

21 MARCH 2026 | 3 NISAN 5786

VOLUME 39 | #28

DAF HASHAVUA

ויקרא | VAYIKRA

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 7.02pm
Birmingham: 7.10pm
Bournemouth: 7.11pm
Cardiff: 7.17pm
Dublin: 7.28pm
Edinburgh: 7.20pm
Glasgow: 7.25pm
Hull: 7.10pm
Leeds: 7.10pm
Liverpool: 7.18pm
Manchester: 7.13pm
Nottingham: 7.11pm
Sheffield: 7.13pm
Southend: 6.58pm
Southport: 7.20pm
Jerusalem: 6.28pm



ויקרא
VAYIKRA

1st Sidra in:
ויקרא
VAYIKRA

By Numbers:
111 VERSES
1,673 WORDS
6,222 LETTERS

Headlines:
DESCRIPTIONS OF
OFFERINGS AND
PUBLIC LAW

VAYIKRA:
Artscroll p.544
Hertz p.410
Koren Sacks p.655
Soncino p.605

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1165
Hertz p.424
Koren Sacks p.1511
Soncino p.625

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – VAYIKRA 1:1-13

The Book of Vayikra starts by detailing the *olah* (elevation) offering. One who brought an offering had to lay their hands upon it (*semicha*). The *shechita* (slaughter) of the animal could be done by a non-Kohen, but the processes thereafter (catching the blood and sprinkling it on the altar) were performed only by the *Kohanim*. The *olah* offering was cut up and all of the pieces were burned on the *mizbeach* (altar). The verses detail an *olah* offering brought from cattle, sheep or goats.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 1:14-2:6

The Torah now details the laws of an *olah* offering brought from fowl. The process of killing the fowl differed from an animal offering; notably, the *Kohen* used his fingernail (*melika*) instead of a knife. It was also possible to bring an offering from fine flour (*mincha*), a handful of which was mixed with oil and thrown onto the altar's fire. The rest was baked and eaten by the *Kohanim*.

Point to Consider: *From what stage could the service of the meal offering be performed only by Kohanim? (see Rashi to 2:2)*

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 2:7-16

Several voluntary meal offerings are listed, some baked, some fried. These offerings had to be unleavened. Every offering – whether animal, fowl or flour – had salt added to it. The laws of the Torah of the parched *Omer* offering are stated, which was brought on 16 Nisan (Rashi).

4TH ALIYA (REVI') – 3:1-17

A voluntary peace offering (*shelamim*) could be brought from cattle, sheep or goats. Only parts of it were burned on the *mizbeach* – other parts were eaten by the *Kohanim* and by the person who brought the offering (see Rashi).

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 4:1-26

People were commanded to bring sin offerings (*chata'ot*) for various inadvertent transgressions. A *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) who accidentally contravened specific serious prohibitions had to bring a bull, parts of which were burned on the *mizbeach*; the rest were burned outside the camp. A similar process had to be done if the High Court's (*Sanhedrin*) ruling caused an accidental transgression by the people. If a king (referred to here as *Nasi*) accidentally transgressed certain mitzvot, he had to bring a male goat as an offering.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 4:27-5:10

The variable offering (*korban oleh ve'yored*) was dependent on the financial means of the person who brought it – it could be an animal, birds or flour. This offering was brought by someone who intentionally refused to testify as a witness or who made a false oath. It was also brought by one who accidentally entered parts of the Temple (*Beit Hamikdash*) or touched sanctified objects when in a state of ritual impurity.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI') – 5:11-26

An individual who unintentionally derived benefit from sanctified objects had to bring a male ram as a guilt offering (*asham*), as well as paying for the 'damage' and adding an additional fifth to the cost. An *asham* was also brought by someone who was not sure whether they had inadvertently committed the type of sin for which one would normally bring a *chata*.

HAFTARAH (ISAIAH 43:21-44:23)

The prophet Yeshaya (Isaiah) rebukes the nation for neglecting to bring offerings to the Temple. He mocks those craftsmen who tire themselves out making false gods. However, Yeshaya's parting message is one of forgiveness and hope.



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COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

THE DIMENSIONS OF SIN

This essay is an abridged version of Rabbi Sacks' 2010 Covenant & Conversation essay. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at www.rabbisacks.org

Our *parasha* talks at length about the *chatat*, the sin offering, brought by different individuals: the High Priest (*Vayikra* 4:3-12), the community (ibid. 4:13-21), a leader (ibid. 4:22-26) and finally, an ordinary individual (ibid. 4:27-35).

