

MARCH 27, 2020

Parashat Vayikra

Leviticus 1:1-5:26

Taught By:

Seraphina & Maya



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.



SERAPHINA: I feel close to G'd when good things happen, almost like G'd is helping me or doing nice things for me. But I can also feel close to G'd when I help a friend, or really anyone in the world. Helping people makes me feel close to G'd because I know I'm doing the right thing and that feels like I'm connecting with G'd.

MAYA: For me feeling close to G'd could be about feeling excited or even

about feeling sad. It's more of a feeling of trust than of a particular mood. I did feel close to G'd when I found out I could be in my aunt's wedding this summer as a junior bridesmaid. I was so excited! But really I think feeling close to G'd means feeling like I can talk to G'd and that G'd hears. That can be something I feel in whatever mood.

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?"

MAYA: I like to do nice things for my mom sometimes--like get her breakfast or give her a spa day--as a way of feeling close to her. It's just fun and it makes me feel like I've done something that she appreciates. Maybe giving G'd "closeness gifts" helped the Israelites feel like they had done something that G'd would appreciate.

SERAPHINA: I think that "closeness gifts" could be a way of building trust with G'd. When someone gives a present it can build trust between the two people, particularly if what they give is something that is valuable. The person who receives the gift might feel happy and grateful. A happy, grateful person might be more likely to trust others. Friends trust each other.

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?

SERAPHINA: Maybe G'd tells them to salt them because if you have the right amount of salt on something it tastes good--like *hallah* dipped in grape juice--but if you have too much salt it can hurt you or be bad for you. Maybe salting the "closeness gifts" is supposed to remind them to do the right thing.

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?

