

Parsha Plug: Parshat Vayikra and Parshat HaChodesh

Shemot 12:1-11	שמות יב:א-יא
<p>1 The Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month shall be to you the head of the months; to you it shall be the first of the months of the year. 3 Speak to the entire community of Israel, saying, "On the tenth of this month, let each one take a lamb for each parental home, a lamb for each household. 4 But if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor who is nearest to his house shall take [one] according to the number of people, each one according to one's ability to eat, shall you be counted for the lamb. 5 You shall have a perfect male lamb in its [first] year; you may take it either from the sheep or from the goats. 6 And you shall keep it for inspection until the fourteenth day of this month, and the entire congregation of the community of Israel shall slaughter it in the afternoon. 7 And they shall take [some] of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel, on the houses in which they will eat it. 8 And on this night, they shall eat the flesh, roasted over the fire, and unleavened cakes; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 You shall not eat it rare or boiled in water, except roasted over the fire its head with its legs and with its innards. 10 And you shall not leave over any of it until morning, and whatever is left over of it until morning, you shall burn in fire. 11 And this is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste it is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord.</p>	<p>א וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר. ב הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם, רֹאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים: רֹאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם, לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה. ג דַּבְּרוּ, אֶל-כָּל-עַדְתַּיִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר, בַּעֲשׂוֹר, לְחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה: וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם, אִישׁ שָׂה לְבֵית-אָבִתּוֹ--שֶׂה לְבַיִת. ד וְאִם-יִמְעַט הַבַּיִת, מִהְיוֹת מִשֶּׂה--וַיִּלְקַח הוּא וּשְׁכֵנוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ, בְּמִכְסַת נַפְשׁוֹ: אִישׁ לְפִי אֹכְלוֹ, תִּכְסֹּף עַל-הַשֶּׂה. ה שֶׂה תְּמִים זָכָר בֶּן-שָׁנָה, יִהְיֶה לָכֶם; מִן-הַכְּבָשִׂים וּמִן-הָעִזִּים, תִּקְחוּ. ו וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת, עַד אֲרֻבְעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לְחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה; וּשְׁחֹטוּ אֹתוֹ, כָּל קֹהֵל עַדְתַּיִשְׂרָאֵל--בֵּין הָעַרְבִּים. ז וַלְקַחוּ, מִן-הַדָּם, וּנְתַנּוּ עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת, וְעַל-הַמַּשְׁקוּף--עַל, הַבָּתִּים, אֲשֶׁר-יֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ, בָּהֶם. ח וְאָכְלוּ אֶת-הַבָּשָׂר, בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה: צְלִי-אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת, עַל-מַרְרִים יֹאכְלֵהוּ. ט אֶל-תֹּאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ בָּא, וּבִשֵׁל מִבִּשְׁל בָּמַיִם: כִּי אִם-צְלִי-אֵשׁ, רֹאשׁוֹ עַל-כַּרְעֵיו וְעַל-קַרְבּוֹ. י וְלֹא-תוֹתִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ, עַד-בֹּקֶר; וְהִנָּתַר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד-בֹּקֶר, בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרֹפוּ. יא וְכָכָה, תֹּאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ--מִתְּנִיכֶם חִגְרִים, נְעִלְיֶכֶם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם וּמְקַלְכֶם בְּיָדְכֶם; וְאִכְלֵתֶם אֹתוֹ בְּחַפְזוֹן, פֶּסַח הוּא לָהּ.</p>

