

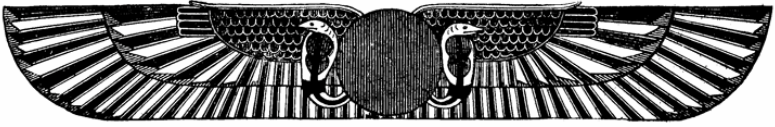
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We present our many thanks to Our God-Father
and to Our King of Kings, to His Imperial
Majesty, HAILE SELASSIE I's Kingdome in the
Glorious name of *Iyesus Kristos*, Our Saviour –
Our Lord of Lords.

AMEN AND AMEN.



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*Our mission is to bring good tidings, that publisheth peace;
that bringeth good tidings of good, that saith to Zion, Thy God
reigneth. – Isaiah 52:7*

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NAM ET IPSA SCIENTIA POTESTAS EST¹

«አውቀትም ደግሞ በራሱ ሥልጣን ሆኖ»²

¹ Often, translated as “Knowledge is power,” an aphorism borrowed and much repeated, based upon Francis Bacon’s original, “*for Knowledge too is itself power.*”

² Ras Iadonis Tafari’s accurate rendering, and translation into the AMHARIC, of the LATIN phrase favoured and quoted above by Sir Bacon.

ויקרא

VAYIKRA

HEBREW BOOK OF THE
LEVITICUS:

TORAH PORTION VOL.3,

Introduction & compilation

by

Ras Iadonis Tafari



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INTRODUCTORY NOTES

WE, THE BLACK JEWS of the world, along with the progressive Rastafari and collectively, the “Ethiopian-Hebrews,” i.e. *the Beta-Israel (or, Falashas³) of the West*, for more than a two to three millennia prior to the other “Jews”, the other ‘Israel⁴’; also have a written testimony to our Divine Heritage, possessing our own ancient religious, metaphysical and spiritual literature that endeavours to explain, clarify and explicate the revealed word of scripture, the Holy Bible. Amongst the other “Israel,” or European converts called ‘Jews,’ these writings have been expanded upon and preserved in voluminous commentaries to the Torah, the Hebrew Bible, and thus further divided into various categories according to content. Overall, these traditional oral interpretations, scriptural ordinances, were compiled by certain Rabbis about A.D. 200; according to Orthodox Judaism, Judaic Studies and Yeshiva Schooling , i.e. **TALMUD, MISHNA, GEMARA, HAGGADAH, HALACHA**, and **THE KABBALAH**, inclusive of so-called **THE ZOHAR** and other like and similar ‘Extra-biblical’ and interlinear writings by distinguished (European) Jewish Rabbis.

THE FOLLOWING COMPILATIONS of each Book of the Hebrew Bible’s Weekly Torah Portions are intended as a basic and preliminary introduction to modern “JUDAISM”, as it presently, that is to say, the current form based predominantly upon the prevailing European-Jewish, i.e. Germanic-Polish tradition, commentaries, interpretations and related studies, that

³ *Falashas*, from the Ge’ez/Ethiopic root **ፈለሰ** *fellese* – meaning “to separate, go away, depart, emigrate, to secede, split off (from)”; **ፍልሰተ ባቢሎን** *filsete babilon*, the Babylonian exile; **ፈላስ** *felasi* – “an exile, alien, pilgrim.” The implication here, is that, namely the “lost sheep” in the Americas and the Caribbean are also “Falashas of the West,” or Exilist in the Trans-Ethiopic, falsely called “TransAtlantic,” Ocean Slave Trade of the 16th and 17th centuries.

⁴ Particularly, the Israelis, i.e. those who also call themselves ‘Jews,’ the ‘wild olive grafted in,’ (Romans 11:17, 24) namely the so-called Gypsies, Khazars or better known, ‘European Jews’ (Ashkenaz), et al, who history documents converted to a form of Judaism after 70 A.D. and the global dispersion and later captivity of the ethnically African, or ‘Black’ Hebrews; see Rudolph R. Winsor’s, *From Babylon to Timbuctu*.

collectively are derived from what is called the Babylonian Talmud. Also inclusive in these Wikipedia free encyclopedia references are certain Sephardic, or Spanish-Jewish alternative points-of-view to the Torah studies that are highly instructive, especially in our exploration of the wide diversity of possible interpretation that have, and greatly continues to define modern Judaism.

We, the BLACK JEWS, are very conscious and aware of the fact that certain Black Hebrews and Ethiopian Jews may rightly object to the preponderance of whitewashed art and images in this volume, the majority created by the “wild olive tree” (Romans 11:17, 24), European-Jews, Anglo-Europeans and Romanist/Catholic pseudonymous Christians, all that were grafted, over nearly 16 centuries, since the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., into our natural vine tree, i.e. the True and Ancient Judaism that was Black, Egyptian/Kamite or Ethiopic in its primary origination, racial ethnicity, linguistic composition and biblical revelation. This we hope to, and intend to, by the Almighty’s help, sufficiently prove in our related volumes containing our Ethiopian-Hebrew commentaries (Amos 9:7) and exegesis, mainly based upon the various writings and research, by authors such as Mr. Gerald Massey, and others, both past and present, Black and White, who wrote (or, whose works and documents were subsequently translated) in English. We, for our part, have also studied, translated and interpreted from many of the original documents and manuscripts in order to compose our own extensive research and reconstruction of the Ethiopic Torah (Orit) from several of the ancient Black Race’s biblical languages (i.e., Kamo-Semitic) of the antiquity: namely, Ancient Egyptian (Hieroglyphs), Ethiopic (Western Semitic), Ge’ez, Tigre, biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, Assyrian (Eastern Semitic), Sabaeen, Oromo (or, Galla) dialects and even archaic Amharic.

HOWEVER, we must be greater in spirit and broader in outlook and approach this sensitive subject matter by dealing with the facts on the ground and what is believed, or thought to be the case by the other Jews, and then present our case and the other side of this suppressed, neglected and avoided controversial story, our Black “Jewish” or African-based, and Ethiopian-

Hebrew story. **The views presented in this volume are not our own** and do not necessarily reflect the Ethiopian-Hebraic interpretation to the Old Testament, or Ethiopic Orit (Torah) in particular, but is being compiled into these five volumes: Bereishit, Shemot, Vayikra, Bamidbar, and Devarim (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) and printed separately, largely due to side per volume. Nevertheless, this study, and these volumes have been compiled by THE LION OF JUDAH SOCIETY, and are designed for the Brotherhood of the Rastafari disciples and Ethiopian-Hebrew faithful to get better acquainted with the primary and prevailing opinions on Judaism and the interpretations of the Hebrew Bible.

THE TORAH PORTIONS IN THE THIRD BOOK, CALLED - VAY'KRA (Heb. Leviticus) are composed 10 portions, including the first portion, or self-named parsha of **Vayikra • Tzav • Shemini • Tazria • Metzora • Acharei • Kedoshim • Emor • Behar • Bechukotai.**

As ethnic, or “Black” Hebrews, and Afro-Israelities, we have several well-attested to, thoroughly researched and duly documented ancient Ethiopian books and manuscripts (MSS), that thankfully help serve as resource and reference materials, comprising what the present author and compiler has suitably named, the Ethiopic Talmud, many of these written in the Ge'ez language. These manuscripts assist us in forming our own Ethiopian-Hebrew and Black Jewish commentaries and exegeses, from a non-Eurocentric perspective. A few of the main Ethiopic Talmudic commentary source materials and titles are namely, but not strictly limited to, the following volumes:

The Queen of Sheba and Her only son Menyelek (Kebra Nagast), The Book of Jubilees, or Little Genesis (Kufale), the Book of Enoch (Ethiopic Henok), Gadla Adam (Conflict of Adam), Ancient Egyptian Wisdom & Kamite Mysteries (Gerald Massey's A Book of the Beginnings, Natural Genesis, Ancient Egypt: Light of the World, and Lectures), Lefafa Sedeq: Bandlet of Righteousness, to only name a few of the many texts, that we, by the Grace of the Almighty, soon expect to compose our Ethiopian-Hebrew commentaries and

exegesis based upon both the “Wisdom of the Egyptians (or, Egypt)” (Acts 7:22) coupled with our Judeo-Christian Ethiopian “Divine Heritage”. Yet, this is still to come, and we hope and pray to the Most High for guidance, perseverance and life eternal. Amen.

ONE FINAL NOTE is in order here, namely: There are several smaller volumes, some books, many fragments and a host of rare manuscripts written in Ethiopic, some of them original compositions, and others allegedly based on, what foreign scholars consider to be, translations from *Coptic* (or, Sabaeen?), *Hebrew*, *Syretic* (i.e. Arabic) and early *Greek* (κοινε); thus, these are not listed and enumerated in detail here because of the numerous and contradictory names, codices and other cataloging systems used by various museums and libraries, namely in England, France, Germany and elsewhere that have arbitrarily assigned to these Ethiopic writings, dubiously misappropriated from Ethiopia (sometime referred to by Orientalists as ‘Abyssinia’) over the past four to five centuries, by conservative estimations. Due to the anonymity of these Ethiopic ancient, cultural, historical and biblical documents, coupled the lack of access, and therefore the availability, presently to verify and thus corroborate these records, we cannot confirm all of the details without further study, but will reference, and quote, where possible, from any and all available sources and resources in circulation.

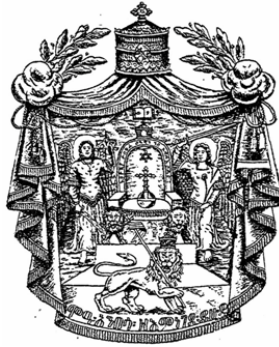
RAS IADONIS TAFARI ⁵

Chairman, LOJS

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & FINE-ARTS

c. 28th October, 2011

⁵ *Alius dictus, Debtera: Rasiadonis Tafari, A Sometime Scholar of LOJS' Black Christ College; H.I.M. HAILE SELASSIE I University in Exile [USA], An Ethiopian-Hebrew Scholar; and Keeper of the Department of Ethiopic & Amharic Antiquities in the Black Lion Museum, USA-ET.*



የሐገስ ራእይ ምዕራፍ ፩ ቁጥር ፩

«ከሽማግሌዎቹም አንዱ።

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አለኝ። »

REVELATION CHAPTER 5, VERSE 5

“And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the
Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath
prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals
thereof.”

Vayikra (parsha)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jump to: [navigation](#), [search](#)

Vayikra, **VaYikra**, **Va-yikra**, or **Vayyiqra** (ויקרא — [Hebrew](#) for "and He called," the first word in the parshah) is the 24th [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the first in the [book of Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 1:1–5:26](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) read it the 23rd or 24th [Sabbath](#) after [Simchat Torah](#), generally in March or early April.

The parshah lays out the laws of the [sacrifices](#) (*korbanot*).



The Sacrifice of the [Old Covenant](#) (painting by [Peter Paul Rubens](#))

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[\[edit\]](#) Summary





[God](#) called to [Moses](#) from the [Tabernacle](#) and told him the laws of the sacrifices. ([Leviticus 1:1.](#))

- Burnt offerings (*'olah*) could be [bulls](#), rams or male [goats](#), or [turtle doves](#) or [pigeons](#), which the [priest](#) burned completely on [wood](#) on the [altar](#). ([Leviticus 1:3–17.](#))
- Meal offerings (*minchah*) were of choice flour with oil, from which priest would remove a token portion to burn on the altar, and the remainder the priests could eat. ([Leviticus 2:1–10.](#)) Meal offerings could not contain [leaven](#) or [honey](#), and had to be seasoned with [salt](#). ([Leviticus 2:11–13.](#)) Meal offerings of first fruits had to be new ears parched with fire, grits of the fresh grain. ([Leviticus 2:14.](#))
- Sacrifices of well-being (*shelamim*) could be male or a female cattle, sheep, or goats, from which the priest would dash the [blood](#) on the sides of the altar and burn the [fat](#) around the entrails, the [kidneys](#), and the protuberance on the [liver](#) on the altar. ([Leviticus 3:1–16.](#))
- Sin offerings (*chattat*) for unwitting sin by the High Priest or the community required sacrificing a bull, sprinkling its blood in the Tent of Meeting, burning on the altar the

fat around the entrails, the kidneys, and the protuberance on the liver, and burning the rest of the bull on an ash heap outside the camp. ([Leviticus 4:1–21.](#)) Guilt offerings for unwitting sin by a chieftain required sacrificing a male goat, putting some of its blood on the horns of the altar, and burning its fat. ([Leviticus 4:22–26.](#)) Guilt offerings for unwitting sin by a lay person required sacrificing a female goat, putting some of its blood on the horns of the altar, and burning its fat. ([Leviticus 4:27–31.](#))

- Sin offerings were required for cases when a person:
 - was able to testify but did not give information,
 - touched any unclean thing,
 - touched human uncleanness, or
 - uttered an oath and forgot. ([Leviticus 5:1–4.](#))

In such cases, the person had to confess and sacrifice a female sheep or goat; or if he could not afford a sheep, two turtledoves or two pigeons; or if he could not afford the birds, choice flour without oil. ([Leviticus 5:5–13.](#))

- Guilt offerings (*ʿasham*) were required when a person was unwittingly remiss about any sacred thing. ([Leviticus 5:14–15.](#)) In such cases, the person had to sacrifice a ram and make restitution plus 20 percent to the priest. ([Leviticus 5:16.](#)) Similarly, guilt offerings were required

when a person dealt deceitfully in the matter of a deposit or a pledge, through robbery, by fraud, or by finding something lost and lying about it. ([Leviticus 5:20–22](#).) In such cases, the person had to sacrifice a ram and make restitution plus 20 percent to the victim. ([Leviticus 5:22–26](#).)

[[edit](#)] In classical rabbinic interpretation

[[edit](#)] Leviticus chapter 1

[Rav Assi](#) said that young children began their Torah studies with Leviticus and not with [Genesis](#) because young children are pure, and the sacrifices explained in Leviticus are pure, so the pure studied the pure. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 7:3.)

Rabbi [Shimon bar Yochai](#) taught that, generally speaking, the Torah required a burnt offering only as expiation for sinful meditation of the heart. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 7:3.) And a [midrash](#) taught that if people repent, it is accounted as if they had gone up to [Jerusalem](#), built the [Temple](#) and the altars, and offered all the sacrifices ordained in the Torah. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 7:2.) And Rabbi Aha said in the name of Rabbi [Hanina ben Pappa](#) that God accounts studying the sacrifices as equal to offering them. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 7:3.)

Rabbi Leazar ben Menahem taught that the opening words of [Leviticus 1:1](#), “And the Lord called,” indicated God’s proximity to Moses. Rabbi Leazar taught that the words of [Proverbs 15:29](#), “The Lord is far from the wicked,” refer to the prophets of other

nations. But the continuation of [Proverbs 15:29](#), “He hears the prayer of the righteous,” refers to the prophets of Israel. God appears to nations other than Israel only as one who comes from a distance, as [Isaiah 39:3](#) says, “They came from a far country to me.” But in connection with the prophets of Israel, [Genesis 18:1](#) says, “And the Lord appeared,” and [Leviticus 1:1](#) says, “And the Lord called,” implying from the immediate vicinity. Rabbi [Haninah](#) compared the difference between the prophets of Israel and the prophets of other nations to a king who was with his friend in a chamber (separated by a curtain). Whenever the king desired to speak to his friend, he folded up the curtain and spoke to him. (But God speaks to the prophets of other nations without folding back the curtain.) The Rabbis compared it to a king who has a wife and a concubine; to his wife he goes openly, but to his concubine he repairs with stealth. Similarly, God appears to non-Jews only at night, as [Numbers 22:20](#) says, “And God came to [Balaam](#) at night,” and [Genesis 31:24](#) says, “And God came to [Laban](#) the [Aramean](#) in a dream of the night.” ([Genesis Rabbah](#) 52:5.)



sacrifices (woodcut by [Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld](#) from the 1860 *Die Bibel in Bildern*)

The [Sifra](#) cited [Leviticus 1:1](#) along with [Exodus 3:4](#) for the proposition that whenever God spoke to Moses, God first called out to him. (Sifra 1:1.) And the Sifra deduced from God’s calling “to him” in [Leviticus 1:1](#) that God meant to speak to Moses alone, to the exclusion of even [Aaron](#). Rabbi Judah ben Betera noted that God spoke to Moses and Aaron together in 13 passages, and to Moses alone in 13 passages, teaching that in these latter passages, Moses was then to inform Aaron. And Rabbi [Jose the Galilean](#) deduced from the use of “at the tent of meeting” in [Leviticus 1:1](#) that every time that God spoke to Moses at the tent of meeting, God spoke to Moses alone, to the exclusion of Aaron. (Sifra 2:1.) Rabbi Tanchum ben Chanilai

found in God's calling to Moses alone in [Leviticus 1:1](#) proof that a burden that is too heavy for 600,000 — hearing the voice of God (see [Deuteronomy Deuteronomy 5:22](#)) — can nonetheless be light for one. (Leviticus Rabbah 1:1, 4.) And the Sifra also deduced from [Leviticus 1:1](#) that God's voice, perhaps because it was subdued, resonated only within the tent itself. (Sifra 2:2.)



Priestly Duties (1695 woodcut by Johann Christoph Weigel)

[Rabbi Tanhuma](#) said in the name of Rabbi Joshua ben Korchah that [Leviticus 1:1](#) demonstrated that out of the 10 different names that Scripture applied to Moses, God always addressed Moses by his given name. (Leviticus Rabbah 1:3.)

The [Mishnah](#) deduced from [Leviticus 1:3](#) that the offerer only effected atonement if the offerer brought the offering voluntarily, but if the offerer pledged to bring a burnt offering, the Mishnah taught that they compelled the offerer to state that the offering was voluntary. The Rabbis in a [Baraita](#) read the words “he shall offer it” in [Leviticus 1:3](#) to teach that the congregation needed to compel the offerer to fulfill the offerer’s obligation. (Mishnah Arakhin 5:6; [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 21a.](#))

The [Gemara](#) interpreted the requirement of [Leviticus 1:5](#) that the priest “dash the blood round about against the altar” to teach that the priest threw the blood against two opposing corners of the altar, thus hitting all four sides of the altar and satisfying the requirement to dash the altar “round about.” ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 53b.](#))

Rabbi Eliezer (or some say Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob) taught that Nadab and Abihu died in [Leviticus 10:2](#) only because they gave a legal decision interpreting [Leviticus 1:7](#) in the presence of their Master Moses. Even though [Leviticus 9:24](#) reports that “fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed the burnt-offering and the fat on the altar,” Nadab and Abihu deduced from the command of [Leviticus 1:7](#) that “the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar” that the priests still had a religious duty to bring some ordinary fire to the altar, as well. ([Babylonian Talmud Eruvin 63a.](#))

The Mishnah taught that the priest’s obligation in [Leviticus 1:9](#) to offer the fats and other sacrificial pieces persisted until dawn. ([Mishnah Berakhot 1:1](#); [Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 2a.](#))

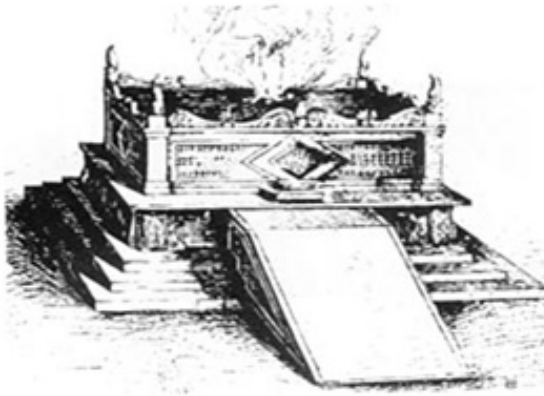
The Sifra deduced from [Leviticus 1:10](#) that God occasionally began freestanding statements to Moses so as to allow Moses a pause to collect his thoughts. The Sifra generalized from this example that it was all the more appropriate for ordinary people to speak deliberately in conversation with other people. (Sifra 1:3.)

Tractate [Zevachim](#) in the Mishnah, [Tosefta](#), and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the law of animal sacrifices in [Leviticus 1–5](#). (Mishnah Zevachim 1:1–14:10; Tosefta Zevachim 1:1–13:20; [Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 2a–120b](#).)

Tractate [Kinnim](#) in the Mishnah interpreted the laws of pairs of sacrificial pigeons and doves in [Leviticus 1:14](#), [5:7](#), [12:6–8](#), [14:22](#), and [15:29](#); and [Numbers 6:10](#). ([Mishnah Kinnim 1:1–3:6](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) **Leviticus chapter 2**

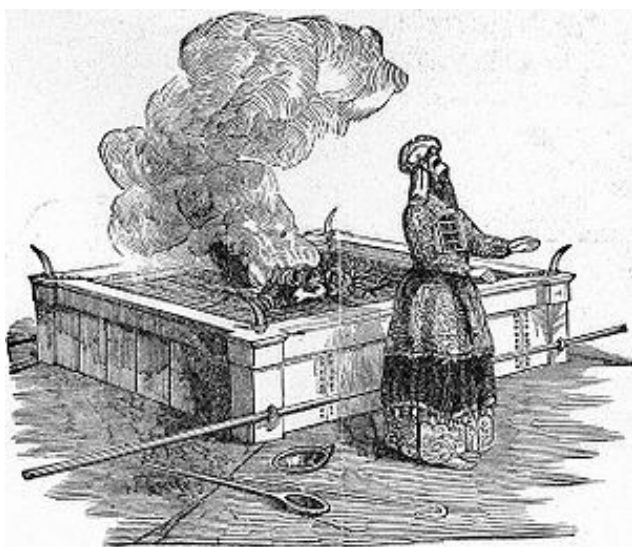
Tractate Menachot in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud interpreted the law of meal offerings in [Leviticus 2](#). (Mishnah Menachot 1:1–13:11; Tosefta Menachot 1:1–13:23; [Babylonian Talmud Menachot 2a–110a](#).)



the altar of the tabernacle (illustration from Philip Y. Pendleton. *Standard Eclectic Commentary*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1901.)

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 3

The Gemara deduced from the words “And if his offering be a sacrifice of peace-offerings” in [Leviticus 3:1](#) that for an offering to be effective, one needed to slaughter the sacrifice for the sake of its being a peace-offering. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 4a.](#))



High Priest Offering a Sacrifice of a Goat (illustration from Henry Davenport Northrop. *Treasures of the Bible*. International Pub. Co., 1894.)

[Rabbi Simeon](#) interpreted the term “peace-offering” (שְׁלָמִים, *shelamin*) in [Leviticus 3:1](#) and after to indicate that a person could bring the offering only when “whole” (שָׁלֵם, *shalem*), and thus not when one was in the first stage of mourning after the death of a close relative. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 99b](#); [Leviticus Rabbah 9:8](#).)

Interpreting the words “And he shall . . . kill it at the door of the tent of meeting” in [Leviticus 3:2](#), [Rab Judah](#) deduced in the name of Samuel that the priest had to kill the sacrifice when the gate was open, not when the gate was closed, and thus that peace-offerings slain before the doors of the Temple were opened were invalid. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 62b](#).)

The Mishnah taught that because the peace-offering was a sacrifice of lesser sanctity, it could be slain in any part of the Temple court. (Mishnah Zevachim 5:7.) The Rabbis taught in a Baraita that the Mishnah's rule could be derived from the words "And he shall . . . kill it at the door of the tent of meeting" in [Leviticus 3:2](#), "And he shall . . . kill it before the tent of meeting" in [Leviticus 3:8](#), and "And he shall . . . kill it before the tent of meeting" in [Leviticus 3:13](#). The three verses taken together taught that all sides of the Temple court were fit for performing sacrifices of lesser sanctity. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 55a](#).)

The Gemara deduced from the words "And the priest shall make it smoke" in [Leviticus 3:11](#) that the priest must not mix portions of one sacrifice with those of another. And the Gemara cited a Baraita to interpret the words "And the priest shall make them smoke" [Leviticus 3:16](#) to teach that the priest had to burn all the sacrificed parts of an offering at the same time. ([Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 64b](#).)

The Sages taught that one may trust butchers to remove the fat that [Leviticus 3:17](#) and [7:23](#) forbids. (Mishnah Chullin 7:1; [Babylonian Talmud Chullin 89b](#).)



