

**PARSHAT VAYIKRA**

**PART I - QUESTIONS FOR THE 'SHABBOS TABLE'**

**PARSHIOT & MOSHE RABEINU**

1. As you most probably have noticed in your study of Chumash, the Torah delimits certain portions from one another by the use of 'parshiot' [several spaces that create a division]. According to Chazal, these 'parshia' divisions were given together with the Torah at Har Sinai.

In regard to the purpose of these 'parshia' divisions, see Rashi's commentary on the first pasuk of Sefer Vayikra [the section that begins with 'va-yedaber'], noting how he discusses their purpose.

Relate this commentary to the underlying assumption that we have employed in many of our shiurim, i.e. it is incumbent upon the reader of Chumash to contemplate the thematic significance in these divisions.

2. In addition to this Rashi, study the Chizkuni on Shmot 34:32, where he explains how (and why) the Torah was composed in given by Moshe to the people of Israel in the fortieth year prior to his death. Note how that explanation enhances the Rashi discussed in the above question.

**KORBAN CHATAT**

2. A 'chatat' offering, as described in detail in chapter 4, is usually understood as a 'sin offering'. To the best of your recollection, for what type of sin is a person obligated to bring such an offering? In your answer, relate to both the severity of the sin and the sinner's intention.

Next, review chapter 4 in Sefer Vayikra, noting how the opening pasuk in each of its five 'parshiot' provides the answer to the above question. Nonetheless, note how it remains unclear in regard to the specific type of transgressions these 'sin offerings' apply to. In other words, what laws does the phrase "m'kol mitzvot Hashem asher lo ta'asenu" refer to? [If you have time, note the various opinions among the commentators.]

In regard to 'intention', note the meaning (and context) of the Hebrew word 'shogeg' as it is used in 4:2, 22, 27, etc. In your opinion, does shogeg imply that the act was done: accidentally; inadvertently; or unintentionally?

According to any of these possibilities, why does the 'transgressor' require forgiveness?

How do Chazal interpret "shogeg"? [See Rashbam, and Masechet Kritut 1:1.]

See Ramban on 4:2, re: why atonement is necessary.

3. Review 5:1-13, noting that this unit also begins with a certain case, or to be more exact, a certain set of cases. How do these 'cases' (as described in 5:1-4) differ from the standard case of a korban chatat described in chapter 4?

Would you consider these cases as shogeg as well? If not, how would you define them? Is the word "shogeg" used in their description? If not, is any other word used to explain the nature of those transgressions?

In your opinion, should the cases described in 5:1-13 be considered a korban **chatat** or a korban **asham**? Explain your answer based on these psukim!

Recall from the "viduy" that we recite on Yom Kippur, one of the final lines of the "al chet" include "al chataaim sh'anu chayavim aleihem OLEH v'YORED" - for transgressions that we are obligated to offer an "oleh v'yored" offering (i.e. where the type of offering is a function one's financial status). How does that "al chet" relate to the topics discussed in 5:1-13?

4. As you review the first parshia of chapter 5, note that the transgressor (in any of the cases described in 5:1-4) has the option to offer a less expensive korban (i.e. birds instead of an animal/ see 5:7-13). In your opinion, does this option imply that these transgressions are less severe (than the transgressions described in chapter four), or could this option be a result of the fact that these cases are simply more common?

Note that in the next parshia, we find that there is even another option to bring a flour offering (should the transgressor be very poor). Relate this as well to your answer to the above question.

**KORBANOT OLAH & SHLAMIM**

5. In Chumash, do we ever find an instance when a korban **olah** was offered (i.e. before Ma'amad Har Sinai / see 24:5)? If so, when, where, by whom, and why?

[Note Breishit 8:20 and 12:6-8.]

Was a korban **shlamim** ever brought **before** the events of Ma'amad Har Sinai? If so, when and why?

If not, why do you think that Ma'amad Har Sinai was the **first** time that we find a korban shlamim?

In your answer, relate to 'who' shares in the meat of this korban, and to the covenantal nature of the events that took place at Har Sinai.

