



11 - 17 March, 2018
24 Adar - 1 Nissan, 5778

Torah:
Leviticus 1:1 - 5:26

**Second Torah - Shabbat
Rosh Chodesh:**
Numbers 28:9 - 15

**Second Torah - Parshat
Hachodesh:**
Exodus 12:1 - 20

Haftorah:
Ezekiel 45:18 - 46:15
Isaiah 66:1; Isaiah 66:23-24; Isaiah 66:23

■ FAMILY PROGRAMS

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

■ GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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PERSONAL SACRIFICE

This week we begin to read the third of the Five Books of Moses, the book of Leviticus, or Vayikra.

Now that that Jewish people have been redeemed from Egypt, saved from the pursuing Egyptian armies, entered the desert and successfully constructed the Tabernacle, it was time for the next set of instructions from God. Therefor Vayikra discusses at great length the many Korbanot, ritual sacrifices, which the people were instructed by God to offer in the Tabernacle and Temple. There were daily communal sacrifices, weekly sacrifices brought on Shabbat, and additional sacrifices offered on holidays. Then there were also the personal sacrifices of repentance for sins committed unintentionally or thanksgiving for having safely gone through a dangerous ordeal. All of these are discussed in great detail throughout the portions of the book of Vayikra, as the service of the sacrifices was an integral part of the Temple rituals.

Now, as discussed on many occasions, everything written and mentioned in the Torah, be it a law or a story, is intended not merely as a book of rules or, God forbid, a history book, but is meant to serve as a guiding map, an eternal lesson for our daily lives even today. But what are we to learn from this book of Vayikra? What contemporary

lesson can be gleaned from the how-to of ancient animal sacrifices offered up more than two thousand years ago? What is the modern day equivalent of the sacrifices of old?

If we look at the wording in the first few verses discussing the sacrifices we see an interesting choice of words. God says to Moses, "speak to the Children of Israel and tell them, when a man will sacrifice from you a sacrifice to God..." Ideally, should it not have been worded, "when a man from you will sacrifice" as opposed to "will sacrifice from you?"

Why is it implied that the sacrifice is "from you?" Of course, God's choice of words is neither imperfect nor coincidental. Every word and indeed every letter is purposeful and multi-layered in its meaning.

What God is teaching us is the foundation for a true relationship. The Hebrew word for sacrifice, "Korban," stems from the word "Kiruv," closeness. When the people offered their sacrifices it was not merely a daily ritual, done by rote just to fulfill sole kind of requirement. Rather each time a Korban was brought, it brought the individual person offering it and ultimately the community at large closer in their relationship with God. The secret to a real relationship is, "sacrifice from you." In order for a relationship to work, be it a close relationship like siblings, or close friends, more distant such as employers to their teams,

Parshat Vayikra

or the ultimate relationship between spouses, everyone must be ready and willing to make, yes, sacrifices. The verse continues, "from the animals, from the cattle and from the sheep you shall bring your sacrifice." What must we sacrifice today to enhance our relationship with God? This verse gives us the answer. It is our animalistic tendencies and habit, our mundane wants and desires that we must sacrifice for God. Even if it is for but a short time, or only in a small way, God promises that it will bring us closer to Him. Whether we have a strong or aggressive animalistic side to our natural makeup like that of an ox or a bull, or if we have a mellow, laid back, go-with-the-flow type of animal inside of us like a sheep or goat, we must sacrifice it just the same.

In some cases this would mean letting go of these habits despite our desire to fall back on them, as we are accustomed to doing. Yet, in other situations, you might be called upon to use those very habits to serve God in some way which only you can. We live and learn, through trial and error, what is needed from us at each individual junction. But when we are put in the position to let go and step out of our comfort zones, sacrificing a little bit of our own comfort in the process, we can rest assured that ultimately it is bringing us closer to our maker and His infinite love and compassion.

PARSHAT HACHODESH

On the Shabbat that falls on or before the 1st of Nissan, a special reading called "Hachodesh" (Exodus 12:1-20) is added to the regular Shabbat Torah reading. Hachodesh recounts G-d's historic communication to Moses in Egypt on the 1st of Nissan (2 weeks before the Exodus) regarding the Jewish calendar, the month of Nissan and the Passover offering.

