



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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PARSHAT TZAV

Parshat Vayikra introduced the procedure for each of Olah, Shlamim, Mincha, Chatat and Asham. Parshat Tzav outlines the benefits to the Kohanim in these offerings.

The Kohanim are the religious functionaries. While we need to learn how to approach G-d through the offerings, we also need to outline both the benefits and the limits to the Kohanim. Having a central location for offerings and a class of people responsible for them simply invites corruption. We need the Kohen to offer our offerings. That creates an immediate power imbalance. The Kohanim have ample opportunity to use this power imbalance to their advantage; if we want their assistance, well, pay for it.

Care must be exercised in who is granted the privilege of the office of the Kohen. And care must be given to outline not only what benefits do accrue to the Kohen in exchange for their public service; but also, the limits to what they receive.

Our parsha addresses both these themes. First, what the Kohen receives (and hence, what not). And second, an elaborate inauguration ceremony to impress on the Kohanim that they are servants, not lords. Serving G-d

and His people, not assuming positions of power and privilege.



1ST ALIYA (VAYIKRA 6:1-11)

Instructions are given to the Kohanim: The **Olah** fats and limbs are burnt all night. In the morning the Kohen shall take some of the ashes from the altar and place them at the side. This pile of ashes is removed out of the Mikdash. A fire for the offerings is to burn constantly. When a **Mincha** flour offering is brought, part is burned on the altar, the remainder eaten by the Kohanim. It may not be chametz.

In this section outlining the benefits given to the Kohen, we begin with the Olah, the offering that is completely burned. The Kohen gets nothing.

The Olah is burned all night. In this we learn a rule concerning the Temple. We know from the Creation story that the day begins at sunset: evening and morning, one day. But not in the Temple. The day in the Temple was the opposite; day followed by night, one day. Offerings are brought during the day and burned through the night. With dawn, a new day begins.

The offerings have time limits. Most offerings must be burned and the Kohen must consume his parts in a day – meaning the day they are brought and the night that follows. Some have 2 days. And the offering we are most familiar with (as we are all the wise child of the seder), the Korban Pesach may be eaten only at night, and perhaps even only until midnight. As we learn the rules of

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on their **Aliyah 13 years ago** and on
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offerings, we realize how unusual the Korban Pesach is in all of its rules.



2ND ALIYA (6:12-7:10)

An **inauguration Mincha** flour offering is brought by a Kohen on the first day of his service, by a Kohen Gadol on the first day of his service and daily by the Kohen Gadol. It is boiled, then baked and completely burned. When a **Chatat**, a sin offering, is brought, it is consumed by the Kohanim in the Temple. The utensils used to cook it must be kashered; while a metal utensil can be put in water, an earthenware one must be broken. An **Asham** guilt offering is also consumed by the Kohanim in the Temple. For an **Olah**, the Kohen receives the leather. The Kohen consumes baked **Mincha** offerings.

Some offerings are completely burned, but most have part burned and the rest eaten by the Kohen. When and where the Kohen or owner consumes the offering varies according to the offering. The “kodesh kodashim – the holiest of holy” offerings are consumed in the Temple grounds itself. That includes the Olah, the Chatat and the Asham. These are offerings brought to express a submission to G-d; the owner does not consume any of it, has no personal pleasure in it. An Olah is completely burned, save the leather, which is given to the Kohanim.



3RD ALIYA (7:11-38)

When a **Shlamim**, a peace offering is brought to express thanks, 4 different types of 10 mincha breads each are brought. One of each of these 4 types is given to the Kohen. The owner consumes the offering over 2 days. He may not be Tameh, impure. Blood and the offered fats may never be eaten. The Kohen is given the breast and thigh of the shlamim offering.

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STATS

Sources say that TZAV has TZAV (96) pesukim. Our Chumashim have 97. Either one-off is acceptable for Gimatriya purposes, or there was a slightly different pesukim-division way back.



MITZVOT

18 mitzvot; 9 positive and 9 prohibitions.

The Shlamim is eaten by the owner. It is not restricted to the Temple; it may be eaten anywhere in Yerushalayim (or before Yerushalayim within eyesight of the Mikdash). And, the owner has 2 days to consume it.

The Shlamim is associated with joy, satisfaction, thanks. And it has 40 breads. That is a lot. It would seem that built into an offering of joy is sharing. True simcha is engendered by sharing. We derive pleasure from consumption.

But pleasure is not simcha. Simcha is deeper. Simcha is the deep pleasure of standing before G-d, living a life of meaning. And sharing.



4TH ALIYA (8:1-13)

Moshe is instructed to inaugurate the Kohanim. Moshe gathered the people and the Kohanim, pronouncing that the following has been commanded by G-d. Moshe dresses Aharon in the garments of the Kohen Gadol. With the anointing oil he anointed the Mishkan, the altar, and Aharon. He dressed the Kohanim in the Kohen garments, as commanded by G-d.

