

## **CSH March Shabbat Service Schedule**

March 5 | Parashat Pekudei / Shabbat Shekalim  
March 26 | Parashat Shmini /Shabbat Paraha

**Friday, March 11, 2011 Candle Lighting 5:34 pm (Sag Harbor)**

### **This week's Torah reading: Vayikra**

Annual Cycle: Leviticus 1:1-5:26 Etz Hayim, p. 585

Triennial Cycle I: Leviticus 1:1-2:16 Etz Hayim, p. 585

Haftarah: Isaiah 43:21-44:23; Etz Hayim, p. 606



### **Musings on Vayikra –**

In the ancient Jewish curriculum, children's Torah education began with *Vayikra*, the Book of Leviticus. Modern educators who hear this throw up their hands in horror. Leviticus? All those sacrifices and offerings? How could that be fitting material for a young child?

The rabbinic sages explain, "The sacrifices are pure and the children are pure: let the pure children learn about the subject of purity". The modern critics are not likely to be mollified at this thought. Yet without necessarily advocating a total return to the textual study of *Vayikra* at the beginning of primary school, we can still discern immense wisdom in the old rabbinic idea. Think of the diet with which the youngest children are fed these days – violence, hatred, immodesty, vulgarity and all the rest. Parents don't like it, but what can they do? The culture of impurity permeates everything. The rabbis knew something that our age needs to rediscover – that children's education needs to begin with sweet dreams, not ugly nightmares.

<http://www.oztorah.com/2007/03/first-lessons-vayikra/>



### **Falling In Love With the Book of Leviticus / Vayikra by Rabbi Jeremy Gordon**

I want to read, today, the first verse of the Parasha – the first verse of the entire book as a love letter.

Where are we in the story? Moses and his construction team have finished building the sanctuary, everything is placed perfectly. But Moses can't get in. The book of Exodus ends with a perfectly constructed sanctuary full of the presence of the Divine and Moses outside.

#### **Vayikra el Moshe – And God called to Moses**

Midrash Tanhuma The Holy Blessed One says – it's not right that Moses should be left out of all this, standing outside, while I am standing inside, so I'll call to him to come in as it says –

#### ***Vayikra el Moshe – And God called to Moses***

Like a doorman at some fancy club, beckoning at some shivering soul on the pavement and whisking them around the barriers and past the bouncers into the VIP area.

#### **Vayikra**

Rashi wanting to know why this root has been used and not amar/davar/tzav suggests that it is *Lashon Hivah* – the language of warmth

*Vayikra* means come inside, see what is here, make yourself at home in my home.

Elsewhere the Rabbis use the notion of **Vayikra** - *vav yod kuf aleph*

To play a game at the expense of one of their favourite knocking horses Bilaam the non-Jewish prophet who is bribed into attempting to curse Israel.

What's the difference, the second century sage Rabbi Hama Bar Hanina asks, between the prophets of Israel and the prophets of the other nations?

God doesn't reveal God's full self to the peoples of the world, for when God calls to Bilaam

**Vyikar** *elohim el bilaam*

The translation is – God met Bilaam, but the language

**Vayikar** – *vav yod kuf* is an *aleph* away from the way in which God called to Moses

**Vayikra** has that extra aleph.

It's a fuller willingness to encounter

I'm going to come back to this distinction between the **Vayikar**, lesser calling to the non-Jewish Bilaam and the **Vayikra**, the greater calling to Moses later.

Rabbi Yisaschar of Kfar Megido<sup>[3]</sup> goes somewhere else in search of a verse that explains the deeper intent behind the word *Vayikra*

It's *lashon kedushah* – he says, the language of holiness.

He equates our *Vayikra* to a verse we know well from our liturgy.

It's the language of the administering angels of Isaiah's greatest theophany

**Vayikra** *zeh el zeh vamar*

And the angels called out one to another

The Rabbis are trying to get at the way this beckoning call from God to Moses – this *Vayikra* – both the word and the whole apparatus that follows – is a whisper designed for a chosen lover. God is descending from aloof aloneness – alone in the *Mishcan* – to engage with a mere human, Moses, drawing Moses in with *lashon hiva*, loving entreaties.