ROSH CHODESH OBSERVANCES

Shabbat (Saturday) is Rosh Chodesh ("Head of the Month") for the month of Nissan.

Special portions are added to the daily prayers: Hallel (Psalms 113-118) is recited -- in its "partial" form -- following the Shacharit morning prayer, and the Yaaleh V'yavo prayer is added to the Amidah and to Grace After Meals; the additional Musaf prayer is said (when Rosh Chodesh is Shabbat, special additions are made to the Shabbat Musaf). Tachnun (confession of sins) and similar prayers are omitted.

Many have the custom to mark Rosh Chodesh with a festive meal and reduced work activity. The latter custom is prevalent amongst women, who have a special affinity with Rosh Chodesh -- the month being the feminine aspect of the Jewish Calendar.

BLESSING ON BLOOMING TREES

A special mitzvah, which can be fulfilled only once a year, is to recite the berachah ("blessing" or prayer) made upon seeing a fruit tree in bloom: Blessed are you G-d our G-d, king of the universe, who left nothing lacking in His world, and created within it good creatures and good trees with which He gives pleasure to people. Today is the first opportunity to make this blessing, but it can be done anytime during the month of Nissan (referred to by the Torah as "the month of spring"). Many visit botanical gardens during this time, so as to avail themselves of an opportunity to observe this beautiful mitzvah.

NASI OF THE DAY

Beginning today, and continuing through Nissan 13, we recite the verses (from Numbers ch. 7) describing the offerings made by the "princes" (nesi'im) of the 12 tribes of Israel (see "Mishkan inaugurated"). Today we read of the gift bought by Nachshon ben Aminadav, the nasi of the tribe of Judah, on this date. Tomorrow we read of Issachar's gift, and so on for the 12 tribes. On the 13th of Nissan we read G-d's instructions to Aaron regarding the kindling of the menorah, which represents the participation of the priestly tribe of Levi.

Following the verses of the day's "Nasi," we recite a short prayer in which we say, "...if I, Your servant, am from the tribe of ___ whose section of the Nasi I have read today in Your Torah, may all the holy sparks and holy illuminations that are included within the holiness of this tribe shine upon me, to grant me understanding and intelligence in Your Torah and my awe of You, to do Your will all the days of my life...."

In Parshas Vayikra	From an actual man
We are told that when	This is what you do
A man will want to bring	
From among you a korban	You give hashem the animal
	That for your desires it battles
From the cattle and flock	This can come
You should bring your offering	From your flock or your cattle
Our sages noticed	
A problem with the wording	It can either be a bull
	Uncontrollable and wild
When a man from among you	Or it can be a sheep
The Posuk should say	Timid and mild
But the Alter Rebbe says	
Don't learn it this way	Or they can come
	From you, from a man
When you want to give	Not to quiet and not to loud
To hashem from you	This is the best that you can

In Jewish History

Monday, 25 Adar, 5778 - March 12, 2018

Nebuchadnezzar died (397 BCE)

Death of King Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian emperor who conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the first Holy Temple 26 years earlier, died on the 25th of Adar of the year 3364 from creation. (Jeremiah 52:31)

Rebbitzin's Birthday (1901)

Rebbitzin Chaya Mushkah Schneerson (1901-1988) of righteous memory, wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe of righteous memory, was born on Shabbat, the 25th of Adar, in Babinovich, a town near the Russian city of Lubavitch, in the year 5661 from creation (1901). In an address delivered on the 25 of Adar of 1988 (the Rebbitzin's 87th birthday, and about a month after her passing), the Rebbe initiated an international birthday campaign, urging people to celebrate their birthdays and utilize the day as a time of introspection and making resolutions involving an increase in good deeds.

Wednesday, 27 Adar, 5778 - March 14, 2018

Rebbe Falls Ill (1992)

On the 27th of Adar I, 5752 (Monday, March 2, 1992), the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, suffered a disabling stroke while praying at the gravesite of the previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch. On the same date two years later, the Rebbe lost consciousness following another stroke; three months later, on the 3rd of Tammuz 5754 (June 12, 1994), the Rebbe's soul ascended on high, orphaning a generation.