

## QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT VAYIKRA

**Q-1. (a)** What was the goal of the *korbanot* (sacrificial offerings) (7 views)? **(b)** (1) Why did *Hashem* call (“*vayikra*”) to *Moshe*, before speaking (“*va-yedabeir*”) to him (4 views)? (2) Why does the word, “*vayikra*”, have a small *alef* (2 views)? **(c)** Why does 1:2 (1) start, “*adam ki yakriv*” (a man who offers – singular), but end “*takrivu*” (shall offer – plural) (2 views)? (2) say “*adam*”, not the more usual “*ish*”? **(d)** (1) What 3 mammals were acceptable *korbanot*? (2) How do they recall the *avot*’s merits? **(e)** (1) Why were domesticated animals used for *korbanot*, but not wild ones? (2) Were wild animals allowed to be offered on the *mizbei’ach* (2 views)? **(f)** From which Jew was a *korban* not accepted? **(g)** To offer an animal *korban*, (1) what 4 steps did the owner of the *korban* take? (2) what 6 steps did the *kohen* take? (*Vayikra* 1:1-2)

**A-1. (a)** (1) To wean *Bnei Yisrael* from idol worship (*Rambam – Moreh Nevuchim*). (2) To unite *Bnei Yisrael* with *Hashem*, by drawing Divine radiance to the world (*Meshech Chochma*, based on *Ramban*). (3) Sins result from (i) thought, (ii) speech and (iii) action – a *korban* brought a sinner atonement, since he had to (i) lean his hands on the *korban* – an action, (ii) confess his sin – by speech, and (iii) burn the entrails and kidneys – organs of thought and desire – and the legs that do the action (*Ramban*). (4) The animal’s organs are like one’s own organs – by forsaking one’s intelligence through sin, his body becomes like an animal’s, and burning the animal’s body erases the sin from his mind (*Sefer haChinuch – Mitzvah* 95). (5) *Korbanot* are an inexplicable formula to bring *Hashem* closer to people (*Kuzari*). (6) Offering our possessions – animals and grains – to *Hashem* forces us to recognize that we are able to exist only by His Will (*Maharal*). (7) Like grain and meat nurture one’s body, *korbanot* nourish one’s soul (*Akeidat Yitzchak*). **(b)** (1) (i) *Hashem* called *Moshe* to join Him, showing His affection for him (*Rashi*). (ii) Since *Moshe* was so modest, he was not sure that *Hashem* had not found someone greater than him to join him in *Mishkan* – perhaps, *Aharon*, whom *Hashem* had selected as *Kohen Gadol* – he waited until He called him (*Vayikra Raba*). (iii) When *Hashem* made *Har Sinai* temporarily holy for *matam Torah*, *Moshe* could not ascend until *Hashem* summoned him (*Shemot* 19:20) – *Moshe* thought he should not enter the *Mishkan*, which had permanent *kedusha*, until he was summoned (*Targum Yonatan*). (iv) As indicated at the end of *Sefer Shemot* (40:35), *Moshe* was unable to enter the *Mishkan* until *Hashem* first summoned him – subsequently, each time *Hashem* spoke (*va-yedabeir*) to him, He called (*vayikra*) him first, although the *Torah* does not specify the calling (*Ramban*). (2) (i) Humble *Moshe* wanted *Hashem* to say “*vayiker*” (He chanced upon) *Moshe*, without an *alef*, like when *Hashem* met *Bilam* (*Bamidbar* 23:16) – *Hashem* told him to write “*vayikra*” but agreed to a small *alef*, to show his humility (*Ba’al haTurim*). (ii) The small *alef* indicates that the *Shechina*’s goal of permanent residence had not been reached when He called *Moshe* into the *Mishkan* – His permanent Place is *Yerushalayim’s Har haBayit* (*Zohar*). **(c)** (1) (i) While an individual (singular) pays for a personal *korban*, the community (plural) participates by paying for the fire’s wood and the *korban*’s salt (*Toldot Yitzchak*). (ii) It tells us that one who brings a *korban* or does a *mitzvah* can bring all of *Bnei Yisrael* (plural) closer to *Hashem*; (2) it refers to *Adam haRishon*, who could not offer a stolen *korban* since everything in the world was his, teaching that one may not offer a dishonestly-gotten *korban* (*Rashi*). **(d)** (1) (i) Cows/oxen; (ii) sheep/rams; (iii) goats; (2) (i) oxen recall *Avraham*’s merit in feeding his guests oxen (*Bereishit* 18:8); (ii) sheep recall the *akeida*, where a ram substituted for *Yitzchak* (22:13); (iii) goats recall *Ya’akov*’s listening to *Rivka* to bring 2 goats to his father (27:25) (*Bava Kama* 63a). **(e)** (1) It shows *Hashem*’s concern for *Bnei Yisrael*, who did not have to trap wild animals (*Da’at Zekeinim*). (2) (i) *Reish Lakish* – yes; (ii) *Rav Yochanan* – no, it violates a positive *mitzvah* to offer from cattle or flock (*Zevachim* 34a). **(f)** From an apostate to *avoda zara* or one who publicly was *mechaleil Shabbat* (*Rambam – Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 3:4). **(g)** (1) (i) *Hava’a* (bringing) – the owner, or his *shali’ach*, had to bring the animal to the *Mishkan* or *Beit haMikdash* – he could not ask the *kohen* to come and get it; (ii) *semicha* – propping both hand on the animal’s head while standing in the *azara*; (iii) *viduy* (confession), if the *korban* was to atone for a sin; (iv) *shechita* – the owner could slaughter the animal or ask anyone else to slaughter it; (2) (v) *holacha* (walking) – the *kohen* took the pan containing the animal’s blood and walked it to the *mizbei’ach*; (vi) *zerika* – he would sprinkle some of the blood onto the appropriate place on the *mizbei’ach*; (vii) *shefichat sherayim* – he would pour the remaining blood at the base of the *mizbei’ach*; (viii) *hafsheit ve-nitu’ach* – he would skin and cut up the animal; (ix) *hadacha* – he would rinse the *korban*’s parts; (x) *melicha ve-haktarat ha’eimurim* – he would take the parts that were to go on the *mizbei’ach* to the ramp, salt them, bring them to the top of the ramp, remove the *gid hanasheh*, and throw the pieces into the fire (*Rambam – Hilchot Ma’aseh Korbanot*).