The National Sin Offering (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 4

Tractate [Horayot](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, [Jerusalem Talmud](#), and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of the High Priest's bull in [Leviticus 4:1–12](#), the bull for a communal error in [Leviticus 4:13–21](#), the ruler's goat in [Leviticus 4:22–26](#), and the sin offerings in [Leviticus 4:27–5:12](#), and [5:17–19](#). (Mishnah Horayot 1:1–3:8; Tosefta Horayot 1:1–2:13; Jerusalem Talmud Horayot 1a–; [Babylonian Talmud Horayot 2a–14a.](#))

The Rabbis interpreted the words, “If any one shall sin through error,” in [Leviticus 4:2](#) to apply to inadvertent transgressions. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 36b.](#))

[[edit](#)] Leviticus chapter 5

Rabbi Joshua of Siknin taught in the name of Rabbi Levi that [Leviticus 5](#) uses the word “soul” (*nefesh*, נֶפֶשׁ) six times (in [Leviticus 5:1](#), [2](#), [4](#), [15](#), [17](#), and [21](#)), corresponding to the six days of Creation. God said to the soul that all that God created in the six days of creation God created for the sake of the soul, and then the soul went and sinned! And thus, [Leviticus 5:1](#) begins, “When a soul sins” (Leviticus Rabbah 4:2.)

Tractates [Nedarim](#) and [Shevuot](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of vows in [Exodus 20:7](#), [Leviticus 5:1–10](#) and [19:12](#), [Numbers 30:2–17](#), and [Deuteronomy 23:24](#). (Mishnah [Nedarim 1:1–11:12](#); Tosefta Nedarim 1:1–7:8; Jerusalem Talmud Nedarim 1a–; [Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 2a–91b](#); [Mishnah Shevuot 1:1–8:6](#); Tosefta Shevuot 1:1–6:7; Jerusalem Talmud Shevuot 1a–; [Babylonian Talmud Shevuot 2a–49b.](#))

A midrash deduced from the instructions in [Leviticus 5:11–13](#) for the poor person to bring meal offerings that God valued the poor person’s offering. (Leviticus Rabbah 3:2.)

[[edit](#)] Commandments

According to [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 11 positive and 5 negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

- To carry out the procedure of the burnt offering as prescribed in the Torah ([Leviticus 1:3.](#))
- To bring meal offerings as prescribed in the Torah ([Leviticus 2:1.](#))
- Not to burn [honey](#) or [yeast](#) on the altar ([Leviticus 2:11.](#))
- Not to omit the salt from sacrifices ([Leviticus 2:13.](#))
- To salt all sacrifices ([Leviticus 2:13.](#))
- The Sanhedrin must bring an offering when it rules in error. ([Leviticus 4:13.](#))
- To bring a sin offering for transgression ([Leviticus 4:27.](#))
- Anybody who knows evidence must testify in court. ([Leviticus 5:1.](#))
- To bring an offering of greater or lesser value (if the person is wealthy, an animal; if poor, a bird or meal offering) ([Leviticus 5:7-11.](#))
- Not to [decapitate](#) a fowl brought as a sin offering ([Leviticus 5:8.](#))
- Not to put oil on the meal offerings of wrongdoers ([Leviticus 5:11.](#))
- Not to put [frankincense](#) on meal offerings ([Num. 5:15.](#))

- One who [profaned](#) property must repay what he profaned plus a fifth and bring a sacrifice. ([Leviticus 5:16.](#))
- To bring an offering when uncertain of guilt ([Leviticus 5:17-18.](#))
- To return the robbed object or its value ([Leviticus 5:23.](#))
- To bring an offering when guilt is certain ([Leviticus 5:25.](#))

(See *Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 2:3–73. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-296-5.](#))



Isaiah (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

[\[edit\]](#) **Haftarah**

[\[edit\]](#) **Generally**

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is [Isaiah 43:21–44:23](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Summary

God formed the people of Israel that they might praise God, but they did not call upon God, nor did they bring God their burnt-offerings, meal-offerings, frankincense, or the fat of their sacrifices. ([Isaiah 43:21–24.](#)) Rather, they burdened God with their sins. ([Isaiah 43:24.](#)) God blots out their transgressions for God's own sake. ([Isaiah 43:25.](#)) Their first father sinned, and their intercessors transgressed, and so God abandoned the sanctuary and the Israelites to condemnation. ([Isaiah 43:27–28.](#))

And yet God told the people of Israel not to fear, for God would pour water upon the thirsty land, and God's blessing upon their offspring, and they would spring up like grass. ([Isaiah 44:1–4.](#)) And they would call themselves the Lord's, by the name of Jacob, and by the name of Israel. ([Isaiah 44:5.](#))

God declared that God is the first and the last, and beside God there is no God, no One Who can proclaim what the future will be, no other Rock. ([Isaiah 44:6–8.](#)) Those who fashion graven images shall not profit; they shall be shamed together. ([Isaiah 44:7–11.](#)) The smith makes an ax, and the carpenter forms the figure of a man. ([Isaiah 44:12–13.](#)) He hews down cedars and oaks, and uses the same wood for fuel to warm himself and to make a god to worship. ([Isaiah 44:14–17.](#)) They do not know nor understand that they strive after ashes. ([Isaiah 44:18–20.](#))

God called on the people of Israel to remember these things, and not forget God who formed them and blotted out their sins. ([Isaiah 44:21–22.](#)) God called on the heaven and earth, mountain

and forest to sing, for God had redeemed Israel for God's glory.
([Isaiah 44:23](#).)

[[edit](#)] Connection to the Parshah

Both the parshah and the haftarah address sacrifices to God.

Both the parshah and the haftarah address burnt offerings (*olah*) ([Leviticus 1:3–4](#), [6](#), [9–10](#) [13–14](#), [17](#); [3:5](#); [4:7](#), [10](#), [18](#), [24–25](#), [29–30](#), [33–34](#); [5:7](#), [10](#); [Isaiah 43:23](#)), meal offerings (*minchah*) ([Leviticus 2:3](#), [5–11](#), [13–15](#); [5:13](#); [Isaiah 43:23](#)), frankincense (*levonah*) ([Leviticus 2:1–2](#), [15–16](#); [5:11](#); [Isaiah 43:23](#)), and witnesses (*ed* or *eday*). ([Leviticus 5:1](#); [Isaiah 44:8](#).)

[[edit](#)] On Shabbat Rosh Chodesh

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat [Rosh Chodesh](#) (as it does in 2012, 2015, and 2018), the haftarah is [Isaiah 66:1–24](#).



The Death of Agag (illustration by [Gustave Doré](#))

[\[edit\]](#) On Shabbat Zachor

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat Zachor (the [special Sabbath](#) immediately preceding [Purim](#) — as it does in 2016), the haftarah is:

- for [Ashkenazi Jews](#): [1 Samuel 15:2–34](#);
- for [Sephardi Jews](#): [1 Samuel 15:1–34](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Connection to the Special Sabbath

On Shabbat Zachor, the Sabbath just before Purim, Jews read [Deuteronomy 25:17–19](#), which instructs Jews: “Remember (*zachor*) what [Amalek](#) did” in attacking the Israelites. ([Deuteronomy 25:17](#).) The haftarah for Shabbat Zachor, [1 Samuel 15:2–34](#) or [1–34](#), describes Saul’s encounter with Amalek and Saul’s and Samuel’s treatment of the Amalekite king [Agag](#). Purim, in turn, commemorates the story of [Esther](#) and the Jewish people’s victory over [Haman’s](#) plan to kill the Jews, told in the [book of Esther](#). ([Esther 1:1–10:3](#).) [Esther 3:1](#) identifies Haman as an Agagite, and thus a descendant of Amalek. [Numbers 24:7](#) identifies the Agagites with the Amalekites. Alternatively, a [Midrash](#) tells the story that between King Agag’s capture by Saul and his killing by Samuel, Agag fathered a child, from whom Haman in turn descended. ([Seder Eliyahu Rabbah](#) ch. 20; Targum Sheni to Esther 4:13.)

[\[edit\]](#) In the liturgy

The list of animals from which the Israelites could bring sacrifices in [Leviticus 1:2](#) provides an application of the fourth of the Thirteen Rules for interpreting the Torah in the [Baraita of Rabbi Ishmael](#) that many Jews read as part of the readings before the [Pesukei d’Zimrah prayer service](#). The rule provides that when the general precedes the specific, the law applies only to the specific. [Leviticus 1:2](#) says, “you shall bring your offering from the domestic animals, even from the herd or from the flock.” Applying the fourth rule teaches that Israelites could bring sacrifices from no domestic animals other than cattle from the herd or sheep or goats from the flock. (Menachem Davis. *The Schottenstein Edition Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals with an Interlinear Translation*, 244. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2002. [ISBN 1-57819-697-3](#).)

During the [Torah reading](#), the [gabbai](#) calls for the [Kohen](#) to “approach” (*k’rav*, קרב) to perform the first *aliah*, or blessing on the Torah reading, recalling the use of the word “approach” (*k’rav*, קרב) in [Leviticus 1:5](#) to describe the priest’s duty to perform the sacrificial service. (Davis. *Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals*, at 368.)

Many Jews read excerpts from and allusions to the instructions in the parshah as part of the readings on the offerings after the Sabbath morning blessings. Specifically, Jews read the instructions for the priest’s sacrifices in [Leviticus 1:11](#) (Davis. *Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals*, at 221–22), the prohibition on [leavening](#) or honey in the incense in [Leviticus 2:11](#) (Davis, at

228), a discussion of the bulls that are completely burned, in reference to the instructions in [Leviticus 4:8–12](#) (Davis, at 236), and a discussion of the guilt offerings referred to in [Leviticus 5:14–26](#) (Davis, at 239).

[[edit](#)] The Weekly Maqam

In [the Weekly Maqam](#), Sephardi Jews each week base the songs of the services on the content of that week's parshah. For parshah Vayikra, Sephardi Jews apply Maqam Rast, the maqam that shows a beginning or an initiation of something. In this case it is appropriate because Jews are initiating the book of Leviticus.

[[edit](#)] Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these classical sources:

[[edit](#)] Biblical

- [Exodus 20:7](#) (vows).
- [Leviticus 19:12](#) (vows).
- [Numbers 30:2–17](#) (vows).
- [Deuteronomy 23:22–24](#) (vows).
- [Isaiah 56:7](#) (sacrifices from all people).
- [Jeremiah 7:22–23](#) (preferring obedience to sacrifices).
- [Ezekiel 18:5–7](#) (the just does not rob).

- [Hosea 14:3](#) (the offering of our lips instead of bulls).
- [Psalms 19:13](#) (unknowing sin); [20:4](#) (burnt offerings); [40:7](#) (sacrifices); [50:3–23](#) (sacrifices of thanksgiving); [51:16–19](#) (sacrifices); [66:13–15](#) (burnt offerings); [107:22](#) (sacrifices of thanksgiving); [116:17](#) (sacrifices of thanksgiving).



Philo

[\[edit\]](#) Early nonrabbinic

- [The Wisdom of Ben Sira 50:1–29](#). Jerusalem, circa 180 BCE.
- [Philo. *Allegorical Interpretation* 3:48:143–49:144; *On the Birth of Abel and the Sacrifices Offered by Him and by His Brother Cain* 36:118; *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile* 35:123; *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies* 30:169; *On the Change of Names* 41:234; *On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent* 1:14:81, 2:10:71, 44:296; *The Special Laws 1:* 37:199, 42:233, 43:236, 53:289; \[2:\]\(#\) 6:26; \[4:\]\(#\) 23:119, 123. \[Alexandria\]\(#\), Egypt, early 1st century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by \[Charles Duke Yonge\]\(#\), 66,](#)

108, 144, 319, 361, 372, 393, 409, 553, 556, 561, 570,
627–28. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1993. [ISBN
0-943575-93-1](#).



Josephus

- [Josephus](#), [Antiquities of the Jews 3:9:1–4](#). Circa 93–94. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [William Whiston](#), 94–95. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1987. [ISBN 0-913573-86-8](#).

[[edit](#)] Classical rabbinic

- [Mishnah](#): [Berakhot 1:1](#); Shekalim 6:6; Nedarim 1:1–11:12; Bava Kamma 9:7; Sanhedrin 4:5; Shevuot 1:1–8:6; Horayot 1:1–3:8; Zevachim 1:1–14:10; Menachot 1:1–13:11; Chullin 1:4, 7:1; Arakhin 5:6; Keritot 1:2, 2:4, 4:3, 6:6–9; [Kinnim 1:1–3:6](#); Parah 1:4. Land of Israel, circa 200 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 3, 261, 406–30, 524, 591, 616, 620–39, 689–766, 779, 817, 837, 839, 845, 849–50, 883–89, 1014. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).

- [Tosefta](#): Peah 3:8; Demai 2:7; Challah 2:7; Bikkurim 2:1; Kippurim (Yoma) 1:5; Nedarim 1:1–7:8; Bava Kamma 7:5; Makkot 5:2–3; Shevuot 1:6–3:8; Horayot 1:1–2:13; Zevachim 1:1–13:20; Menachot 1:1–13:23; Chullin 9:14; Keritot 2:13–15. Land of Israel, circa 300 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew, with a New Introduction*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:65, 85, 339, 348, 542, 785–805; 2:987, 1214, 1219–44, 1295–1369, 1401–02, 1429–30, 1437, 1453, 1562–63 1563. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 2002. [ISBN 1-56563-642-2](#).
- [Sifra](#) 1:1–69:1. Land of Israel, 4th century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:65–345. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-205-4](#).
- [Jerusalem Talmud](#): Berakhot 8a; Terumot 31b, 71b; Challah 7a, 8a, 33a; Nedarim 1a–; Shevuot 1a–; Horayot 1a–. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 1, 7–8, 11. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2005–2010.
- [Leviticus Rabbah](#) 1:1–7:1; 8:4; 10:3; 22:10. Land of Israel, 5th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:1–88, 90, 104, 124, 288. London: Soncino Press, 1939. [ISBN 0-900689-38-2](#).



Talmud

- Babylonian [Talmud](#): [Berakhot 2a, 5a, 31b, 37b](#); [Shabbat 2a–3a, 15a, 25a, 26b, 38a, 68b–69a, 70a, 71b, 103a, 108a](#); [Eruvin 2a, 30b, 57a, 104a](#); [Pesachim 16b, 32b–33a, 36a, 40a, 43b, 57b, 59a, 62a, 63b, 64b–65b, 66b, 73a, 77b, 83a, 89a, 96b](#); [Yoma 4b–5a, 15b, 20a, 21b, 24a–b, 25b, 26b–27a, 36a–37a, 41a, 44a, 45a, 47a–48a, 50a, 53a, 56b–57b, 58b–59a, 62b, 67b–68b, 73a, 74a, 80a, 85b](#); [Sukkah 30a, 48b, 49b, 56a](#); [Beitzah 20a, 25a, 39a](#); [Rosh Hashanah 5b–6a, 28a, 33a](#); [Taanit 22b](#); [Megillah 8a, 9b, 16a, 20b](#); [Moed Katan 17b](#); [Chagigah 2a, 6a–b, 7b, 10a–11a, 16b, 23b](#); [Yevamot 8b–9a, 32b, 34a, 35b, 83b, 87b, 90a, 100a, 101b, 106a](#); [Ketubot 5b, 30b, 42a–b, 45a, 60a, 106a](#); [Nedarim 2a–91b](#); [Nazir 9b, 23a, 24a, 25a, 27b–28a, 29a, 35a, 36a, 38a, 45a, 47b, 62b](#); [Sotah 14a–15a, 23a, 32a, 33a, 37b, 44b, 46b](#); [Gittin 28b, 71a, 74a](#); [Kiddushin 14a, 24b, 36a–b, 37b, 44a, 50a, 52b–53a, 54b–55a, 57b, 81b](#); [Bava Kamma 2a, 3b, 4b, 9b, 12b–13a, 20b, 40b, 56a, 63b, 65a–67a, 71a, 79b, 86b, 91b](#), 93a, 94b, 98a–b, 101a, 103a–06b, 108a–b, 110b–11a, 112a, 117b; [Bava Metzia 3b, 36a, 43a–b, 48a, 54b–55b, 58a, 104a, 111a–b](#); [Bava Batra 26b, 74b, 79a, 88b, 120b, 123b](#); [Sanhedrin 2a, 3b–](#)

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Rashi

[\[edit\]](#) Medieval

- [Rashi](#). *Commentary. Leviticus 1–5*. Troyes, France, late 11th century. Reprinted in, e.g., Rashi. *The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated*.

Translated and annotated by Yisrael Isser Zvi Herczeg, 3:1–57. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1994. [ISBN 0-89906-028-5](#).

- [Judah Halevi](#). *Kuzari*. 3:60. Toledo, Spain, 1130–1140. Reprinted in, e.g., Jehuda Halevi. *Kuzari: An Argument for the Faith of Israel*. Intro. by Henry Slonimsky, 184. New York: Schocken, 1964. [ISBN 0-8052-0075-4](#).
- [Zohar 3:2a–26a](#). Spain, late 13th century.



Hobbes

[[edit](#)] Modern

- [Thomas Hobbes](#). *Leviathan*, 3:40, 42. England, 1651. Reprint edited by [C. B. Macpherson](#), 503–04, 572. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Classics, 1982. [ISBN 0-14-043195-0](#).
- [Jacob Milgrom](#). “Sacrifices and Offerings, OT,” and “Wave offering.” In *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*. Supp. vol., 763–71, 944–46. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1976. [ISBN 0-687-19269-2](#).
- Jacob Milgrom. *Leviticus 1–16*, 3:129–378. New York: [Anchor Bible](#), 1998. [ISBN 0-385-11434-6](#).

- Alan Lew. *This Is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared: The Days of Awe as a Journey of Transformation*, 108–09. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 2003. [ISBN 0-316-73908-1](#).
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Tzav

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For the town in Armenia, see [Tsav, Armenia](#).

Tzav, **Tsav**, **Zav**, **Sav**, or in Biblical Hebrew **Ṣaw** (צַו — [Hebrew](#) for "command," the sixth word, and the first distinctive word, in the parshah) is the 25th [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the second in the [book of Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 6.1–8:36](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) read it the 24th or 25th [Sabbath](#) after [Simchat Torah](#), generally in March or early April.

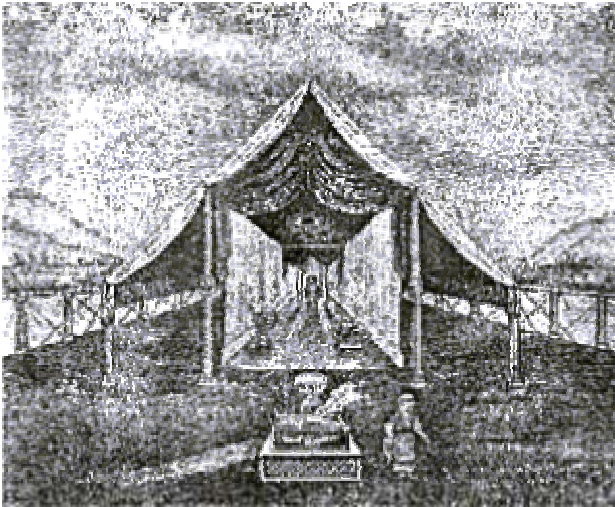
The parshah teaches how the [priests](#) performed the [sacrifices](#) and describes the ordination of [Aaron](#) and his sons.

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[\[edit\]](#) Summary



The Tabernacle (illustration from the 1901 *Standard Eclectic Commentary*)

[\[edit\]](#) Sacrifices

[God](#) told [Moses](#) to command Aaron and the priests about the rituals of the sacrifices (*korbanot* in Hebrew). ([Leviticus 6:1.](#))

The burnt offering (*'olah*) was to burn on the [altar](#) until morning, when the priest was to clear the ashes to a place outside the camp. ([Leviticus 6:2–4.](#)) The priests were to keep the [fire](#) burning, every morning feeding it [wood](#). ([Leviticus 6:5–6.](#))

The meal offering (*mincha*) was to be presented before the altar, a handful of it burned on the altar, and the balance eaten by the priests as [unleavened](#) cakes in the Tent of Meeting. ([Leviticus 6:7–11.](#)) On the occasion of the High Priest's anointment, the meal offering was to be prepared with oil on a griddle and then entirely burned on the altar. ([Leviticus 6:12–16.](#))

The [sin](#) offering (*chattat*) was to be slaughtered at the same place as the burnt offering, and the priest who offered it was to eat it in the Tent of Meeting. ([Leviticus 6:17–22.](#)) If [blood](#) of the sin offering was brought into the Tent of Meeting for expiation, the entire offering was to be burned on the altar. ([Leviticus 6:23.](#))

The guilt offering (*asham*) was to be slaughtered at the same place as the burnt offering, the priest was to dash its blood on the altar, burn its [fat](#), broad tail, [kidneys](#), and protuberance on the [liver](#) on the altar, and the priest who offered it was to eat the balance of its meat in the Tent of Meeting. ([Leviticus 7:1–7.](#))

The priest who offered a burnt offering kept the skin. ([Leviticus 7:8.](#)) The priest who offered it was to eat any baked or grilled meal offering, but every other meal offering was to be shared among all the priests. ([Leviticus 7:9–10.](#))

The peace offering (*shelamin*), if offered for thanksgiving, was to be offered with unleavened cakes or wafers with oil, which would

go to the priest who dashed the blood of the peace offering. ([Leviticus 7:11–14.](#)) All the meat of the peace offering had to be eaten on the day that it was offered. ([Leviticus 7:15.](#)) If offered as a votive or a freewill offering, it could be eaten for two days, and what was then left on the third day was to be burned. ([Leviticus 7:16–18.](#))

Meat that touched anything unclean could not be eaten; it had to be burned. ([Leviticus 7:19.](#)) And only a person who was clean could eat meat from peace offerings, at pain of exile. ([Leviticus 7:20–21.](#)) One could eat no fat or blood, at pain of exile. ([Leviticus 7:22–27.](#))

The person offering the peace offering had to present the offering and its fat himself, the priest would burn the fat on the altar, the breast would go to the priests, and the right thigh would go to the priest who offered the sacrifice. ([Leviticus 7:28–34.](#))



Consecration of Aaron and His Sons (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)



Moses Consecrates Aaron and His Sons and Offers Their Sin Offering (illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

[[edit](#)] Ordination

God instructed Moses to assemble the whole community at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting for the priests' ordination. ([Leviticus 8:1–5.](#)) Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward, washed them, and dressed Aaron in his vestments. ([Leviticus 8:6–](#)

9.) Moses anointed and consecrated the [Tabernacle](#) and all that was in it, and then anointed and consecrated Aaron and his sons. ([Leviticus 8:10–13.](#))

Moses led forward a [bull](#) for a sin offering, Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the bull's head, and it was slaughtered. ([Leviticus 8:14–15.](#)) Moses put the bull's blood on the horns and the base of the altar, burned the fat, the protuberance of the liver, and the kidneys on the altar, and burned the rest of the bull outside the camp. ([Leviticus 8:15–17.](#))

Moses then brought forward a [ram](#) for a burnt offering, Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the ram's head, and it was slaughtered. ([Leviticus 8:18–19.](#)) Moses dashed the blood against the altar and burned all of the ram on the altar. ([Leviticus 8:19–21.](#))