Rashi on Shemot 12:6	רש"י על שמות יב:ו
<p>And you shall keep it for inspection: This is an expression of inspection, that it [the animal] requires an inspection for a blemish four days before its slaughter. Now why was it [the designated animal] to be taken four days before its slaughter, something not required in the Passover sacrifice of later generations? Rabbi Mathia the son of Charash used to say [in response]: Behold He [God] says: "And I passed by you and saw you, and behold your time was the time of love" (Ezek. 16:8). The [time for the fulfillment of the] oath that I swore to Abraham that I would redeem his children has arrived. But they [the Children of Israel] had no commandments in their hands with which to occupy themselves in order that they be redeemed, as it is said: "but you were naked and bare" (Ezek. 16:7). So He gave them two mitzvot, the blood of the Passover and the blood of the circumcision. They circumcised themselves on that night, as it is said: "downtrodden with your blood (בְּדַמֶּיךָ)" (ibid., verse 6), with the two [types of] blood. He [God] states also: "You, too-with the blood of your covenant I have freed your prisoners from a pit in which there was no water" (Zech. 9:11). Moreover, they [the Israelites] were passionately fond of idolatry. [Moses] said to</p>	<p>וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת: זֶה לְשׁוֹן בְּקוֹר שִׁטְעוֹן בְּקוֹר מִמוֹם אַרְבַּעַת יָמִים קוֹדֵם שְׁחִיטָה, וּמִפְּנֵי מַה הַקָּדִים לְקִיחָתוֹ לְשַׁחֲטוֹ אַרְבַּעַת יָמִים מַה שְׁלֹא צוּה כֵּן בַּפֶּסַח דּוֹרוֹת, הִיָּה ר' מַתִּיא בֶן חֲרַשׁ אֹמֵר הָרִי הוּא אֹמֵר (יַחְזַקְאֵל טז ח) וְאֵעֻבֵר עֲלֶיךָ וְאֵרְאֶךָ וְהִנֵּה עֵתְךָ עַת דּוֹדִים, הַגִּיעָה שְׁבוּעָה שְׁנֹשְׁבַעֲתִי לְאַבְרָהָם שֶׁאֵגְאֵל אֶת בְּנָיו וְלֹא הָיוּ בִידֵם מִצּוֹת לְהִתְעַסֵּק בָּהֶם כְּדֵי שִׁיגְאֵלוּ, שְׁנֹאמֵר (שם ז) וְאֵת עָרוֹם וְעֵרִיָּה, וְנִתַּן לָהֶם שְׁתֵּי מִצּוֹת דָּם פֶּסַח וְדָם מִלֵּה, שְׁמְלוּ בְּאוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה, שְׁנֹאמֵר (שם ו) מִתְּבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמֶּיךָ, בְּשְׁנֵי דַמִּים, וְאֹמֵר (זכְרִי ט יא). גַּם אֶת בְּדָם בְּרִיתְךָ שְׁלַחְתִּי אֲסִירֶיךָ מִבּוֹר אֵין מַיִם בּוֹ, וְלִפִּי שְׁהִיו שְׁטוּפִים בְּעַבּוּדָה זֶרָה אִמֵּר לָהֶם (פֶּסוּק)</p>

<p>them, “Withdraw and take for yourselves” (Exod. 12:21). [He meant:] withdraw from idolatry and take for yourselves sheep for the mitzvah.</p>	<p>(א) משכו וקחו לכם, משכו ידיכם מעבודה זרה וקחו לכם צאן של מצוה:</p>
--	---

<p>Vayikra 1:5-10 (Parshat Vayikra)</p>	<p>ויקרא א:ה-י</p>
<p>5 And he shall slaughter the young bull before the Lord. And Aaron's descendants, the kohanim, shall bring the blood, and dash the blood upon the altar, around [the altar] which is at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. 6 And he shall skin the burnt offering, and cut it into its [prescribed] sections. 7 And the descendants of Aaron the kohen shall place fire on the altar, and arrange wood on the fire. 8 And Aaron's descendants, the kohanim, shall then arrange the pieces, the head and the fat, on top of the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. 9 And its innards and its legs, he shall wash with water. Then, the kohen shall cause to [go up in] smoke all [of the animal] on the altar, as a burnt offering, a fire offering, [with] a pleasing fragrance to the Lord.</p>	<p>ה וְשָׁחַט אֶת־בֶּן־בָּקָר לִפְנֵי ה' וְהִקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַדָּם וְזָרְקוּ אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב אֲשֶׁר־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ו וְהִפְשִׁיט אֶת־הָעֵלָה וְנָתַח אֹתָהּ לְנִתְחֶיהָ: ז וְנָתַנוּ בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֵשׁ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְעָרְכוּ עֵצִים עַל־הָאֵשׁ: ח וְעָרְכוּ בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת הַנִּתְחִים אֶת־הָרֶגֶל אֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַפֶּדֶר עַל־הָעֵצִים אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ט וְלָרְבּוֹ וּכְרַעְיוֹ יִרְחֹץ בְּמִים וְהִקְטִיר הַפֶּהוּ אֶת־הַכֹּל הַמִּזְבֵּחַהּ עֹלָה אִשָּׁה רִיחַ־נִיחֹחַ לַה':</p>

