



# PARSHA PAGES



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## VAYIKRA - ויקרא

### WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

This week's Parsha begins with Hashem **calling** to Moshe from the Tent of Meeting, the **Ohel Moed**. He tells Moshe to speak to the Jews and teach them the laws of bringing a **Korban**, an offering or sacrifice. The animal offered cannot have any blemishes, and for each different type of sacrifice, there is a different procedure. A burnt offering, **olah**, is completely consumed by the fire of the altar, **Mizbeach**, and can be brought from a specific selection of animals and birds. A meal offering, **mincha**, is a mixture of flour, oil, and frankincense. Part of it is burnt in the Mizbeach, and the rest is eaten by the **Cohanim**. There are five varieties of **mincha** offerings, and they cannot contain any leavening agent or fruit honey and must be seasoned with salt. A gratitude or peace-offering, **shelamim**, has specific parts that are burned on the altar. The rest of the animal is eaten by the **Cohanim** and the individual who brought the sacrifice, The Torah also prohibited eating any blood from any animals, not just from an offering. An offering to atone for accidental sins, **chatas**, can be offered on behalf of an individual, the community, a leader, or the Cohanim. It is partially burned on the Mizbeach, and partially burned outside of the camp of the Jewish people, and none of it is consumed. The guilt offering, **asham**, is offered for a variety of situations, such as touching the carcass of a dead animal or making a false vow. This offering is based on the means of the individual: the most expensive being a sheep or goat, then two turtledoves, then a measure of flour. A portion of the offering is burnt on the Mizbeach and the rest is eaten by the Cohen, and the process absolves the individual of his or her guilt. Hashem tells Moshe that this offering is also given when someone accidentally takes something that belongs to the Mishkan or the Temple, **Beis Hamikdash**, if someone is in doubt of violating a Torah commandment, if someone violates certain interpersonal financial agreements, or makes a false vow.

#### THINK ABOUT IT:

The Torah prohibits adding **honey** or a **leavening agent** to the **mincha** offering, but teaches it must be made with **salt**. **Rabbi Mordechai Gifter** (1915-2001, Cleveland) explains that honey and leavening agents change the flavor of food, while salt enhances the flavor. **What does that teach us about our relationship with Hashem?**



### ARE KORBANOS IDEAL?

A modern-day individual may find the idea of offerings, **korbanos**, to be unusual. In fact, the idea of **korbanos** has been analyzed for hundreds of years by Jewish scholars. Our Sages ask: **are offerings an ideal way to serve Hashem?** Especially because we don't bring offerings today! **Rambam** (1138-1204, Spain & Egypt) explains that Hashem **only** commanded the Jews to bring **korbanos** because that was how religious worship was done at the time that the Torah was given. Hashem wanted the Jews to have an easier transition into serving Him, but, it wasn't the long-term plan! However, **Ramban** (1194-1270, Spain & Israel) teaches that the process of bringing a **korban** causes the person to see himself its place! For example, a cow can cost thousands of dollars, which is a serious financial sacrifice. This prompted the individual to reflect on his deeds and relationship with Hashem, and makes **korbanos** an ideal way to connect to Hashem.

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם  
אָדָם כִּי יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם קֶרְבָּן לַיהוָה מִן  
הַבְּהֵמָה מִן הַבְּקָר וּמִן הַצֹּאן  
תִּקְרִיבוּ אֶת קֶרְבַּנְכֶם: (ויקרא א:ב)

Speak to the Jews, and say to them:  
**When any of you presents an offering to the L-rd, he shall choose his offering from the herd or from the flock.**

#### A SHORT IDEA:

# קֶרְבָּן

The word **Korban** has the same root as **Karov**, close. Today, our offerings are replaced with **prayer**. How do you think **korbanos** can bring us closer to Hashem?



What do you think of these explanations? Do you think animal sacrifices are an ideal way to serve Hashem? **Why? Why not?**

### THE SMALL ALEF

If you look in a Torah scroll, you might notice something unique about the first word in this week's Parsha and the entire book of **Vayikra**: there is a **small alef!** **Rashi** (1040-1105, France) explains the difference between the word **vayikra**, ויקרא, and he called, symbolizing a very close relationship, and **vayikar**, ויקר, and he happened or chanced upon, symbolizing a very casual relationship. **Rabbi Jacob ben Asher** (1269-1343, Germany & Spain) in the **Ba'al HaTurim** explains that Moshe wanted to write **vayikar**, not **vayikra**, out of humility and to avoid publicizing his uniquely close relationship with Hashem. So, Hashem made him compromise by writing **vayikra** with a **small alef**.



image from torah.org

#### DISCUSS:

The Torah describes Moshe as the most humble person on earth (Bamidbar 12:3). However, Moshe was the greatest prophet in history, and lead the Jewish people out of Egypt! **How do you think he was able to be so humble? Make it personal... Are you humble? How can you become more humble?**