**Q-2. (a)** (1) Why is the *korban olah* described before the *chatat* (2 views)? (2) Which *olah* meat was not burned on the *mizbei’ach*? **(b)** Since an *olah* had to be “*li-retzono*” (voluntary), how was *beit din* allowed to coerce someone, when necessary, to offer the *korban*? **(c)** What 3 actions of offering a *korban* did not have to be done by a *kohen*? **(d)** (1) What was a *korban*’s “*rei’ach nicho’ach*” (pleasant fragrance) for *Hashem*? (2) Which *korbanot* had a *rei’ach nicho’ach*? (3) Which did not? **(e)** For what aspect of a sin did each of the following steps atone – (1) *semicha* (resting hands on the *korban*)? (2) *viduy* (confession)? (3) *haktarat ha’eimurim* (burning the animal’s kidney’s and innards)? (4) *zerika* (sprinkling the blood)? **(f)** Now, without the *Beit haMikdash*, what 4 things do we do, instead of *korbanot*, to atone for our sins? **(g)** (1) What 5 steps did the *kohen* take to offer a bird *korban*? (2) Since a bird *korban* was burnt with its feathers, producing a horrible smell, why does the *Torah* describe it as a *rei’ach nicho’ach*? (3) Which blemishes rendered a bird *korban* invalid? (4) Why were turtledoves and doves the valid birds for *korbanot*? (5) Why only adult turtledoves? (6) Why only young doves? **(h)** What was no kind of kosher fish acceptable as a *korban*? (*Vayikra* 1:3-9,14,17)

