

## Shabbat Times

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London	19:17	20:22	Cambridge	19:14 20:26
Manchester	19:24	20:21	Leeds	19:22 20:31
Birmingham	19:22	20:35	Liverpool	19:27 20:41
Oxford	19:19	20:30	Jerusalem	18:22 19:36

### Coming up....

- This Monday at the London Bayit we are having a Leil Iyun, on modern day slavery today. Starting at 7:30 email dena@bauk.org
- Tafkidim Application are now out email Akiva@bauk.org for information on how to apply
- Summer Machane forms are now out, for more information contact Akiva on akiva@bauk.org

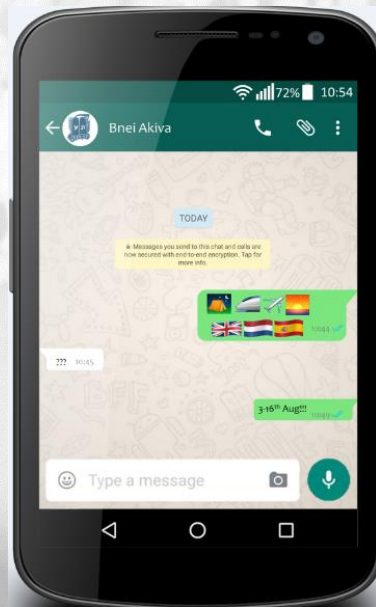
### Shabbat debate

Every week we will be writing weekly debates to discuss over Shabbat. The debates will then be continued on Facebook, on Sunday at 2pm.

What's the point in learning about Korbanot, when we don't do Korbanot at the moment?



Some photo's from the Hendon and Salford Ha'irgun



# SHABBAT

שמות ויקרא

PARASHAT VAYIKRA



תנועת בני אקבה  
BNEI AKIVA UK

# LASHEM שבת לה'

The most widely distributed weekly Torah periodical written by our youth in the United Kingdom.

### Bringing Heaven and Earth Closer

#### Ben Baruch

אדם כי יקריב מן קרבן לה'

When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem The Midrash (Yalkut Me'ein Ganim 3) learns from the seemingly extra word מן – from you – that anyone who says one-hundred (the Gematria of מן ) brachot every day is considered as if they brought a korban. Although this comparison seems strange at first glance, I think that through a closer look at the nature of brachot and korbanot it can be understood as an introduction to one of the key themes of Sefer Vayikra. Korbanot, which a significant part of Sefer Vayikra is dedicated to speaking about, can be understood as ritualistic and outdated; only relating to a generation who saw all the paganistic religions around them doing similar things, giving them a “kosher” outlet for their desire to be like everyone else. However, I believe that a deeper look paints a slightly different picture. The word korban comes from the root ב.ק.ר, which can be seen as an indication of a korban's ability to bring closeness between man and G-d. This closeness can be understood on a number of levels; both the spiritual closeness that is achieved through the bringing of a korban, either to atone or as a voluntary expression of love, but also through the mechanism of the korban itself. By bringing an animal or meal offering to the altar and by burning them, one literally transforms something mundane and physical into something that transcends this world, and creates a ‘pleasing scent for Hashem’. I think that this aspect of Korbanot is also found in brachot. Eating and drinking can be some of the most base and animalistic actions that humans are involved in, and it is the process of saying brachot, recognizing that we are eating and drinking for a higher purpose, that transform them into meaningful, worthwhile actions. The Gemara in Brachot (35a) brings a contradiction in verses in Tehillim. On the one hand it is written (24:1): “Hashem's is the earth and its fullness”, but it's also written (115:16), “The heavens are Hashem's, but the earth he has given to mankind”. Rabbi Levi answers that one verse is describing the situation before someone says a bracha, and the other is after a bracha has been made. The classic understanding is that before one makes a bracha, the whole world belongs to Hashem, and it is the recitation of a Bracha that gives someone permission to eat from the fruits of the world, and for the earth to be considered ‘given to mankind’. However Rav Aaron Soloveitchik, in an innovative twist, explains that really it is the pasuk in chapter 115 that describes the pre-bracha world; there is an absolute separation between Hashem in heaven and man on earth. The recitation of a bracha raises the physical, so that ‘the earth and its fullness’ are considered in the G-dly domain. This connection between korbanot and brachot, the raising and sanctification of the mundane and physical to spiritual heights, is one that runs throughout Vayikra. It is a common theme amongst other religions that holiness involves cutting oneself from the physical world, abstaining from pleasures and not having any worldly involvement. Sefer Vayikra contains many different details of how to live a life full of Kedusha, from the way we eat, the way we interact with other people and the world, and the way we serve G-d, the common denominator being that Kedusha doesn't involve being separated from the world, it involves interacting with it, in order to connect the earth to the heavens.