The instructions for inaugurating the Kohanim were given in Parshat Tetzaveh; the inauguration occurs here. The last 4 aliyot of this parsha all end with the same phrase: as G-d commanded. Perhaps this is to avoid accusations of nepotism. Moshe is not appointing his brother as Kohen Gadol in the way politicians hand out jobs to family and supporters. Moshe was commanded.

This phrase is also foreshadowing. Next parsha Nadav and Avihu will do something they were not commanded, a noteworthy departure from all the loyalty of Moshe and Aharon.



5TH ALIYA (8:14-21)

Moshe brings the inauguration offerings. The Kohanim place their hands on the Chatat, the sin offering. Moshe offers it; the blood is placed on the altar, the fats burned, the animal burned outside the camp. The ram as an Olah is offered; the Kohanim place their hands on the head, Moshe does all of the procedures for its offering.

Moshe acts as the Kohen for the entire inauguration ceremony. He does the slaughter, the sprinkling of the blood, and the offering of the fats. Perhaps this too is to bolster Aharon as Kohen Gadol. Moshe himself could act as the

Kohen Gadol. In fact, for this week he does. But he is charged to transfer that role to others, to divest. Aharon is the Kohen Gadol by Divine fiat.



6TH ALIYA (8:22-29)

The second ram, the Inauguration Ram is brought. Moshe places its blood on Aharon's right ear, right thumb and right big toe. And does the same for all the Kohanim. He offers the ram, sprinkling its blood and burning its fats. After Aharon and the Kohanim wave the matzot, one of each kind is offered on the altar. Moshe waved the breast, his portion in the offering.

With this offering, the position as official Kohanim of the Jewish people is inaugurated. There are no other Jews, as far as I am aware, who can trace their lineage as far back as Kohanim and Leviim. A Levi today descends from Levi, the son of Yaakov. And a Kohen descends from Aharon, brother of Moshe. That Kohen status begins at this moment in the desert, one year after the exodus from Egypt and continues, unbroken, until today.



7TH ALIYA (8:30-36)

Moshe instructs Aharon to cook the meat of the offering and to consume it and the matza. The Kohanim are not to leave the Mikdash for 7 days. This same procedure is to be done when gaining atonement. Aharon and the Kohanim did all that G-d commanded.

Our parsha outlined some of the benefits to the Kohen, due to his holy service. Support of clergy, or spiritual workers, or ritual leaders is a universal notion, crossing cultures and religions. Our Kohanim are no different in receiving such benefits. However, far more important is not what they receive, but what they do not.

Back in the Yosef story we are told how the Kohanim in Egypt, the Egyptian clergy were

treated. They received public support of food. They had land. All of the land of Egypt was taken by Paro in payment for the food during the famine; save the land of the priests. The wealthiest people in Egypt were the priests. In our time, the wealth of the Vatican is vast.

Our Kohanim, in contrast, have no land. They receive support, albeit modest. This is another instance of the Torah's moderation; supporting the Kohanim, though modestly. The King will receive similar instructions; benefits but with limits. Leadership is serving G-d and His people, not self serving. When reading the Torah we need to notice not only what is said but what is not said; what rights are given, but more importantly what rights are not given. The Kohanim receive; but modestly.

PARSHAT PARAH (BAMIDBAR 19:1-22)

The purification process of the red heifer is required for those in contact with the dead. Since we all need to bring a Korban Pesach, we all need to be in a state of purity. And although contact with the dead is a mitzvah, it does render one impure. This parsha is a part

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of the theme that appears in our seder – we sigh with the awareness that our Pesach seder pales in comparison with a seder featuring the korban Pesach. We don't have it – but we can read about it. Hence, we read about the elaborate purity process in preparation for the great day of bringing the Pesach offering. ■

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOKH YERES
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(ז'י:ז) - "אם על תודה יקריבנו" (7:12)

Rashi explains that we learn by the "peace offering of thanksgiving" that there are four different conditions in which an individual must express thanks. These occasions are when one successfully travels at sea, those who cross the wilderness, those who survived being held in prison and a sick person who has recovered.

Rabbi Avraham Kaufman seems to ask on Rashi that from the pasuk, the bringing of the thanksgiving offering is never obligatory, so how can Rashi explain the need to express thanks in these situations as anything but voluntary?

One can answer that the Pasuk's message is clear by using the word: "אם"

There are sources that the word "IM" in Hebrew does not mean "if" but rather "when". In Parshat Mishpatim it says "(IM) If you lend money to any of My people" (22:24) where the mitzvah, according to Rashi there, is not optional but rather an obligatory act.

Perhaps, to further explain, the requirement to offer a Korban Todah is not an obligation on a legal level but rather a moral one, to thank G-d for being saved from dire straits. This idea is confirmed by the Talmud (Berachot 54b) that uses the language "Tzrichin" instead of "Chayavim", that one ought to thank G-d in these situations on a moral-virtuous level but not compulsory level.

- Shabbat Shalom