

This week we begin Vayikra, the third book of the Torah also known as Torat Kohanim, the law of the Priests. Vayikra deals primarily with two very important subjects: sacrifice laws that safeguard the priestly character of Israel, and the holiness of human life.

Traditionally, when a child is first introduced to Torah study, we begin briefly with Vayikra. The teacher also provides the youngster with sweets so that his first experience with Torah should be a positive one.

Why would we introduce a youngster to Torah with Vayikra, with all its complicated laws and lack of story line? Wouldn't Bereshit be more appropriate with its many stories, or perhaps Sh'mot with its exciting narrative of the Exodus?

Our Midrash answers that since Vayikra deals with purity and holiness, let a child's first exposure to Torah start here, for the child's soul is also holy and pure.

The child may also notice the little Aleph that ends the word "Vayikra" and he may wonder why this letter is written in miniature. Our sages teach that the small Aleph is yet another example of Moshe's humility. Moshe Rabbenu wanted to omit the Aleph altogether. That would place his revelation from Hashem in the same low category as Balaam as we see in Bamidbar 23:16.

When Hashem communicates with Balaam, there is no Aleph, just Vav, Yud, Koof and Resh which implies that something was missing. Hashem's communication with Balaam was just by chance and spiritually contaminated. Moshe, in his humility, tried to minimize his own importance but Hashem insisted he include the Aleph. Moshe did, and made it smaller than the other letters, for he could not accept such a great honor wholeheartedly.

The word "Aleph" in Hebrew means to teach, and the message to us is clear. Whenever we see that little Aleph we must remember to always strive to increase the knowledge of Torah throughout the world and remain humble, as did Moshe.

THOUGHT QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Our Torah Gem this week talks about the importance of teaching Torah and remaining humble. In your experience, did you find a special teacher who inspired you?

Vayikra Aliyah Summary

General Overview: This week's Torah reading, *Vayikra*, begins the third book of the Torah, Leviticus. Last week we completed the reading of the book of Exodus, which concluded with a description of the construction of the Tabernacle. This week's portion will provide a description of the various sacrifices – animal, fowl, and meal-offerings – offered by the priests in this newly constructed Sanctuary.

First Aliyah: G-d calls out to Moses from the Tabernacle and teaches him the laws of the elective burnt offering, the *Olah* sacrifice. This aliyah discusses the laws of the cattle, sheep, or goat *Olah*.

Second Aliyah: G-d then teaches Moses the laws of the fowl *Olah*. This aliyah then continues with a description of three types of voluntary meal offerings: unbaked flour, baked loaves, and the shallow-fried meal offering. All voluntary meal offerings also contained olive oil and frankincense.

Third Aliyah: The Torah describes the last type of voluntary meal offerings — the deep-fried meal offering — and the mandatory barley offering, the *Omer* offering, brought on the second day of Passover. G-d instructs the Jews to add salt to every animal sacrifice or meal offering, a symbol of our everlasting "salt covenant" with G-d. We are also commanded not to include any leavened items or anything which contains honey in any Temple offering (there are two exclusions to the leaven prohibition).

Fourth Aliyah: The "Peace Offering," the *Shelamim* sacrifice, is described in this Aliyah. The *Shelamim* — which could be brought from cattle, sheep, or goats — was shared by the altar, which consumed some of the animal's fats, the *Kohanim*, and the donors of the sacrifice who were given the bulk of the meat. The aliyah ends with the prohibitions against consuming blood and the specific fats which were offered on the altar. These prohibitions apply to all animals, even those not offered in the Temple.

Fifth Aliyah: We now begin learning about the "Sin Offering," the *Chatat* sacrifice, brought by an individual who is guilty of inadvertently transgressing a sin. This section discusses the unique *Chatat* sacrifices brought by a High Priest who sins, by the *Sanhedrin* (Jewish Supreme Court) who issue an erroneous ruling which causes the populace to sin, and a monarch who sins.

Sixth Aliyah: The Torah discusses the fourth and final type of *Chatat*, that of a common person who sins. Also discussed is the *Korban Oleh Viyored*, a "vacillating" Sin Offering, brought by an individual guilty of certain specific sins. The *Korban Oleh Viyored* depended on the financial position of the transgressor — a wealthy person brought a sheep or goat, a person of lesser means brought two birds, and a pauper brought a meal offering.

Seventh Aliyah: This section concludes the laws of the *Korban Oleh Viyored*. We then move on to the last sacrifice discussed in this week's Torah reading, the "Guilt Offering," the *Asham* Sacrifice. Three types of *Asham* Sacrifices are discussed: a) an *Asham* brought by one who inadvertently misappropriates Temple property. b) An *Asham* brought by one who falsely swears regarding money owed to another. (In addition to bringing a sacrifice, these two individuals must repay the principal amount, and pay a punitive fine equal to one fourth of the principal.) c) An *Asham* brought by a person who is uncertain whether he violated a Torah prohibition.

DID YOU KNOW.....

Were you ever called for an Aliya? "YA-AMOD....." Everyone is familiar with the call. BUT did you ever listen carefully to the FIRST call – the one for the Kohein to be honored with the first Aliya? It is different, and goes like this:

וַיַּעֲזֹר וַיִּגַּן וַיּוֹשִׁיעַ לְכָל־הַחוֹסִים בּוֹ, וַנֹּאמֶר אָמֵן. הַפֶּל הַבּוֹ
גָדֹל לֵאלֹהֵינוּ, וַתִּנּוּ כְבוֹד לַתּוֹרָה. [בַּת כַּהֵן, קָרַב. תַּעֲמֹד
_____ בַּת _____ הַבַּת כַּהֵן.] בְּרוּךְ שְׁנַתֵּן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ.

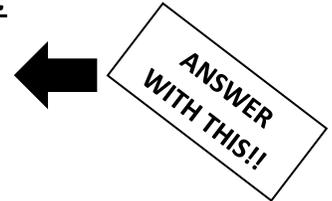


Now here is the point – after Gabbai 1 makes this call, WE ALL SHOULD ANSWER:

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, חַיִּים בְּלַכֶּם הַיּוֹם.

V-atem had-vaykeem badonai Elohaychem chayeem kul-chem hayom.

You who cling to God have been sustained to this day.



It will make Rabbi Stern *very* happy!!!!

Vayikra (ויקרא) — Hebrew for "and He called," the first word in the parashah) is the 24th weekly Torah portion (פְּרָשָׁה, *parashah*) in the annual Jewish cycle of Torah reading and the first in the Book of Leviticus. The parashah lays out the laws of sacrifices (קִרְבָּנוֹת, *korbanot*). The parashah has the most letters and words of any of the weekly Torah portions in the Book of Leviticus (although not the most verses). It is made up of 6,222 Hebrew letters, 1,673 Hebrew words, 111 verses, and 215 lines in a Torah scroll (סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה, *Sefer Torah*). (Parashah Emor has the most verses of any Torah portion in Leviticus.) Jews read it the 23rd or 24th Sabbath after Simchat Torah, generally in March or early April.