

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 (“vayedabeir”) to him (4 views)? (2) Why does the word, “vayikra”, have a small letter *alef* (2 views)? **(c)** Why does 1:2 (1) start with the phrase, “adam ki yakriv” (a man who offers, which is singular), but end with the word “takrivu” (they shall offer, which is plural) (2 views)? (2) say “adam”, not the more usual word “ish”? **(d)** (1) What 3 mammals were acceptable *korbanot*? (2) How do these animals recall the merits of the *avot*? **(e)** (1) Why were *kosher* domesticated animals used for *korbanot*, but *kosher* wild animals were not used? (2) Was it permissible to offer wild animals 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* away from idol worship by offering *korbanot* to Hashem (*Rambam* – *Moreh Nevuchim*). (2) To unite *Bnei Yisrael* with Hashem, by drawing His Divine radiance to the world (*Meshech Chochma*, based on *Ramban*). (3) Sins result from (i) thought, (ii) speech and (iii) action, and a *korban* offered by a sinner provided atonement for his sin, since he had to (i) lean his hands on the *korban*, which is an action, (ii) confess his sin by speaking, and (iii) burn the entrails and kidneys, which are organs of thought and desire, and the legs that do the action (*Ramban*). (4) The organs of the animal are similar to one’s own organs, and by forsaking one’s intelligence by sinning, his body becomes like that of an animal, and burning the body of the animal erased 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) Just as grain and meat nurture one’s body, *korbanot* nourish one’s soul (*Akeidat Yitzchak*). **(b)** (1) (i) Hashem called to Moshe, asking him to join Hashem, showing His affection for Moshe (*Rashi*). (ii) Since Moshe was so modest, he was not sure that Hashem had not found someone who was greater than him to join Him in *Mishkan* – perhaps, *Aharon*, whom Hashem had selected as *Kohen Gadol* – Moshe therefore waited until Hashem 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), and Moshe thought he should not enter the *Mishkan*, which had permanent *kedusha*, until Hashem summoned him (*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, and subsequently, each time that Hashem spoke (*va-yedabeir*) to him, Hashem called (*vayikra*) Moshe first, even though the *Torah* does not specify that Hashem called Moshe each time that the *Torah* says “vayedabeir Hashem el Moshe leymor” (Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying), but Hashem did call him each time (*Ramban*). (2) (i) Since Moshe was so humble, he wanted the *Torah* to say the word “vayiker” (meaning that Hashem chanced upon) Moshe, without the letter *alef*, like when Hashem met *Bilam* (*Bamidbar* 23:16), but Hashem ordered Moshe to write the word “vayikra”, but He agreed to a small letter *alef*, to demonstrate the humility of Moshe (*Ba’al haTurim*). (ii) The small *alef* indicates that the goal of the *Shechina* for a permanent residence on earth had not been reached when Hashem called Moshe into the *Mishkan*, since Hashem’s permanent Place is the *Har haBayit* in *Yerushalayim* (*Zohar*). **(c)** (1) (i) While an individual (singular) pays for his personal *korban*, the community (plural) participates in offering his *korban* by paying for the wood of the fire and the salt poured on the *korban* (*Toldot Yitzchak*). (ii) It tells us that by offering a *korban* or performing a *mitzvah*, an individual can bring all of *Bnei Yisrael* (plural) closer to Hashem; (2) the *Torah* refers to *Adam haRishon*, who was not able to offer a stolen *korban* since everything in the world belonged to him, teaching that one may not offer a *korban* that he obtained dishonestly (*Rashi*). **(d)** (1) (i) Cows or oxen; (ii) sheep or rams; (iii) goats; (2) (i) oxen recall the merit of *Avraham*, who spared no expense to feed his guests oxen (*Bereishit* 18:8); (ii) sheep recall the *akeida*, where a ram substituted for *Yitzchak* (22:13); (iii) goats recall *Ya’akov*, who listened to *Rivka*’s command to bring 2 goats to his father (27:25) (*Bava Kama* 63a). **(e)** (1) It shows the concern of Hashem for *Bnei Yisrael*, who did not have to make the effort to trap wild animals (*Da’at Zekeinim*). (2) (i) According to *Reish Lakish* – yes; (ii) according to *Rav Yochanan* – no, since it violates a positive *mitzvah* to offer from cattle or flock (*Zevachim* 34a). **(f)** If an apostate to *avoda zara* or one who publicly was *mechaleil Shabbat* (a *Shabbat* violator) offered a *korban*, it was *pasul* (invalid) (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 3:4). **(g)** (1) (i) *Hava’a* (bringing) – the owner, or his *shali’ach* (messenger), had to bring the animal to the *Mishkan* or *Beit haMikdash* – he could not ask the *kohen* to come and get the *korban*; (ii) *semicha* – propping both hand on the head of the animal while he was standing in the *azara*; (iii) *viduy* (confession), if the purpose of the *korban* was to atone for a sin; (iv) *shechita* – the owner either had to slaughter the animal or ask any other Jew to slaughter it on his behalf; (2) (v) *holacha* (walking) – the *kohen* took the pan containing the blood of the slaughtered animal and walked it to the *mizbei’ach*; (vi) *zerika* – the *kohen* would sprinkle some of the blood onto the appropriate place on the *mizbei’ach*; (vii) *shefichat sherayim* – the *kohen* would pour the remaining blood at the base of the *mizbei’ach*; (viii) *hafsheit venitu’ach* – the *kohen* would skin and cut up the animal; (ix) *hadacha* – the *kohen* would rinse the parts of the *korban*; (x) *melicha ve-haktarat ha’eimurim* – the *kohen* 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’asheh Korbanot*).