Sacrifices have not been offered for almost two millennia, and it is hard for us to understand the very concepts of sin and atonement as they are dealt with in the Torah.

The puzzle is that the sins for which one brought an offering were those committed inadvertently. Either the sinner forgot the law, or some relevant fact. To give an example: the phone rings on Shabbat and you answer. You would only be liable for a sin offering if you forgot the law prohibiting this or forgot the fact that the day was Shabbat.

We don't tend to see this kind of act as a sin at all. We think of sins as something intentional, yielding to temptation perhaps, or rebellion. That is the kind of act we would have thought calls for a *chatat*. But such an act cannot be atoned for by an offering at all. So how do we make sense of the *chatat*?

The answer is, there are three dimensions of wrongdoing

between us and God. The first is guilt and shame. That is what happened to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden after they had sinned. They felt shame and tried to hide. For that kind of deliberate sin, the only adequate moral response is *teshuvah*, repentance. This involves remorse, confession and a resolution never to commit the sin again. The result is that God forgives us. A mere sacrifice is not enough.

Then, there is a second dimension. Regardless of guilt and responsibility, if we sin, we have objectively transgressed a boundary. The word *chet* means to miss the mark. For example, your car has a faulty speedometer, and you are caught speeding. You have still broken the law. You were speeding, albeit unknowingly, and you will have to pay the penalty.

That is what a *chatat* is. According to Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888), it is a penalty for carelessness. According to the *Sefer Ha-Chinuch*, it is an educational, preventive measure. The fact that you have had to bring a sacrifice will make you take greater care in future.

What the sacrifice achieves is *kapparah*, a "covering over" of the sin. Noah was told to "cover"

(*ve-chapharta*) the ark's surface (*Bereishit* 6:14). The cover of the Ark in the Tabernacle was called *kapporet* (*Vayikra* 25:17). Once a sin is symbolically covered over, it is forgiven, a result of the sacrifice.

The third dimension of sin is that it stains one's character. Ramban (Nachmanides, 1194-1270) says that this is the logic of the *chatat*. All sins, even inadvertent ones, "leave a stain on the soul... and the soul is only fit to meet its Maker when it has been cleansed from all sin" (Ramban on *Vayikra* 4:2).

The *chatat* is not about guilt but other dimensions of transgression. Our acts leave traces in the world; even unintentional sins can leave us feeling defiled.

The law of the *chatat* reminds us that we can do harm unintentionally, which can have psychological consequences. The best way to put things right is make a sacrifice: do something that costs us. In ancient times, that took the form of sacrifice offered on the altar at the Temple.

Charity (*tzedakah*) and kindness (*chesed*) are our substitutes for sacrifice, and, like the *chatat*, they help mend what is broken in the world and in our soul.



DESERT ISLAND SEDER!

BY: **RABBI MICHAEL LAITNER**

US Director of Education, Interim rabbi at Belmont US

In *Traditional Alternatives* (1989), former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l describes an imaginary London Jewish family sitting around the Seder table. Although the family is fictional, the description of it is all too real. The characters include a teenage girl whose life is focused on Neighbours (it was 1989!), a student who grapples with existential questions of being Jewish and an older son who has moved to Israel.

In this vein, I like to imagine characters that I could sit around the Seder table with and share the experience of reliving the story of the Exodus. I introduce below two such characters.

The first is Tzipporah, the wife of Moshe (Moses). They married whilst Moshe was in Midian, having fled from the wrath of Pharaoh. Her father, Yitro, later became a source of practical advice to Moshe and even has a *sidra* in the Torah named after him.

Tzipporah, along with her sons, was not present in Egypt for the plagues and the Exodus. They were in Midian instead and were only reunited when Yitro brought them

to meet Moshe after the splitting of the sea. They had missed out on the experience of the Exodus. I wonder how Moshe would have told them about it each Pesach - it is a fascinating thought.

Have you ever had a Jew at your Seder table who was attending a Seder for the first time? How did you involve them and what was their perspective? In broad terms, the experience of Ethiopian Jews has been similar. Cut off from other Jews for thousands of years, as well as from the development of the Seder, they also experienced their own 'Exodus', often walking for days as part of clandestine missions, such as Operation Moses in 1984, to bring them to Israel.

