

Torah Weekly

ת"סג

March 19-25, 2023
26 Adar-3 Nissan, 5783

Torah Reading:
Vayikra: Leviticus 1:1 – 5:26
Haftarah: Isaiah 43:21 – 44:23

PARSHAT VAYIKRA

Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi or Chaplain to contact us.

Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside 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

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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No One Forgotten.

Are You a Bull or a Lamb?

Not only animal-rights groups have difficulty with this week's Parshah; many if not most people in our modern era have a problem with the whole concept of animal sacrifice, which is a major theme of the third book of the Torah, Leviticus.

But I have no wish to enter into a rationalization of biblical morality. The second verse in the book lends itself to some interesting homiletic interpretation, which makes it quite clear that the [Torah's](#) focus on sacrifice is not so much on the animal on the altar as on the person who is offering it:

When a man (adam) will bring an offering from among you to G-d, from the animals, from the cattle or from the flock shall you bring your offering. (Leviticus 1:2)

Now, clearly, the language here is rather strained. In fact, most translators have edited the text to read more smoothly: "When a man among you will bring an offering," clearly an improvement in the flow of the verse.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, in his classic *Likkutei Torah*, insists however that the Torah's syntax is deliberate. "When a man will bring an offering"—i.e., he will want to come closer to [G-d](#) (the Hebrew word *korban* has in it the root *karav*, "to come close"), then he must know that the offering must come "from you," from the animal within you.

Every one of us possesses

animalistic tendencies, and these must be consumed on the altar of G-d. We are obliged to slay our inner animal and humanize ourselves by working on developing our character traits, until the beast within us has been neutralized—and better yet, sanctified.

What exactly does this mean? The verse continues, "from the cattle or from the flock, shall you bring your offering." An individual may behave like "cattle," a goring bull, trampling on everyone and everything in its way. He is the proverbial bull in a china closet, stomping, aggressive, bullying, domineering, and utterly insensitive to people's feelings.

Others might be like "the flock"—the meek little lamb that timidly follows the crowd. He has no opinion of his own; whatever the last person he spoke to said becomes his opinion for the moment. He has no backbone, no sense of self or self-respect. He stays with the flock at all costs, lest he be labeled a "black sheep."

Still others might be moody and temperamental, changing colors and character traits from day to day. One minute they might be like the raging bull, and the next, the docile lamb.

So the Torah teaches us to be *adam*, a human being of human—indeed, G-dly—character. Be a man, not an ox; a lady, not a lamb. Be a *mentsch*; behave like a mature, refined person, not like a *vilde chayah* (wild animal). Examine your own behavioral tendencies; check out your inner feelings and

dispositions. Are you satisfied with yourself as a human being? Are those around you happy, or do you intimidate them with your temper tantrums? Are you mature and mild-mannered, or do you suffer from road rage?

Searching our souls and our inner psyches for unacceptable behaviors, and then doing something about it, is what we mean when we say to bring the animal up on the altar of sacrifice. It is the animal within each of us. The true and ultimate sacrifice is the sacrificing of self.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Moses' Enduring Legacy

Have you ever been so stressed that you wanted to punch a hole in the wall? A business concept called an "anger room" provides the opportunity to break useless junk in a controlled environment, purportedly to release stress and frustration.

Anger management is not my expertise, and Jewish law forbids wasteful destruction, but perhaps the notion that breaking stuff is a valid method of stress relief contributes to a common misconception of an episode in this week's Parshah.

During the Revelation at Sinai, G-d verbally communicated the Ten Commandments and then instructed Moses to ascend Mt. Sinai for forty days and nights to learn the entire Torah and receive the Tablets. These Tablets were entirely prepared by [G-d](#) and were miraculous in many ways.

Meanwhile, after

miscalculating the day of Moses' expected return from the mountain, the Israelite camp was in turmoil. Mixed messages, raw nerves, and overall confusion resulted in the unfortunate creation of a Golden Calf, which was subsequently served by a number of Jews. The self-sacrifice of Chur (Moses' nephew) and Aharon's heroic attempts to quell the rebellion did not stop the disaster from happening. Just forty days after

pledging allegiance to G-d at Mt. Sinai, idolatry infiltrated the Israelite camp.

Moses descended Mt. Sinai holding the divine Tablets, when he beheld the shocking scene of Jews serving the [Golden Calf](#). Moses became angry and smashed the Tablets at the foot of the mountain.