As you review Vayikra chapter 23, note that the only holiday where we find the offering of public 'korban shlamim' is on Shavuot! Based on the above questions, can you explain why?

**PART II - QUESTIONS FOR PREPARATION (for weekly shiur)**

Before we begin our questions, a short reminder of what we refer to when we use the words: 'Parsha' and 'parshia'.

\* Parsha - with a capital 'P' - refers to Parshat Ha-Shavua.

[or what is also known as the weekly 'Sedra'.]

\* parshia - with a small 'p' refers to the basic paragraph type unit that we find in the Sefer Torah. In Chumash, we find two types of 'parshiot':

A 'parshia stuma' - a wide space in the middle of a line;

A 'parshia ptucha' - a wider space until the end of a line.

['parshiot' - is the plural form for (more than one) 'parshia']

**A. CHARTING PARSHIOT**

We begin our study by introducing a tool that is very helpful towards finding structural patterns and themes in Chumash.

Borrowing an analogy from the world of sports, we refer to this methodology as the 'tournament' method, because the chart that you finish will look somewhat like the results of an elimination tournament match (i.e. when lots of teams who play against one another, and you end up quarter-finals, and semifinals and finally with one winner).

In our case, the 'contestants' are each 'parshia' within any given unit within the Sefer, and the 'winner' is simply the primary topic that emerges as the theme of that unit. [It may sound a bit complicated, but it really very easy (once you catch on).]

It is a wonderful tool that helps the student understand the progression of parshiot, and follow how Chumash develops its most basic themes.

Here's how it works, and remember, **no** shortcuts.

1. Take a blank piece of paper (line or unlined), and along the left margin, draw a set of short lines (like an inch or two long), single spaced, one on top of another. [In other words, make a vertical list of short blank lines.]

Your list should look something like this:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ etc.

2. The first unit that we will study is Parshat Vayikra, i.e. chapters one through five of Sefer Vayikra. Quickly glance over this section, noting that it contains approx. twenty individual parshiot (so your list will need to start with about 20 blank lines).

Now comes the hard (or 'thinking') part.

3. Starting from chapter one, briefly review each parshia, and attempt to summarize its primary topic in two words or less. In other words, keep the 'topic name' concise (even though it may not be 100% precise). However, make sure that your definition is unique enough to differentiate it from the topic of the next parshia.

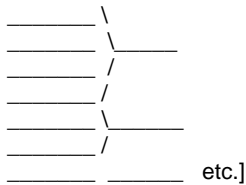
For example, a 'topic name' for the first parshia such as korban would be too general, while titles like shchita or kohanim would not be nearly precise enough.

Remember, only one line for each parshia; and as short a summary phrase as possible!

It is recommended that you use a pencil, since you'll probably find yourself 'changing your mind' quite often. If you have trouble defining a single topic, then just leave a question mark, you can always return to that parshia at a later time.]

4. Once you have finished your list for the entire unit (i.e. chapters one thru five), attempt to group together any group of lines that share an **obvious** common topic. [For example, the three types of korban ola that you find in the three parshiot of chapter one would easily group together under the more general category of korban ola.]

As you proceed down the list, attempt to identify the most basic common topics, grouping these parshiot together with a sideways 'v' type symbol. Your list should look something like this:



[Sometimes, certain parshiot may not group, and if a parshia stands alone, just leave it that way, simply moving that line out one more level to line up with the others.]

5. By identifying these common topics, you have basically created a 'shorter' second list. The next step is simple, as we simply repeat this process over and over again, until we are left with only one line (the 'winner'), i.e. the primary topic for this entire unit.

By doing so, you have basically created an **outline** for these five chapters. (Your outline should contain at least about four levels.)

When you review your conclusions, be sure that you can give a clear title for each level of the outline, and then a general title for the entire outline, which (by default) should be the primary topic of Parshat Vayikra.

As you will notice, Parshat Vayikra is very organized, so this method works very nicely for this unit.

## B. FINDING TEXTUAL PATTERNS IN THE OUTLINE

1. Once you complete your outline, scan the entire unit once again, and note each time that a new 'dibbur' begins [i.e. when ever you find a "va-yomer Hashem el Moshe..." or similar].