**A-2. (a)** (1) The *olah* (i) is spiritually higher, “rising” entirely to *Hashem* – other *korbanot* were eaten by *kohanim* and/or the offerer (*Medrash Tanchuma – Tzav* 1). (ii) atones for improper thoughts, while the *chatat* atones for improper acts – improper thoughts precede and lead to improper acts (*Kli Yakar*). (2) The *gid ha-nasheh* (*Sefer haChinuch – Mitzvah* 115). **(b)** One’s soul wants to do what is right, but external temptations cloud his judgment – *beit din*’s coercion allows the soul’s goodness to come through and do what the person really wants to (*Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 14:16). **(c)** (1) Slaughtering the animal; (2) cutting the animal in pieces; (3) carrying wood to the *mizbei’ach* (*Rambam – Hilchot Bi’at haMikdash* 9:6). **(d)** (1) It was the result of the offerer’s bringing the *korban* according to *Hashem*’s Will (*Rashi*). (2) *Korbanot* offered in the *Mishkan* or *Beit haMikdash* had a *rei’ach nicho’ach*; (3) (i) those on *bamot* (private altars) did not (*Meshech Chochma*). (ii) If the limbs were first roasted then brought up to the *mizbei’ach*, they did not (*Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 6:4). **(e)** It atoned for (1) a sinful deed; (2) sinful speech; (3) sinful thoughts; (4) the sinner’s body, by substituting the animal’s blood for the sinner’s blood (*Ramban*). **(f)** (1) *Tefila* (prayer) – (i) *shacharit* replaces the morning *korban tamid*, (ii) *mincha* replaces the afternoon *korban tamid*, and (iii) *ma’ariv* replaces the *eimurim* that were offered at night (*Medrash Tanchuma*). (2) Study of the laws of *korbanot*, which *Hashem* regards as if we offered them (*Menachot* 110a). (3) *Teshuva* (repentance) (*Vayikra Raba*). (4) *Talmud Torah*, which outweighs all of the *korbanot* (*Rokeach*). **(g)** (1) (i) *Melika* – nipping the bird’s head with his fingernail; (ii) *mitzu’i ha-dam* – pressing the bird’s blood onto the *mizbei’ach*; (iii) *haktarat ha-rosh* – salting the bird’s head and burning it on the *mizbei’ach*; (iv) *hashlacha* – discarding the crop and intestines by throwing it into the *beit ha-deshen*, on the eastern side of the *mizbei’ach*; (v) *haktarat ha’of* – salting and burning the bird on the *mizbei’ach* (*Menachot* 83a-b). (2) Birds were offered by the very poor – the feathers made the *korban* look bigger – if the offerer’s intent was to serve *Hashem*, the *korban* had a *rei’ach nicho’ach*, regardless of its actual odor (*Rashi*). (3) Major blemishes only, like a missing wing, eye or foot or an organic disease that rendered it *treif* – unfit for human consumption (*Rambam – Hilchot Isurei Hamizbe’ach* 3:1). (4) They are common and easy to catch; (5) It is

chaste – it remains faithful to its mate – when its mate dies, it does not attach to another, so *Bnei Yisrael* are faithful to *Hashem* and will never attach to another god; (6) a young dove loves its nest and will never abandon it, so *Bnei Yisrael* will never abandon *Hashem* or the *Torah* (*Ramban*). (h) While animals and birds anatomically resemble man and can physically “replace” a person on the *mizbei’ach*, a fish, whose anatomy is completely different, cannot atone for a person’s sin (*Medrash Tanchuma*).