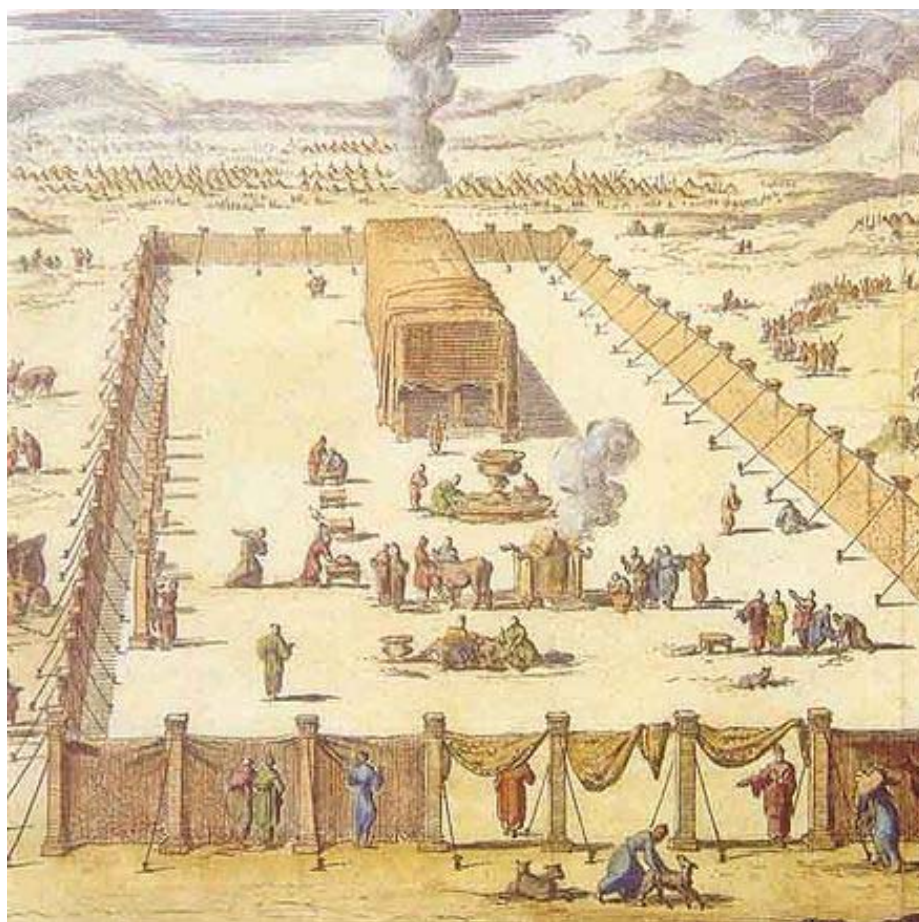
Moses then brought forward a second ram for ordination, Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the ram's head, and it was slaughtered. ([Leviticus 8:22–23.](#)) Moses put some of its blood on Aaron and his sons, on the ridges of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. ([Leviticus 8:23–24.](#)) Moses then burned the animal's fat, broad tail, protuberance of the liver, kidneys, and right thigh on the altar with a cake of unleavened bread, a cake of oil bread, and a wafer as an ordination offering. ([Leviticus 8:25–28.](#)) Moses raised the breast before God and then took it as his portion. ([Leviticus 8:29.](#)) Moses sprinkled oil and blood on Aaron and his sons and their vestments. ([Leviticus 8:30.](#)) And Moses told Aaron and his sons to boil the meat at the entrance of the Tent of

Meeting and eat it there, and remain at the Tent of Meeting for seven days to complete their ordination, and they did all the things that God had commanded through Moses. ([Leviticus 8:31–36.](#))

[[edit](#)] In inner-Biblical interpretation

[[edit](#)] Leviticus chapters 8–9

This is the pattern of instruction and construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings:



The Tabernacle

Item	Instruction		Construction	
	Order	Verses	Order	Verses
The Sabbath	16	Exodus 31:12–17	1	Exodus 35:1–3
Contributions	1	Exodus 25:1–9	2	Exodus 35:4–29

Craftspeople	15	Exodus 31:1–11	3	Exodus 35:30–36:7
Tabernacle	5	Exodus 26:1–37	4	Exodus 36:8–38
Ark	2	Exodus 25:10–22	5	Exodus 37:1–9
Table	3	Exodus 25:23–30	6	Exodus 37:10–16
Menorah	4	Exodus 25:31–40	7	Exodus 37:17–24
Altar of Incense	11	Exodus 30:1–10	8	Exodus 37:25–28
Anointing Oil	13	Exodus 30:22–33	9	Exodus 37:29
Incense	14	Exodus 30:34–38	10	Exodus 37:29
Altar of Sacrifice	6	Exodus 27:1–8	11	Exodus 38:1–7
Laver	12	Exodus 30:17–21	12	Exodus 38:8
Tabernacle Court	7	Exodus 27:9–19	13	Exodus 38:9–20
Priestly Garments	9	Exodus 28:1–43	14	Exodus 39:1–31
Ordination Ritual	10	Exodus 29:1–46	15	Leviticus 8:1–9:24
Lamp	8	Exodus 27:20–21	16	Numbers 8:1–4

[\[edit\]](#) In classical rabbinic interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 6

Tractate Zevachim in the [Mishnah](#), [Tosefta](#), and [Talmud](#) interpreted the law of animal sacrifices in [Leviticus 6–7](#). ([Mishnah Zevachim 1:1–14:10](#); [Tosefta Zevachim 1:1–13:20](#); [Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 2a–120b](#).)

[Rabbi Simeon](#) taught that, generally speaking, the Torah required a burnt offering only as expiation for sinful meditation of the heart. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 7:3.) A [midrash](#) taught that if people repent, it is accounted as if they had gone up to [Jerusalem](#), built the [Temple](#) and the altars, and offered all the sacrifices ordained in the Torah. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 7:2.) And Rabbi Aha said in the name of Rabbi [Hanina ben Pappa](#) that God accounts studying the sacrifices as equal to offering them. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 7:3.)

Rabbi Mani of Sheab and Rabbi Joshua of Siknin in the name of Rabbi Levi explained the origin of [Leviticus 6:1](#). Moses prayed on Aaron's behalf, noting that the beginning of Leviticus repeatedly referred to Aaron's sons (in [Leviticus 1:5](#), [7](#), [8](#), [11](#); [2:2](#); [3:2](#), [5](#), [8](#), [13](#)), barely mentioning Aaron himself. Moses asked whether God could love well water but hate the well. Moses noted that God honored the olive tree and the vine for the sake of their offspring, teaching (in [Mishnah Tamid 2:3](#); [Babylonian Talmud Tamid 29a](#)) that the priests could use all trees' wood for the altar fire except that of the olive and vine. Moses thus asked God whether God might honor Aaron for the sake of his sons, and God replied that God would reinstate Aaron and honor him above his sons. And

thus God said to Moses the words of [Leviticus 6:1](#), “Command Aaron and his sons.” (Leviticus Rabbah 7:1.)

Rabbi Abin deduced from [Leviticus 6:1](#) that burnt offerings were wholly given over to the flames. (Leviticus Rabbah 7:4.)

The School of [Rabbi Ishmael](#) taught that whenever Scripture uses the word “command” (צַו, *tzav*) (as [Leviticus 6:2](#) does), it denotes exhortation to obedience immediately and for all time. A [Baraita](#) deduced exhortation to immediate obedience from the use of the word “command” in [Deuteronomy 3:28](#), which says, “charge [Joshua](#), and encourage him, and strengthen him.” And the Baraita deduced exhortation to obedience for all time from the use of the word “command” in [Numbers 15:23](#), which says, “even all that the Lord has commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the Lord gave the commandment, and onward throughout your generations.” ([Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin 29a.](#))



Noah's Sacrifice (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

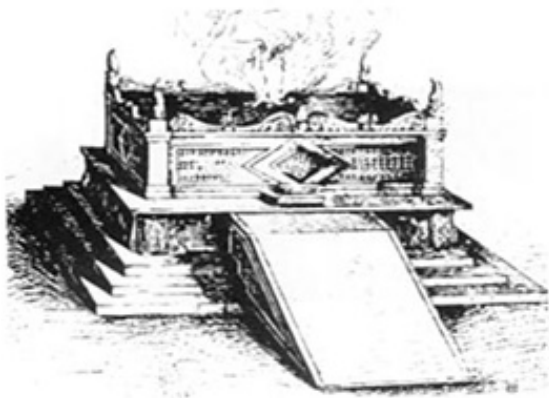
Rabbi Joshua of Siknin said in Rabbi Levi's name that the wording of [Leviticus 6:2](#) supports the argument of Rabbi [Jose bar Hanina](#) (on which he differed with [Rabbi Eleazar](#)) that the descendants of [Noah](#) offered only burnt-offerings (and not peace-offerings, as before the Revelation at [Mount Sinai](#), people were unworthy to consume any part of an animal consecrated to God). Rabbi Joshua of Siknin noted that [Leviticus 6:2](#) says, “This is the law of the burnt-offering: that is the burnt-offering,” which Rabbi Joshua of Siknin read to mean “that is the burnt-offering” that the Noahides used to offer. But when [Leviticus 7:11](#) addresses peace-offerings, it says, “And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace-offerings,” and does not say, “that they offered” (which would indicate that they offered it in the past, before Revelation). Rabbi Joshua of Siknin thus read [Leviticus 7:11](#) to teach that they would offer the peace-offering only after the events of [Leviticus 7:11](#). ([Genesis Rabbah 22:5](#); see also [Genesis Rabbah 34:9](#).)

The [Gemara](#) interpreted the words in [Leviticus 6:2](#), “This is the law of the burnt-offering: It is that which goes up on its firewood upon the altar all night into the morning.” From the passage, “which goes up on its firewood upon the altar all night,” the Rabbis deduced that once a thing had been placed upon the altar, it could not be taken down all night. [Rabbi Judah](#) taught that the words “*This . . . goes up on . . . the altar all night*” exclude three things. According to Rabbi Judah, they exclude (1) an animal slaughtered at night, (2) an animal whose blood was spilled, and

(3) an animal whose blood was carried out beyond the curtains. Rabbi Judah taught that if any of these things had been placed on the altar, it was brought down. Rabbi Simeon noted that [Leviticus 6:2](#) says “burnt-offering.” From this, Rabbi Simeon taught that one can only know that a fit burnt-offering remained on the altar. But Rabbi Simeon taught that the phrase “the law of the burnt-offering” intimates one law for all burnt-offerings, namely, that if they were placed on the altar, they were not removed. Rabbi Simeon taught that this law applied to animals that were slaughtered at night, or whose blood was spilt, or whose blood passed out of the curtains, or whose flesh spent the night away from the altar, or whose flesh went out, or were unclean, or were slaughtered with the intention of burning its flesh after time or out of bounds, or whose blood was received and sprinkled by unfit priests, or whose blood was applied below the scarlet line when it should have been applied above, or whose blood was applied above when it should have been applied below, or whose blood was applied outside when it should have been applied within, or whose blood was applied within when it should have been applied outside, or a Passover-offering or a sin-offering that one slaughtered for a different purpose. Rabbi Simeon suggested that one might think that law would also include an animal used for bestiality, set aside for an idolatrous sacrifice or worshipped, a harlot's hire or the price of a dog (as referred to in [Deuteronomy 23:19](#)), or a mixed breed, or a *trefah* (a torn or otherwise disqualified animal), or an animal calved through a cesarean section. But Rabbi Simeon taught that the word “*This*” serves to exclude these. Rabbi Simeon explained that he included the

former in the general rule because their disqualification arose in the sanctuary, while he excluded the latter because their disqualification did not arise in the sanctuary. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 27b.](#))

The Gemara taught that it is from the words of [Leviticus 6:2](#), “upon the altar all night into the morning,” that the Mishnah (in [Mishnah Megillah 2:6](#); [Babylonian Talmud Megillah 20b](#)) concludes that “the whole of the night is proper time for . . . burning fat and limbs (on the altar).” ([Babylonian Talmud Megillah 21a.](#)) And the Mishnah then set forth as a general rule: “Any commandment which is to be performed by night may be performed during the whole of the night.” ([Mishnah Megillah 2:6](#); [Babylonian Talmud Megillah 20b.](#))



The Altar of the Tabernacle (illustration from the 1901 *Standard Eclectic Commentary*)

The Rabbis taught a story reflecting the importance of the regular offering required by [Leviticus 6:2](#): When the [Hasmonean](#)

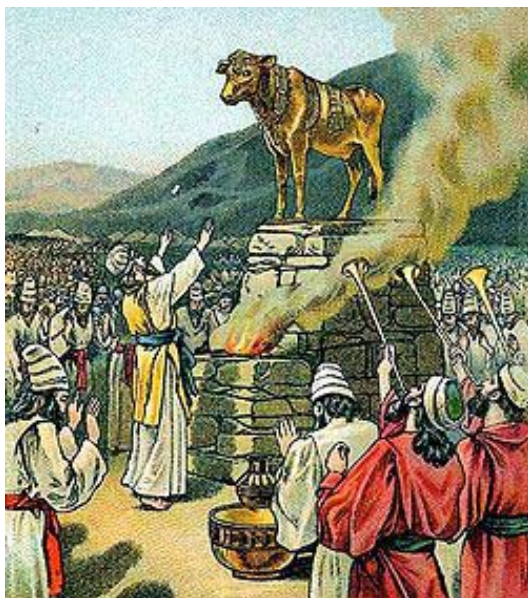
brothers Hyrcanus and [Aristobulus](#) were contending with one another, and one was within Jerusalem's city wall and the other was outside, those within would let down a basket of money to their besiegers every day, and in return the besiegers would send up kosher animals for the regular sacrifices. But an old man among the besiegers argued that as long as those within were allowed to continue to perform sacrifices, they could not be defeated. So on the next day, when those inside sent down the basket of money, the besiegers sent up a pig. When the pig reached the center of the wall, it stuck its hooves into the wall, and an earthquake shook the entire Land of Israel. On that occasion, the Rabbis proclaimed a curse on those who bred pigs. ([Babylonian Talmud Bava Kamma 82b.](#))

It was taught in the name of [Rabbi Nehemiah](#) that in obedience to [Leviticus 6:2](#), the Israelites kept the fire burning in the altar for about 116 years, yet the wood of the altar did not burn, and the brass of the altar did not melt, even though it was taught in the name of Rabbi [Hoshaiah](#) that the metal was only as thick as a coin. (Leviticus Rabbah 7:5.)

Rabbi Levi read [Leviticus 6:2](#) homiletically to mean: "This is the law regarding a person striving to be high: It is that it goes up on its burning-place." Thus Rabbi Levi read the verse to teach that a person who behaves boastfully should be punished by fire. (Leviticus Rabbah 7:6.)

A midrash deduced the importance of peace from the way that the listing of the individual sacrifices in [Leviticus 6–7](#) concludes with the peace offering. [Leviticus 6:2–6](#) gives "the law of the

burnt-offering,” [Leviticus 6:7–11](#) gives “the law of the meal-offering,” [Leviticus 6:18–23](#) gives “the law of the sin-offering,” [Leviticus 7:1–7](#) gives “the law of the guilt-offering,” and [Leviticus 7:11–21](#) gives “the law of the sacrifice of peace-offerings.” Similarly, the midrash found evidence for the importance of peace in the summary of [Leviticus 7:37](#), which concludes with “the sacrifice of the peace-offering.” (Leviticus Rabbah 9:9.)



Worshipping the Golden Calf (illustration from a Bible card published 1901 by the Providence Lithograph Company)

A Baraita interpreted the term “his fitted linen garment” (יָדָם, *mido*) in [Leviticus 6:3](#) to teach that the each priestly garment in [Exodus 28](#) had to be fitted to the particular priest, and had to be neither too short nor too long. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 35a.](#))

Tractate Menachot in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the law of meal offerings in [Leviticus 6:7–16](#). (Mishnah Menachot 1:1–13:11; Tosefta Menachot 1:1–13:23; [Babylonian Talmud Menachot 2a–110a](#).)

The Rabbis taught that through the word “this,” Aaron became degraded, as it is said in [Exodus 32:22–24](#), “And Aaron said: ‘. . . I cast it into the fire, and there came out *this* calf,’” and through the word “this,” Aaron was also elevated, as it is said in [Leviticus 6:13](#), “*This* is the offering of Aaron and of his sons, which they shall offer to the Lord on the day when he is anointed” to become High Priest. (Leviticus Rabbah 8:1.)

And noting the similarity of language between “This is the sacrifice of Aaron” in [Leviticus 6:13](#) and “This is the sacrifice of [Nahshon](#) the son of Amminadab” and each of the other princes of the 12 tribes in [Numbers 7:17–83](#), the Rabbis concluded that Aaron’s sacrifice was as beloved to God as the sacrifices of the princes of the 12 tribes. (Leviticus Rabbah 8:3.)

A midrash noted that the commandment of [Leviticus 6:13](#) that Aaron offer sacrifices paralleled [Samson](#)’s riddle “out of the eater came forth food” ([Judges 14:14](#)), for Aaron was to eat the sacrifices, and by virtue of [Leviticus 6:13](#), a sacrifice was to come from him. (Leviticus Rabbah 8:2.)

[edit] Leviticus chapter 7

A midrash read [Psalm 50:23](#) to teach that the thanksgiving offerings of [Leviticus 7:12](#) honored God more than sin offerings or guilt offerings. (Leviticus Rabbah 9:1.) Similarly, Rabbi

Phinehas compared the thanksgiving offerings of [Leviticus 7:12](#) to the case of a king whose tenants and intimates came to pay him honor. From his tenants and entourage, the king merely collected their tribute. But when another who was neither a tenant nor a member of the king's entourage came to offer him homage, the king offered him a seat. Thus Rabbi Phinehas read [Leviticus 7:12](#) homiletically to mean: "If it be for a thanks giving, He [God] will bring him [the offerer] near [to God]." (Leviticus Rabbah 9:4.) Rabbi Phinehas and Rabbi Levi and [Rabbi Johanan](#) said in the name of Rabbi Menahem of Gallia that in the Time to Come, all sacrifices will be annulled, but the thanksgiving sacrifice of [Leviticus 7:12](#) will not be annulled, and all prayers will be annulled, but the Thanksgiving (*Modim*) prayer will not be annulled. (Leviticus Rabbah 9:7.)

In reading the requirement of [Leviticus 7:12](#) for the loaves of the thanksgiving sacrifice, the Mishnah interpreted that if one made them for oneself, then they were exempt from the requirement to separate [challah](#), but if one made them to sell in the market, then they were subject to the requirement to separate challah. (Mishnah Challah 1:6.)

The Sages taught that one may trust butchers to remove the fat that [Leviticus 3:17](#) and [7:23](#) forbids. ([Mishnah Chullin 7:1](#); [Babylonian Talmud Chullin 89b](#).)

Rabbi Aha compared the listing of [Leviticus 7:37](#) to a ruler who entered a province escorting many bands of robbers as captives. Upon seeing the scene, one citizen expressed his fear of the ruler. A second citizen answered that as long as their conduct was

good, they had no reason to fear. Similarly, when the Israelites heard the section of the Torah dealing with sacrifices, they became afraid. But Moses told them not to be afraid; if they occupied themselves with the Torah, they would have no reason to fear. (Leviticus Rabbah 9:8.)

A midrash asked why [Leviticus 7:37](#) mentions peace-offerings last in its list of sacrifices, and suggested that it was because there are many kinds of peace-offerings. Rabbi Simon said that assorted desserts always come last, because they consist of many kinds of things. (Leviticus Rabbah 9:8.)

Noting that [Leviticus 7:37–38](#) says that “This is the law . . . that the Lord commanded *Moses* in mount Sinai,” Rabbi [Judah ben Bathyra](#) counted [Leviticus 7:38](#) among 13 limiting phrases recorded in the Torah to inform us that God spoke not to Aaron but to Moses with instruction that he should tell Aaron. Rabbi Judah ben Bathyra taught that these 13 limiting phrases correspond to and limit 13 Divine communications recorded in the Torah as having been made to both Moses and Aaron. ([Numbers Rabbah](#) 14:19.)

[[edit](#)] Leviticus chapter 8

[Rabbi Jose](#) noted that even though [Exodus 27:18](#) reported that the Tabernacle’s courtyard was just 100 cubits by 50 cubits (about 150 feet by 75 feet), a little space held a lot, as [Leviticus 8:3](#) implied that the space miraculously held the entire Israelite people. ([Genesis Rabbah](#) 5:7.)

The [Tosefta](#) deduced from the congregation's placement in [Leviticus 8:4](#) that in a [synagogue](#), as well, the people face toward the sanctuary. (Tosefta Megillah 3:21.)

[[edit](#)] Commandments

According [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 9 positive and 9 negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

- To remove the ashes from the altar every day ([Leviticus 6:3.](#))
- To light a fire on the altar every day ([Leviticus 6:6.](#))
- Not to extinguish this fire ([Leviticus 6:6.](#))
- The priests must eat the remains of the meal offerings. ([Leviticus 6:9.](#))
- Not to bake a meal offering as leavened bread ([Leviticus 6:10.](#))
- The High Priest must bring a meal offering every day. ([Leviticus 6:13.](#))
- Not to eat the meal offering of the High Priest ([Leviticus 6:16.](#))
- To carry out the procedure of the sin offering ([Leviticus 6:18.](#))

- Not to eat the meat of the inner sin offering ([Leviticus 6:23.](#))
- To carry out the procedure of the guilt offering ([Leviticus 7:1.](#))
- To follow the procedure of the peace offering ([Leviticus 7:11.](#))
- Not to allow any of the thanksgiving offering to remain until the morning ([Leviticus 7:15.](#))
- To burn the leftover *korbanot* ([Leviticus 7:17.](#))
- Not to eat from *korbanot* offered with improper intentions ([Leviticus 7:18.](#))
- Not to eat from *korbanot* that became impure ([Leviticus 7:19.](#))
- To burn all impure *korbanot* ([Leviticus 7:19.](#))
- Not to eat fat ([Leviticus 7:23.](#))
- Not to eat blood ([Leviticus 7:26.](#))



[Jeremiah](#) Lamenting the Destruction of [Jerusalem](#) (1630 painting by [Rembrandt](#))

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 2:73–131. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-296-5](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) Haftarah

[\[edit\]](#) Generally

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is [Jeremiah 7:21–8:3](#) & [9:22–23](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Connection to the Parshah

Both the parshah and the haftarah refer to the burnt offering (*‘olah*) and sacrifice (*zevach*). ([Leviticus 6:1–6; 7:11–18; Jeremiah](#)

[7:21.](#)) In the haftarah, Jeremiah spoke of the priority of obedience to God’s law over ritual sacrifice alone. ([Jeremiah 7:22–23.](#))

[[edit](#)] On Shabbat HaGadol

When the parshah coincides with [Shabbat HaGadol](#) (the [special Sabbath](#) immediately before [Passover](#) — as it does in 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2017), the haftarah is [Malachi 3:4–24](#). Shabbat HaGadol means “the Great Sabbath,” and the haftarah for the special Sabbath refers to a great day that God is preparing. ([Malachi 3:17–23.](#))



The Death of Agag (illustration by [Gustave Doré](#)).

[\[edit\]](#) On Shabbat Zachor

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat Zachor (the special Sabbath immediately preceding [Purim](#) — as it does in 2011 and 2014), the haftarah is:

- for [Ashkenazi Jews](#): [1 Samuel 15:2–34](#);
- for [Sephardi Jews](#): [1 Samuel 15:1–34](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Connection to the Special Sabbath

On Shabbat Zachor, the Sabbath just before Purim, Jews read [Deuteronomy 25:17–19](#), which instructs Jews: “Remember (*zachor*) what [Amalek](#) did” in attacking the Israelites. ([Deuteronomy 25:17](#).) The haftarah for Shabbat Zachor, [1 Samuel 15:2–34](#) or [1–34](#), describes Saul’s encounter with Amalek and Saul’s and Samuel’s treatment of the Amalekite king [Agag](#). Purim, in turn, commemorates the story of [Esther](#) and the Jewish people’s victory over [Haman’s](#) plan to kill the Jews, told in the [Book of Esther](#). ([Esther 1:1–10:3](#).) [Esther 3:1](#) identifies Haman as an Agagite, and thus a descendant of Amalek. [Numbers 24:7](#) identifies the Agagites with the Amalekites. Alternatively, a [Midrash](#) tells the story that between King Agag’s capture by Saul and his killing by Samuel, Agag fathered a child, from whom Haman in turn descended. ([Seder Eliyahu Rabbah](#) ch. 20; Targum Sheni to Esther 4:13.)

[\[edit\]](#) In the liturgy

Many Jews read excerpts from and allusions to the instructions in the parshah as part of the readings on the offerings after the Sabbath morning blessings. Specifically, Jews read the instructions for the taking of the ashes in [Leviticus 6:1–6](#) (Menachem Davis. *The Schottenstein Edition Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals with an Interlinear Translation*, 217–19. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2002. [ISBN 1-57819-697-3](#).); read the instructions for the offerings in [Leviticus 6:5](#) (Davis, at 231); and allude to the thanksgiving offerings of [Leviticus 7:12](#) (Davis, at 240).