Ben Baruch is in Shevet Hagevurah and was sgan on Bet Base 5776





## The word Vayikra

In 1946, Auschwitz Survivor and famed psychiatrist Viktor Frankel wrote a book chronicling his experiences in the death cap, and introducing his theory of logotherapy. He writes:

**“What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life. We had to learn ... that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life ... Our question must consist not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct.”**

This Shabbat we commence the third book of the Torah, Vayikra. Our *parasha*, of the same name, opens (Vayikra 1:1):

**“And Hashem called to Moshe, and spoke to him out of the tent of meeting, saying.”**

Why is it important to know that Hashem called to Moshe? In fact, this point is superfluous since it subsequently says that Hashem “spoke to him”. Is it not absurd that an entire book of the Torah is called after a superfluous and seemingly inconsequential word? Why does Sefer Vayikra open with Hashem’s calling, what is its significance?

Sefer Vayikra primarily discusses the topic of the *Avodah* – Temple Service. Its chapters are filled with the details of the various sacrificial services, from those performed on a daily basis to those performed on holiday; those performed when a person would perform an iniquity, to those performed when someone felt spiritual elation.

The Hebrew word for sacrifice is *korban* – which actually comes from the root meaning “closeness”. The *korbanot* were not sacrificing something, rather they were various expressions of coming close to one’s ultimate self – to Hashem – at various moments in life. How does one become close to Hashem? It is by realizing that we are being “called to” by Him that we attain the sense of closeness. When we realize we have a calling, a purpose, we come closer to the source of our purpose. When we live our purpose, we allow the closeness to manifest in our lives.

*Vayikra* can also mean cold, distant, purposeless. The transformation of purposeless to purposeful is found in us hearing the calling.

The word “*Vayikra*” for which our book is named does not describe a technical act, it is the essence of Jewish life; *Vayikra* is a noun, not a verb; it is a way of life. The *Avodah* – our unique calling in this world – is an expression of our purpose, and this inherently is our closeness.

The ancient custom was for the children to begin their Torah studies with Sefer Vayikra. Why is this so? Sefer Vayikra is possibly the most complex, technical and unengaging of books in the Torah. It would make more sense to begin with the stories of the books of Bereishit and Shemot. The Midrash comments:

**“Rebbi Assi said, ‘Why do we begin teaching young children the book of Vayikra and not that of Bereishit? Because children are pure, and the [Temple] Service is pure; the pure ones should duly study about purity.’”**

Everything surrounding the Temple Service revolves around purity. It is thus fitting that young children – who are wholesome and pure – begin their studies with Vayikra. Children, who have a pure and innocent understanding of the world, can learn about their calling in an uninhibited manner. They are untainted by the cynicism of adulthood, the negativity of failure. Children are inspired and motivated, optimistic and hopeful.

As we begin the book of Vayikra, we aspire to be more pure – like children. We aspire to open our hearts and ears to hear the Hashem is “calling out” to all of us.

## The Week that Was...

Last Shabbat we had our last two Shabbatot Ha’irgun of the year in Hendon and Salford. On Monday night we had the first of our Leil Iyun looking at inclusivity, with over 100 people engaged, at the London Bayit or watching online. Thank you to Rav Ari and Joe Hyman for speaking at the event

Shabbat Shalom to all those at the Edgware Family Friday Night this week



## Sviva Spotlight

Dvar Torah and Update from one of our Svivot

*Woodside Park Bnei Akiva takes place every week at Woodside Park Shul. The Shul is right next to Woodside Park Tube Station. The Ark and Bimah of the shul are from Sunderland Shul when it closed. The Stained Glass windows are from South London synagogue when it closed*

### A Deeper Look into Prayer

In Pirkei Avot (Ethics of our Fathers 1:2) our sages teach that the world continues to exist on the merits of Torah study, *Avodah*, and acts of kindness. *Avodah* refers to the *Korbanot* (Temple offerings), but nowadays is replaced with our daily prayers. Understanding the *Korbanot* gives us an insight into the fundamental reasons for why we pray, and the potential that our prayers have.

The Rambam explains that the Jewish people had a desire to worship animals, since that is what they saw from the surrounding nations; Hashem commanded us to offer animals to Him to remind us that He is the One to be served rather than the animals. Interestingly, the Torah constantly emphasizes the "pleasant aroma" of offerings that ascended to Hashem. In response to this aroma, Hashem would send His blessings down to us on earth.

This is all the same with our prayers. According to the Rambam, the power of our prayers produces the same effect as the *Korbanot* once did. On the one hand, just as the *Korbanot* removed evil desires from our hearts while reminding us to serve only Hashem, prayer can accomplish the same. We take time each day from our busy, noisy world to talk to Hashem and connect for a little while, praising Him and asking for His bountiful blessings. Tefillah (prayer) is therefore also our "pleasant aroma" that we send up to Hashem. In response to this, Hashem showers us with great blessings. The *Korbanot* remind us of the huge power that our prayer has - all we need to do is use it!

Talia Goodkin

Rosh of Woodside Park Bnei Akiva

Ideas adapted from ShortVort.org