**Q-3.** (a) Why is the word “*nefesh*” (soul) used for one who offers a *korban mincha* (meal offering)? (b) What were the 5 voluntary *menachot*? (c) Why could a *mincha* not contain (1) *chametz* (leaven) (2 reasons)? (2) *devash* (honey)? (d) When the *kohanim* ate part of a *mincha*, could they eat it together with honey? (e) (1) Why was salt added to every *korban* (3 reasons)? (2) What 3 things items were offered on the *mizbei’ach* without being salted? (f) (1) When could a *korban mincha* that was made with *chodosh* (new grain) be offered? (2) Was a *mincha* with *chodosh* that was offered before that time valid? (*Vayikra* 2:1-14)

**A-3.** (a) Bringing a *mincha* was a great monetary loss for a very poor person – it is as if he brought his very soul (*Rashi*). (b) *Minchat* (1) *solet* – offered as raw flour; (2) *machavat* – griddle-fried; (3) *marcheshet* – pan-fried; (4) *ma’afei tanur shel rekikin* – oven-baked wafers; (5) *ma’afei shel chalot* – oven-baked thick *matzot* (*Menachot* 63a,75a). (c) (1) *Chametz* represents both (i) a lack of *zerizut* (alertness) in doing *mitzvot*, like slow-rising dough, and (ii) yearning for “puffed-up” honor; (2) *devash* represents spending one’s life seeking comfort and pleasure – to serve *Hashem* wholeheartedly, one must curtail these inclinations (*Mitzvah* 117). (d) Yes – the *mincha* could be prepared in any fashion for eating (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 12:14). (e) (1) (i) During Creation’s 2<sup>nd</sup> day, *Hashem* separated the heavenly and earthly waters – when the lower waters “protested” their separation from *Hashem*, salt, from the sea (lower waters), was added to all *korbanot* (*Rashi*). (ii) Food-preserving salt signifies permanence – *Hashem*’s covenant with *Bnei Yisrael* is permanent (*Hirsch*). (iii) Salt destructively prevents plant growth but preserves food – neglecting *korbanot* brings destructive exile, but proper offerings preserve *Bnei Yisrael* (*Ramban*). (2) (i) Wine for the *nesachim* (libations); (ii) a *korban*’s blood; (iii) the wood; (f) (1) after the *Shetei haLechem* (2 loaves) were offered on *Shavuot*; (2) yes (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Isurei Hamizbei’ach* 5:10-11).

**Q-4.** (a) Why were *korbanot* “*shelamim*” given that name (4 views)? (b) Why could a (i) *korban olah* be only a male animal, while a (ii) *shelamim* could be male or female? (c) What 4 *halachot* of *korbanot shelamim* made them *kodshim kalim* (*korbanot* of lesser holiness)? (d) Which 3 animal *korbanot* did not require the owner to lean his hands on it while it was still alive? (*Vayikra* 3:1-2)

**A-4.** (a) (1) *Shelamim* stand for “peace” (*shalom*) – they increase peace in the world; (2) a *korban shelamim* was divided into 3 parts among (i) *Hashem* on the *mizbei’ach*, (ii) the *kohanim*, and (iii) the offerers, resulting in peace among the 3 of them (*Rashi*). (3) *Shelamim* stands for “wholeness” (*sheleimut*), because they are motivated by one’s desire for perfection by elevating one’s spirituality (*Ramban*). (4) The *shelamim* provide harmony by uniting the spiritual and materialistic worlds (*Korban Aharon*). (b) (i) One who feels strong and independent, represented by the male, may bring a *korban* to express gratitude to *Hashem*, (ii) while someone in a state of dependence, symbolized by the female, may be equally content and grateful – the *shelamim* represent happiness that is not dependent on domination, since power is not the best indication of success in life (*Hirsch*). (c) They (1) could be slaughtered anywhere in the *azara* (courtyard); (2) could be eaten by non-*kohanim*; (3) could be eaten anywhere in *Yerushalayim*; (4) were not subject to *me’ila* (penalty for personal use) until after the blood was thrown on the *mizbei’ach* (*Me’ila* 7b). (d) The *korban* (1) *bechor* (firstborn); (2) *ma’aser* (tithe); (3) *Pesach* (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 3:6).