The prohibition in [Leviticus 7:19–20](#) of eating of sacrificial meat by anyone ritually contaminated provides an application of the eighth of the Thirteen Rules for interpreting the Torah in the [Baraita of Rabbi Ishmael](#) that many Jews read as part of the readings before the [Pesukei d’Zimrah prayer service](#). The rule provides that an item included in a generalization that is then singled out to teach something is singled out not to teach only about that particular item but about the generalization in its entirety. [Leviticus 7:19](#) prohibits the eating of sacrificial meat by anyone ritually contaminated, and [Leviticus 7:20](#) then singles out the peace offering and states that a contaminated person who eats the peace offering is subject to excision (*karet*, כָּרַת). Applying the eighth rule teaches that the punishment of excision applies to a contaminated person who eats any of the offerings. (Davis. *Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals*, at 244–45.)

The role of Moses as a priest in [Leviticus 8:14–30](#) is reflected in [Psalm 99:6](#), which is in turn one of the six Psalms recited at the beginning of the Kabbalat Shabbat prayer service. ([Reuven Hammer](#). *Or Hadash: A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*, 19. New York: The [Rabbinical Assembly](#), 2003. [ISBN 0-916219-20-8](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

[\[edit\]](#) Biblical

- [Leviticus 14:14](#) (right ear, thumb of right hand, and great toe of right foot).
- [Jeremiah 7:22–23](#) (preferring obedience to sacrifices).
- [Hosea 14:3](#) (the offering of our lips instead of bulls).



Philo

- [Psalm 20:4](#) (burnt offerings); [26:6](#) (washing before the altar); [40:7](#) (sacrifices); [50:3–23](#) (sacrifices of thanksgiving); [51:16–19](#) (sacrifices); [66:13–15](#) (burnt offerings); [93:5](#) (God's holy place); [107:22](#) (sacrifices of

thanksgiving); [116:17](#) (sacrifices of thanksgiving); [133:2](#) (anointing Aaron).

[[edit](#)] Early nonrabbinic

- [Philo](#). [*Allegorical Interpretation*](#) 3:45:129, 46:133, 50:147; [*On the Migration of Abraham*](#) 12:67; [*Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?*](#) 36:174; [*The Special Laws*](#) 1:41:225, 43:240, 46:254, 52:285. [Alexandria](#), Egypt, early 1st Century C.E.. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [Charles Duke Yonge](#), 65, 67, 259, 290, 555, 557–58, 561. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1993. [ISBN 0-943575-93-1](#).



Josephus

- [Josephus](#), [*Antiquities of the Jews*](#) 3:9:1–4, 11:2; 4:8:9, 11:1; 8:8:4. Circa 93–94. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [William Whiston](#), 94–95. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1987. [ISBN 0-913573-86-8](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Classical rabbinic

- [Mishnah](#): Challah 1:6; Orlah 2:16–17; Bikkurim 2:7–10; Shekalim 1:4, 7:6; Zevachim 1:1–14:10; Menachot 1:1–13:11; Chullin 7:1, 10:1; Keritot 1:1. Land of Israel, circa 200 C.E. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 149, 164, 171, 252, 263, 699–765, 779, 784, 836. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).
- [Tosefta](#): Demai 2:7-8; Challah 2:7-8; Pisha (Pesachim) 8:9; Megillah 3:21; Sotah 13:7; Bava Kamma 10:13; Shevuot 2:10; 3:1, 6; Zevachim 1:1–13:20; Menachot 1:1–13:23; Otkzin 3:3. Land of Israel, circa 300 C.E. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew, with a New Introduction*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:85-86, 339, 511, 650, 886; 2:1012, 1227, 1229, 1231, 1307-70, 1407-68, 1925. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 2002. [ISBN 1-56563-642-2](#).
- [Sifra](#) 70:1–98:9. Land of Israel, 4th Century C.E. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 2:1–119. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-206-2](#).
- [Jerusalem Talmud](#): Orlah 33b, 34b; Bikkurim 12b, 25a; Sukkah 14a. Land of Israel, circa 400 C.E. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz,

Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 12, 22. Brooklyn: Mesorah Pubs., 2007–2009.

- [Leviticus Rabbah](#) 7:1–10:9. Land of Israel, 5th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:89–134. London: Soncino Press, 1939. [ISBN 0-900689-38-2](#).



Talmud

- Babylonian [Talmud](#): [Shabbat 111a, 114a, 132a; Pesachim 3a, 16a–b, 19a, 23a–24b, 26a, 27b, 35a, 37a, 38b, 43b, 45a, 58a–59b, 63b, 65b, 71b, 79a, 82a–83a, 95b–96a; Yoma 2a–b, 4a, 5a–b, 7a, 12b, 20a, 21a, 23b–24a, 25a, 28a, 33a–34a, 45a–b, 46b–47a, 59b–60a, 74a–b; Sukkah 43a, 47b, 55b–56a; Beitzah 19b, 21a; Rosh Hashanah 5b–6a; Taanit 11b; Megillah 9b, 20b, 23b; Moed Katan 9a, 15b; Chagigah 7b, 10b, 24a, 26b; Yevamot 7a, 39b–40a, 68b, 72b, 74b, 81a, 82a, 87a, 100a; Ketubot 5b, 25a, 106b; Nedarim 10b, 12a–b, 25a, 36a; Nazir 37b–38a; Sotah 14b–15a, 19a, 23a–b, 29a–b; Kiddushin 29a, 30a, 36b, 51a, 53a, 55b; Bava Kamma 5a, 13a, 41a, 82b, 110b, 111a; Bava Metzia 3b, 55a; Bava Batra 106b; Sanhedrin 34a, 42b, 61b; Makkot 13a, 14b, 17a–b, 18b; Shevuot 6b–](#)

[7a, 11a, 15a–b, 29a, 38a; Avodah Zarah 34a–b, 76a; Horayot 3a, 9a, 11b–12a; Zevachim 2a–120b; Menachot 2a–110a; Chullin 22a, 23b, 36b–37a, 39a, 45a, 74b–75a, 81b, 99a, 101a, 117a–b, 120a, 130a, 131b, 132b–33b, 134b; Bekhorot 15a, 30b, 33b, 39a; Arakhin 3b–4a; Temurah 14a, 18a–b, 23a, 32b; Keritot 2a, 4a–b, 5a–6a, 20b–21b, 22b, 23b, 27a; Meilah 2a, 5a–6b, 9a, 10a, 11b–12a; Tamid 28a–29a, 30a; Niddah 6b, 40a–41a.](#)

Babylonia, 6th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Bavli*.

Edited by Yisroel Simcha Schorr, Chaim Malinowitz, and Mordechai Marcus, 72 vols. Brooklyn: Mesorah Pubs., 2006.



Rashi

[[edit](#)] Medieval

- [Rashi](#). *Commentary*. [Leviticus 6–8](#). [Troyes](#), France, late 11th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., Rashi. *The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated*. Translated and annotated by Yisrael Isser Zvi Herczeg, 3:59–92. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1994. [ISBN 0-89906-028-5](#).

- [Judah Halevi](#). [Kuzari](#). 2:80. [Toledo](#), Spain, 1130–1140.
Reprinted in, e.g., Jehuda Halevi. *Kuzari: An Argument for the Faith of Israel*. Intro. by Henry Slonimsky, 133. New York: Schocken, 1964. [ISBN 0-8052-0075-4](#).
- [Zohar](#) 2:236b, 238b; [3:27a–35b](#), 37a, 87a, 107b, 213a.
Spain, late 13th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Zohar*.
Translated by Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon. 5 vols.
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Hobbes

[\[edit\]](#) Modern

- [Thomas Hobbes](#). [Leviathan](#), 3:40, 42. England, 1651.
Reprint edited by [C. B. Macpherson](#), 503–04, 572.
Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Classics, 1982. [ISBN 0-14-043195-0](#).
- [Louis Ginzberg](#). *Legends of the Jews*, 3:179–81.
Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1911.
- [Jacob Milgrom](#). “Sacrifices and Offerings, OT,” and
“Wave offering.” In *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*.
Supp. vol., 763–71, 944–46. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon,
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- Jacob Milgrom. *Leviticus 1-16*, 3:378–569. New York: Anchor Bible, 1998. [ISBN 0-385-11434-6](#).
- Suzanne A. Brody. “A Woman’s Portion.” In *Dancing in the White Spaces: The Yearly Torah Cycle and More Poems*, 86. Shelbyville, Kentucky: Wasteland Press, 2007. [ISBN 1-60047-112-9](#).

[\[edit\]](#) External links

[\[edit\]](#) Texts

- [Masoretic text and 1917 JPS translation](#)
- [Hear the parshah chanted](#)
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[\[edit\]](#) Commentaries



- [Academy for Jewish Religion, California](#)
- [Academy for Jewish Religion, New York](#)
- [Aish.com](#)
- [American Jewish University](#)

- [Anshe Emes Synagogue, Los Angeles](#)
- [Bar-Ilan University](#)
- [Chabad.org](#)
- [eparsha.com](#)
- [G-dcast](#)
- [The Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash](#)
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- [613.org Jewish Torah Audio](http://613.org)
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- [Tanach Study Center](#)
- [Teach613.org, Torah Education at Cherry Hill](http://Teach613.org)
- [Torah from Dixie](#)
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Shemini

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Shemini, **Sh'mini**, or **Shmini** (שְׁמִינִי — [Hebrew](#) for "eighth," the third word, and the first distinctive word, in the parshah) is the 26th [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the third in the book of [Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 9:1–11:47](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) read it the 25th or 26th [Sabbath](#) after [Simchat Torah](#), generally in late March or April.

The parshah tells of the consecration of the [Tabernacle](#), the death of [Nadav](#) and [Avihu](#), and the dietary laws of [kashrut](#).



The Two Priests Are Destroyed (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

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[\[edit\]](#) Summary



The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)

[\[edit\]](#) God Consecrated the Tabernacle

On the eighth day of the ceremony to ordain the [priests](#) and consecrate the Tabernacle, [Moses](#) instructed [Aaron](#) to assemble [calves](#), [rams](#), a [goat](#), a [lamb](#), an [ox](#), and a meal offering as [sacrifices](#) (called *korbanot* in [Hebrew](#)) to [God](#), saying: "Today the Lord will appear to you." ([Leviticus 9:1–4](#).) They brought the *korbanot* to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the [Israelites](#) assembled there. ([Leviticus 9:5](#).) Aaron offered the *korbanot* as Moses had commanded. ([Leviticus 9:8–21](#).) Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. ([Leviticus 9:22](#).) Moses and Aaron then went inside the Tent of Meeting, and when they came out, they blessed the people again. ([Leviticus 9:23](#).) Then the Presence of the Lord appeared to all the people and [fire](#) came forth and consumed the *korbanot* on the [altar](#). ([Leviticus 9:23–24](#).) And the people shouted and fell on their faces. ([Leviticus 9:24](#).)





The Sin of Nadab and Abihu (illustration from a 1907 Bible card published by the Providence Lithograph Company)

[[edit](#)] Nadab and Abihu

Acting on their own, Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his fire pan, laid [incense](#) on it, and offered alien fire, which God had not commanded. ([Leviticus 10:1.](#)) And God sent fire to consume them, and they died. ([Leviticus 10:2.](#)) Moses told Aaron, "This is what the Lord meant when He said: "Through those near to Me I show Myself holy, and gain glory before all the people," and Aaron remained silent. ([Leviticus 10:3.](#)) Moses called Aaron's cousins [Mishael](#) and [Elzaphan](#) to carry away Nadab's and Abihu's bodies to a place outside the camp. ([Leviticus 10:4.](#)) Moses instructed Aaron and his sons [Eleazar](#) and [Ithamar](#) not to mourn Nadab and Abihu by rending their garments or leaving their hair unshorn and not to go outside the Tent of Meeting. ([Leviticus 10:6–7.](#))

And God told Aaron that he and his sons must not drink [wine](#) or other [intoxicants](#) when they entered the Tent of Meeting, so as to distinguish between the sacred and the profane. ([Leviticus 10:8–11.](#))

Moses directed Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar to eat the remaining meal offering beside the altar, designating it most holy and the priests' due. ([Leviticus 10:12–13.](#)) And Moses told them that their families could eat the breast of the elevation offering and the thigh of the gift offering in any clean place. ([Leviticus 10:14.](#))

Then Moses inquired about the goat of sin offering, and was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar when he learned that it had already been burned and not eaten in the sacred area. ([Leviticus 10:16–18](#).) Aaron answered Moses: "See, this day they brought their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord, and such things have befallen me! Had I eaten sin offering today, would the Lord have approved?" ([Leviticus 10:19](#).) And when Moses heard this, he approved. ([Leviticus 10:20](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) Dietary Laws

God then instructed Moses and Aaron in the dietary laws of kashrut ([Leviticus 11](#)), saying: "You shall be holy, for I am holy." ([Leviticus 11:45](#))

[\[edit\]](#) In inner-Biblical interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapters 8–9

This is the pattern of instruction and construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings:



The Tabernacle

Item	Instruction		Construction	
	Order	Verses	Order	Verses
The Sabbath	16	Exodus 31:12–17	1	Exodus 35:1–3
Contributions	1	Exodus 25:1–2	2	Exodus 35:4–29
Craftspeople	15	Exodus 31:1–11	3	Exodus 35:30–36:7
Tabernacle	5	Exodus 26:1–37	4	Exodus 36:8–38

Ark	2	Exodus 25:10–22	5	Exodus 37:1–9
Table	3	Exodus 25:23–30	6	Exodus 37:10–16
Menorah	4	Exodus 25:31–40	7	Exodus 37:17–24
Altar of Incense	11	Exodus 30:1–10	8	Exodus 37:25–28
Anointing Oil	13	Exodus 30:22–33	9	Exodus 37:29
Incense	14	Exodus 30:34–38	10	Exodus 37:29
Altar of Sacrifice	6	Exodus 27:1–8	11	Exodus 38:1–7
Laver	12	Exodus 30:17–21	12	Exodus 38:8
Tabernacle Court	7	Exodus 27:9–19	13	Exodus 38:9–20
Priestly Garments	9	Exodus 28:1–43	14	Exodus 39:1–31
Ordination Ritual	10	Exodus 29:1–46	15	Leviticus 8:1–9:24
Lamp	8	Exodus 27:20–21	16	Numbers 8:1–4

[\[edit\]](#) In early nonrabbinic interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 10

[Philo](#) interpreted [Leviticus 10](#) to teach that because Nadab and Abihu fearlessly and fervently proceeded rapidly to the altar, an

imperishable light dissolved them into ethereal beams like a whole burnt-offering and took them up to heaven. ([On Dreams 2:9:67.](#))



Moses Consecrates Aaron and His Sons and Offers Their Sin Offering (illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

[\[edit\]](#) In classical rabbinic interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 9

[Rabbi Helbo](#) taught that after ministering in the office of High Priest for the seven days of consecration, Moses imagined that the office was his, but on the eighth day (as indicated by [Leviticus](#)

[9:1](#)) God told Moses that the office belonged not to Moses but to his brother Aaron. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 11:6.)

[Rabbi Eliezer](#) interpreted the words, “And there I will meet with the children of Israel; and [the Tabernacle] shall be sanctified by My glory,” in [Exodus 29:43](#) to mean that God would in the future meet the Israelites and be sanctified among them. The midrash reports that this occurred on the eighth day of the consecration of the Tabernacle, as reported in [Leviticus 9:1](#). And as [Leviticus 9:24](#) reports, “when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.” ([Numbers Rabbah](#) 14:21.)

Rav Assi of Hozna'ah deduced from the words, “And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month,” in [Exodus 40:17](#) that the Tabernacle was erected on the first of [Nisan](#). With reference to this, a [Tanna](#) taught that the first of Nisan took ten crowns of distinction by virtue of the ten momentous events that occurred on that day. The first of Nisan was: (1) the first day of the Creation (as reported in [Genesis 1:1–5](#)), (2) the first day of the princes’ offerings (as reported in [Numbers 7:10–17](#)), (3) the first day for the priesthood to make the sacrificial offerings (as reported in [Leviticus 9:1–21](#)), (4) the first day for public sacrifice, (5) the first day for the descent of fire from Heaven (as reported in [Leviticus 9:24](#)), (6) the first for the priests’ eating of sacred food in the sacred area, (7) the first for the dwelling of the Shechinah in Israel (as implied by [Exodus 25:8](#)), (8) the first for the [Priestly Blessing](#) of Israel (as reported in [Leviticus 9:22](#), employing the blessing prescribed by [Numbers 6:22–27](#)), (9) the first for the prohibition of the [high places](#) (as

stated in [Leviticus 17:3–4](#)), and (10) the first of the months of the year (as instructed in [Exodus 12:2](#)). ([Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 87b](#).)

Rabbi Tanhum taught in the name of Rabbi Judan that the words “for today the Lord appears to you” in [Leviticus 9:4](#) indicated that God’s presence, the [Shekhinah](#), did not come to abide in the Tabernacle all the seven days of consecration when Moses ministered in the office of High Priest, but the Shekhinah appeared when Aaron put on the High Priest's robes. ([Leviticus Rabbah 11:6](#).)





Nadab and Abihu consumed by fire from the Lord (illustration from 1728 "Figures de la Bible")

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 10

According to the [Sifra](#), Nadab and Abihu took their offering in [Leviticus 10:1](#) in joy, for when they saw the new fire come from God, they went to add one act of love to another act of life. (Sifra Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim 99:5:4.)

Abba Jose ben Dosetai taught that that Nadab and Abihu died in [Leviticus 10:2](#) when two streams of fire came forth from the Holy of Holies and divided into four streams, of which two flowed into the nose of one and two into the nose of the other, so that their breath was burned up, but their garments remained untouched (as implied in [Leviticus 10:5](#)). (Sifra Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim 99:5:7.)

[Bar Kappara](#) said in the name of Rabbi Jeremiah ben Eleazar that Nadab and Abihu died (as reported in [Leviticus 10:2](#)) because of four things: (1) for drawing too near to the holy place, (2) for offering a sacrifice that they had not been commanded to offer, (3) for the strange fire that they brought in from the kitchen, and (4) for not having taken counsel from each other, as [Leviticus 10:1](#) says “Each of them his censer,” implying that each acted on his own initiative. (Leviticus Rabbah 20:8.)

[Rabbi Eliezer](#) (or some say [Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob](#)) taught that Nadab and Abihu died only because they gave a legal decision in

the presence of their Master Moses. Even though [Leviticus 9:24](#) reports that “fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed the burnt-offering and the fat on the altar,” Nadab and Abihu deduced from the command of [Leviticus 1:7](#) that “the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar” that the priests still had a religious duty to bring some ordinary fire to the altar, as well. ([Babylonian Talmud Eruvin 63a](#); see also Sifra Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim 99:5:6.)

According to the Sifra, some say that Nadab and Abihu died because earlier, when at Sinai they were walking behind Moses and Aaron, they remarked to each other how in a little while, the two old men would die, and they would head the congregation. And God said that we would see who would bury whom. (Sifra Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim 99:3:4.)





Aaron's Sons, Nadab and Abihu, Destroyed by Fire (engraving circa 1625–1630 by [Matthäus Merian](#))

The Gemara interpreted the report in [Exodus 29:43](#) that the Tabernacle “shall be sanctified by My glory” to refer to the death of Nadab and Abihu. The Gemara taught that one should read not “My glory” (*bi-khevodi*) but “My honored ones” (*bi-khevuday*). The Gemara thus taught that God told Moses in [Exodus 29:43](#) that God would sanctify the Tabernacle through the death of Nadab and Abihu, but Moses did not comprehend God’s meaning until Nadab and Abihu died in [Leviticus 10:2](#). When Aaron’s sons died, Moses told Aaron in [Leviticus 10:3](#) that Aaron’s sons died only that God’s glory might be sanctified through them. When Aaron thus perceived that his sons were God’s honored ones, Aaron was silent, as [Leviticus 10:3](#) reports, “And Aaron held his peace,” and Aaron was rewarded for his silence. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 115b](#).)

Similarly, a [midrash](#) interpreted [Leviticus 10:3](#), where Moses told Aaron, “This is what the Lord meant when He said: ‘Through those near to Me I show Myself holy, and gain glory before all the people.’” The midrash taught that God told this to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, when in [Exodus 29:43](#) God said, “there I will meet with the children of Israel; and the Tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory.” And Moses said to Aaron, “At the time that God told me, I thought that either you or I would be stricken, but now I know that they [Nadab and Abihu] are greater than you or me.” (Midrash [Tanhuma](#) Shemini 1.)



The Dead Bodies Carried Away (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Similarly, the Sifra taught that Moses sought to comfort Aaron, telling him that at Sinai, God told him that God would sanctify God’s house through a great man. Moses had supposed that it would be either through Aaron or himself that the house would be sanctified. But Moses said that it turned out that Aaron’s sons were greater and Moses and Aaron, for through them had the house been sanctified. (Sifra Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim 99:3:6; see also 99:5:9.)

[Rabbi Akiba](#) taught that because Aaron’s cousins Mishael and Elzaphan attended to the remains of Nadab and Abihu (as reported in [Leviticus 10:4–5](#)), they became the “certain men” who [Numbers 9:6](#) reported “were unclean by the dead body of a man, so that they could not keep the Passover.” But Rabbi Isaac replied that Mishael and Elzaphan could have cleansed

themselves before the Passover. ([Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 25a–b.](#))

[Rabbi Simeon](#) taught that Nadab and Abihu died only because they entered the Tent of Meeting drunk with wine. Rabbi Phinehas in the name of Rabbi Levi compared this conclusion to the case of a king who had a faithful attendant. When the king found the attendant standing at tavern entrances, the king beheaded the attendant and appointed another in his place. The king did not say why he killed the first attendant, except that he told the second attendant not to enter the doorway of taverns, and thus the king indicated that he put the first attendant to death for such a reason. And thus God’s command to Aaron in [Leviticus 10:9](#) to “drink no wine nor strong drink” indicates that Nadab and Abihu died precisely because of wine. (Leviticus Rabbah 12:1.)

A midrash taught that when in [Leviticus 10:16](#) “Moses diligently inquired [literally: inquiring, he inquired] for the goat of the sin-offering,” the language indicates that Moses made two inquiries: (1) If the priests had slaughtered the goat of the sin-offering, why had they not eaten it? And (2) If the priests were not going to eat it, why did they slaughter it? And immediately thereafter, [Leviticus 10:16](#) reports that Moses “was angry with Eleazar and with Ithamar,” and midrash taught that through becoming angry, he forgot the law. [Rav Huna](#) taught that this was one of three instances where Moses lost his temper and as a consequence forgot a law. (The other two instances were with regard to the Sabbath in [Exodus 16:20](#) and with regard to the purification of

unclean metal utensils [Numbers 31:14](#).) In this case (involving Nadab and Abihu), because of his anger, Moses forgot the law relating to those in the first stage of mourning (the *onen*), that it is prohibited for a bereaved person, prior to the burial of his dead, to eat consecrated food. Aaron asked Moses whether he should eat consecrated food on the day that his sons died. Aaron argued that since the tithe (which is of lesser sacredness) is forbidden to be eaten by a bereaved person prior to the burial of his dead, how much more certainly must the meat of the sin-offering (which is more sacred) be prohibited to a bereaved person prior to the burial of his dead. Immediately after Moses heard Aaron's argument, he issued a proclamation to the Israelites, saying that he had made an error in regard to the law and Aaron his brother came and taught him. Eleazar and Ithamar had known the law, but kept their silence out of deference to Moses, and as a reward, God addressed them directly along with Moses and Aaron in [Leviticus 11:1](#). When [Leviticus 11:1](#) reports that "the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them," [Rabbi Hiyya](#) taught that the words "to them" referred to Eleazar and Ithamar. (Leviticus Rabbah 13:1.)

