

**It's Not About What You Sacrifice or Offer... It's About How You Do It.**

(Old Testament, Chapter: Vayikra)

**Summary:** The first Parshah of V'yikra is entirely about sacrifices and offerings.... A subject about which there is not too much thought given in our modern times--

Sacrifices and offerings in this parsha fall into three pretty basic categories:

- Things you did or say knowingly or unknowingly that you should not have done or said...
- Things you didn't do or say knowingly or unknowingly and should have done or said...
- And Just because, or thanks!... Things are good!

**Allegorical references:** Our sacrifices and offerings are numerous in the things we do and say every day—in the things we are doing and saying here today.

**Moral:** It is the quality of our sacrifices and offerings-- how we sacrificed and offered—that God, your family, friends, and colleagues notice and care about.

**Statistics:** 1,749 words (approximately 12 minutes speaking time); includes definition of terms used; quotes and sources.

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"Lah mihn-ah-tzay-ach mizmor dahveed-- *the 20<sup>th</sup> Psalm of David- Siddur Sim Shalom page 154/155*"

"May G-d remember all your offerings and accept your sacrifices, granting your heart's desires, fulfilling all your hopes..."

That's right... G-d is *paying attention*.

Shabbat Shalom.

My name is Mark Daniels. Rabbi Zelizer asked if I was available to give a d'var torah this week--

Good husband and citizen that I am, I checked our schedule with my wife and told the Rabbi I was available...

The thing I keep *forgetting* to do first is to **pay attention** to what the parsha of the week will be.... To LOOK at the parshah BEFORE making a commitment!

Still, After reviewing the parshah and doing a bit of reading---I think we can get through a few minutes together.

This is a BIG Weekend in so many ways...

This Shabbat you notice we have two Torahs- this is Shabbat Zachor- the Shabbat before Purim and we read the Maftir from the book of Sh'mot-- "Remember what Amalek did to you..."

And we **begin** the book of V'yikra, Leviticus-- referred to as the book of priests.

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A few items of interest from the parsha you may want to review further during our reading:

- All sacrifices and offerings include at least 'a dash of salt'.
- Rei'ach Nee-cho-ach, a **pleasing odor** is mentioned **9** times in the parshah-- *think maybe this is important?*

The sense of smell is argued to be one of the most powerful triggers for memory...

This close to Pesach, if I ask you to close your eyes and think of the holiday, what do you smell? Your favorite kugel? Marror? Cakes and matzoh brei? Lysol countertop cleaner?

### **Does it make you smile or cringe?**

What smell triggers what memories for you on Friday night/ erev Shabbat?  
**Challah baking? Chicken soup?**

I can't smell baking bread *without* being flooded with memories of my present day Shabbat- - **but**, even though we did not bake our challah growing up -- by association, my childhood memories float to the surface -

Here's a secret... if you want to sell me your house or car-- fresh baked bread would likely tip the scale in your favor...

**However** a pleasing odor is not a necessary result for all sacrifices and offerings... Take a look and you will see which have a pleasing odor specifically called out.

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The very first word of the **parsha v'yikra**, in the **book of v'yikra** is... **v'yikra**.

The idea consumed me that this must have a very special significance... be important.

**V'yikra** has a small aleph at the end of the written word, whereas **AhDahm** has a Large aleph- and Ahdahm is used in parsha v'yikra rather than the more common term "Ish".

Rashi tells us that v'yikra: to call, is always followed by the more conversational v'yidaber, v'yomer, etc...

The 'aleph' aspect is interesting... and Rashi's clarification is educational- but it didn't really satisfy my feeling that v'yikra has some other **relevant** and very special **significance** here at the beginning of the parsha and the book of Leviticus.

**My** first thought in reading the opening sentence is-- *and I say this with all humility -- after all we are created in G-d's image--* **How like G-d am I?**

I mean almost any discussion, or conversation with my children, for example, is preceded by yelling-- I mean Calling --my child...

According to my son's Hebrew-english/ English-Hebrew dictionary the root of Vyikra is k'rah. In English meaning: read; call, name; call out.

The Rabbis teach that to call, or name something suggests power over the thing named...

If like me you have children or pets, you too might think this is a bit far-fetched and argue the point; however, Let's set that aside for now--

Picking up the connection to Bereshit I and began scanning the pages of the eitz haim for **k'rah** and **v'yikra** to see what connections or conclusions I might draw.

In Bereshit, G-d names aspects of creation: Ch 1 verse 5 for example-- V'yikra elohim leh-ohr yom, veh lachoshech karah lie y'lah (And G-d called the light day and the darkness He named night).

In chapter 2 verse 19 – 20, G-d summons all the living things of the earth, instructing Adam to *name* them... and Adam *names* them-

And of course in verse 23 (please remember this is a biblical/ historical statement and not a political statement), Adam *names* woman.

In chapter 3 verse 9 G-d *calls* out to Adam and says 'where are you?' What follows is the expulsion from the garden of eden.

Yet later in chapter 4 verse 9 after Cain kills Abel,  
G-d does NOT call. He speaks to Cain.