**Q-5.** (a) Why does 4:2 begin, “a soul that sins (*teh-cheta* [feminine])”, but concludes “and he will do (*ve’asa* [masculine]) one of them [sins]”? (b) (1) For what kind of sin is a *chatat* (sin offering) effective for atonement? and (2) for what 2 kinds of sin is it ineffective? (c) Why does the *Torah* require a *korban* for a sin done *be-shogeg*, since it was not the person’s fault (4 views)? (d) What 2 characteristics must the sin have to warrant a *chatat*? (e) Which 3 sins (i) carry a *karet* penalty if done *be-meizid*, but a *chatat* is not brought *be-shogeg*? (ii) Why? (*Vayikra* 4:2)

**A-5.** (a) It teaches that a sin can be done only with the combined effort of one’s *nefesh* (soul – feminine word) and *guf* (body – masculine) (*R. Bechaya*). (b) (1) It effectively atones for an inadvertent (*be-shogeg*) sin – done through carelessness; (2) it is ineffective (i) for an intentional (*be-meizid*) sin, or (ii) a sin for which the sinner had no intent to do it; (c) (1) the sinner should have taken the proper precautions – his lack of care makes him responsible for the sin; (2) a sin, even when committed by mistake, creates *tuma* in the sinner’s heart, and the *korban* cleanses the impurity (*Ramban*). (3) Since *Hashem* guards the pious, one who accidentally sins is responsible, since if he was truly righteous, *Hashem* would have saved him from sinning (*Medrash Tanchuma*). (4) Requiring a person to bring a *korban* for an unintentional sin shows how terrible *Hashem* considers a deliberate sin (*Sefer haChinuch* – *Mitzvah* 121). (d) It must be a sin in which (1) the person takes a negative action, and (2) the penalty for doing it *be-meizid* is *karet* (*Rashi*). (e) (1) (i) Saying blasphemy, (ii) since no action is taken; (2) (i) not being circumcised, or (3) (i) not bringing a *korban Pesach*, (ii) since they are failures to do positive *mitzvot*, not violations of negative *mitzvot* (*Ramban*).

**Q-6.** (a) How does the duty to testify in (1) civil cases differ from the duty to testify in (2) criminal cases? (b) For which 3 sins does the *Torah* specify a *korban oleh ve-yored* (variable offering)? (c) Why did the *Torah* allow the poor to bring a lesser value *korban* for these 3 sins? (d) How can a witness avoid saying *lashon hara* if his testimony about another person describes that person negatively? (*Vayikra* 5:1-13)

**A-6.** (a) (1) Civil cases – one must testify only when summoned by a litigant; (2) criminal cases – a witness must, of his own accord, go to *beit din* (*Mitzvah* 122). (b) (1) Falsely denying that one has testimony for *beit din*; (2) entering the *Beit haMikdash* or eating *korbanot* while *tamei*; (3) unintentionally saying a false oath; (c) these sins were so common that by bringing expensive *korbanot*, poor people would lose all their money (*Mitzvah* 123). (d) If one’s testimony is truthful and will avoid harm being inflicted on a second person, the testimony is not *lashon hara* – he is required to testify negatively about the first person (*Chafetz Chaim*).

**Q-7.** In the *haftara*, why does the *navi* specify *Rosh Chodesh Nisan* as the date to purify the *Mikdash*? (*Yechezkeil* 45:18)

**A-7.** Just as *Nisan* was the *geula* month from *Mitzrayim*, the future *geula* will be in *Nisan*, and the new *Beit haMikdash* will be dedicated on *Rosh Chodesh Nisan* just as the *Mishkan* was (*Radak*).