Similarly, [Rabbi Nehemiah](#) deduced from [Leviticus 10:19](#) that Aaron's sin-offering was burned (and not eaten by the priests) because Aaron and his remaining sons (the priests) were in the early stages of mourning, and thus disqualified from eating sacrifices. ([Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 82b](#); see also [Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 101a](#).)

The Rabbis in a [Baraita](#) noted the three uses of the word “commanded” in [Leviticus 10:12–13](#), [10:14–15](#), and [Leviticus-nb 10:16–18](#), in connection with the sacrifices on the eighth day of the inauguration of the Tabernacle, the day on which Nadab and Abihu died. The Rabbis taught that Moses said “as the Lord commanded” in [Leviticus 10:13](#) to instruct that the priest were to eat the grain (*minchah*) offering, even though they were in the earliest stage of mourning. The Rabbis taught that Moses said “as I commanded” in [Leviticus 10:18](#) in connection with the sin-offering (*chataf*) at the time that Nadab and Abihu died. And the Rabbis taught that Moses said “as the Lord commanded” in [Leviticus 10:15](#) to enjoin Aaron and the priests to eat the peace-offering (*shelamim*) notwithstanding their mourning (and Aaron’s correction of Moses in [Leviticus 10:19](#)), not just because Moses said so on his own authority, but because God had directed it. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 5b](#); [Zevachim 101a](#).)



Moses (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Samuel taught that the interpretation that Aaron should not have eaten the offering agreed with Rabbi Nehemiah while the other interpretation that Aaron should have eaten the offering agreed with [Rabbi Judah](#) and Rabbi Simeon. Rabbi Nehemiah argued that they burned the offering because the priests were in the first stages of mourning. Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Simeon maintained that they burned it because the offering had become defiled during the day, not because of bereavement. Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Simeon argued that if it was because of bereavement, they should have burned all three sin offerings brought that day. Alternatively, Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Simeon argued that the priest would have been fit to eat the sacrifices after sunset. Alternatively, Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Simeon argued that

[Phinehas](#) was with then alive and not restricted by the law of mourning. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 101a.](#))

According to Rabbi Nehemiah, this is how the exchange went: Moses asked Aaron why he had not eaten the sacrifice. Moses asked Aaron whether perhaps the blood of the sacrifice had entered the innermost sanctuary, but Aaron answered that its blood had not entered into the inner sanctuary. Moses asked Aaron whether perhaps the blood had passed outside the sanctuary courtyard, but Aaron replied that it had not. Moses asked Aaron whether perhaps the priests had offered it in bereavement, and thus disqualified the offering, but Aaron replied that his sons had not offered it, Aaron had. Thereupon Moses exclaimed that Aaron should certainly have eaten it, as Moses had commanded in [Leviticus 10:18](#) that they should eat it in their bereavement. Aaron replied with [Leviticus 10:19](#) and argued that perhaps what Moses had heard was that it was allowable for those in mourning to eat the special sacrifices for the inauguration of the Tabernacle, but not the regular ongoing sacrifices. For if [Deuteronomy 26:14](#) instructs that the tithe, which is of lesser holiness, cannot be eaten in mourning, how much more should that prohibition apply to sacrifices like the sin-offering that are more holy. When Moses heard that argument, he replied with [Leviticus 10:20](#) that it was pleasing to him, and he admitted his error. Moses did not seek to excuse himself by saying that he had not heard the law from God, but admitted that he had heard it and forgot it. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 101a.](#))

According to Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Simeon, this is how the exchange went: Moses asked Aaron why he had not eaten, suggesting the possibilities that the blood had entered the innermost sanctuary or passed outside the courtyard or been defiled by being offered by his sons, and Aaron said that it had not. Moses then asked whether perhaps Aaron had been negligent through his grief and allowed the sacrifice to become defiled, but Aaron exclaimed with [Leviticus 10:19](#) that these events and even more could have befallen him, but Aaron would not show such disrespect to sacrifices. Thereupon Moses exclaimed that Aaron should certainly have eaten it, as Moses had commanded in [Leviticus 10:18](#). Aaron argued from analogy to the tithe (as in Rabbi Nehemiah's version), and Moses accepted Aaron's argument. But Moses argued that the priests should have kept the sacrificial meat and eaten it in the evening. And to that Aaron replied that the meat had accidentally become defiled after the sacrifice. ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 101a–b.](#))

A Baraita taught that the righteous are blessed, for not only do they acquire merit, but they bestow merit on their children and children's children to the end of all generations. The Baraita deduced from the words “that were left” used in [Leviticus 10:12](#) to describe Aaron's remaining sons that those sons deserved to be burned like Nadab and Abihu, but Aaron's merit helped them avoid that fate. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 87a.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 11

Tractate Chullin in the [Mishnah](#), [Tosefta](#), and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of kashrut in [Leviticus 11](#). (Mishnah Chullin 1:1–12:5; Tosefta Chullin 1:1–10:16; [Babylonian Talmud Chullin 2a–142a.](#))

A midrash taught that [Adam](#) offered an ox as a sacrifice, anticipating the laws of clean animals in [Leviticus 11:1–8](#). (Leviticus Rabbah 2:10.)

Rav Hisda asked how Noah knew (before the giving of [11](#)) which animals were clean and which were unclean. Rav Hisda explained that Noah led them past the Ark, and those that the Ark accepted (in multiples of seven) were certainly clean, and those that the Ark rejected were certainly unclean. Rabbi Abbahu cited [Genesis 7:16](#), “And they that went in, went in male and female,” to show that they went in of their own accord (in their respective pairs, seven of the clean and two of the unclean). ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 116a.](#))

Rabbi Tanhum ben Hanilai compared the laws of kashrut to the case of a physician who went to visit two patients, one whom the physician judged would live, and the other whom the physician judged would die. To the one who would live, the physician gave orders about what to eat and what not to eat. On the other hand, the physician told the one who would die to eat whatever the patient wanted. Thus to the nations who were not destined for life in the World to Come, God said in [Genesis 9:3](#), “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you.” But to Israel,

whom God intended for life in the World to Come, God said in [Leviticus 11:2](#), “These are the living things which you may eat.” (Leviticus Rabbah 13:2.)

[Rab](#) reasoned that since [Proverbs 30:5](#) teaches that “Every word of God is pure,” then this means that the precepts of kashrut were given for the express purpose of purifying humanity. (Leviticus Rabbah 13:3.)

[\[edit\]](#) Commandments

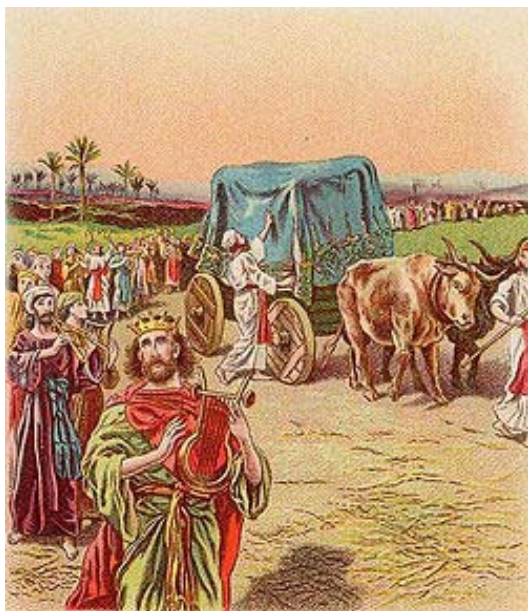
According to [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 6 positive and 11 negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

- A Kohen must not enter the [Temple](#) with long [hair](#).
[Leviticus 10:6](#).
- A Kohen must not enter the Temple with torn clothes.
[Leviticus 10:6](#).
- A Kohen must not leave the Temple during service.
[Leviticus 10:7](#).
- A Kohen must not enter the Temple intoxicated.
[Leviticus 10:9](#).
- To examine the signs of animals to distinguish between [kosher](#) and non-kosher [Leviticus 11:2](#).
- Not to eat non-kosher animals [Leviticus 11:4](#).

- To examine the signs of [fish](#) to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher [Leviticus 11:9.](#)
- Not to eat non-kosher fish [Leviticus 11:11.](#)
- Not to eat non-kosher [fowl](#) [Leviticus 11:13.](#)
- To examine the signs of [locusts](#) to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher [Leviticus 11:21.](#)
- To observe the laws of impurity caused by the eight [insects](#) [Leviticus 11:29.](#)
- To observe the laws of impurity concerning liquid and solid [foods](#) [Leviticus 11:34.](#)
- To observe the laws of impurity caused by a dead beast [Leviticus 11:39.](#)
- Not to eat non-kosher creatures that crawl on land [Leviticus 11:41.](#)
- Not to eat [worms](#) found in [fruit](#) on the ground [Leviticus 11:42.](#)
- Not to eat creatures that live in [water](#) other than fish [Leviticus 11:43.](#)
- Not to eat non-kosher maggots [Leviticus 11:44.](#)

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 2:131–99. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-296-5.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Haftarah



The Ark Brought to Jerusalem (illustration from a Bible card published 1896 by the Providence Lithograph Company)

[\[edit\]](#) In general

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is:

- for [Ashkenazi Jews](#): [2 Samuel 6:1–7:17](#)
- for [Sephardi Jews](#): [2 Samuel 6:1–19](#)



The Chastisement of Uzzah (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

[\[edit\]](#) Summary

[David](#) gathered together all the chosen men of Israel — 30,000 in all — and went to retrieve the [Ark of the Covenant](#) from [Baale-judah](#). ([2 Samuel 6:1–2](#).) They brought the Ark out of the house of [Abinadab](#) and set it on a new cart, and Abinadab's sons [Uzzah](#) and [Ahio](#) drove the cart, with Ahio going before the Ark. ([2 Samuel 6:3–4](#).) David and the Israelites played with all manner of instruments — [harps](#), [psalteries](#), [timbrels](#), [sistra](#), and [cymbals](#). ([2 Samuel 6:5](#).) When they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah put out his hand to the Ark. ([2 Samuel 6:6](#).) In anger, God smote Uzzah for his error, and Uzzah died by the Ark. ([2 Samuel 6:7](#).)

Displeased and afraid, David questioned how the Ark could come to him. ([2 Samuel 6:8–9](#).) So David took the Ark to the house of [Obed-Edom](#) the [Gittite](#) and left it there for three months, during which time God blessed Obed-Edom and his house. ([2 Samuel 6:10–11](#).)

When David heard that God had blessed Obed-Edom because of the Ark, David brought the Ark to [Jerusalem](#) with joy. ([2 Samuel 6:12](#).) When those who bore the Ark had gone six paces, they sacrificed an ox and a fatling. ([2 Samuel 6:13](#).) The Israelites brought up the Ark with shouting and the sound of the horn, and David danced with all his might girded with a linen ephod. ([2 Samuel 6:14–15](#).) As the Ark came into the city, [Michal](#) the daughter of [Saul](#) looked out the window and saw David leaping and dancing, and she despised him in her heart. ([2 Samuel 6:16](#).)



The Ark of Jerusalem (woodcut by [Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld](#))

They set the Ark in a tent that David pitched for it, David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and David blessed the people in the name of the Lord. ([2 Samuel 6:17–18](#).) David distributed a sweet cake of bread to all the people of Israel, and the people departed to their houses. ([2 Samuel 6:19](#).) (The Haftarah ends at this point for Sephardi Jews, but continues for Ashkenazi Jews.)



David's Love for God's House (illustration from a Bible card published 1896 by the Providence Lithograph Company)

When David returned to bless his household, Michal came out to meet him with scorn, taunting him for uncovering himself before his servants' handmaids. ([2 Samuel 6:20](#).) David retorted to

Michal that he danced before the God who had chosen him over her father, and that he would be viler than that. ([2 Samuel 6:21–22.](#)) Michal never had children thereafter. ([2 Samuel 6:23.](#))

God gave David rest from his enemies, and David asked [Nathan](#) the prophet why David should dwell in a house of cedar, while the Ark dwelt within curtains. ([2 Samuel 7:1–2.](#)) At first Nathan told David to do what was in his heart, but that same night God directed Nathan to tell David not to build God a house, for God had not dwelt in a house since the day that God had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, but had abided in a tent and in a tabernacle. ([2 Samuel 7:3–7.](#)) God directed Nathan to tell David that God took David from following sheep to be a prince over Israel, God had been with David wherever he went, and God would make David a great name. ([2 Samuel 7:8–9.](#)) God would provide a place for the Israelites at rest from their enemies, God would make David into a dynasty, and when David died, God would see that David's son would build a house for God's name. ([2 Samuel 7:10–13.](#)) God would be to David's son a father, and he would be to God a son; if he strayed, God would chasten him, but God's mercy would not depart from him. ([2 Samuel 7:14–15.](#)) David's kingdom would be established forever. ([2 Samuel 7:16.](#)) And Nathan told David everything in his vision. ([2 Samuel 7:17.](#))

[[edit](#)] Connection to the parshah

Both the parshah and the haftarah report efforts to consecrate the holy space followed by tragic incidents connected with inappropriate proximity to the holy space. In the parshah, Moses

consecrated the Tabernacle, the home of the Ark of the Covenant ([Leviticus 9](#)), while in the haftarah, David set out to bring the Ark to [Jerusalem](#). ([2 Samuel 6:2–5](#).) Then in the parshah, God killed Nadab and Abihu “when they drew near” to the Ark ([Leviticus 16:1–2](#)), while in the haftarah, God killed [Uzzah](#) when he “put forth his hand to the Ark.” ([2 Samuel 6:6–7](#).)



Ezekiel (painting by [Michelangelo](#))

[\[edit\]](#) On Shabbat Parah

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat Parah (the special Sabbath prior to Passover — as it does in 2011 and 2014), the haftarah is:

- for Ashkenazi Jews: [Ezekiel 36:16–38](#)
- for Sephardi Jews: [Ezekiel 36:16–36](#)

On Shabbat Parah, the Sabbath of the [red heifer](#), Jews read [Numbers 19:1–22](#), which describes the rites of purification using the red heifer (*parah adumah*). Similarly, the haftarah in Ezekiel 36 also describes purification. In both the special reading and the

haftarah in Ezekiel 36, sprinkled water cleansed the Israelites.
([Numbers 19:18](#); [Ezekiel 36:25](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) On Shabbat Machar Chodesh

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat Machar Chodesh (as it does in 2012 and 2015), the haftarah is [1 Samuel 20:18–42](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

[\[edit\]](#) Biblical

- [Leviticus 16:1–2](#) (Nadab and Abihu).
- [Numbers 3:4](#) (Nadab and Abihu); [26:61](#) (Nadab and Abihu).
- [Deuteronomy 14:3–21](#) (kashrut).



Philo

- [Psalms 58:9](#) (snail); [102:7](#) (pelican).

[\[edit\]](#) Early nonrabbinic

- [Philo](#). *Allegorical Interpretation* 2: 15:57–58, 26:104–05; 3: 47:139–48:141, 49:144, 50:147; *On Husbandry* 30:131–35; *On Drunkenness* 32:126–27, 35:140–41; *On the Migration of Abraham* 12:64–69; *Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?* 49:238–40, 51:249–51; *On Flight and Finding* 11:59, 28:157; *On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent* 2:9:67; *The Special Laws* 2: 8:33; 4: 18:105–06, 20:110, 21:113–22:118, 36:191. [Alexandria](#), Egypt, early 1st Century C.E..
Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [Charles Duke Yonge](#), 44, 49, 66–67, 185, 218–19, 259, 296, 298, 326, 335, 392, 571, 626–27, 635. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1993. [ISBN 0-943575-93-1](#).



Josephus

- [Josephus](#), *Antiquities of the Jews* 3:8:6–7; 8:8:4. Circa 93–94.
Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [William Whiston](#), 92, 229. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1987. [ISBN 0-913573-86-8](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Classical rabbinic

- [Mishnah](#): Sheviit 5:9, 7:4; Bikkurim 2:7, 11; Sotah 5:2; Menachot 5:6; Chullin 1:1–12:5. Land of Israel, circa 200 C.E. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 81, 84, 171–72, 455, 743, 765–87. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).
- [Tosefta](#): Berakhot 4:17; Demai 2:7; Sotah 5:13; Zevachim 8:25; Chullin 1:1–10:16; Parah 1:5. Land of Israel, circa 300 C.E. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew, with a New Introduction*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:26, 85, 853; 2:1347, 1371–1405, 1746. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 2002. [ISBN 1-56563-642-2](#).
- [Sifra](#) 99:1–121:2:13. Land of Israel, 4th Century C.E. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 2:121–229. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-206-2](#).
- [Jerusalem Talmud](#): Peah 12b; Kilayim 69a; Sheviit 55b; Terumot 1b, 73a, 88a, 100a, 101a; Maasrot 41a; Orlah 34a; Bikkurim 12b. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 3, 5, 6b–9, 12. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2006–2010.

- [Leviticus Rabbah](#) 1:8; 2:10; 10:4; 11:1–14:1; 20:4–5, 8–10; 26:1. Land of Israel, 5th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:12, 29, 125, 135–79, 257–62, 325. London: Soncino Press, 1939. [ISBN 0-900689-38-2](#).



Talmud

- Babylonian [Talmud](#): [Berakhot](#) 53b, 61a; [Shabbat](#) 12a, 27a, 63b–64a, 83b–84a, 87b, 90b, 95b, 107a, 123b, 125a, 136a–b; [Eruvin](#) 13b, 28a, 63a, 87b, 104b; [Pesachim](#) 14a, 16a, 18a–b, 20b, 23a–b, 24b, 49b, 67b, 82b–83a, 91b; [Yoma](#) 2b–4a, 5b, 21b, 39a, 53a, 73b, 76b, 80a–b, 87a; 25b; [Beitzah](#) 6b, 19a, 20a; [Rosh Hashanah](#) 16b; [Taanit](#) 15b, 17b, 26b; [Megillah](#) 9b, 10b, 18a; [Moed Katan](#) 2a, 13a–b, 14b–15b, 19b, 24a, 28b; [Chagigah](#) 11a, 19a, 22b, 24a, 26b; [Yevamot](#) 20b, 40a, 43a, 54a–b, 74b–75a, 87a, 114a; [Ketubot](#) 15a, 50a, 60a; [Nazir](#) 4a, 38a, 52a, 64a; [Sotah](#) 27b, 29a–b, 38a–b, 47a; [Gittin](#) 60a, 61b–62a, 68b; [Kiddushin](#) 30a, 59b, 80a; [Bava Kamma](#) 2a–b, 16a, 25b, 38a, 54a–b, 62b–63a, 64b, 76b–77a, 78a, 81a; [Bava Metzia](#) 22a, 61b, 90b; [Bava Batra](#) 9b, 66b, 80a, 91a, 97a; [Sanhedrin](#) 5b, 17a, 22b, 52a, 70b–71a, 83b, 107b, 108b; [Makkot](#) 3b, 11a, 13a, 16b; [Shevuot](#) 5a, 7a, 9b–10b, 14b,

[18b, 23a, 36b](#); [Avodah Zarah 40a, 47b, 68b](#); [Horayot 4a](#); [Zevachim 3a–b, 10b, 17b, 25b, 28a, 34a, 55a, 60a, 61b, 69b, 82a–b, 99b, 100b–01b, 105a, 115b](#); [Menachot 23a, 29a, 39b, 59a, 62a, 70b, 93b, 96b, 101b](#); [Chullin 2a–142a](#); [Bekhorot 6a–7b, 9b, 15b, 16a, 38a, 45b, 51a](#); [Keritot 4b, 13b, 15b, 21a, 22a](#); [Meilah 16a–17b](#); [Tamid 33b](#); [Niddah 18a, 19b, 21a, 42b, 51a–b, 55b, 56a](#). Babylonia, 6th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Bavli*. Edited by Yisroel Simcha Schorr, Chaim Malinowitz, and Mordechai Marcus, 72 vols. Brooklyn: Mesorah Pubs., 2006.



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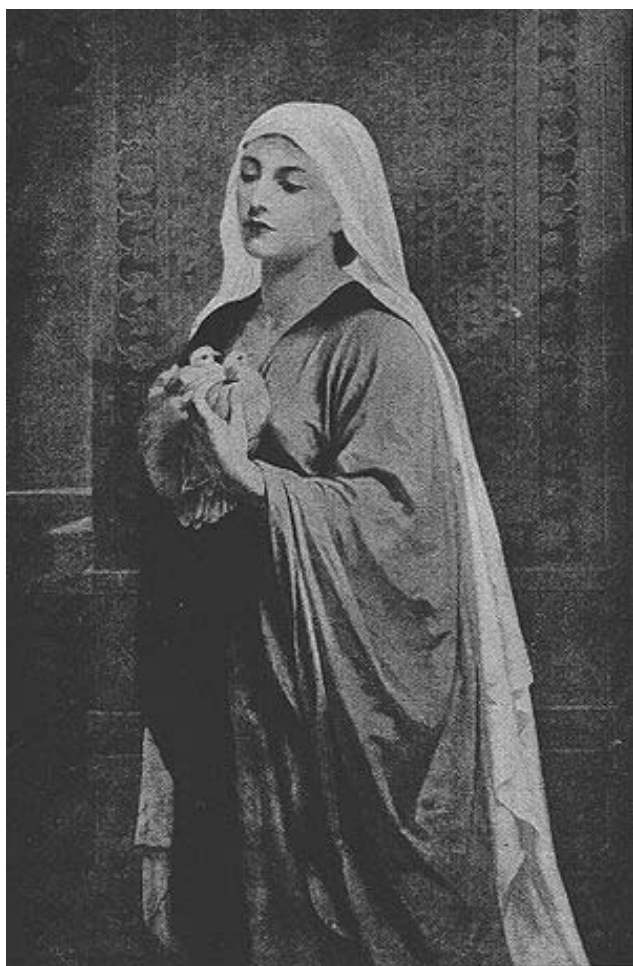
Tazria

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Tazria, **Thazria**, **Thazri'a**, **Sazria**, or **Ki Tazria'** (תַּזְרִיָּע — [Hebrew](#) for “she conceives,” the 13th word, and the first distinctive word, in the parshah) is the 27th [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the fourth in the [book of Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 12:1–13:59](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) read it the 27th or 28th [Sabbath](#) after [Simchat Torah](#), generally in April.

The [lunisolar Hebrew calendar](#) contains up to 55 [weeks](#), the exact number varying between 50 in common years and 54 or 55 in leap years. In leap years (for example, 2011, 2014, and 2016), parshah Tazria is read separately. In common years (for example, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018), parshah Tazria is combined with the next parshah, [Metzora](#), to help achieve the number of weekly readings needed.



The Poor Widow's Offering (illustration by [Frederick Goodall](#))

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Summary

Childbirth

[God](#) told [Moses](#) to tell the [Israelites](#) that when a woman at [childbirth](#) bore a boy, she was to be unclean 7 days and then remain in a state of blood purification for 33 days, while if she bore a girl, she was to be unclean 14 days and then remain in a state of blood purification for 66 days. ([Leviticus 12:1–5](#).) Upon completing her period of purification, she was to bring a [lamb](#) for a burnt offering and a [pigeon](#) or a [turtle dove](#) for a sin offering,

and the [priest](#) was to offer them as [sacrifices](#) to make expiation on her behalf. ([Leviticus 12:6–7.](#)) If she could not afford a sheep, she was to take two turtle doves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. ([Leviticus 12:8.](#))

Skin disease

God told Moses and Aaron that when a person had a swelling, [rash](#), discoloration, scaly affection, inflammation, or burn, it was to be reported to the priest, who was to examine it to determine whether the person was clean or unclean. ([Leviticus 13:1–44.](#)) Unclean persons were to rend their clothes, leave their head bare, cover over their upper lips, call out, "Unclean! Unclean!" and dwell outside the camp. ([Leviticus 13:45–46.](#))

Clothing

Similarly, when a streaky green or red eruptive affection occurred in wool, linen, or animal skin, it was to be shown to the priest, who was to examine to determine whether it was clean or unclean. ([Leviticus 13:47–51.](#)) If unclean, it was to be burned, but if the affection disappeared from the article upon washing, it was to be washed again and be clean. ([Leviticus 13:52–59.](#))

In inner-biblical interpretation

Leviticus chapter 12

[Leviticus 12](#) associates childbirth with uncleanness. In the [Hebrew Bible](#), uncleanness has a variety of associations. [Leviticus](#)

[11:8, 11; 21:1–4, 11](#); and [Numbers 6:6–7](#); and [19:11–16](#); associate it with death. And perhaps similarly, [Leviticus 13–14](#) associates it with skin disease. [Leviticus 15](#) associates it with various sexuality-related events. And [Jeremiah 2:7, 23; 3:2](#); and [7:30](#); and [Hosea 6:10](#) associate it with contact with the worship of alien gods.