The second character is the famous Rabbi Akiva, whose Seder night with his colleagues in Lod, Israel, which probably took place in the early part of the second century CE, is recounted in the Haggadah. Rabbi Akiva did not start life as a scholarly Jew. His connection with Jewish study only began at the age of 40. His incredible dedication to his studies and religious observance and his

care for other people made him a natural leader of the Jewish people as well as one of the greatest scholars in our history.

Rabbi Akiva did not just learn the story of the Exodus as part of history. Living in the Land of Israel under Roman rule, before, during and after the destruction of the Second Temple, he felt the resonance of the Exodus in his own times through the struggle of the Jewish people to live freely in their own Land. He was heavily involved in this struggle and, tragically, paid for it with his life.

This approach of Rabbi Akiva can also be applied to our own times, viewing the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and the establishment of the State of Israel as part of the ongoing adventure of Jewish history. Just as the Exodus inspired Rabbi Akiva to assert our Biblical rights and obligations in the Land of Israel, it should inspire us to be a part of the gift that God has given us: the State of Israel and the opportunity for that State to enable us to live out the visions and promises of the *Tanach* (the Hebrew Bible).



In loving memory of Frida Mirel bat Chaim Simcha z"l



HAGGADAH INSIGHTS - PART 3

THE FOUR CUPS

BY: **DAVID FREI**

US Director of External and Legal Services and Registrar of the London Beth Din

The bad news for Seder participants who are both teetotal and averse to grape juice is that there is a Rabbinic obligation to drink four cups of wine at specified points during the Seder. What is the reason for this?

According to the Talmud Yerushalmi (*Pesachim* 10:1) they correspond to the four expressions of redemption used by God (*Shemot* 6:6 and 7) to instil hope in the Israelites, at a time when the cruel Pharaoh had increased their burdens.

Kol Bo, a 14th-Century code of Jewish law of uncertain authorship, explains the four expressions as follows:

(1) *And I will remove you from under the burdens of Egypt* is a reference to a relief from the backbreaking and cruel work

(2) *And I will rescue you from their service* is a cessation of all forced labour

(3) *And I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgements* is the Divine punishment of the Egyptians for their iniquitous behaviour

(4) *And I will take you as My people and I will be your God* is a promise of spiritual redemption.

Mordechai ben Hillel, a 13th-Century Halachist, famously asks: while the four expressions of redemption explain a four-stage process, why did the Rabbis ordain drinking four cups of wine, as opposed to (for example) eating

four pieces of matzah or meat?

Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (1816-1893), in his Torah commentary, *Ha'Amek Davar*, answers that, on Seder night, we are trying to evoke the transition of our nation in Egypt in the aforementioned progressive stages going from hard labour to the end of slavery, to the escape from Egypt culminating in the Revelation at Sinai. He says that drinking wine lightens the mood and the more one drinks (within limits) the more elated one can become. If one were to eat four pieces of matzah or another food at different points of the Seder, it would not bring about this sensation of transitional elevation and liberation.

There are, however, other reasons given for the four cups.

There is a view expressed in both the Talmud Yerushalmi and the Midrash that the four cups are based on the dream of Pharaoh's chief cupbearer, which he related to Yosef (Joseph) (see *Bereishit*, chapter 40), his fellow inmate in prison, who interpreted the dream favourably, telling him that he would shortly be released.

In this dream, the cupbearer mentions the word 'cup' (כוס) four times. Yosef's interpretation of the dream was the event which led to the Pesach story. Two years after the cupbearer's release, when Pharaoh had two dreams that no one could interpret, the cupbearer

“ There is a Rabbinic obligation to drink four cups of wine at specified points during the Seder. What is the reason for this?

told him of Yosef's prowess, which led to Yosef's release and elevation to the second highest position in the land.

Indeed, the Midrash says that elements in the dream alluded to Israel's forthcoming liberation.

The vine which the cupbearer mentions hints at the phrase in *Tehillim* (80:9) 'You carried a vine out of Egypt' being a reference to the Exodus.

The three branches on the vine are a reference to Moshe, Aharon and Miriam and the budding, blossoming and ripening of the grapes on the vine, all within seconds, was a premonition of the future redemption and Exodus from Egypt.





