

# Parashat Vayikra

Leviticus 1:1-5:26

March 27, 2020



## SUMMARY

This week we begin reading *Sefer Vayikra*, the Book of Leviticus, the third book of *Torah*. *Vayikra* means “And He called.” It refers to God’s calling to Moshe to enter the Tent of Meeting. *Parashat Vayikra* focuses on “*korbanot*,” or “sacrifices.” The Hebrew word for sacrifice, *korban*, comes from the root letters *kuf*, *resh*, and *bet*, and means to “get close.” The Israelites would offer different animals or vegetables as sacrifices for all sorts of different reasons. The common goal of these sacrifices was to get **close** to G-d.

Some of sacrifices mentioned in this week’s *parasha* include:

The *olah*--an offering that was burnt entirely on the altar to show that the person who brought it trusted G-d completely.

The peace offering, was brought to bring more peace to the world. Part of it was burnt up for G-d, then the rest of it was eaten by the one who brought it, together with their family. Then part was also given to the *kohen*. This *korban* was a little like a barbecue that brought together G-d, the *kohanim*, and the family of the person who brought the offering.

The Israelites brought the *hattat* חַטָּאת offering for accidental sins done because of carelessness or lack of attention. Many of these sacrifices were eaten by the כֹּהֲנִים. Every sacrifice was salted.

### From Our Commentators:

#### **Bekhor Shor on Leviticus 2:3**

מלח ברית אלהיך. מלח דבר המתקים, לפיכך  
צוה הק' להקריבו במנחות ובקרבתות, להראות  
שהקרבתות ברית קימת לעולם וכפרה

Salt is something that lasts and doesn’t ever go bad. This is why G!d commanded the Israelites to salt the sacrifices--to show that these sacrifices are part of a lasting promise between G!d and the Israelites.

### FOR DISCUSSION:

1) *Parashat Vayikra* teaches a lot about sacrifices, but the Hebrew word for sacrifice doesn’t mean to give up something you really want. It means “to get close”. The Israelites offered *korbanot* (sacrifices) as a way of getting closer to G!d. Can you describe a time that you felt close to G!d?

2) If G!d doesn’t need to eat and doesn’t really have a need for anyone’s gifts, then why might we be told to bring G!d *korbanot*, or “closeness gifts?”

3) All “closeness gifts” or *korbanot*, need to be salted. Although the *kohanim* and the other Israelites sometimes eat them, we know that G!d doesn’t eat them. So why salt them?