

# VAYIKRA | ויקרא

## And he called

TORAH: LEVITICUS 1:1-5:26

HAFTARAH: ISAIAH 43:21-44:23

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 5:23-30

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### Name & Meaning

- The title "Leviticus" is derived from the Greek Septuagint (LXX) version of the Torah. The book of Leviticus is predominantly concerned with Levitical rituals. An older Hebrew name for the book was "The Laws of the Priesthood," but in Judaism today, it is referred to by the name Vayikra (ויקרא), which means "And He called." Vayikra is the first Hebrew word of the book, which begins by saying, "And the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from inside the tent of meeting" (Leviticus 1:1).
- Leviticus describes the sacrificial service and the duties of the priests. It also introduces ritual purity, the biblical diet, the calendar of appointed times, laws of holiness and laws relating to redemption, vows and tithes. In addition, Leviticus discourses on ethical instruction and holiness. The twenty-fourth reading from the Torah is eponymous with the Hebrew name of the book it introduces: Vayikra. This portion introduces the sacrificial service and describes five different types of sacrifices.

### Five Primary Categories of Offerings

Each of the first five chapters of Vayikra corresponds to one of the five main categories of offerings.

- *Olah* (burnt/ascending offering): Vayikra 1
- *Minchah* (grain offering); Vayikra 2
- *Shelammim* (peace offering): Vayikra 3
- *Chattat* (sin offering): Vayikra 4
- *Asham* (guilt offering): Vayikra 5

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## Purpose for Offerings

- Lev. 1:4: atonement = sin?
- Hebrews 9:22
- Lev. 5:11-13
- Why would anyone bring a whole burnt offering?
  - This is a free-will offering
- Lev. 1:4- laying hands on the sacrifice; an act of confession
- Lev. 16:21
  - Laying the hands on the sacrifice is not simply a physical action, but it is what is done while one lays hands on the sacrifice.
- Lev. 4:27-29
  - Numbers 15:22-29
  - Numbers 15:30

If one sins accidentally (unintentionally), there are sacrifices to make atonement. If one sins on purpose (intentionally), there is no sacrifice for atonement.

- 1 Samuel 15:22-23
- Is. 1:11
- Hosea 6:6
- Micah 6:6-8
- Amos 5:21-25

Is God required to accept the offerings that were presented?

- Psalm 40:6
- Jer. 7:21-28

If there is no sacrifice for intentional sin, is there a solution?

- Hosea 14
- Ps. 51:15-19
  - Righteous sacrifice is a broken and contrite heart
  - The offering *can* be brought, but is no good without a repentant heart

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- We throw ourselves on the mercy of God

## The Lesson from Manasseh

- 2 Chron. 33:9-16
  - Did Manasseh sin presumptuously?
  - Did he bring offerings for his atonement?
  - How did he gain forgiveness?
  - What do the sacrifices he brought have to do with atonement?

## Steps in Offering Korbanot

1. **Ha'k'rah'vah** [הקרבה] – Owner brings the sacrificial animal to the entrance on the East side of the Mishkan (later of the Temple), declares what type of korban it is, and leads it to the correct place near the altar. For example, if it was an “olah” – a “burnt offering” – it was brought to the North side. (*Lev. 1:3*)

2. **S'mi'chah** [סמיכה] – Owner stands with his animal on the North side of the altar, facing Westward (i.e. towards the Tent of Meeting), places his hands between the animal's horns, presses down firmly and does confession (viddui) and prayer. (*Lev. 1:4*)

3. **Sh'chi'tah** [שחיטה] – Owner, a kohen or anyone else properly trained in the procedure, slices the throat of the animal with surgical precision. The resulting rapid, extreme loss of blood causes the animal to quickly become unconscious, thereby feeling no pain during the subsequent steps in the procedure. (*Lev. 1:5*)

4. **Ka'ba'lah** [קבלה] – Kohen receives the blood in a “mizrak” [מזרק] (bowl).

5. **Ho'la'chah** [הולכה] – The Kohen brings the mizrak to the Mizbeach ha-N'cho'shet (the “brass” altar).

6. **Z'ri'kah** [זריקה] – Kohen sprinkles blood on the corner of the altar appropriate for the particular type of korban, pouring the remainder out at the base. (*Lev. 1:5*)

7. **Ha'f'shah'tah** [הפשטה] – Kohen removes the animal's skin. (*Lev. 1:6*)

8. **Ni'tu'ach** [ניתוח] – Kohen sections the animal's remains. (*Lev. 1:6*)

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9. **Ah'ri'chat ha-Ae'vo's'rim** [עריכת האברים] – Kohen arranges the sections of the animal in the order in which they'll be brought to the altar. (*Lev. 1:8*)

10. **Rach'tzah** [רחצה] – Kohen washes animal's innards and legs. (*Lev. 1:9*)

11. **Ki'dush Ya'da'yim v'Rag'la'yim** [קדוש ידים ורגלים] – Kohen washes his hands and feet in water from the kiyor, before ascending the altar. (*Ex. 30:19-20*)

12. **Ha'a'ta'rah** [הקטרה] – Kohen places the animal's sections on the fire. (*Lev. 1:8-9*)

13. **Min'chah** [מנחה] – Kohen mixes flour with oil and places it in the fire. (*Num. 28:5*)

14. **Neh'sehch** [נסך] – Kohen pours wine out at the base of the altar. (*Num. 28:7*)

15. **Ah'chi'lah** [אכילה] – Kohen eats the meat in the Heichal/"Holy Place," depending on the type of korban. Some korbanot could be eaten elsewhere.