

# The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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Baltimore, MD 21209

[www.chabadshul.org](http://www.chabadshul.org)



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VaYikra

7 Nissan, 5785

## True Sacrifice

Does serving G-d mean that you have to sacrifice your life? To become a conformist? To obliterate your personality?

In the third book of the Bible, Vayikra (Leviticus), we learn the quintessential approach to how each of us can and should serve G-d. We enter the bloody world of the great altar in the Holy Temple where the Jewish people brought animal sacrifices to Jerusalem to atone for their sins. What possible connection could this slaughter of ox and sheep have to do with establishing a fulfilling relationship with G-d?

The classical Torah commentator Ramban, tells us that when a person had to bring a korban (animal sacrifice), "a person had to envision that what was happening to the animal should have been happening to him or her." Since it is we who need to be cleansed of our wrongdoings - a cleansing of our blood, our flesh, and our fat - G-d in His great mercy gave us an alternative: we could replace ourselves with an animal that would endure this process in our stead.

The Torah is not a lesson in ancient history; its every word is eternal and relevant to each of us every day. In a Temple-less world, we need to look a little deeper to discover the relationship of these sacrifices to our contemporary lives.

There are two forces within each of us: a force that desires material pleasures and a force that yearns for G-dliness. Simply put, our search for purpose, for meaning, for serving G-d, are at constant odds with "the animal" in us: the part of us that would rather indulge our selfish passions than contribute to a higher cause. The centrality of the animal offerings in the Temple reflects the essence of our Divine purpose: To submit the animal within us to G-d.

Now, when we read how a person brought a sacrifice upon the altar we find a curious twist of words. Instead of saying, "When one of you will bring an offering," the literal translation is, "When a person will bring an offering of you." The "of you" tells us that by bringing an animal to the altar, we are actually bringing to the altar the animal in us.

Offering yourself, the animal in you, to G-d is the cornerstone of all Judaism, but how is this accomplished? Do you crush the animal passion and pleasure in you and live a somber life of deprivation and misery? The answer lies in the derivation of the word korban. While korban is often translated as "sacrifice," the actual word comes from the root word "kiruv," meaning "to draw close."

We make ourselves a korban by "bringing close" the pure essence of the animal in us to G-d. We don't annihilate it, we don't squash it, we use it to help us approach Divinity, to transcend our limits and get closer to the quintessential purpose for which we were created. An animal cannot behave in any way other than how G-d created it. Bulls are aggressive, sheep are slothfully self-indulgent, and goats are stubborn. But the animal in us has a choice. We can be an obnoxious "bully," or we can channel our passions toward an assertive love for G-d. We can indulge in our sheep-like lust for pleasure, or we can get pleasure in helping others and living a meaningful life.

At the heart of every force in our lives, even the ones that manifest negative expression, lies a kernel that can be directed to a constructive and G-dly cause. What we do "sacrifice" is the object of our desires, the immature or narrow attitudes we assume, our ignorance and our blind spots - so that our essential natures can emerge, just as you sacrifice the weeds to allow the flowers to surface.

You shouldn't give up your G-d-given talents and behaviors; you should bring them closer to their purer state. When you become a korban, you have the opportunity to transform every aspect of yourself, to become the greatest person you can be; a person who no longer walks among the beasts, but hand in hand with G-d.

The story of the korban in Vayikra teaches us that serving G-d is not about self-annihilation but about self-actualization.

*(by Rabbi Simon Jacobson from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)*

**"Vayikra / He called to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from the Ohel Mo'ed, Laimor / saying." (1:1)**

Rashi z"l writes: "Vayikra" expresses affection and is the way angels address each other, as it is written (Yeshayah 6:3) "Ve'kara" / And one called to another." To the prophets of the nations of the world, however, G-d reveals himself using an expression that denotes events of a casual character and of uncleanness, as it is written, (Bemidbar 23: 4), "Va'yiker/ And Elokim happened to meet Bil'am." [Until here from Rashi]

R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (Maharal of Prague; died 1609) elaborates: "Va'yiker" is used when Hashem speaks to a gentile prophet, in contrast to "Vayikra" when He speaks to a prophet of Bnei Yisrael, to indicate that the former receive only "half" a prophecy, just as the word "Va'yiker" (וַיִּקֶּר) is only part of the word "Vayikra" (וַיִּקְרָא). Why can gentiles not receive a complete prophecy? Because they do not have the Torah to purify their intellects.

Thus, writes Maharal, we read (Esther 3:14), "The copies of the decree were to be promulgated in every province, and to be published to all peoples, that they should be ready for that day," i.e., the 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar. Haman was not a prophet, but he was given an inkling of prophecy, a premonition that something momentous would happen in the Persian Empire on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar. What did happen, however, was not at all what he expected. He experienced only "half" a prophecy. (Ohr Chadash 3:14; Tiferet Yisrael ch.21)

Midrash Tanchuma asks: What is the meaning of "Laimor"? The Midrash answers: "Saying to Bnei Yisrael."

R' Avi Ezri Zelig Margalios z"l (rabbinical judge and Darshan / preacher in several European cities; died 1715 in Eretz Yisrael) explains: The Zohar interprets "Ohel Mo'ed," usually translated "Tent of Meeting," as "Tent of Time." (The holidays are called "Mo'adim" because they are "meetings" with G-d that come at fixed times.) When Hashem spoke to Moshe from the Ohel Mo'ed, He was telling Moshe that this meeting place, the Mishkan/Mikdash, would only exist for a time. Eventually, the Bet Hamikdash would be destroyed.

However, Hashem continued, "Laimor / Say this to Bnei Yisrael." The Torah uses two verbs to introduce Hashem's speaking to Moshe: "Va'yomer" (from the same root as "Laimor") and "Vy'da'ber." Our Sages explain that the former connotes soft speech, while the latter connotes harsh speech. One would think that a portent of the destruction of the Temple would be introduced by "Vy'da'ber." No! says Hashem. "Laimor" / Tell it to Bnei Yisrael gently, for it is good that I will pour My anger on stick and stones and not on them. (Kessef Nivchar)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))

**Yahrzeits This Week:**

Rabbi Fred Lewin 11 Nissan - Tuesday night / Wednesday for mother Bosya bas Aryeh Lav

**DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE**

**Friday, 4/4 — 6 Nissan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

**Shabbat, 4/5 — 7 Nissan**

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:54 a.m.  
"Shabbat HaGadol Drasha" — 6:00 p.m.  
Minchah — 7:05 p.m.  
Shiur — after Minchah  
Shkiah — 7:35 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 8:17 p.m.

**Sunday, 4/6 — 8 Nissan**

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Maariv — 7:20 p.m.

**Monday, 4/7 — 9 Nissan**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.

**Tuesday, 4/8 — 10 Nissan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.

**Wednesday, 4/9 — 11 Nissan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.  
Tanya Shiur: 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Tanya Shaar HaYichud  
V'Emunah which deals w/the nature of creation  
and the unity of Hashem — 8:00 p.m.

**Thursday — Fast of the First Born, 4/10 — 12 Nissan**

Fast Begins — 5:08 a.m.  
Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.  
Fast Ends — 7:40 p.m.  
Bedikat Chometz — After 8:08 p.m.

**Friday, 4/11 — 13 Nissan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Burn Chometz — Before 12:01 p.m.  
Shabbat Candles — 7:22 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.