SEFER YESHAYAHU (ISAIAH) – PART 9

SPLIT IN TWO?

PART 2

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and US Educator

In our last article we explored the differences between the first 39 chapters of *Sefer Yeshayahu* (Book of Isaiah) and the later section. These include different style, focus and topics. There is also an implication of different historical contexts in the two sections, with the second section writing about later events in the past tense. This can make it hard to know how to approach the chapters from chapter 40 onwards.

We have already discussed the fact that, as a prophet, Yeshayahu had Divine knowledge of events yet to come. Yet another approach, stated in the Talmud, was that Yeshayahu did not compile his book himself (see *Bava Batra* 15a). This potentially allows for later prophets to have added in later prophecies.

For example, the *Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni)* discusses the prophet Be'eri, father of Hoshea, one of the *Trei Asar* (Twelve Minor Prophets). Be'eri's prophecy was so small that it was only two verses long. It was included in the book of *Yeshayahu* so that it wouldn't get lost.¹ This is stated in a matter-of-fact way, implying that other prophets may have also had their prophecies included in *Sefer Yeshayahu*.

The Netziv (Rabbi Naftali

Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, 1816-1893) mentions the phenomenon of Be'eri being included in *Yeshayahu* in his commentary to *Bereishit* (Genesis). He states that "there are many instances like this in *Nevi'im* (the prophets) and *Ketuvim* (the writings)".² Whilst Be'eri lived before Yeshayahu, it is reasonable to think that later prophets could also have been included in the book.

Amos Chacham (Jerusalem, 1921-2012), author of the *Da'at Mikra* commentary on *Yeshayahu*, combines some of these ideas in a fascinating way. He explains that Yeshayahu founded a study house for prophets. He explains that, whilst there is no issue whatsoever with Yeshayahu's ability to predict events that would take place 200 years later, he questions the likelihood of Yeshayahu transmitting this to his own generation. The purpose of a prophet is not to simply predict the future, but to shape the future by encouraging his contemporaries to improve their ways. Thus, there would be little purpose in conveying prophecies of comfort in a generation that had yet to receive the punishment.

Instead, Amos Chacham suggests that these prophecies were received by Yeshayahu but

not transmitted publicly. Instead, he shared them privately with his students and they were passed down until the generation of the Babylonian destruction. Only then were they shared publicly and written down by his students, "the helpers" of Chizkiyahu.³ The bottom line, according to Amos Chacham, is that "all the words come from one source, from the prophecies of Yeshayahu ben Amotz".

Whilst this is an interesting discussion, let us conclude with a crucial reminder. Whether Yeshayahu wrote the entire book, or sections were added in by other prophets, the final product is the same. It is a holy book of prophecy, Divine communication to the Jewish people for all future generations. Former Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz explains that we should consider the topic "dispassionately" because it "touches no dogma, or any religious principle in Judaism".⁴ The messages of Yeshayahu are just as important and relevant to us, regardless of how they were compiled.

In our remaining article on Yeshayahu, we will discuss the messages imparted in the second section of the book.

¹ *Vayikra Raba* 6:6.

² Netziv on *Bereishit* 39:10.

³ Amos Chacham, *Sefer Yeshayahu* (Hebrew) p.13-17.

⁴ Hertz Chumash, (London 1938), p.942.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYIKRA

20-21 MARCH | 3 NISAN

TAKING THE FIRST STEP



BY: **SARA
AND JOSH
MARCOVITCH**

Regional Tribe
Coordinators - Essex

Korbanot (offerings) can be confusing, but *Parashat Vayikra* opens in a powerful way: God calls out to Moshe (Moses) and then gives them the mitzvah of *korbanot*. The Torah says, "*Adam ki yakriv mikem korban l'Hashem*" - "If a person brings from you an offering to God." At first glance, the wording feels awkward. Wouldn't it make more sense to say, "*Adam mikem*" - If any person among you?

The Chief Rabbi tells us a beautiful explanation from Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (known as the Alter Rebbe, 1745-1812) that completely changes how we read the verse. It all depends on where you pause. Instead of reading it straight through, read it like this: "*Adam ki yakriv, mikem korban l'Hashem*." In other words: If a person wants to come *close* to God, that closeness has to start with you.