Make note of those positions on your outline.

Does each dibbur correspond to a certain level of your outline?

Try to explain where it does correspond and where it doesn't.

2. Next, review the entire Parsha once again, this time making note of where each chapter begins. [Remember that the division of the Bible into chapters in not a Jewish tradition, while the parshiot are.] How does the division into chapters correlate with your outline, and the division into dibbur's? Can you explain why?

Can you explain the reason for the two instances where it is slightly different? [Relate to the difference between an asham and a chatat.]

3. Based on your outline, attempt to define the overriding principle that guides the order of the parshiot in Parshat Vayikra.

Is that principle the same or different for each category of korbanot? Can you explain how and why?

4. Finally, scan the entire Parsha one last time, this time making note of the following two key phrases:

1) "...isheh reiach nichoach la-Hashem"

2) "...ve-chiper alav ha-kohen ... ve-nislach lo."

a. Relate your findings to your outline.

b. Which **two** general categories of korbanot do these two phrases relate to? Can you explain why?

Did your outline recognize this division into two general categories of korbanot that an individual can offer?

Be sure that you understand how this division into two basic sections explains the internal order of each subsection.

5. Attempt to relate these two phrases ["ishe reiach nichoach la-Hashem" and "ve-chiper alav ha-kohen ... ve-nislach lo"] to the thematic connection between the mishkan, Ma'amad Har Sinai and chet ha-egel.

Relate to 24:5-11 and 32:20, 34:9.

Relate also to 23:17 and 34:23.

## C. THEMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

6. Based on your outline, should the 'korban mincha' be considered a separate category or a sub-category of ola?

Relate to both the structure of the parshiot, as well as their content. Relate also to parshiot ptuchot and stumot.

7. As you most probably have noticed by now, the first three chapters of Parshat Vayikra form a distinct unit (as they are all included in one dibbur), and they describe the various types of **korbanot nedava** [free-will offerings] that an individual may offer. Be sure that you have identified the three basic categories of **ola**, **mincha**, & **shlamim**, and what is unique about each.

Explain why the korban **mincha** could be considered a subcategory of the **ola** offering.

With this in mind, recall the last time (recorded in Chumash) when Bnei Yisrael offered **olot** & **shlamim**. [If you need help - try Shmot 24:5 & 32:6.]

In your opinion, is there a thematic connection between those two instances and this first **dibbur** given to Moshe from the **ohel moed**? [Relate (as usual) to Ramban on Shmot 25:1.]

8. Based on your answers to the above questions, can you suggest a reason why Sefer Vayikra begins specifically with the laws of korban nedava?

Relate to 1:1-2. and last week's shiur on Parshat Pekudei.

9. What is the three letter "shoresh" [root] of the Hebrew word "korban"? What is the simple meaning of that "shoresh" in Hebrew? How does this relate to the word "korban"- an offering?

Relate this to the purpose of korbanot and man's relationship with God, as well as to your conclusions concerning the outline.

10. Recall from chapter three that we find three categories of **shlamim**:

'bakar' (cattle),

'kvasim' (lambs), and

'izim' (goats)

Recall as well from chapter one, the three categories of **olot**:

bakar (cattle),

tzon (sheep), and

'of' (birds).

In your opinion, why do you think the option to offer 'birds' exists only for the **ola** offering, but not for the **shlamim**?

[Relate to who 'eats' each korban (and why).]

[See Rashi 3:1.]

Note that the Hebrew word tzon [sheep] refers to both kvasim and izim (lambs and goats). With this in mind, attempt to explain why we find two parshiot (and hence categories) for tzon in regard to the **shlamim**, but only one parshia for the **ola** option for tzon. [See Rashi on 3:7!]

11. Read 5:1-13 carefully. How did you define this section on your outline? Chazal refer to this korban as an 'oleh ve-yored'. Can you explain why? [Do you remember this name from the 'vidui' that we say on Yom Kippur?]

In your opinion, would you consider this korban a chatat or an asham? In your answer, relate to both 5:5-6 and 5:9.