While [Leviticus 12:6–8](#) required a new mother to bring a burnt-offering and a sin-offering, [Leviticus 26:9](#), [Deuteronomy 28:11](#), and [Psalm 127:3–5](#) make clear that having children is a blessing from God; [Genesis 15:2](#) and [1 Samuel 1:5–11](#) characterize childlessness as a misfortune; and [Leviticus 20:20](#) and [Deuteronomy 28:18](#) threaten childlessness as a punishment.

Leviticus chapter 13

The Hebrew Bible reports skin disease (*tzara'at*, צִרְעַת) and a person affected by skin disease (*metzora*, מִצְרָע) at several places, often (and sometimes incorrectly) translated as “leprosy” and “a leper.” In [Exodus 4:6](#), to help Moses to convince others that God had sent him, God instructed Moses to put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, his hand was “leprosy (*m'tzora'at*, מִצְרָעַת), as white as snow.” In [Leviticus 13–14](#), the Torah sets out regulations for skin disease (*tzara'at*, צִרְעַת) and a person affected by skin disease (*metzora*, מִצְרָע). In [Numbers 12:10](#), after [Miriam](#) spoke against Moses, God’s cloud removed from the [Tent of Meeting](#) and “Miriam was leprosy (*m'tzora'at*, מִצְרָעַת), as white as snow.” In [Deuteronomy 24:8–9](#), Moses warned the Israelites in the case of skin disease (*tzara'at*, צִרְעַת) diligently to observe all that the priests would teach them,

remembering what God did to Miriam. In [2 Kings 5:1–19](#), part of the [haftarah](#) for parshah Tazria, the prophet [Elisha](#) cures [Naaman](#), the commander of the army of the king of [Aram](#), who was a “leper” (*metẓora*, מֶצְרָעָה). In [2 Kings 7:3–20](#), part of the haftarah for parshah Metzora, the story is told of four “leprous men” (*m’ṭẓora’im*, מִצְרָעִים) at the gate during the [Arameans’](#) siege of [Samaria](#). And in [2 Chronicles 26:19](#), after King [Uzziah](#) tried to burn incense in the [Temple in Jerusalem](#), “leprosy (*tẓara’at*, תִּצְרָעַת) broke forth on his forehead.”

In classical rabbinic interpretation

Leviticus chapter 12

Rabbi [Simlai](#) noted that just as God created humans after creating cattle, beasts, and birds, the law concerning human impurity in [Leviticus 12](#) follows that concerning cattle, beasts, and birds in [Leviticus 11](#). ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 14:1.)

[Rabbi Ammi](#) taught in the name of [Rabbi Johanan](#) that even though [Rabbi Simeon](#) ruled that a dissolved fetus expelled by a woman was not unclean, Rabbi Simeon nonetheless agreed that the woman was ritually unclean as a woman who bore a child. An old man explained to Rabbi Ammi that Rabbi Johanan reasoned from the words of [Leviticus 12:2](#), “If a woman conceived seed and bore.” Those words imply that even if a woman bore something like “conceived seed” (in a fluid state), she was nonetheless unclean by reason of childbirth. ([Babylonian Talmud Nidah 27b](#).)

Rabbi Johanan interpreted the words “in the [eighth] day” in [Leviticus 12:3](#) to teach that one must perform circumcision even on the Sabbath. ([Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 132a.](#))

The [Gemara](#) read the command of [Genesis 17:14](#) to require an uncircumcised adult man to become circumcised, and the Gemara read the command of [Leviticus 12:3](#) to require the father to circumcise his infant child. ([Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 132b.](#))

The [Mishnah](#) taught that circumcision should not be performed until the sun has risen, but counts it as done if done after dawn has appeared. (Mishnah Megillah 2:4; [Babylonian Talmud Megillah 20a.](#)) The Gemara explained that the reason for the rule could be found in the words of [Leviticus 12:3](#), “And in the eighth *day* the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.” ([Babylonian Talmud Megillah 20a.](#)) A [Baraita](#) interpreted [Leviticus 12:3](#) to teach that the whole eighth day is valid for circumcision, but deduced from [Abraham](#)’s rising “early in the morning” to perform his obligations in [Genesis 22:3](#) that the zealous perform circumcisions early in the morning. ([Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 4a, Yoma 28b.](#))

The disciples of Rabbi [Simeon ben Yohai](#) asked him why [Leviticus 12:6–8](#) ordained that after childbirth a woman had to bring a sacrifice. He replied that when she bore her child, she swore impetuously in the pain of childbirth that she would never again have intercourse with her husband. The Torah, therefore, ordained that she had to bring a sacrifice, as she would probably violate that oath. ([Babylonian Talmud Niddah 31b.](#)) Rabbi

Berekiah and Rabbi Simon said in the name of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai that because she fluttered in her heart, she had to bring a fluttering sacrifice, two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. ([Genesis Rabbah](#) 20:7.) The disciples asked Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai why [Leviticus 12:2](#) permitted contact between the father and mother after 7 days when the mother bore a boy, but [Leviticus 12:5](#) permitted contact after 14 days when she bore a girl. He replied that since everyone around the mother would rejoice upon the birth of a boy, she would regret her oath to shun her husband after just 7 days, but since people around her would not rejoice on the birth of a girl, she would take twice as long. And Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai taught that [Leviticus 12:3](#) ordained circumcision on the eighth day so that the parents could join their guests in a celebratory mood on that day. ([Babylonian Talmud Niddah 31b.](#))



Turtledove (1897 painting by [Johann Friedrich Naumann](#))



Pigeons (painting circa 1832–1837 by [John Gould](#))

Rabbi Simeon noted that Scripture always lists turtledoves before pigeons, and imagined that one might thus think that Scripture prefers turtledoves over pigeons. But Rabbi Simeon quoted the instructions of [Leviticus 12:8](#), “a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin-offering,” to teach that Scripture accepted both equally. (Mishnah Keritot 6:9; [Babylonian Talmud Keritot 28a](#).)

Rabbi [Eleazar ben Hisma](#) taught that even the apparently arcane laws of bird offerings in [Leviticus 12:8](#) and the beginning of menstrual cycles in [Leviticus 12:1–8](#) are essential laws. ([Mishnah Avot 3:18](#).)

Tractate [Kinnim](#) in the Mishnah interpreted the laws of pairs of sacrificial pigeons and doves in [Leviticus 1:14, 5:7, 12:6–8, 14:22,](#) and [15:29](#); and [Numbers 6:10](#). ([Mishnah Kinnim 1:1–3:6](#).)

Interpreting the beginning of menstrual cycles, as in [Leviticus 12:6–8](#), the Mishnah ruled that if a woman loses track of her menstrual cycle, there is no return to the beginning of the *niddah* count in fewer than seven, nor more than seventeen days. ([Mishnah Arakhin 2:1](#); [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 8a](#).)

The Mishnah (following [Leviticus 5:7–8](#)) taught that a sin-offering of a bird preceded a burnt-offering of a bird; and the priest also dedicated them in that order. ([Mishnah Zevachim 10:4](#); [Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 89a](#).) [Rabbi Eliezer](#) taught that wherever an offerer (because of poverty) substituted for an animal sin-offering the offering of two birds (one of which was for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt-offering), the priest sacrificed the bird sin-offering before the bird burnt-offering (as [Leviticus 5:7–8](#) instructs). But in the case of a woman after childbirth discussed in [Leviticus 12:8](#) (where a poor new mother could substitute for an animal *burnt*-offering two birds, one for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt-offering), the bird *burnt*-offering took precedence over the bird sin-offering. Wherever the offering came on account of sin, the sin-offering took precedence. But here (in the case of a woman after childbirth, where the sin-offering was not on account of sin) the burnt-offering took precedence. And wherever both birds came instead of one animal sin-offering, the sin-offering took precedence. But here (in the case of a woman after childbirth) they did not both

come on account of a sin-offering (for in poverty she substituted a bird burnt-offering for an animal burnt-offering, as [Leviticus 12:6–7](#) required her to bring a bird sin-offering in any case), the burnt-offering took precedence. (The Gemara asked whether this contradicted the Mishnah, which taught that a bird sin-offering took precedence over an animal burnt-offering, whereas here she brought the animal burnt-offering before the bird sin-offering.) [Rava](#) taught that [Leviticus 12:6–7](#) merely accorded the bird burnt-offering precedence in the mentioning. (Thus, some read Rava to teach that [Leviticus 12:6–8](#) lets the reader *read* first about the burnt-offering, but in fact the priest sacrificed the sin-offering first. Others read Rava to teach that one first *dedicated* the animal or bird for the burnt-offering and then dedicated the bird for the sin-offering, but in fact the priest sacrificed the sin-offering first.) ([Babylonian Talmud Zevachim 90a.](#))

[Leviticus 12:8](#) called for “two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons: the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering.” [Rav Hisda](#) taught that the designation of one of the birds to become the burnt-offering and the other to become the sin-offering was made either by the owner or by the priest's action. Rabbi Shimi bar Ashi explained that the words of [Leviticus 12:8](#), “she shall take . . . the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering,” indicated that the mother could have made the designation when taking the birds, and the words of [Leviticus 15:15](#), “the priest shall offer them, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering,” and of [Leviticus 15:30](#), “the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-

offering,” indicated that (absent such a designation by the mother) the priest could have made the designation when offering them up. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 41a](#).)

Leviticus chapter 13

Tractate [Negaim](#) in the Mishnah and [Tosefta](#) interpreted the laws of skin disease in [Leviticus 13](#). (Mishnah Negaim 1:1–14:13; Tosefta Negaim 1:1–9:9.)

A [midrash](#) compared the discussion of skin diseases beginning at [Leviticus 13:2](#) to the case of a noble lady who, upon entering the king's palace, was terrified by the whips that she saw hanging about. But the king told her: “Do not fear; these are meant for the slaves, but you are here to eat, drink, and make merry.” So, too, when the Israelites heard the section of Scripture dealing with leprous affections, they became afraid. But Moses told them: “These are meant for the wicked nations, but you are intended to eat, drink, and be joyful, as it is written in [Psalm 32:10](#): “Many are the sufferings of the wicked; but he that trusts in the Lord, mercy surrounds him.” (Leviticus Rabbah 15:4.)

Rabbi Johanan said in the name of Rabbi Joseph ben Zimra that anyone who bears evil tales (*lashon bara*) will be visited by the plague of skin disease (*tzara'at*), as it is said in [Psalm 101:5](#): “Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I destroy (*azmit*).” The Gemara read *azmit* to allude to *tzara'at*, and cited how [Leviticus 25:23](#) says “in perpetuity” (*la-ze'mitut*). And [Resh Lakish](#) interpreted the words of [Leviticus 14:2](#), “This shall be the law of the person with skin disease (*metzora*),” to mean, “This

shall be the law for him who brings up an evil name (*motzi shem ra*).” ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 15b](#).)

Similarly, Rabbi [Haninah](#) taught that skin disease came only from slander. The Rabbis found a proof for this from the case of Miriam, arguing that because she uttered slander against Moses, plagues attacked her. And the Rabbis read [Deuteronomy 24:8–9](#) to support this when it says in connection with skin disease, “remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam.” ([Deuteronomy Rabbah](#) 6:8.)

Rabbi Samuel bar Nahmani said in the name of Rabbi Johanan that skin disease results from seven sins: slander, the shedding of blood, vain oath, incest, arrogance, robbery, and envy. The Gemara cited Scriptural bases for each of the associations: For slander, [Psalm 101:5](#); for bloodshed, [2 Samuel 3:29](#); for a vain oath, [2 Kings 5:23–27](#); for incest, [Genesis 12:17](#); for arrogance, [2 Chronicles 26:16–19](#); for robbery, [Leviticus 14:36](#) (as a Tanna taught that those who collect money that does not belong to them will see a priest come and scatter their money around the street); and for envy, [Leviticus 14:35](#). ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16a](#).)



Worshipping the golden calf (illustration from a 1901 Bible card published by the Providence Lithograph Company)



Miriam Shut Out from the Camp (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

Similarly, a midrash taught that skin disease resulted from 10 sins: (1) idol-worship, (2) unchastity, (3) bloodshed, (4) the profanation of the Divine Name, (5) blasphemy of the Divine Name, (6) robbing the public, (7) usurping a dignity to which one has no right, (8) overweening pride, (9) evil speech, and (10) an evil eye. The midrash cited as proofs: (1) for idol-worship, the experience of the Israelites who said of the Golden Calf, “This is your god, O Israel,” in [Exodus 32:4](#) and then were smitten with leprosy, as reported in [Exodus 32:25](#), where “Moses saw that the people had broken out (*parua*, פָּרַע),” indicating that leprosy had “broken out” (*parah*) among them; (2) for unchastity, from the experience

of the daughters of Zion of whom [Isaiah 3:16](#) says, “the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and ogling eyes,” and then [Isaiah 3:17](#) says, “Therefore will the Lord smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion”; (3) for bloodshed, from the experience of [Joab](#), of whom [2 Samuel 3:29](#) says, “Let it fall upon the head of Joab, and upon all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper,” (4) for the profanation of the Divine Name, from the experience of [Gehazi](#), of whom [2 Kings 5:20](#) says, “But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the [man of God](#), said: ‘Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Aramean, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought; as the Lord lives, I will surely run after him, and take of him somewhat (*me'umab*, מְאֻמָּה),” and “somewhat” (*me'umab*, מְאֻמָּה) means “of the blemish” (*mum*, מוּם) that Naaman had, and thus Gehazi was smitten with leprosy, as [2 Kings 5:20](#) reports Elisha said to Gehazi, “The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave to you”; (5) for blaspheming the Divine Name, from the experience of [Goliath](#), of whom [1 Samuel 17:43](#) says, “And the Philistine cursed [David](#) by his God,” and the [1 Samuel 17:46](#) says, “This day will the Lord deliver (*sagar*, שָׂגַרְךָ) you,” and the term “deliver” (*sagar*, שָׂגַרְךָ) is used here in the same sense as [Leviticus 13:5](#) uses it with regard to leprosy, when it is says, “And the priest shall shut him up (*sagar*)”; (6) for robbing the public, from the experience of [Shebna](#), who derived illicit personal benefit from property of the Sanctuary, and of whom [Isaiah 22:17](#) says, “the Lord . . . will wrap you round and round,” and “wrap” must refer to a leper, of whom [Leviticus 13:45](#) says, “And he shall wrap

himself over the upper lip”; (7) for usurping a dignity to which one has no right, from the experience of Uzziah, of whom [2 Chronicles 26:21](#) says, “And Uzziah the king was a leper to the day of his death”; (8) for overweening pride, from the same example of Uzziah, of whom [2 Chronicles 26:16](#) says, “But when he became strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly and he trespassed against the Lord his God”; (9) for evil speech, from the experience of Miriam, of whom [Numbers 12:1](#) says, “And Miriam . . . spoke against Moses,” and then [Numbers 12:10](#) says, “when the cloud was removed from over the Tent, behold Miriam was leprous”; and (10) for an evil eye, from the person described in [Leviticus 14:35](#), which can be read, “And he that keeps his house to himself shall come to the priest, saying: There seems to me to be a plague in the house,” and [Leviticus 14:35](#) thus describes one who is not willing to permit any other to have any benefit from the house. (Leviticus Rabbah 17:3.)

Similarly, Rabbi Judah the Levite, son of Rabbi Shalom, inferred that skin disease comes because of eleven sins: (1) for cursing the Divine Name, (2) for immorality, (3) for bloodshed, (4) for ascribing to another a fault that is not in him, (5) for haughtiness, (6) for encroaching upon other people's domains, (7) for a lying tongue, (8) for theft, (9) for swearing falsely, (10) for profanation of the name of Heaven, and (11) for idolatry. Rabbi Isaac added: for ill-will. And our Rabbis said: for despising the words of the TorAH (Numbers Rabbah 7:5.)

In the priest's examination of skin disease mandated by [Leviticus 13:2](#), [9](#), and [14:2](#), the Mishnah taught that a priest could examine

anyone else's symptoms, but not his own. And [Rabbi Meir](#) taught that the priest could not examine his relatives. (Mishnah Negaim 2:5; Deuteronomy Rabbah 6:8.) The Mishnah taught that the priests delayed examining a bridegroom — as well as his house and his garment — until after his seven days of rejoicing, and delayed examining anyone until after a [holy day](#). (Mishnah Negaim 3:2.)

Rabbi [Abbahu](#), as well as Rabbi Uzziel the grandson of Rabbi Uzziel the Great, taught that [Leviticus 13:46](#) requires that the person afflicted with skin disease “cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’” to warn passers-by to keep away. But the Gemara cited a Baraita that taught that [Leviticus 13:46](#) requires that the person “cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’” so that the person's distress would become known to many people, so that many could pray for mercy on the afflicted person's behalf. And the Gemara concluded that [Leviticus 13:46](#) reads “Unclean” twice to teach that [Leviticus 13:46](#) is intended to further both purposes, to keep passers-by away and to invite their prayers for mercy. ([Babylonian Talmud Moed Katan 5a](#).)

A [midrash](#) taught that Divine Justice first attacks a person's substance and then the person's body. So when leprous plagues come upon a person, first they come upon the fabric of the person's house. If the person repents, then [Leviticus 14:40](#) requires that only the affected stones need to be pulled out; if the person does not repent, then [Leviticus 14:45](#) requires pulling down the house. Then the plagues come upon the person's clothes. If the person repents, then the clothes require washing; if

not, they require burning. Then the plagues come upon the person's body. If the person repents, [Leviticus 14:1–32](#) provides for purification; if not, then [Leviticus 13:46](#) ordains that the person “shall dwell alone.” ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 17:4; [Ruth Rabbah](#) 2:10.)

Similarly, the Tosefta reported that when a person would come to the priest, the priest would tell the person to engage in self-examination and turn from evil ways. The priest would continue that plagues come only from gossip, and skin disease from arrogance. But God would judge in mercy. The plague would come to the house, and if the homeowner repented, the house required only dismantling, but if the homeowner did not repent, the house required demolition. They would appear on clothing, and if the owner repented, the clothing required only tearing, but if the owner did not repent, the clothing required burning. They would appear on the person's body, and if the person repented, well and good, but if the person did not repent, [Leviticus 13:46](#) required that the person “shall dwell alone.” (Tosefta Negaim 6:7.)

Rabbi Samuel bar Elnadab asked Rabbi Haninah (or others say Rabbi Samuel bar Nadab the son-in-law of Rabbi Haninah asked Rabbi Haninah, or still others say, asked Rabbi [Joshua ben Levi](#)) what distinguished the person afflicted with skin disease that [Leviticus 13:46](#) ordains that the person “shall dwell alone.” The answer was that through gossip, the person afflicted with skin disease separated husband from wife, one neighbor from another, and therefore the Torah punished the person afflicted with skin

disease measure for measure, ordaining that the person “shall dwell alone.” ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16b.](#))

Commandments



Moses Maimonides

According to Maimonides

[Maimonides](#) cited verses in this parshah for 3 positive and 1 negative [commandments](#):

- To circumcise the son, as it is written "and on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" ([Leviticus 12:3](#)).
- For a woman after childbirth to bring a sacrifice after she becomes clean, as it is written "and when the days of her purification are fulfilled" ([Leviticus 12:6](#)).

- Not to shave off the hair of the scall, as it is written "but the scall shall he not shave" ([Leviticus 13:33](#)).
- For the person with skin disease to be known to all by the things written about the person, "his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry: 'unclean, unclean'" ([Leviticus 13:45](#)). So too, all other unclean persons must declare themselves.

(Maimonides. [Mishneh Torah](#), [Positive Commandments 76, 112, 215](#); [Negative Commandment 307](#). [Cairo](#), Egypt, 1170–1180.

Reprinted in Maimonides. *The Commandments: Sefer Ha-Mitzvot of Maimonides*. Translated by Charles B. Chavel, 1:88, 123–24, 230–31; 2:283–84. London: Soncino Press, 1967. [ISBN 0-900689-71-4](#).)

According to Sefer ha-Chinuch

According to [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 5 positive and 2 negative commandments in the parshah:

- The precept about the ritual uncleanness of a woman after childbirth ([Leviticus 12:2](#).)
- A ritually unclean person is not to eat meat of holy sacrifices. ([Leviticus 12:4](#).)
- The precept of a woman's offering after giving birth ([Leviticus 12:6](#).)

- The precept regarding the ritual uncleanness of a *m'tzora* (person with a skin condition) ([Leviticus 13:12.](#))
- The prohibition against shaving the area of a *netbek* (an impurity in hair) ([Leviticus 13:33.](#))
- That one with a *tzara'at* condition (skin condition), among others, should rend clothes. ([Leviticus 13:45.](#))
- The precept of *tzara'at* in cloth ([Leviticus 13:47.](#))

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 2:201–33. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-296-5.](#))

Haftarah

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is [2 Kings 4:42–5:19.](#)

Summary

A man from Baal-[shalishah](#) brought the prophet Elisha bread of the [First Fruits](#) — 20 loaves of barley — and fresh grain in his sack to give to the people to eat. ([2 Kings 4:42.](#)) Elisha's servant asked Elisha how he could feed a hundred men with these rations, but Elisha told his servant to give the food to the people, for God said that they would eat and have food left over. ([2 Kings 4:43.](#)) So the servant set the food before the men, they ate, and they had food left over, just as God had said. ([2 Kings 4:44.](#))



Elisha Refusing Gifts from Naaman (1630 painting by [Pieter de Grebber](#))

Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great warrior, but he was a leper. ([2 Kings 5:1.](#)) The girl who waited on Naaman's wife was an Israelite whom the Arameans had taken captive, and she told Naaman's wife that if Naaman went to Elisha in Samaria, then Elisha would cure Naaman of his leprosy. ([2 Kings 5:2–3.](#)) Naaman told his lord the king of Aram what the girl said, and the king of Aram sent Naaman on his way with a letter to the king of Israel. ([2 Kings 5:4–5.](#)) Naaman departed, taking with him ten [talents](#) of silver, 6,000 pieces of gold, and ten changes of clothes. ([2 Kings 5:5.](#)) Naaman brought the king of Israel the letter, which asked the king of Israel to cure Naaman of his leprosy. ([2 Kings 5:6.](#)) When the king of Israel read the letter, he rent his clothes and complained that he was not God with power over life and death, but the king of Aram must have been seeking some pretext to attack Israel. ([2 Kings 5:7.](#))



Elisha refusing the gifts of Naaman (1637 painting by Pieter de Grebber)

When Elisha heard, he invited the king to send Naaman to him, and so Naaman came to Elisha's house with his horses and his chariots. ([2 Kings 5:8–9.](#)) Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman to tell him to wash seven times in the [Jordan River](#) and be healed, but that angered Naaman, who expected Elisha to come out, call on the name of God, and wave his hands over Naaman. ([2 Kings 5:10–11.](#)) Naaman asked whether the [Amanah](#) and [Pharpar](#) rivers of [Damascus](#) were not better than any river in Israel, so that he might wash in them and be clean. ([2 Kings 5:12.](#))

But Naaman's servants advised him that if Elisha had directed him to do some difficult thing he would have done it, so how much more should he do what Elisha directed when he said merely to wash and be clean. ([2 Kings 5:13.](#)) So Naaman dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, and his flesh came back like the flesh of a little child. ([2 Kings 5:14.](#))

Naaman returned to Elisha, avowed that there is no God except in Israel, and asked Elisha to take a present, but Elisha declined. ([2 Kings 5:15–16](#).) Naaman asked if he might take two mule loads of Israel’s earth so that Naaman might make offerings to God, and he asked that God might pardon Naaman when had had to bow before the Aramean idol [Rimmon](#) when the king of Aram leaned on Naaman to bow before Rimmon. ([2 Kings 5:17–18](#).) And Elisha told Naaman to go in peace. ([2 Kings 5:19](#).)