<p>Vayikra 7:12-15 (Parshat Tzav)</p>	<p>ויקרא ז:יב-טו</p>
<p>12 If he is bringing it as a thanksgiving offering, he shall offer, along with the thanksgiving offering unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and scalded flour mixed with oil. 13 Along with loaves of leavened bread, he shall bring his offering along with his thanksgiving peace offering. 14 And he shall bring from it one out of each offering, as a separation for the Lord; the kohen who dashes the blood of the peace offering it shall be his. 15 And the flesh of his thanksgiving peace offering shall be eaten on the day it is offered up; he shall not leave any of it over until morning.</p>	<p>יב אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ וְהִקְרִיב עַל־זֶבַח הַתּוֹדָה חֲלוֹת מִצּוֹת בְּלוּלֹת בְּשֶׁמֶן וּרְקִיקֵי מִצּוֹת מִשְׁתִּים בְּשֶׁמֶן וְסֹלֶת מִרְבֶּכֶת חֲלוֹת בְּלוּלֹת בְּשֶׁמֶן: יג עַל־חֲלוֹת לֶחֶם חֲמִץ יִקְרִיב קֶרְבָּנוֹ עַל־זֶבַח תּוֹדָת שְׁלָמָיו: יד וְהִקְרִיב מִמֶּנּוּ אֶחָד מִפְּלִי־קֶרְבָּנוֹ תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה לִכְהֹן הַזֶּה: טו וּבִשְׂרֵזֶבַח תּוֹדָת שְׁלָמָיו בְּיוֹם קֶרְבָּנוֹ יֹאכַל לֹא־יִנָּח מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר:</p>

Rav Amnon Bazak, *The Meaning of the Korban Pesach*

The key to understanding the nature of the pesach lies in another unique feature of this ritual: “They shall take some of the blood and place [it] upon the two doorposts and the lintel, on the homes in which they will partake of it” (12:7). It appears from this verse that the pesach ritual indeed featured an aspect of netina, the “giving” of sacrificial blood, like sacrifices. This giving of blood may be compared to the placing of sacrificial blood on the corners of the altar, and indeed the Sages comment regarding the paschal ritual in Egypt, “There were three altars there [in Egypt] – on the lintel and on the two doorposts” (Pesachim 96a). In particular, we may compare the formulation, “You shall take a bundle of hyssop and dip it in the blood in the doorstep and apply some of the blood in the doorstep onto the lintel and both doorposts” (12:22) with the ritual conducted on the eighth day of the Mishkan’s inauguration: “He [Aharon] dipped his finger in the blood and placed it on the corners of the altar; he then poured the blood on the altar’s foundation” (Vayikra 9:9). The paschal offering transformed the entire house into an altar, a place that is entirely consecrated to God and under His protection...[T]ransforming the house into an altar affords protection to Bnei Yisrael who, in essence, become like the kohanim as they partake of the meat of the pesach. Thus, this ritual indeed

March 13, 2018

constitutes a sacrifice, in the sense that it features the aspect of netina, but this is a unique type of korban that transforms the home into an altar and the people partaking of the sacrifice into “a kingdom of priests and a sacred nation.” Viewing the home as an altar also helps us understand several other halakhot mentioned in the context of the pesach: God instructs, “It shall be eaten in one house; do not remove any of the meat from the house outside” (verse 46). This prohibition is easily understood once we perceive the house as an altar...[T]he prohibition against eating chametz also relates to the status of the home as an altar, regarding which the Torah instructs, “Any meal offering that you offer to the Lord shall not be prepared as leaven, for leavened products and honey – you shall not offer any of it as a fire offering to the Lord. You shall offer them to the Lord only as an initial offering [referring to the korban shetei ha-lechem], but they shall not be placed upon the altar as a pleasing fragrance” (Vayikra 2:11-12). In this vein we might also explain the prohibition against boiling the meat of the pesach, and the obligation to roast it: “They shall eat the meat on this night; they shall eat it roasted on the fire, as well as matzot with bitter herbs. You shall not eat it raw or boiled in water, but rather roasted over the fire...” (verses 8-9). On the altar, too, of course, the meat is roasted over a fire and not boiled...[The korban pesach could be a korban ola or a korban toda. But the two] need not contradict one another; the korban pesach may very well contain both aspects – that of a korban ola, which extends the notion of the home as an altar, and that of a korban toda, which expresses Am Yisrael’s sense of gratitude to the Almighty.

