



MIZRACHI

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE WEEKLY: MIZRACHI.ORG/YOUTH

הַמִּזְרָחִי HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

CHAVRUTA

PARSHAT VAYIKRA 5786 • 2026



A project of the Mizrachi Schools Department

AS IF ONE BROUGHT A KORBAN

What can we learn from Sefer Vayikra and the korbanot? Are these pesukim still relevant to us?

Parshat Vayikra opens a sefer that largely deals with korbanot. Studying korbanot can feel difficult for two main reasons: many of the details are unfamiliar, and today we do not have a Beit HaMikdash and cannot bring them.

Learning Torah in Place of Korbanot

The Gemara in Masechet Megillah discusses the ma'amadot, public Torah readings from Sefer Bereishit that took place while the Kohanim were offering the korbanot.

Megillah 31b

Rabbi Ami said: If not for the ma'amadot, heaven and earth could not endure, as it says: "If not for My covenant day and night, I would not have set the laws of heaven and earth." Avraham said before Hashem: Perhaps Israel will sin and You will destroy them like the generation of the Flood. Hashem replied: No. Avraham asked: How will I know? Hashem answered by teaching him the korbanot. Avraham then asked: This works when the Beit HaMikdash exists, but what will happen when it does not? Hashem replied: I have already established the order of korbanot. Whenever they read these passages, I consider it as if they brought a korban before Me.

מגילה ל"א:ב

אמר רבי אמי: אלמלא מעמדות לא נתקיימו שמים וארץ, שנאמר: "אם לא בריתי יומם ולילה חקות שמים וארץ לא שמתי" (ירמיהו ל"ג, כ"ה)... אמר אברהם לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: שמא ישראל חוטאים לפניך ואתה עושה להם כדור המבול? אמר לו: לא. אמר לו: במה אדע? אמר לו: "קחה לי עגלה משלשת ועז משלשת..." (בראשית ט"ו, ט'). אמר לפניו: תינח בזמן לשבית המקדש קנים; בזמן שאין בית המקדש קנים מה תהא עליהם? אמר לו: כבר תקנתי להם סדר קרבנות. כל זמן שקוראין בהן, מעלה אני עליהם כאילו הקריבו לפני קרבן.

The Gemara teaches that even without a Beit HaMikdash, studying the passages of korbanot is considered like offering them. When we study korbanot, we are not only learning about a mitzvah that cannot currently be performed. Torah study itself is meaningful. In his famous letter, the Ramban writes that when we learn Torah we should always consider how its lessons can be applied.

Iggeret HaRamban

Be careful to read the Torah constantly so that you can fulfill it. When you rise from the sefer, examine what you learned and see if there is something you can apply.

שמות ל"ו, י"ג

והיו זהיר לקרות בתורה תמיד אשר תוכל לקומה. וכאשר תקום מן הספר תחפש באשר למדת אם יש בו דבר אשר תוכל לקומה.

When we read Parshat Vayikra and the other sections dealing with korbanot, we should try both to understand the mitzvah and to consider what it can teach us today.

Tefillah in Place of Korbanot

Human life includes both intellect and emotion. Torah study speaks to the intellect, while tefillah expresses the emotions and inner experience. Chazal therefore taught:

Sifrei, Parshat Ekev

"To serve Him with all your heart"—what service is performed with the heart? This is tefillah."

ספרי, פרשת עקב

"לעבדו בכל לבבכם" – איזו היא עבודה שהיא בלב? הווי אומר זו תפילה.

The Gemara in Berachot records a debate about the origin of the prayers. One opinion says the Avot established them, while another says they correspond to the daily korbanot. In the end, the Gemara explains that both views agree that tefillah and korbanot are closely connected.

Berachot 26b

Rabbi Yosi bar Rabbi Chanina says the Avot established the prayers, while Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says they were established to correspond to the daily korbanot. Rabbi Yosi explains that the prayers were indeed established by the Avot, and the Sages later connected them to the korbanot.