Relate to the type of animal offered (for the rich person) in comparison to the standard animal offered for either a **chatat** or an **asham**.

12. Review 5:14-26, noting the cases when a person brings an **asham**. In your opinion, how are these cases different than the cases of the oleh ve-yored.

Can you define a general difference between the cases for when one must bring a **chatat** and the cases (or at least most of the cases) when one must bring an **asham**?

In your answer, relate to the intention of the transgressor, against who the transgression was made, and the severity of the sin.

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### PART III - PARSHANUT

#### RAMBAN'S INTRODUCTION TO SEFER VAYIKRA

1. Carefully study Ramban's introduction to Sefer Vayikra.

How does Ramban explain the connection (and flow) from Sefer Shmot to Sefer Vayikra? [Relate this to his peirush to Shmot 25:1, as well as to his introduction to Sefer Shmot.]

How does this relate to Ramban's understanding of the **Shchina** on Har Sinai and the events at chet ha-egel?

How does Ramban explain the progression of topics within Sefer Vayikra? Does he suggest a general theme for the sefer? If so, what is it?

How does Ramban explain why there are mitzvot in Sefer Vayikra that are **not** directly related to the mishkan?

[Note how Ramban focuses on the need for Am Yisrael to perform mitzvot in order to 'keep' the **Shchina** from 'leaving', and how this explains the 'non-mishkan' related mitzvot in Sefer Vayikra.]

2. In your opinion, does Ramban assume that the mitzvot of Sefer Vayikra follow in the chronological order by which they were first given to Moshe? Relate this to Ramban's shitta of 'yesh mukdam u-me'uchar'? [If you have time, see Ramban on Vayikra 25:1, i.e the second of half of that lengthy Ramban where he explains his own opinion of why Parshat Behar that was given at Har Sinai was recorded in Sefer Vayikra!]

3. Reread the last five psukim of Sefer Shmot, especially 40:34-35 in relation to Vayikra 1:1, based on their parallel to Shmot 24:15-17. [See last week's shiur on Pekudei as well.]

With this parallel in mind, see Rashi, Ramban, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Chizkuni, and Seforno on 1:1. [that should keep you busy.]

On what points do they all agree, and on what point do they disagree? [Note according to each **where** Moshe is standing when Hashem speaks to him. Is it:

- in the kodesh kodashim itself;
- in the kodesh, outside the parochet;
- in the chatzer, outside the ohel mo'ed?

[In your answer, relate to Shmot 25:21-22 and Bamidbar 7:89!]

Why does Seforno bring down the pasuk from Melachim 8:11? Why does Rashi claim that this type of 'calling' actually took place **every** time that God spoke to Moshe?

Does Ramban disagree (according to pshat)? If so, why?

See end of Ramban to 1:1. Why does he compare this pasuk to Shmot 24:1, and relate this topic once again to Ma'amad Har Sinai? Why does Ramban refer to this as 'al derech ha-emet'?

#### ME'ILAH & ASHAM

4. Note the case in 5:20-22 when one brings an **asham**. Is this for a transgression against God or against his fellow man?

With this in mind, what is the meaning of "u'ma'la ma'al b-Hashem" in 5:21? What transgression was done against God?

See Rashi on 5:21. How does his peirush relate to this question?

#### IF OR WHEN?

5. Review 2:14, noting its context in relation to the parshiot that preceded it that discuss how one can offer various types of a voluntary "korban mincha".

Then, note the Hebrew word "im" at the beginning of 2:14. Did you understand that word as 'if' or 'when'? In your answer, relate to the commandment to bring one's first fruits as detailed in Devarim 26:1-3.

Then, see Rashi (and Rashbam), noting how they interpret this word, and why.

In contrast, see Ibn Ezra - be sure that you understand why he disagrees. Note the careful attention that Ibn Ezra pays to how this pasuk is worded!

Finally, see Ramban, noting how he first quotes both possibilities, and then how he offers his own third interpretation - relating to 'when' Bnei Yisrael will enter the land. Relate this to Devarim 26:1. Note how this interpretation is rather ingenious!

be-hatzlacha,  
menachem