Connection to the parshah

Both the parshah and the haftarah report the treatment of skin disease, the parshah by the priests (in [Leviticus 13](#)), and the haftarah by the prophet Elisha (in [2 Kings 5](#)). Both the parshah and the haftarah frequently employ the term “skin disease” (*tzara’at*, [צָרַעַת](#)). ([Leviticus 13:3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20, 25, 27, 30, 42, 43, 49, 51, 52, 59](#); [2 Kings 5:3, 6, 7](#).)

A midrash deduced from the characterization of Naaman as a “great man” in [2 Kings 5:1](#) that Naaman was haughty on account of his being a great warrior, and as a result was smitten with leprosy. (Numbers Rabbah 7:5.)

And fundamentally, both the parshah and the haftarah view skin disease as related to the Divine sphere and an occasion for interaction with God.



Ezekiel (1510 fresco by [Michelangelo](#) from the [Sistine Chapel](#))

On Shabbat HaChodesh

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat HaChodesh ("Sabbath [of] the month," the [special Sabbath](#) preceding the Hebrew month of [Nissan](#) — as it does in 2011 and 2014), the haftarah is:

- for [Ashkenazi Jews](#): [Ezekiel 45:16–46:18](#)
- for [Sephardi Jews](#): [Ezekiel 45:18–46:15](#)

Connection to the Special Sabbath

On Shabbat HaChodesh, Jews read [Exodus 12:1–20](#), in which God commands that “This month [Nissan] shall be the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year” ([Exodus 12:2](#)), and in which God issued the commandments of Passover. ([Exodus 12:3–20](#).) Similarly, the haftarah in [Ezekiel 45:21–25](#) discusses Passover. In both the special reading and the haftarah,

God instructs the Israelites to apply blood to doorposts. ([Exodus 12:7](#); [Ezekiel 45:19](#).)

Parshah Tazria-Metzora

When parshah Tazria is combined with parshah Metzora (as it is in 2012, 2013, and 2015) and the parshah does not coincide with a special parshah, the haftarah is the haftarah for parshah Metzora, [2 Kings 7:3–20](#).



The lepers went into a tent (illustration by Charles Joseph Staniland (1838–1916))

Summary

During the Arameans' siege of Samaria, four leprous men at the gate asked each other why they should die there of starvation, when they might go to the Arameans, who would either save them or leave them no worse than they were. ([2 Kings 7:3–4](#).)

When at twilight, they went to the Arameans' camp, there was no one there, for God had made the Arameans hear chariots, horses, and a great army, and fearing the [Hittites](#) and the Egyptians, they fled, leaving their tents, their horses, their donkeys, and their camp. ([2 Kings 7:5–7.](#)) The lepers went into a tent, ate and drank, and carried away silver, gold, and clothing from the tents and hid it. ([2 Kings 7:8.](#))



The four lepers bring the news to the guards at the gate of Samaria (illumination from [Petrus Comestor](#)'s 1372 *Bible Historiale*)

Feeling qualms of guilt, they went to go tell the king of Samaria, and called to the porters of the city telling them what they had seen, and the porters told the king's household within. ([2 Kings 7:9–11.](#)) The king arose in the night, and told his servants that he

suspected that the Arameans had hidden in the field, thinking that when the Samaritans came out, they would be able to get into the city. ([2 Kings 7:12.](#)) One of his servants suggested that some men take five of the horses that remained and go see, and they took two chariots with horses to go and see. ([2 Kings 7:13–14.](#)) They went after the Arameans as far as the Jordan River, and all the way was littered with garments and vessels that the Arameans had cast away in their haste, and the messengers returned and told the king. ([2 Kings 7:15.](#)) So the people went out and looted Arameans' camp, so that the price of fine flour and two measures of barley each dropped to a shekel, as God had said it would. ([2 Kings 7:16.](#)) And the king appointed the captain on whom he leaned to take charge of the gate, and the people trampled him and killed him before he could taste of the flour, just as the man of God Elisha had said. ([2 Kings 7:17–20.](#))

Connection to the double parshah

Both the double parshah and the haftarah deal with people stricken with skin disease. Both the parshah and the haftarah employ the term for the person affected by skin disease (*metzora*, מִצְרָא). ([Leviticus 14:2](#); [2 Kings 7:3, 8.](#)) In parshah Tazria, [Leviticus 13:46](#) provides that the person with skin disease “shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be,” thus explaining why the four leprous men in the haftarah lived outside the gate. ([2 Kings 7:3.](#))

Rabbi Johanan taught that the four leprous men at the gate in [2 Kings 7:3](#) were none other than Elisha's former servant Gehazi

(whom the midrash, above, cited as having been stricken with leprosy for profanation of the Divine Name) and his three sons. ([Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 107b.](#))



[Isaiah](#) (fresco circa 1508–1512 by Michelangelo from the Sistine Chapel)

In parshah Metzora, when there “seems” to be a plague in the house ([Leviticus 14:35](#)), the priest must not jump to conclusions, but must examine the facts. ([Leviticus 14:36–37](#), [39](#), [44](#).) Just before the opening of the haftarah, in [2 Kings 7:2](#), the captain on whom the king leaned jumps to the conclusion that Elisha’s prophesy could not come true, and the captain meets his punishment in [2 Kings 7:17](#) and [19](#). (See Lainie Blum Cogan and Judy Weiss. *Teaching Haftarah: Background, Insights, and Strategies*, 203. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, 2005. [ISBN 0-86705-054-3](#).)

On Shabbat Rosh Chodesh

When the parshah or combined parshah coincides with Shabbat Rosh Chodesh (as it did in 2009), the haftarah is [Isaiah 66:1–24](#).

In the liturgy

Some Jews refer to the laws of bird offerings in [Leviticus 12:8](#) and the laws of the menstrual cycle as they study the end of [chapter 3](#) of *Pirkei Avot* on a Sabbath between [Passover](#) and [Rosh Hashanah](#). (Menachem Davis. *The Schottenstein Edition Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals with an Interlinear Translation*, 556. Brooklyn: [Mesorah Publications](#), 2002. [ISBN 1-57819-697-3](#).)

Some Jews refer to the guilt offerings for skin disease in [Leviticus 13](#) as part of readings on the offerings after the Sabbath morning blessings. (Davis, *Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals*, at 239.)

The Weekly Maqam

In [the Weekly Maqam](#), [Sephardi Jews](#) each week base the songs of the services on the content of that week's parshah. For parshah Tazria, Sephardi Jews apply Maqam Saba, the maqam that symbolizes a covenant (*brit*). This is appropriate, because this parshah commences with the discussion of what to do when a baby boy is born. It also mentions the [brit milah](#), a ritual that shows a covenant between man and God.

Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

Biblical

- [Genesis 17:12](#) (circumcision).



Philo

- [Psalms 72:12](#) (God's help for the needy who cry out);
[147:3](#) (God's healing).

Early nonrabbinic

- [Jubilees 3:8–14](#) Land of Israel, 2nd century BCE. (days of defilement after childbirth).
- [Philo. *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile* 13:47; *On the Unchangableness of God* 25:123–24; 27:127; *Concerning Noah's Work as a Planter* 26:111; *On the Prayers and Curses Uttered by Noah When He Became Sober* 10:49. \[Alexandria\]\(#\), Egypt, early 1st century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by \[Charles Duke Yonge\]\(#\), 136, 168, 200, 231. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1993. \[ISBN 0-943575-93-1\]\(#\).](#)



Josephus

- [Josephus](#), *Antiquities of the Jews* 3:11:3–5. Circa 93–94. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [William Whiston](#), 96–97. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1987. [ISBN 0-913573-86-8](#).
- [Luke 2:22](#) (days of purification after birth).

Classical rabbinic

- [Mishnah](#): Nazir 7:3; Sotah 3:8; Arakhin 2:1, Keritot 6:9; Kinnim 1:1–3:6; Negaim 1:1–14:13. Land of Israel, circa 200 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 444, 453, 811, 851, 883–89, 981–1012. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).
- [Tosefta](#): Bikkurim 2:6; Shabbat 8:27; Megillah 2:4; Sotah 6:7; Eduyot 2:4; Negaim 1:1–9:9. Land of Israel, circa 300 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew, with a New Introduction*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:350, 385, 857; 2:1253, 1709–44. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 2002. [ISBN 1-56563-642-2](#).

- [Sifra](#) 121:1–147:16. Land of Israel, 4th century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 2:231–323. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-206-2](#).
- [Jerusalem Talmud](#): Kilayim 76a; Maaser Sheni 46b. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 5, 10. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2008–2009. *[Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon](#) 10:2. Land of Israel, 5th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai*. Translated by W. David Nelson, 31. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006. [ISBN 0-8276-0799-7](#).
- [Leviticus Rabbah](#) 2:6; 5:5; 14:1–16:1; 16:3–4, 6; 17:3–4; 18:2, 4–5; 21:2; 27:1, 10; 36:1. Land of Israel, 5th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:24, 70, 177–98, 202, 205–07, 216–17, 219, 229, 232–33, 266, 344, 354, 456. London: Soncino Press, 1939. [ISBN 0-900689-38-2](#).



Talmud

- Babylonian [Talmud](#): [Berakhot 4a, 5b, 25a](#); [Shabbat 2b, 24b, 26b, 28a, 54a, 55b, 67a, 94b, 132a–b, 134b–35a](#); [Eruvin 24a, 32a, 37a](#); [Pesachim 3a, 4a, 9b, 67a–b, 75a, 84a, 90b, 92a, 113b](#); [Yoma 6a, 9b, 28b, 34b, 41a, 42a, 81a](#); [Sukkah 28b](#); [Megillah 8b, 20a, 24b](#); [Moed Katan 5a, 7a–8a, 14b–15a](#); [Chagigah 11a, 18b](#); [Yevamot 4b, 47b, 72b, 74b–75a, 83a, 103b–04a](#); [Ketubot 61b, 75b](#); [Nedarim 4b](#); [Nazir 17b, 26b–27a, 29a, 43a, 54b, 56b, 59b, 64b, 65b](#); [Sotah 5a, 23a, 32b](#); [Kiddushin 13b, 25a, 30a, 35b](#); [Bava Kamma 11a, 80a, 92b](#); [Bava Metzia 86a](#); [Bava Batra 84a, 127a](#); [Sanhedrin 4a, 11a, 26a, 34b, 54b, 59b, 68a, 83b, 87b–88a, 97a, 101a](#); [Makkot 8b, 14b, 20b, 22a](#); [Shevuot 2a, 6a–7a, 8a, 11a, 16a, 17b](#); [Avodah Zarah 23b, 42a](#); [Horayot 10a](#); [Zevachim 19b, 32b, 33b, 38a, 49b, 67b, 76b, 90a, 94a, 102a, 105b, 112b, 117a](#); [Menachot 4b, 6b, 37b, 39b, 91b](#); [Chullin 8a, 24a, 31b, 41b, 51b, 63a, 71a, 77b–78a, 84b–85a, 109b, 134a](#); [Bekhorot 17a, 27b, 34b, 41a, 47b](#); [Arakhin 3a, 8b, 15b–16b, 18b, 21a](#); [Temurah 26b](#); [Keritot 7b–8b, 9b–10b, 22b, 28a](#); [Meilah 19a](#); [Niddah 11a–b, 15b, 19a, 20b–21a, 24b, 27b, 30b–31a, 34a–b, 35b, 36b, 37b, 38b, 40a, 44a, 47b, 50a, 66a, 71b](#). Babylonia, 6th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Bavli*. Edited by Yisroel Simcha Schorr, Chaim Malinowitz, and Mordechai Marcus, 72 vols. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2006.

Medieval

- [Solomon ibn Gabirol](#). *A Crown for the King*, [30:369–70](#). Spain, 11th century. Translated by David R. Slavitt, 48–49. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. [ISBN 0-19-511962-2](#).



Rashi

- [Maimonides](#). *The Guide for the Perplexed*, [1:42](#); [3:41](#), [45](#), [47](#), [49](#). [Cairo](#), Egypt, 1190. Reprinted in, e.g., Moses Maimonides. *The Guide for the Perplexed*. Translated by [Michael Friedländer](#), 56, 346, 357, 368, 379. New York: Dover Publications, 1956. [ISBN 0-486-20351-4](#).
- [Zohar 3:42a–52a](#). Spain, late 13th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Zohar*. Translated by Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon. 5 vols. London: Soncino Press, 1934.
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Modern



Dickinson

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- [Jacob Milgrom](#). *Leviticus 1–16*, 3:742–826. New York: [Anchor Bible](#), 1998. [ISBN 0-385-11434-6](#).
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External links

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Commentaries



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Metzora (parsha)

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Metzora, **Metzorah**, **M'tzora**, **Mezora**, **Metsora**, or **M'tsora** (מִצְרָא — [Hebrew](#) for “one being diseased,” the ninth word, and the first distinctive word, in the parshah) is the 28th [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the fifth in the [book of Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 14:1–15:33](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) generally read it in April.

The [lunisolar Hebrew calendar](#) contains up to 55 [weeks](#), the exact number varying between 50 in common years and 54 or 55 in leap years. In leap years (for example, 2011, 2014, and 2016), parshah Metzora is read separately. In common years (for example, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018), parshah Metzora is combined with the previous parshah, [Tazria](#), to help achieve the needed number of weekly readings.

The parshah deals with ritual impurity. It addresses cleansing from [tzaraath](#), houses with an eruptive plague, male genital discharges, and [menstruation](#).



cedar wood

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[\[edit\]](#) Summary

[\[edit\]](#) Cleansing from skin disease

[God](#) told [Moses](#) the [ritual](#) for cleansing one with a skin disease. ([Leviticus 14:1–2.](#)) If the [priest](#) saw that the person had healed, the priest would order two live clean birds, [cedar](#) wood, crimson stuff, and [hyssop](#). ([Leviticus 14:3–4.](#)) The priest would order one of the birds slaughtered over fresh [water](#) and would then dip the live bird, the cedar wood, the crimson stuff, and the hyssop in the [blood](#) of the slaughtered bird. ([Leviticus 14:5–6.](#)) The priest would then sprinkle the blood seven times on the one who was to be cleansed and then set the live bird free. ([Leviticus 14:6–7.](#)) The one to be cleansed would then wash his clothes, shave off his [hair](#), bathe in water, and then be clean. ([Leviticus 14:8.](#)) On the eighth day after that, the one being cleansed was to present two male [lambs](#), one ewe lamb, choice [flour](#), and [oil](#) for the priest to offer. ([Leviticus 14:9–13.](#)) The priest was to put some of the blood and the oil on the ridge of the right [ear](#), the right [thumb](#),

and the right big [toe](#) of the one being cleansed, and then put more of the oil on his [head](#). ([Leviticus 14:14–18.](#)) If the one being cleansed was poor, he could bring two [turtle doves](#) or [pigeons](#) in place of two of the lambs. ([Leviticus 14:21–22.](#))



hyssop (1885 painting by [Otto Wilhelm Thome](#))

[[edit](#)] Houses with an eruptive plague

God then told Moses and [Aaron](#) the ritual for cleansing a [house](#) with an eruptive plague. ([Leviticus 14:33–34.](#)) The owner was to tell the priest, who was to order the house cleared and then examine it. ([Leviticus 14:35–36.](#)) If the plague in the walls was greenish or reddish streaks deep into the wall, the priest was to close the house for seven days. ([Leviticus 14:37–38.](#)) If, after

seven days, the plague had spread, the priest was to order the stones with the plague to be pulled out and cast outside the city. ([Leviticus 14:39–40.](#)) The house was then to be scraped, the stones replaced, and the house replastered. ([Leviticus 14:41–42.](#)) If the plague again broke out, the house was to be torn down. ([Leviticus 14:43–45.](#)) If the plague did not break out again, the priest was to pronounce the house clean. ([Leviticus 14:48.](#)) To purge the house, the priest was to take two birds, cedar wood, crimson stuff, and hyssop, slaughter one bird over fresh water, sprinkle on the house seven times with the bird's blood, and then let the live bird go free. ([Leviticus 14:49–53.](#))

[[edit](#)] Male genital discharge

God then told Moses and Aaron the ritual for cleansing a person who had a genital discharge. ([Leviticus 15.](#))

When a man had a discharge from his genitals, he was unclean, and any bedding on which he lay and every object on which he sat was to be unclean. ([Leviticus 15:2–4.](#)) Anyone who touched his body, touched his bedding, touched an object on which he sat, was touched by his spit, or was touched by him before he rinsed his hands was to wash his clothes, bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening. ([Leviticus 15:5–11.](#)) An earthen vessel that he touched was to be broken, and any wooden implement was to be rinsed with water. ([Leviticus 15:12.](#)) Seven days after the discharge ended, he was to wash his clothes, bathe his body in fresh water, and be clean. ([Leviticus 15:13.](#)) On the eighth day, he was to give two turtle doves or two pigeons to the

priest, who was to offer them to make expiation. ([Leviticus 15:14–15.](#))

When a man had an emission of [semen](#), he was to bathe and remain unclean until evening. ([Leviticus 15:16.](#)) All material on which semen fell was to be washed in water and remain unclean until evening. ([Leviticus 15:17.](#)) And if a man had carnal relations with a woman, they were both to bathe and remain unclean until evening. ([Leviticus 15:18.](#))

[[edit](#)] Menstruation

When a woman had a menstrual discharge, she was to remain impure seven days, and whoever touched her was to be unclean until evening. ([Leviticus 15:19.](#)) Anything that she lay on or sat on was unclean. ([Leviticus 15:20.](#)) Anyone who touched her bedding or any object on which she has sat was to wash his clothes, bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening. ([Leviticus 15:21–23.](#)) And if a man lay with her, her impurity was communicated to him and he was to be unclean seven days, and any bedding on which he lay became unclean. ([Leviticus 15:24.](#)) When a woman had an irregular discharge of blood, she was to be unclean as long as her discharge lasted. ([Leviticus 15:25–27.](#)) Seven days after the discharge ended, she was to be clean. ([Leviticus 15:28.](#)) On the eighth day, she was to give two turtle doves or two pigeons to the priest, who was to offer them to make expiation. ([Leviticus 15:29–30.](#))

God told Moses and Aaron to put the Israelites on guard against uncleanness, lest they die by defiling God's [Tabernacle](#). ([Leviticus 15:31](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) In inner-biblical interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 14

[Leviticus 13–14](#) associates skin disease with uncleanness, and [Leviticus 15](#) associates various sexuality-related events with uncleanness. In the [Hebrew Bible](#), uncleanness has a variety of associations. [Leviticus 11:8, 11; 21:1–4, 11](#); and [Numbers 6:6–7; 19:11–16](#); associate it with death. And perhaps similarly, [Leviticus 12](#) associates it with childbirth and [Leviticus 13–14](#) associates it with skin disease. [Leviticus 15](#) associates it with various sexuality-related events. And [Jeremiah 2:7, 23; 3:2](#); and [7:30](#); and [Hosea 6:10](#) associate it with contact with the worship of alien gods.

The Hebrew Bible reports skin disease (*tẖara'at*, תַּחַרַעַת) and a person affected by skin disease (*metẖora*, מֵצַח־רַע) at several places, often (and sometimes incorrectly) translated as “leprosy” and “a leper.” In [Exodus 4:6](#), to help Moses to convince others that God had sent him, God instructed Moses to put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, his hand was “leprous (*m'tẖora'at*, מֵצַח־רַעַת), as white as snow.” In [Leviticus 13–14](#), the Torah sets out regulations for skin diseases (*tẖara'at*, תַּחַרַעַת) and a person affected by skin disease (*metẖora*, מֵצַח־רַע). In [Numbers 12:10](#), after [Miriam](#) spoke against Moses, God's cloud removed

from the [Tent of Meeting](#) and “Miriam was leprous (*m’tzora’at*, מִצְרַעַת), as white as snow.” In [Deuteronomy 24:8–9](#), Moses warned the Israelites in the case of skin disease (*tzara’at*, צִרְעָת) diligently to observe all that the priests would teach them, remembering what God did to Miriam. In [2 Kings 5:1–19](#), part of the [haftarah](#) for parshah Tazria, the prophet [Elisha](#) cures [Naaman](#), the commander of the army of the king of [Aram](#), who was a “leper” (*metzora*, מְצֻרָע). In [2 Kings 7:3–20](#), part of the haftarah for parshah Metzora, the story is told of four “leprous men” (*m’tzora’im*, מִצְרַעִים) at the gate during the [Arameans’](#) siege of [Samaria](#). And in [2 Chronicles 26:19](#), after King [Uzziah](#) tried to burn incense in the [Temple in Jerusalem](#), “leprosy (*tzara’at*, צִרְעָת) broke forth on his forehead.”

[\[edit\]](#) In classical rabbinic interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 14

Tractate [Negaim](#) in the [Mishnah](#) and [Tosefta](#) interpreted the laws of skin disease in [Leviticus 14](#). (Mishnah Negaim 1:1–14:13; Tosefta Negaim 1:1–9:9.)

[Leviticus 18:4](#) calls on the Israelites to obey God’s “statutes” (*hukim*) and “ordinances” (*mishpatim*). The Rabbis in a [Baraita](#) taught that the “ordinances” (*mishpatim*) were commandments that logic would have dictated that we follow even had Scripture not commanded them, like the laws concerning idolatry, adultery, bloodshed, robbery, and blasphemy. And “statutes” (*hukim*) were commandments that the Adversary challenges us to violate as

beyond reason, like those relating to purification of the person with *tzaraat* (in [Leviticus 14](#)), *shaatnez* (in [Leviticus 19:19](#) and [Deuteronomy 22:11](#)), *halizah* (in [Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)), and the *scapegoat* (in [Leviticus 16](#)). So that people do not think these “ordinances” (*mishpatim*) to be empty acts, in [Leviticus 18:4](#), God says, “I am the Lord,” indicating that the Lord made these statutes, and we have no right to question them. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 67b.](#))

[Rabbi Johanan](#) said in the name of Rabbi Joseph ben Zimra that anyone who bears evil tales (*lashon bara*) will be visited by skin disease (*tzaraat*), as it is said in [Psalm 101:5](#): “Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I destroy (*azmit*).” The [Gemara](#) read *azmit* to allude to *tzaraat*, and cited how [Leviticus 25:23](#) says “in perpetuity” (*la-zemitut*). And [Resh Lakish](#) interpreted the words of [Leviticus 14:2](#), “This shall be the law of the person with skin disease (*metzora*, מֵצֹרָא),” to mean, “This shall be the law for him who brings up an evil name (*motzi shem ra*).” ([Babylonian Talmud Arachin 15b.](#))

Similarly, Rabbi [Haninah](#) taught that skin disease came only from slander. The Rabbis found a proof for this from the case of Miriam, arguing that because she uttered slander against Moses, plagues attacked her. And the Rabbis read [Deuteronomy 24:8–9](#) to support this when it says in connection with skin disease, “remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam.” ([Deuteronomy Rabbah](#) 6:8.)

Rabbi Samuel bar Nahmani said in the name of Rabbi Johanan that skin disease results from seven things: slander, the shedding

of blood, vain oath, incest, arrogance, robbery, and envy. The Gemara cited scriptural bases for each of the associations: For slander, [Psalm 101:5](#); for bloodshed, [2 Samuel 3:29](#); for a vain oath, [2 Kings 5:23–27](#); for incest, [Genesis 12:17](#); for arrogance, [2 Chronicles 26:16–19](#); for robbery, [Leviticus 14:36](#) (as a Tanna taught that those who collect money that does not belong to them will see a priest come and scatter their money around the street); and for envy, [Leviticus 14:35](#). ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16a](#).)