There is a sense, in reading this verse this way, of God bearing Godself, opening Godself up to the possibility of relationship, like a suitor in the first moments of a new relationship of intimacy. A relationship which bears, of course, the possibility of being dumped, caused pain.

We'll come back to the pain later.

In *Shmot Rabba*<sup>[4]</sup> Moses equates the inside of the *mishkan*, the place where God's presence manifests, to the top of Mount Sinai, at the very moment of revelation.

Just as I was unable to stand on the top of the mountain in the direct presence of God's revelation – God's revealing – so too, thought Moses, in the minds of the Rabbis, I must be unable to enter into the Sanctuary. God was after all quite clear in the run up to the revelation in Exodus, whoever ascended to the top of the mountain would die.

And we know, from stories yet to be told, that entering unbidden into the sanctuary of the wilderness also courts death.

So Moses waits outside.

No, says God, *vayikra el Moshe*, come inside.

It's a permitted trespass into an inner sanctum.

Actually the more I think about this relational aspect of the verb *Vayikra*, the harder it is for me to move away from the gestalt of young suitors, at the beginning of a new relationship.

This *Vayikra*, this beckoning into the forbidden place is meant in the same way that a suitor might be permitted to place a first kiss on their lover.

There is a sense of danger, a risk of a slap across the face, or worse, if the invitation has been misunderstood.

<http://rabbionanarrowbridge.blogspot.com/search/label/vayikra>

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## "Al Kol Korbancha Takriv Melach", put salt on all your Korbanos (Vayikra 2:13)

Why We Salt Challah ...

On Friday night there is a sequence of rituals to begin the Shabbat meal: sanctification of the wine (*kiddush*), washing of the hands (*netilat yada'im*), and sanctification of the bread (*ha'motzi*). After the bread is broken the *challah* is dipped in salt. This salting alludes to the Temple sacrifices. In lieu of a sacrificial system, our dining tables become the altar:

Never shall you suspend the salt covenant of your G-d... with all your offerings you shall offer salt. —Leviticus 2:13

But this begs the question. Why were the sacrifices salted to begin with? What is the significance of salt?

The world is one part wilderness, one part settled land, and one part sea. Said the sea to G-d: "Master of the Universe! The Torah will be given in the wilderness; the Holy Temple will be built on settled land; and what about me?" Said G-d: "The people of Israel will offer your salt upon the Altar."  
—Yalkut HaReuveni

This commentary beautifully maps the three items we consecrate and consume to three domains of this world:

- The wine is like the wilderness—fermentation requires wild, airborne yeast.
- The bread is like the settled land—bread is created through cultivation and human intervention.
- Salt is like the ocean—the sea, where life began and purity begins....

Through our Sabbath meal we take of the three realms of the world and partake in their unification on the altar of our homes.

Sources: Lev. 2:13, Yalkut HaReuveni, and Rav. Zalman Schachter-Shalomi.

By Shir-Yaakov Feinstein-Feit <http://mail.aol.com/33356-111/aol-1/en-us/Suite.aspx>

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**CSH Membership** -- It takes all of us to make CSH the community that it is. Please help strengthen CSH by joining or renewing your CSH membership now.

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## **Purim's Coming – Send Mishloach Manot**

Honor someone(s) special by sending them **VIRTUAL Mishloach Manot** (gifts of food that Jews send to each other during the holiday of Purim.)

Spare your friend and family the calories of hamantashen, chocolate, candy and wine and **make a donation to CSH in their honor instead.**

Send us the names and email addresses of those you wish to honor, and we will send them a Purim box from you.

25% of all donations for these "gift boxes" will be donated to the Sag Harbor Food Pantry to ensure that those less fortunate will have food to eat.



**End Quote** –

"In my heart I will build a dwelling-place  
to amplify the Glory of God,  
And in that dwelling place I will make  
a place for the flowings of God's Beauty.  
And as the eternal light I will take for myself  
the fire of the Binding,  
And I will offer as the sacrifice my soul  
my only soul."

*Rabbi Menachem Creditor*

Shabbat shalom.

Stacy