Fast forward to the book of Shemot, Exodus chapter 3 verse 2: "... G-d called to him  
out of the bush-- 'Moses! Moses!'"

I would like to spend more time researching the use of the word k'rah or v'yikrah--  
*however* I think I read enough to understand what I was looking for- **why it is  
important to begin the book of v'yikra with v'yikra** and by extension a *possible  
relevant* meaning for the parsha in modern times...

It **is important** that v'yikra begin with the word v'yikra because the word suggests--  
it **calls-out -- that this parsha is relevant! It is important! Yet how?**

Of our 613 mitzvot, more than half are in V'yikra-- how can we hope to satisfy  
commandments in a non-Temple, non-sacrificing environment?

That's when it hit me. V'yikra appears to be used when the issue is a **matter of respect...  
Or disrespect...**

**Of dedication, care and attention to detail...**

Or of the opposite... **without care, going through the motions...**

**When the matter and consequences are great enough that they affect the  
direct community or the broader category of the community at large.**

You see, when **I** call my children, there is typically a matter of respect to discuss.

G-d **called** Adam and Eve and banished *them*, and therefore us from Eden **because  
they did not respect the one prohibition placed on them in paradise.**

G-d **called** Moses at the burning bush *after Moses turned away* **because Moses  
showed respect** for the awesome power of G-d and the moment.

According to the Jewish Book of Why, the "service of the heart," the use of words  
only, coexisted with sacrifice -- the "service of the altar" during the times of the  
sacrificial system.

Our tradition holds that the three daily services-- shacharit, minchah and maariv  
were introduced by Abraham Isaac and Jacob respectively...

Scholars explain they were added much later...

**Shacharit** service representing the morning sacrifice, **mincha** representing the  
afternoon "offering" and that after the destruction of the second temple these two  
services continued to be recited as a *reminder* of the sacrificial system.

**Maariv** was the time when the fat was burned and was the subject of debate as to whether it was connected to sacrificial service and therefore required.

Rabbis Joshua and Gamliel argued respectively *against* and *for* a third daily service. Rabbi Gamliel won the point and we have **Maariv**.

On **Shabbat**, **rosh chodesh** and **holidays** there was an additional sacrifice brought --**Musaf**--; and it is a part of our Shabbat, rosh chodesh and Holiday services today.

There are segments of Judaism that have "**hit the delete button**" on sacrifice in their prayerbooks. And if you look closely at the Siddur Sim Shalom- while conservative Judaism retains reference to sacrifice, it also includes "*substitute language*" for those to whom the *idea* of sacrifice is *ugly* or *irrelevant* in our modern world.--

Whether or not we choose to say or not say a prayer... If we start removing reference from siddurim because of *perceived* irrelevance-- how long before we start removing sections from the Torah? Choosing **only** those pieces that are entertaining or favorable or about which we can find some value in a modern reference?

With its numerous sacrifices and offerings, V'yikra is, for us- today- not about killing-

**It is about the quality of the effort, not quantity.**

If a man doesn't have a bull to offer, he can offer a pigeon. If he doesn't have a pigeon, he can offer grain-

The one **consistent** requirement is that the offering be '**perfect**'.

**It's about the quality, not the quantity.**

It is about paying attention to detail. The parsha's message is to "**do whatever it is you do with care and respect.**"

Maybe in today's society sacrifice has a negative connotation--

**What if** As parents, for example, ***instead of thinking about raising our children as a sacrifice***-- "how could you do this to me after all I have sacrificed for you? Carrying you for 9 months, working 70 hour week to feed you, clothe you, educate you..." --

***We talked with our children in the context of a free-will offering-*** an obligation we understood, accepted and performed with love and respect and expect the same in return.

**What if** when we gather as a community to daven, we concentrate on the prayer (*our means of sacrifice and offering today*) to the best of our ability - being neither

distracted nor being a distraction... offering up to ourselves and to the community the **respect** the moment and event deserves.

**The Shacharit, Minchah, Maariv and Musaf are our sacrifices and offerings today.**

Consider when we daven Musaf... **would a temple priest accept the offering?**

Our sacrifices and offerings are numerous **in the things we do and say every day—in the things we are doing and saying here today.**

**G-d remembers our sacrifices and offerings...**

I propose this means that G-d remembers **the quality** of our sacrifices and offerings-- **how** we sacrificed and offered—

**How will G-d remember our offering today?**

With **care, respect and attention to detail?**

**My wish for you this Shabbat is that "G-d remember all your offerings and accept your sacrifices, granting your heart's desires, fulfilling all your hopes..."**

Our reading today begins on page 592 in the Etz haim, chapter 3 verse 1. Shabbat Shalom.

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**Definition of Terms Used:**

**God-** God with a capital 'G' denotes Israelite God

**Parsha-** Section of Torah

**Sedra-** Story within the section of Torah

**Shabbat-** Jewish Sabbath

**Shalom-** Hebrew greeting: hello; good-bye; peace

**Sefer-** Book

**Siddur-** Prayer Book

**Torah-** Old Testament, Pentateuch, Five Books of Moses