Far from being a reckless reaction due to an anger management problem, Moses' instantaneous decision to break the Tablets is considered the most heroic and selfless act ever done by a Jewish leader.

The Talmud invokes the analogy of a king who flew into a rage upon hearing rumors of his bride's unfaithfulness. A close friend hurriedly destroyed the marriage contract so there would be no legal recourse for the king to swiftly punish the queen under duress. His quick thinking allowed for a thorough investigation, which revealed that the rumors were untrue, and the king was forever grateful to his friend for intervening.

At Sinai, the Israelites made a verbal commitment to G-d, and the Tablets represented the written contract of their exclusivity. Seeing the Golden Calf, Moses understood that so long as the written contract remained intact, G-d's retribution would be swift and complete. Moses sacrificed everything by destroying the most priceless objects in the world to save his nation from annihilation. His quick thinking paid off, and he ultimately elicited G-d's forgiveness for their sin—and we are here today to tell the story.

This is the profile of a true leader and a powerful lesson in *ahavat yisrael*, loving a fellow Jew. To effectively inspire others to embrace [Torah](#) study and mitzvah observance, one must first sincerely and unconditionally care for their physical wellbeing and safety—even at great personal sacrifice.

By Rabbi Levi Greenberg

Sunday, March 19, 2023 --- 26 Adar, 5783

Passing of Sarah Schenirer (1935)

Viewing the dire lack of formal Jewish education provided to Jewish girls in her native Poland, Sarah Schenirer founded the first Bais Yaakov girls' school in Krakow in 1917. Despite some initial opposition, the Bais Yaakov school network quickly expanded throughout Poland and beyond. Today, there are hundreds of Bais Yaakov schools worldwide, attended by tens of thousands of students.

Monday, March 20, 2023 --- 27 Adar, 5783

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.

Wednesday, March 22, 2023 --- 29 Adar, 5783

Jews Commanded 1st Mitzvah (1313 BCE)

Shortly before sundown on the 29th of Adar, G-d commanded Moses regarding the mitzvah of sanctifying the crescent new moon and establishing a lunar calendar. This is the first mitzvah the Jews were given as a nation. Moses had difficulty envisaging the moon's appearance at the exact moment of its monthly rebirth. After the sun set, G-d showed Moses the crescent new moon of the new month of Nissan, showing him the precise dimensions of the moon at the moment the new month is to be consecrated.

For the generations that followed, each new month was ushered in when two witnesses testified before the *Sanhedrin* (rabbinic supreme court) that they had seen the *molad*, the new moon. In the 4th century CE, Hillel II foresaw that the Jews would no longer be able to follow a Sanhedrin-based calendar. So Hillel and his rabbinical court established the perpetual calendar which is followed today -- until [Moshiach](#) will come and reestablish the Sanhedrin.

Thursday, March 23, 2023 --- 1 Nissan, 5783

Mishkan Inaugurated (1312 BCE)

On the [eighth day](#) following a 7-day training and initiation period, the portable Mishkan ("Tabernacle" or "Sanctuary") built by the Children of Israel in the Sinai desert was erected, [Aaron](#) and his sons began serving as priests, and the Divine Presence came to [dwell](#) in the Mishkan; special offerings were brought, including a series of gifts by Nachshon ben Aminadav, the Prince of the Tribe of Judah (similar offerings were brought over the next 11 days by the other tribes of Israel).

Death of Nadav and Avihu (1312 BCE)

On the day the Mishkan was inaugurated (see above), "Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire in it, and put incense on it, and offered strange fire before G-d, which He commanded them not. A fire went out from G-d, and [consumed](#) them, and they died before G-d" (Leviticus 10:1-2).

Friday, March 24, 2023 --- 2 Nissan, 5783

First Red Heifer Prepared (1312 BCE)

On the 2nd of Nissan, one day after the inauguration of the Tabernacle, Moses prepared the very first Red Heifer, in order to ritually purify the Jewish nation in preparation for the bringing of the Paschal Lamb in the newly erected Sanctuary.

Passing of Rashab (1920)

The fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneerson ("Rashab"), was born in the White Russian town of Lubavitch in 1860. After the passing of his father, [Rabbi Shmuel](#) (in 1882), he assumed the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch. Rabbi Sholom DovBer passed away in Rostov on the 2nd of Nissan, 1920. His last words were: "I'm going to heaven; I leave you the writings."