That's a huge message. It's easy to think, "If God wants me, He'll come find me," or "When I feel inspired, then I'll feel connected." The Torah is telling us the opposite. Don't wait. Take the first step - even a small one. God is waiting

for you, not the other way around.

Our Sages in the Talmud teach: "Open for Me an opening the size of a needle's eye [in your heart], and I'll open for you a massive doorway." When we make the effort, God not only meets us but takes us further than we ever imagined.

We ourselves have recently taken the big first step joining the Tribe Team in Essex! Where is your step going to take you?

*Sara and Josh, based at WFUS, are very excited to be working with the youth in Essex. If you are based in the area and we have not yet met, please get in touch!
essex@tribeuk.com*

Parasha Wordsearch

Find these words in the grid. The words can go in any direction and can share letters as they cross over each other.

T	A	B	E	R	N	A	C	L	E	K	K	C
B	R	N	Z	T	Z	D	W	T	Y	W	X	L
S	T	E	P	C	T	W	F	S	O	Z	K	B
O	T	A	F	H	N	R	D	P	P	R	T	X
T	I	S	J	E	E	A	I	U	Y	O	A	H
L	O	A	Y	E	S	H	H	B	E	K	B	H
E	R	N	S	G	X	E	S	E	F	Y	N	
U	A	H	A	V	G	C	F	O	C	E	N	I
H	L	E	M	B	V	C	Z	R	M	L	J	M
P	T	D	F	A	R	K	I	Y	A	V	L	Q
K	A	R	N	Y	G	O	E	P	D	I	S	D
L	R	I	U	D	B	S	K	A	O	S	C	J
N	O	N	P	D	B	P	W	I	Y	E	C	X

ALTAR
ESSEX
KORBANOT
MOSHE
SANHEDRIN
SEFER
STEP
TABERNACLE
TORAH
TRIBE
VAYIKRA





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYIKRA: RIGHTING A WRONG!

THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** TELLS US ABOUT A NUMBER OF SPECIAL OFFERINGS WHICH COULD BE BROUGHT TO THE **MISHKAN** (TABERNACLE) AND OFFERED UP TO **GOD**. ONE OF THESE OFFERINGS WAS BROUGHT BY SOMEONE WHO HAD MADE A MISTAKE AND WANTED TO PUT THINGS RIGHT.



CHECK OUT THIS TRUE STORY ABOUT **YITZCHAK** AND HOW HE PUT RIGHT A MISTAKE FROM MANY YEARS BEFORE.

Meet **Yitzchak Moshe** from Israel: a MASSIVE fan of **Maccabi Haifa**.



I USED TO BE FOOTBALL MAD! I LOVED GOING TO MATCHES... AND IF I DIDN'T HAVE MONEY FOR THE TICKET, I SOMETIMES SNEAKED IN.

YITZCHAK WENT TO 3 GAMES WITHOUT PAYING. YIKES!

FAST-FORWARD 15 YEARS. I'M MARRIED, I'M A DAD, I HAVE A STEADY JOB. I DON'T SNEAK INTO FOOTBALL MATCHES ANYMORE.



SO NOW YOU UNDERSTAND HOW THE **TORAH** TEACHES US TO BE CAREFUL, HONEST AND NOT TAKE ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T BELONG TO US.

TORAH CLASS
Be Careful
Be Honest
Do Not Steal

I WOULD NEVER STEAL. WAIT A MO! WHAT ABOUT THE FOOTBALL MATCHES FROM ALL THOSE YEARS AGO?! I SNUCK IN AND DIDN'T PAY. THAT WAS STEALING! I NEED TO FIX THIS!



MACCABI HAIFA CHAT

Yitzchak:

Hello. About 15 years ago, I went to three matches without paying. I'd like to pay for the tickets now. I'm really sorry, I didn't realise at the time that it was actually stealing.

Maccabi Haifa:

Wow, thanks for your honesty. Don't worry - there's no need to pay.

I SENT **200 SHEKELS** ANYWAY. I WANTED PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT EVEN IF A MISTAKE WAS MADE YEARS AGO, YOU CAN STILL PUT IT RIGHT!



MACCABI HAIFA CHAT

Maccabi Haifa:
Thank you for your thoughtful donation. We've given it to a charity that helps children with special needs.

TURNS OUT, DOING THE RIGHT THING CAN HELP WAY MORE PEOPLE THAN YOU EXPECT!



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Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.