ברכות כ"ו:

רבי יוסי בר רבי חנינא אמר: תפלות אבות תקנום; רבי יהושע בן לוי אמר: תפלות כנגד תמידין תקנום... אמר לך רבי יוסי בר רבי חנינא: לעולם אימא לך תפלות אבות תקנום, ואסמכיהו רבנן אקרבנות.

The idea that speech can take the place of korbanot already appears in the Navi Hoshea.

Hoshea 14:3

"Take words with you and return to Hashem. Say to Him: 'Forgive all sin and accept what is good; we will repay with the words of our lips instead of bulls'."

הושע י"ד:

קחו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה'; אמרו אליו כל תשאל עון וקח טוב, ונשלמה פרים שפתינו.

Speech that comes from the lips and helps make you a better person and closer to Hashem is considered like offering a korban.

How can speech replace a costly korban?

The Midrash teaches that our words can even be more precious than korbanot:

Shir HaShirim Rabbah, Parashah 4

Your lips are like a thread of scarlet" – The murmuring of your mouth is as beloved to Me as a scarlet thread. "And we will pay with the bulls of our lips" – Our lips take the place of bulls (sacrificial offerings).

שיר השירים רבה, פרשה ד

כחוט השני שפתותיך – רחישת פיך חביבה עלי כחוט השני. "ונשלמה פרים שפתינו" – שפתינו תחת פרים.

The korban was never only a technical act; it was meant to influence the person bringing it and help guide them back to the right path. When the Beit HaMikdash stood, korbanot were the main way people drew closer to Hashem. After the churban, another path became central: speech. Through Torah study and sincere tefillah, a person can still grow spiritually and draw closer to Hashem.

What can help us pray with kavanah?



TZURBA

THE LAX FAMILY EDITION

Tzurba M'Rabanan is a groundbreaking learning program that makes the learning of Halacha clear, relevant and interesting.

HALACHA OF THE WEEK

Eating and Drinking Before Havdalah

Shulchan Aruch – Orach Chaim 299

One may not eat or do any melachah before making Havdalah. Once night falls, it is forbidden to eat anything or drink other beverages (except water) until Havdalah is made. However, if someone was already eating while it was still day and nightfall arrived, he does not need to stop his meal. Some say that this applies only when it is still doubtful nightfall, but once it is certainly night he should cover the table, make Havdalah, and then continue the meal. Rema: The common custom follows the first opinion, that he may continue eating.

שולחן ערוך, אורח חיים רצ"ט

אסור לאכל שום דבר או אפלו נשאר משקין חוץ ממים משתחשך עד שיבדיל. אבל אם היה יושב ואוכל מבעוד יום וחשכה לו, אינו צריך להפסיק... ויש אומרים דהני מילי בספק חשכה, אבל בודאי חשכה אפלו היה יושב ואוכל – פורס מפה ומבדיל וגומר סעודתו. רמ"א והמנהג פשוט כסברה הראשונה.

If someone is already in the middle of a meal and nightfall arrives, may he continue eating before making Havdalah?

Mishna Berurah, Orach Chaim 299:1

Nevertheless, it seems to me that regarding eating the third Shabbat meal (Seudah Shelishit), if one did not eat it earlier, he should certainly eat it even after sunset.

משנה ברורה, אורח חיים רצ"ט:

ומכל מקום נראה לי דלענן אכילת סעודה שלישית, אם לא אכל מקדם – בודאי צריך לאכל אפלו אחר שקיעה.

According to the Mishnah Berurah, what should someone do if he has not yet eaten Seudah Shelishit before sunset?

B'Yitzchak Yikarei, Orach Chaim 299:1

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ruled that one should not wash hands to begin a meal after sunset. The reason is that in Eretz Yisrael the custom follows the opinion of the Gra, that nightfall occurs less than half an hour after sunset.

ביצחק יקרא, אורח חיים רצ"ט:

רבי שלמה זלמן אוירבך פסק שאין לטל ידיים לסעודה לאחר השקיעה, משום שביארן ושרא"ל נוהגים כהגר"א שצאת הכוכבים הוא פחות מחצי שעה לאחר השקיעה.

What is the reason why Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's ruling does not contradict the Mishnah Berurah?