Q-2. (a) (1) Why is the *korban olah* (burnt offering) described before the *korban chatat* (sin offering) (2 views)? (2) Which was the only meat of a *korban olah* that was not burned on the *mizbei’ach*? **(b)** (1) Since a *korban olah* had to be “*li-retzono*” (voluntary), how was *beit din* allowed to coerce someone, when necessary, to offer the *korban*? (2) For which 3 sins did a *korban olah* provide atonement? **(c)** What 3 actions concerning the offering of a *korban* did not have to be performed by a *kohen*? **(d)** (1) What was the “*rei’ach nicho’ach*” (pleasant fragrance) of a *korban* for Hashem? (2) Which *korbanot* had a *rei’ach nicho’ach*? (3) Which did not (2 views)? (*Vayikra* 1:3-9,14,17)

A-2. (a) (1) The *korban olah* (i) is spiritually higher, since it “rises” entirely to Hashem, while 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, and improper thoughts precede and lead to improper acts (*Kli Yakar*). (2) The *gid ha-nasheh* (sinew of the hip-socket), which a Jew is not allowed to eat (*Sefer haChinuch* – *Mitzvah* 115). **(b)** (1) One’s soul wants to do what is right, but external temptations cloud his judgment, and the coercion by the *beit din* allowed the goodness of the soul to come through and do what the person really wanted to do (*Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 14:16). (2) (i) For neglecting to fulfill a *mitzvah asef* (positive *mitzvah*, e.g., neglecting to put on *tefillin*), (ii) for a *lav ha-nitak le’asef* (*mitzvah lo ta’asef*) that is remedied by a *mitzvah asef*, e.g., one who steals an item can rectify the *lav* of stealing by performing the *mitzvah asef* of returning the stolen item; (iii) for having sinful thoughts (*Torat Kohanim*). **(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) The “pleasant fragrance” was the result of the offerer’s offering the *korban* according to Will of Hashem (*Rashi*). (2) *Korbanot* offered in the *Mishkan* or *Beit haMikdash* had a *rei’ach nicho’ach*; (3) (i) those offered on *bamot* (private altars) did not have a *rei’ach nicho’ach* (*Meshech Chochma*). (ii) If the limbs were first roasted then brought up to the *mizbei’ach*, they did not have a *rei’ach nicho’ach* (*Hilchot Ma’aseh Hakorbanot* 6:4).

Q-3. (a) 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 kidneys and innards)? (4) *zerika* (sprinkling the blood)? **(b)** Now, without the *Beit haMikdash*, what are 4 things that we do, in place of *korbanot*, to atone for our sins? **(c)** (1) What 5 steps did the *kohen* take to offer a *korban* of a bird? (2) Since a bird *korban* was burnt with its feathers, producing a horrible smell, why does the *Torah* describe offering 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? **(d)** Why was no kind of *kosher* fish acceptable as a *korban*? (*Vayikra* 1:14-17)