Rav Alex Israel, *Is It a Sacrifice?*

If we can be so crude as to describe God in "human" terms, we might say that the Shelamim is a joint meal between man and God. It represents a feeling of calm and harmony between God and man - a "shelamim" - sense of peace. In this korban we "share" a meal with God. The altar takes a part of the animal but the owners eat the other section in the shadow of God's Temple in Jerusalem. Indeed, the shelamim was often brought to celebrate festive occasions (the "thanksgiving" offering - korban toda - was a shelamim) and would invite friends and family to celebrate a marriage, a birth, and thank God for the goodness that he had bestowed upon them. The Shelamim is vastly different to the Olah. Here there is a togetherness with God, but there is no fear, no sacrifice. Instead there is overwhelming joy and gratitude. A feeling of a caring, close God. Maybe the most famous "shelamim" is the Paschal Lamb. It celebrates God's gracious salvation of our entire nation. We celebrate as a nation, we recite the Hallel. We thank God for the kindness he has bestowed upon us.

Responsa Chatam Sofer Yoreh Deah 236

[Chatam Sofer was asked by his father in law if sacrifices could be reinstated] On the Temple Mount, Muslims have built their temple, and they say that the Foundation Stone is within it, and they will not allow a stranger who does not share their faith to offer a sacrifice there...The Yaavitz does record that a person raised the question that perhaps the Korban Pesach could be offered, since impurity for the community is allowed for it (because it is a sacrifice that relies on a specific day) and the shekalim are not required for it, and the clothing of the Kohanim are not required for the Kohen Gadol would not hinder it. And so it would seem possible to offer it [this is a discussion that comes up about Rabban Gamliel as well-- the Korban Pesach is the only time-specific korban that is not brought with communal funds].

שו"ת חתם סופר יורה דעה רלו

כי שם נבנה בית עבודה שלהם ואומרים שאבן שתייה באמצע הכיפה ההיא ולא יקרב שם איש זר שאינו מאמונתם...וביעב"ץ ח"א סי' צ"ט הביא ממנו בקיצור וכתב עליו שיש לשאול גם על שקלי ציבור ואולי קרבן פסח רצה להקריב דבא בטומאה בציבור ולא בעי שקלים והנה מבגדי כהונה לא שאלו כי פשוט הוא שאין כה"ג מעכב ונוכל להקריב בלעדו

March 13, 2018

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *What Does This Avodah Mean to You?*

The Talmud Yerushalmi...understands the question of the *rasha* to be, “What is all this effort [*torach*] that you undertake each year?” According to one reading of the Yerushalmi the child is asking about all the effort involved in preparing the korban pesach (Shibbolei haLeket). According to the Ritva he is asking about the Haggadah itself: why delay the meal with so much talking, so many questions, answers and explanations? What is clear, though, is that for the Yerushalmi the key word is *avodah*. When the child says *Mah ha-avodah ha-zot lakhem*, he is not asking, “What is this *service* to you?” but rather, “What is this *hard work* to you?” This is a deep insight. I will argue that it goes to the very heart of the Jewish condition today...I tell you from the depth of my heart that there is no achievement worth having that is not hard work. What we need in Jewish life today is not ways of making Judaism easier. What costs little is valued even less. We need to find ways of showing how Judaism lifts us to greatness. When that happens people will not ask, *Mah ha-avodah ha-zot lakhem*, “Why all the hard work?” Neither an athlete going for an Olympic gold medal nor a scientist trying a new line of research ever asks that question; nor did Steve Jobs at Apple or Jeff Bezos at Amazon. The pursuit of greatness always involves hard work. The real challenge of our time is to rediscover why Judaism, because it asks great things from us, lifts us to greatness. The rest is commentary. In 2008 two teenage Americans, Alex and Brett Harris, wrote a book that became a best-seller. It was called, *Do Hard Things*, and subtitled: *A teenage rebellion against low expectations*. We need a Jewish equivalent. That will be the answer to the question young Jews still ask, “What does this *avodah* mean to you?”