A-3. (a) It atoned for (1) a sinful deed; (2) sinful speech; (3) sinful thoughts; (4) the body of the person who committed a sin, by substituting the blood of the animal for the blood of the sinner (*Ramban*). **(b)** (1) *Tefila* (prayer), since (i) *tefilat shacharit* replaces the morning *korban tamid*, (ii) *tefilat mincha* replaces the afternoon *korban tamid*, and (iii) *tefilat ma’ariv* replaces the *eimurim* that were offered at night (*Medrash Tanchuma*). (2) Study of the laws of the *korbanot*, which Hashem regards as if we offered them (*Menachot* 110a). (3) *Teshuva* (repentance for a sin) (*Vayikra Raba*). (4) *Talmud Torah*, which outweighs the merit that was provided by all of the *korbanot* (*Rokeach*). **(c)** (1) (i) *Melika* – nipping the head of the bird with his fingernail; (ii) *mitzu’i ha-dam* – pressing the blood of the bird onto the *mizbei’ach*; (iii) *haktarat ha-rosh* – salting the head of the bird and burning it on the *mizbei’ach*; (iv) *hashlacha* – discarding the crop and intestines by throwing them 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, and 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 a *treifa*, i.e., unfit for human consumption (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Isurei Hamizbei'ach* 3:1). (4) They are common and easy to catch; (5) A turtledove is chaste, since it remains faithful to its mate, and when its mate dies, it does not attach to another – similarly, *Bnei Yisrael* are faithful to *Hashem* and will never attach to another god; (6) just as a young dove loves its nest and will never abandon it, so *Bnei Yisrael* will never abandon *Hashem* or the *Torah* (*Ramban*). (d) 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-4. (a) (1) Why does the *Torah* use the word “*nefesh*” (soul) for one who offers a *korban mincha* (meal offering)? (2) Why, (i) in 2:1, is the word, *takriv* (will offer) spelled with the letter *yud*, but (ii) in 2:4, the word “*takriv*” is spelled without the letter *yud*? (b) (1) What were the 3 ingredients that were used for a *korban mincha*? (2) What were the 5 voluntary *menachot* that were offered with those ingredients? (3) Why does the *Torah* provide different ways of offering the same ingredients? (c) Why could a *korban mincha* not contain (1) *chametz* (leaven) (2 reasons)? (2) *devash* (honey)? (d) Since a *korban mincha* could not contain honey, when the *kohanim* ate their part of the *mincha*, could they eat it together with honey? (e) (1) Why was salt added to every *korban* (3 reasons)? (2) What 3 things were offered on the *mizbei'ach* without being salted? (f) (1) When could a *korban mincha* that was made with *chodosh* (new grain) begin be offered? (2) Was a *mincha* that was made with *chodosh* (grain from the new harvest) that was offered before that time valid? (*Vayikra* 2:1-14)

A-4. (a) (1) Offering a *korban mincha* was a great monetary loss for a very poor person, and it is as if he offered his very soul (*Rashi*). (2) The word “*takriv*” can either refer to the masculine 2nd person, i.e., “you will offer” or to the feminine 3rd person, i.e., “she will offer” – (i) since 2:1 uses the subject “*nefesh*”, which is a feminine word, the word “*takriv*” here means the feminine 3rd person, but (ii) the word “*takriv*” in 2:4 refers to the masculine 2nd person, since the word *korbanecha* (your offering) in 1:5 is a masculine word; therefore, the word “*takriv*” is spelled differently in each verse to differentiate its 2 meanings (*veChur laZahav*). (b) (1) (i) Flour, (ii) oil, (iii) incense; (2) *Minchat* (i) *solet*, which was offered as raw flour; (ii) *machavat*, which was griddle-fried; (iii) *marcheshet*, which was pan-fried; (iv) *ma'afei tanur shel rekikin*, which were oven-baked wafers; (v) *ma'afei shel chalat*, which were oven-baked thick *matzot*; (3) since a pauper would offer a *korban mincha* because of its inexpensive ingredients, *Hashem* showed that He appreciated this *korban* by having it offered in different ways (*Menachot* 63a,75a,104b). (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, and to serve *Hashem* wholeheartedly, one must curtail these inclinations (*Mitzvah* 117). (d) Yes, since the *mincha* could be prepared for eating in any fashion (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Ma'aseh Hakorbanot* 12:14). (e) (1) (i) During the 2nd day of Creation, *Hashem* separated the heavenly and earthly waters, and when the lower waters “protested” their separation from *Hashem* in Heaven, salt, from the sea (lower waters), was added to all *korbanot* to bring them closer to *Hashem* (*Rashi*). (ii) Food-preserving salt signifies permanence, and we demonstrate, by adding salt, that the covenant of *Hashem* with *Bnei Yisrael* is permanent (*Hirsch*). (iii) Salt destructively prevents the growth of plants but also preserves food, and this teaches that neglecting *korbanot* brings destructive exile, but proper offerings preserve *Bnei Yisrael* (*Ramban*). (2) (i) Wine for the *nesachim* (libations); (ii) the blood of a *korban*; (iii) the wood that was placed on the fire; (f) (1) only after the *Sheteti haLechem* (2 loaves) were offered on *Shavuot*; (2) yes (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Isurei Hamizbei'ach* 5:10-11).

Q-5. (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) *korban 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-5. (a) (1) The word “*shelamim*” stands for “peace” (*shalom*), and these *korbanot* 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) The word “*shelamim*” stands for “wholeness” (*sheleimut*), because offering *korbanot shelamim* was motivated by one's desire for perfection by elevating one's spirituality (*Ramban*). (4) The *korbanot shelamim* provided harmony by uniting the spiritual and materialistic worlds (*Korban Aharon*). (b) (i) One who feels strong and independent, represented by the male animal, may bring a *korban* to express gratitude to *Hashem*, (ii) while someone in a state of dependence, symbolized by the female animal, may be equally content and grateful, and the *shelamim* represented 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) of the *Beit haMikdash*; (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-6. (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 an ineffective atonement? (c) Why does the *Torah* require a *korban* for a sin that was performed *be-shogeg*, since the sin 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* was not brought if it was done *be-shogeg*? (ii) Why? (f) How does the duty to testify in (1) civil cases differ from the duty to testify in (2) criminal cases? (g) For which 3 sins does the *Torah* specify a *korban oleh ve-yored* (variable offering)? (h) Why did the *Torah* allow the poor to bring a lesser value *korban* for these 3 sins? (i) How can a witness in *beit din* avoid the prohibition on saying *lashon hara* if his testimony about another person describes that person negatively? (*Vayikra* 4:2,5:1-13)

A-6. (a) It teaches that a sin can be done only with the combined effort of one's *nefesh* (soul, which is a feminine word) and *guf* (body, which is a masculine word) (*R. Bechaya*). (b) (1) It effectively atones for an inadvertent (*be-shogeg*) sin in which the sinner acted 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 the action of the sin; (c) (1) the sinner should have taken the proper precautions to prevent sinning, and his lack of care made him responsible for the sin; (2) a sin, even when committed by mistake, creates *tuma* (impurity) in the heart of the sinner, and the *korban* cleanses the impurity (*Ramban*). (3) Since *Hashem* guards the pious, one who accidentally sins is responsible, since if he were truly righteous, *Hashem* would have saved him from sinning (*Medrash Tanchuma*). (4) Requiring a person to bring a *korban* even 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 performing the sin *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 offering a *korban Pesach*, (ii) since, even though the penalty for these 2 sins is *karet*, they are failures to perform positive *mitzvot*, not violations of negative *mitzvot* (*Ramban*). (f) (1) In civil cases, one must testify only when he was summoned by a litigant; (2) in criminal cases, a witness must, of his own accord, go to *beit din* to testify, even when he was not summoned (*Mitzvah* 122). (g) (1) Falsely denying that one has testimony relevant to a case before *beit din*; (2) entering the *Beit haMikdash* or eating *korbanot* while one is *tamei*; (3) unintentionally saying a false oath; (h) these sins were so common that if they were required one to offer expensive *korbanot*, poor people would lose all their money (*Mitzvah* 123). (i) If one's testimony is truthful and will avoid harm being inflicted on a second person, the testimony is not *lashon hara*, and he is required to testify negatively about the first person (*Chafetz Chaim*).

Q-7. In the *haftarah*, why does *Hashem* complain about *Bnei Yisrael's* failure to offer Him *korbanot* – did *Hashem* really need their *korbanot* (2 explanations)? (*Yeshayahu* 43:22-24)

A-7. (a) *Hashem's* complaint was that *Bnei Yisrael* offered *korbanot* to idols instead of to Him (*Rashi*). (b) The *Navi* refers to the time of King *Achaz*, when *avoda* in the *Beit haMikdash* was reduced, and *bamot* used for offerings to other gods were used (*Radak*).