Worshipping the golden calf (illustration from a 1901 Bible card published by the Providence Lithograph Company)



Miriam Shut Out from the Camp (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

Similarly, a midrash taught that skin disease resulted from 10 sins: (1) idol-worship, (2) unchastity, (3) bloodshed, (4) the profanation of the Divine Name, (5) blasphemy of the Divine Name, (6) robbing the public, (7) usurping a dignity to which one has no right, (8) overweening pride, (9) evil speech, and (10) an evil eye. The midrash cited as proofs: (1) for idol-worship, the experience of the Israelites who said of the Golden Calf, “This is your god, O Israel,” in [Exodus 32:4](#) and then were smitten with leprosy, as reported in [Exodus 32:25](#), where “Moses saw that the people had broken out (*parua*, פָּרַע),” indicating that leprosy had “broken out” (*parah*) among them; (2) for unchastity, from the experience

of the daughters of Zion of whom [Isaiah 3:16](#) says, “the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and ogling eyes,” and then [Isaiah 3:17](#) says, “Therefore will the Lord smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion”; (3) for bloodshed, from the experience of [Joab](#), of whom [2 Samuel 3:29](#) says, “Let it fall upon the head of Joab, and upon all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper,” (4) for the profanation of the Divine Name, from the experience of [Gehazi](#), of whom [2 Kings 5:20](#) says, “But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the [man of God](#), said: ‘Behold, my master has spared this [Naaman](#) the [Aramean](#), in not receiving at his hands that which he brought; as the Lord lives, I will surely run after him, and take of him somewhat (*me'umab*, מְאֻמָּה),” and “somewhat” (*me'umab*, מְאֻמָּה) means “of the blemish” (*mum*, מוּם) that Naaman had, and thus Gehazi was smitten with leprosy, as [2 Kings 5:20](#) reports Elisha said to Gehazi, “The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave to you”; (5) for blaspheming the Divine Name, from the experience of [Goliath](#), of whom [1 Samuel 17:43](#) says, “And the Philistine cursed [David](#) by his God,” and the [1 Samuel 17:46](#) says, “This day will the Lord deliver (*sagar*, שָׂגַרְךָ) you,” and the term “deliver” (*sagar*, שָׂגַרְךָ) is used here in the same sense as [Leviticus 13:5](#) uses it with regard to leprosy, when it is says, “And the priest shall shut him up (*sagar*)”; (6) for robbing the public, from the experience of [Shebna](#), who derived illicit personal benefit from property of the Sanctuary, and of whom [Isaiah 22:17](#) says, “the Lord . . . will wrap you round and round,” and “wrap” must refer to a leper, of whom [Leviticus 13:45](#) says, “And he shall wrap

himself over the upper lip”; (7) for usurping a dignity to which one has no right, from the experience of [Uzziah](#), of whom [2 Chronicles 26:21](#) says, “And Uzziah the king was a leper to the day of his death”; (8) for overweening pride, from the same example of Uzziah, of whom [2 Chronicles 26:16](#) says, “But when he became strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly and he trespassed against the Lord his God”; (9) for evil speech, from the experience of Miriam, of whom [Numbers 12:1](#) says, “And Miriam . . . spoke against Moses,” and then [Numbers 12:10](#) says, “when the cloud was removed from over the Tent, behold Miriam was leprous”; and (10) for an evil eye, from the person described in [Leviticus 14:35](#), which can be read, “And he that keeps his house to himself shall come to the priest, saying: There seems to me to be a plague in the house,” and [Leviticus 14:35](#) thus describes one who is not willing to permit any other to have any benefit from the house. (Leviticus Rabbah 17:3.)

Similarly, Rabbi Judah the Levite, son of Rabbi Shalom, inferred that skin disease comes because of eleven sins: (1) for cursing the Divine Name, (2) for immorality, (3) for bloodshed, (4) for ascribing to another a fault that is not in him, (5) for haughtiness, (6) for encroaching upon other people's domains, (7) for a lying tongue, (8) for theft, (9) for swearing falsely, (10) for profanation of the name of Heaven, and (11) for idolatry. Rabbi Isaac added: for ill-will. And our Rabbis said: for despising the words of the Torah. (Numbers Rabbah 7:5.)

A [midrash](#) taught that Divine Justice first attacks a person's substance and then the person's body. So when leprous plagues

come upon a person, first they come upon the fabric of the person's house. If the person repents, then [Leviticus 14:40](#) requires that only the affected stones need to be pulled out; if the person does not repent, then [Leviticus 14:45](#) requires pulling down the house. Then the plagues come upon the person's clothes. If the person repents, then the clothes require washing; if not, they require burning. Then the plagues come upon the person's body. If the person repents, [Leviticus 14:1–32](#) provides for purification; if not, then [Leviticus 13:46](#) ordains that the person "shall dwell alone." ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 17:4; [Ruth Rabbah](#) 2:10.)

Similarly, the Tosefta reported that when a person would come to the priest, the priest would tell the person to engage in self-examination and turn from evil ways. The priest would continue that plagues come only from gossip, and skin disease from arrogance. But God would judge in mercy. The plague would come to the house, and if the homeowner repented, the house required only dismantling, but if the homeowner did not repent, the house required demolition. They would appear on clothing, and if the owner repented, the clothing required only tearing, but if the owner did not repent, the clothing required burning. They would appear on the person's body, and if the person repented, well and good, but if the person did not repent, [Leviticus 13:46](#) required that the person "shall dwell alone." (Tosefta Negaim 6:7.)



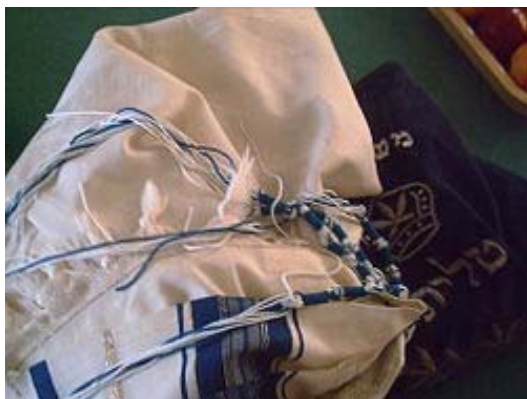
Pigeons (painting circa 1832–1837 by [John Gould](#))

In the priest’s examination of skin disease mandated by [Leviticus 13:2, 9](#), and [14:2](#), the Mishnah taught that a priest could examine anyone else’s symptoms, but not his own. And [Rabbi Meir](#) taught that the priest could not examine his relatives. (Mishnah Negaim 2:5; Deuteronomy Rabbah 6:8.) The Mishnah taught that the priests delayed examining a bridegroom — as well as his house and his garment — until after his seven days of rejoicing, and delayed examining anyone until after a [holy day](#). (Mishnah Negaim 3:2.)

Rabbi [Joshua ben Levi](#) taught that [Leviticus 14:4](#) required “two living clean birds” to be brought to purify the person afflicted with skin disease because the afflicted person did the work of a

babbler in spreading evil tales, and therefore [Leviticus 14:4](#) required that the afflicted person offer babbling birds as a sacrifice. ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16b.](#))

The Gemara interpreted the expression “two living birds” in [Leviticus 14:4](#). The Gemara interpreted the word “living” to mean those whose principal limbs are living (excluding birds that are missing a limb) and to exclude *treifah* birds (birds with an injury or defect that would prevent them from living out a year). The Gemara interpreted the word “birds” (צִפֹּרִים, *zipporim*) to mean kosher birds. The Gemara deduced from the words of [Deuteronomy 14:11](#), “Every bird (צִפּוֹר, *zippor*) *that is clean* you may eat,” that some *zipparim* are forbidden as unclean — namely, birds slaughtered pursuant to [Leviticus 14](#). The Gemara interpreted the words of [Deuteronomy 14:12](#), “And these are they of which you shall not eat,” to refer to birds slaughtered pursuant to [Leviticus 14](#). And the Gemara taught that [Deuteronomy 14:11–12](#) repeats the commandment so as to teach that one who consumes a bird slaughtered pursuant to [Leviticus 14](#) infringes both a positive and a negative commandment. ([Babylonian Talmud Chullin 139b–40a.](#))



blue *tekbelet* thread on a set of *tzitzit*

Rabbi Hanina ben Gamaliel interpreted the words “completely blue (תְּכֵלֶת, *tekbelet*)” in [Exodus 28:31](#) to teach that blue dye used to test the dye is unfit for further use to dye the blue, *tekbelet* strand of a *tzitzit*, interpreting the word “completely” to mean “full strength.” But Rabbi Johanan ben Dahabai taught that even the second dyeing using the same dye is valid, reading the words “and scarlet” (וְשֵׁן נִי תוֹלַעַת, *ushni tolalat*) in [Leviticus 14:4](#) to mean “a second [dying] of red wool.” ([Babylonian Talmud Menachot 42b.](#))

A midrash noted that God commanded the Israelites to perform certain precepts with similar material from trees: God commanded that the Israelites throw cedar wood and hyssop into the Red Heifer mixture of [Numbers 19:6](#) and use hyssop to sprinkle the resulting waters of lustration in [Numbers 19:18](#); God commanded that the Israelites use cedar wood and hyssop to purify those stricken with skin disease in [Leviticus 14:4–6](#); and in [Egypt](#) God commanded the Israelites to use the bunch of hyssop

to strike the lintel and the two side-posts with blood in [Exodus 12:22](#). ([Exodus Rabbah](#) 17:1.)



Sending Out the Scapegoat on Yom Kippur (illustration by William James Webb)

A midrash interpreted the words, “And he spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall,” in [1 Kings 5:13](#) to teach that [Solomon](#) interpreted the requirement in [Leviticus 14:4–6](#) to use cedar wood and hyssop to purify those stricken with skin disease. Solomon asked why the person stricken with skin disease was purified by means of the tallest and lowest of trees. And Solomon answered that the person’s raising himself up like a cedar caused him to be smitten with skin disease, but making himself small and humbling himself like the hyssop caused him be healed. ([Ecclesiastes Rabbah](#) 7:35.)

When Rav Dimi came from the [Land of Israel](#), he said in the name of Rabbi Johanan that there were three red threads: one in connection with the red cow in [Numbers 19:6](#), the second in connection with the [scapegoat](#) in the [Yom Kippur](#) service of [Leviticus 16:7–10](#) (which [Mishnah Yoma 4:2](#) indicates was marked with a red thread), and the third in connection with the person with skin disease (the *m'tzora*) in [Leviticus 14:4](#). Rav Dimi reported that one weighed ten [zuz](#), another weighed two [selas](#), and the third weighed a [shekel](#), but he could not say which was which. When Rabin came, he said in the name of Rabbi Jonathan that the thread in connection with the red cow weighed ten [zuz](#), that of the scapegoat weighed two [selas](#), and that of the person with skin disease weighed a [shekel](#). Rabbi Johanan said that Rabbi Simeon ben Halafta and the Sages disagreed about the thread of the red cow, one saying that it weighed ten [shekels](#), the other that it weighed one [shekel](#). Rabbi Jeremiah of Difti said to [Rabina](#) that they disagreed not about the thread of the red cow, but about that of the scapegoat. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 41b–42a](#).)

Tractate [Kinnim](#) in the Mishnah interpreted the laws of pairs of sacrificial pigeons and doves in [Leviticus 1:14](#), [5:7](#), [12:6–8](#), [14:22](#), and [15:29](#); and [Numbers 6:10](#). ([Mishnah Kinnim 1:1–3:6](#).)



The [Levant](#) in the 9th Century B.C.E.

In [Leviticus 14:33–34](#), God announced that God would “put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession.”

[Rabbi Hiyya](#) asked: Was it then a piece of good news that plagues were to come upon them? Rabbi [Simeon ben Yohai](#) answered that when the [Canaanites](#) heard that the Israelites were approaching, they hid their valuables in their houses. But God promised the Israelites’ forbearers that God would bring the

Israelites into a land full of good things, including (in the words of [Deuteronomy 6:11](#)) “houses full of all good things.” So God brought plagues upon a house of one of the Israelites so that when he would pull it down, he would find a treasure. (Leviticus Rabbah 17:6.)

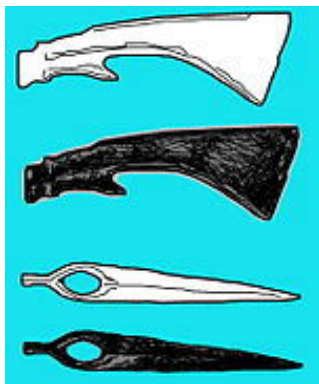
The [Sifra](#) read the words “the land of Canaan” in [Leviticus 14:34](#) to refer to the Land that God set aside distinctly for the Israelites. The Sifra thus read the words “which I give to you” in [Leviticus 14:34](#) to exclude the lands of [Ammon](#) and [Moab](#) east of the [Jordan River](#). Thus house plagues could occur only in the Land of Israel west of the Jordan. (Sifra Mesora 155:1:1.) And [Rabbi Ishmael](#) read the words “of your possession” in [Leviticus 14:34](#) to exclude the possession of Gentiles in the Land of Israel from house plagues. (Sifra Mesora 155:1:6; see also Mishnah Negaim 12:1.)

Because [Leviticus 14:34](#) addresses “a house of the land,” the Mishnah taught that a house built on a ship, on a raft, or on four beams could not be afflicted by a house plague. (Mishnah Negaim 12:1.)

A midrash noted the difference in wording between [Genesis 47:27](#), which says of the Israelites in [Goshen](#) that “they got possessions therein,” and [Leviticus 14:34](#), which says of the Israelites in Canaan, “When you come into the land of Canaan, which I gave you for a possession.” The midrash read [Genesis 47:27](#) to read, “and they were taken in possession by it.” The midrash thus taught that in the case of Goshen, the land seized the Israelites, so that their bond might be exacted and so as to

bring about God's declaration to [Abraham](#) in [Genesis 15:13](#) that the Egyptians would afflict the Israelites for 400 years. But the midrash read [Leviticus 14:34](#) to teach the Israelites that if they were worthy, the Land of Israel would be an eternal possession, but if not, they would be banished from it. ([Genesis Rabbah](#) 95.)

The Rabbis taught that a structure of less than four square [cubits](#) could not contract a house plague. The Gemara explained that in speaking of house plagues, [Leviticus 14:35](#) uses the word “house,” and a building of less than four square cubits did not constitute a “house.” ([Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 3a–b.](#))



bronze ax heads of the type used between 1500 B.C.E. and 500 B.C.E. in the region of the [Adriatic Sea](#) (2008 drawing by Bratislav Tabaš)

A Baraita (which the Gemara later said may have reflected the view of Rabbi Meir, or may have reflected the view of the Rabbis) taught that a [synagogue](#), a house owned by partners, and a house owned by a woman are all subject to uncleanness from house plagues. The Gemara explained that the Baraita needed to

expound this because one might have argued that [Leviticus 14:35](#) says, “then he who owns the house shall come and tell the priest,” and “he who owns the house” could be read to imply “he” but not “she” and “he” but not “they.” And therefore the Baraita teaches that one should not read [Leviticus 14:35](#) that narrowly. And the Gemara explained that one should not read [Leviticus 14:35](#) that narrowly because [Leviticus 14:34](#) speaks broadly of “a house of the land of your possession,” indicating that all houses in the Land of Israel are susceptible to plagues. The Gemara then asked why [Leviticus 14:35](#) bothers to say, “he who owns the house.” The Gemara explained that [Leviticus 14:35](#) intends to teach that if a homeowner keeps his house to himself exclusively, refusing to lend his belongings, pretending that he did not own them, then God exposes the homeowner by subjecting his house to the plague and causing his belongings to be removed for all to see (as [Leviticus 14:36](#) requires). Thus [Leviticus 14:35](#) excludes from the infliction of house plagues homeowners who lend their belongings to others. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 11b.](#))

Similarly, Rabbi Isaac taught that when a person asked to borrow a friend’s ax or sieve, and the friend out of selfishness replied that he did not have one, then immediately the plague would attack the friend’s house. And as [Leviticus 14:36](#) required that they remove everything that he had in his house, including his axes and his sieves, the people would see his possessions and exclaim how selfish he had been. (Deuteronomy Rabbah 6:8; see also Leviticus Rabbah 17:2.)

But the Gemara asked whether a synagogue could be subject to house plagues. For a Baraita (which the Gemara later identified with the view of the Rabbis) taught that one might assume that synagogues and houses of learning are subject to house plagues, and therefore [Leviticus 14:35](#) says, “he who has the house will come,” to exclude those houses — like synagogues — that do not belong to any one individual. The Gemara proposed a resolution to the conflict by explaining that the first Baraita reflected the opinion of Rabbi Meir, while the second Baraita reflected the opinion of the Rabbis. For a Baraita taught that a synagogue that contains a dwelling for the synagogue attendant is required to have a mezuzah, but a synagogue that contains no dwelling, Rabbi Meir declares it is required to have a mezuzah, but the Sages exempt it. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 11b.](#))



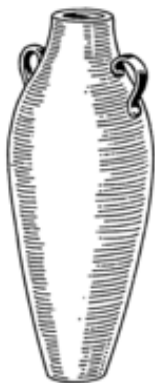
The Second Temple in Jerusalem (model in the [Israel Museum](#))

Alternatively, the Gemara suggested that both teachings were in accord with the Rabbis. In the first case, the synagogue referred to has a dwelling, and then even the Rabbis would say that it would be subject to house plagues. In the other case, the synagogue referred to has no dwelling, and so would not be subject to house plagues. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 11b.](#))

Alternatively, the Gemara tentatively suggested that in both cases, the synagogue has no dwelling, but the first teaching refers to urban synagogues, while the second refers to rural synagogues. But the Gemara asked whether urban synagogues really are not subject to uncleanness from house plagues. For a Baraita taught that the words, “in the house of the land of your possession” in [Leviticus 14:34](#) teach that a house of the land of the Israelites’ possession could become defiled through house plagues, but [Jerusalem](#) could not become defiled through house plagues, because Jerusalem did not fall within any single [Tribe’s](#) inheritance. [Rabbi Judah](#), however, said that he had heard that only the Temple in Jerusalem was unaffected by house plagues. Thus Rabbi Judah’s view would imply that synagogues and houses of learning are subject to house plagues even in large cities. The Gemara suggested, however, that one should read Rabbi Judah’s view to say that sacred places are not subject to house plagues. The Gemara suggested that the principle that the first Tanna and Rabbi Judah were disputing was whether Jerusalem was divided among the Tribes; the first Tanna holds that Jerusalem was not divided, while Rabbi Judah holds that

Jerusalem was divided among the Tribes. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 11b–12a.](#))

But the Gemara asked whether even rural synagogues could be subject to house plagues. For a Baraita taught that the words, “in the house of the land of your possession” in [Leviticus 14:34](#) teach that house plagues would not affect the Israelites until they conquered the Land of Israel. Furthermore, if the Israelites had conquered the Land but not yet divided it among the Tribes, or even divided it among the Tribes but not divided it among the families, or even divided it among the families but not given each person his holding, then house plagues would not yet affect the Israelites. It is to teach this result that [Leviticus 14:35](#) says, “he who has the house,” teaching that house plagues can occur only to those in the Land of Israel to whom alone the house belongs, excluding these houses that do not belong to an owner alone. Thus the Gemara rejected the explanation based on differences between urban and rural synagogues. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 12a.](#))





a cruse (drawing by [Pearson Scott Foresman](#))

The Mishnah interpreted the words, “there seems to me to be as it were a plague in the house,” in [Leviticus 14:35](#) to teach that even a learned sage who knows that he has definitely seen a sign of plague in a house may not speak with certainty. Rather, even the sage must say, “there *seems* to me to be as it were a plague in the house.” (Mishnah Negaim 12:5; Sifra Mesora 155:1:9.)

The Mishnah interpreted the instruction to empty the house in [Leviticus 14:36](#). Rabbi Judah taught that they removed even bundles of wood and even bundles of reeds. Rabbi Simeon remarked that this (removal of bundles that are not susceptible to uncleanness) was idle business. But Rabbi Meir responded by asking which of the homeowner’s goods could become unclean. Articles of wood, cloth, or metal surely could be immersed in a ritual bath and become clean. The only thing that the Torah spared was the homeowner’s earthenware, even his cruse and his ewer (which, if the house proved unclean, [Leviticus 15:12](#) indicates would have to be broken). If the Torah thus spared a person’s humble possessions, how much more so would the Torah spare a person’s cherished possessions. If the Torah shows so much consideration for material possessions, how much more so would the Torah show for the lives of a person’s children. If the Torah shows so much consideration for the possessions of a wicked person (if we take the plague as a punishment for the sin of slander), how much more so would the Torah show for the

possessions of a righteous person. (Mishnah Negaim 12:5; Sifra Mesora 155:1:13.)

Reading [Leviticus 14:37](#) to say, “And he shall look on the plague, and behold the plague,” the Sifra interpreted the double allusion to teach that a sign of house plague was no cause of uncleanness unless it appeared in at least the size of *two* split beans. (Sifra Mesora 156:1:1.) And because [Leviticus 14:37](#) addresses the house’s “walls” in the plural, the Sifra taught that a sign of house plague was no cause of uncleanness unless it appeared on at least four walls. (Sifra Mesora 156:1:2.) Consequently, the Mishnah taught that a round house or a triangular house could not contract uncleanness from a house plague. (Mishnah Negaim 12:1; Sifra Mesora 156:1:2.)

Because [Leviticus 14:40](#) addresses the house’s “stones” in the plural, [Rabbi Akiba](#) ruled that a sign of house plague was no cause of uncleanness unless it appeared in at least the size of two split beans on two stones, and not on only one stone. And because [Leviticus 14:37](#) addresses the house’s “walls” in the plural, Rabbi Eliezer son of Rabbi Simeon said that a sign of house plague was no cause of uncleanness unless it appeared in the size of two split beans, on two stones, on two walls in a corner, its length being that of two split beans and its breadth that of one split bean. (Mishnah Negaim 12:3.)

Because [Leviticus 14:45](#) addresses the “stones,” “timber,” and “mortar” of the house afflicted by a house plague, the Mishnah taught that only a house made of stones, timber, and mortar could be afflicted by a house plague. (Mishnah Negaim 12:2.)

And the Mishnah taught that the quantity of wood must be enough to build a threshold, and quantity of mortar must be enough to fill up the space between one row of stones and another. (Mishnah Negaim 12:4.)

A Baraita taught that there never was a leprous house within the meaning of [Leviticus 14:33–53](#) and never will be. The Gemara asked why then the law was written, and replied that it was so that one may study it and receive reward. But Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Zadok and Rabbi Simeon of Kefar Acco both cited cases where local tradition reported the ruins of such houses, in [Gaza](#) and [Galilee](#), respectively. ([Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 71a.](#))



The Chaldees Destroy the Brazen Sea (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

A midrash read the discussion of the house stricken with plague in [Leviticus 14:33–53](#) as a prophecy. The midrash read the words, “and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession,” in [Leviticus 14:34](#) to allude to the Temple, about which in [Ezekiel 24:21](#) God says, “I will defile My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes, and the longing of your soul.” The midrash read the words, “then He whose house it is shall come,” in [Leviticus 14:35](#) to allude to God, about Whom [Haggai 1:4](#) says, “Because of My house that lies waste.” The midrash read the words, “and He shall tell the priest,” in [Leviticus 14:35](#) to allude to [Jeremiah](#), who [Jeremiah 1:1](#) identified as a priest. The midrash read the words, “there seems to me to be, as it were, a plague in the house,” in [Leviticus 14:35](#) to allude to the idol that [King Manasseh](#) set up in [2 Kings 21:7](#). The midrash read the words, “and the priest shall command that they empty the house,” in [Leviticus 14:36](#) to allude to King [Shishak](#) of Egypt, who [1 Kings 14:26](#) reports, “took away the treasures of the house of the Lord.” The midrash read the words, “and he shall break down the house,” in [Leviticus 14:45](#) to allude to King [Nebuchadnezzar](#) of Babylon, who [Ezra 5:12](#) reports destroyed the Temple. The midrash read the words, “and they shall pour out the dust that they have scraped off outside the city,” in [Leviticus 14:41](#) to allude to the Israelites taken away to the [Babylonian Captivity](#), whom [Ezra 5:12](#) reports Nebuchadnezzar “carried . . . away into Babylon.” And the midrash read the words, “and they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones,” in [Leviticus 14:42](#) to allude to the Israelites who would come to restore Israel, and of whom [Isaiah](#)

[28:16](#) reports God saying, “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a costly corner-stone of sure foundation; he that believes shall not make haste.” (Leviticus Rabbah 17:7.)



Rabbi Akiba (illustration from the 1568 [Mantua Haggadah](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 15

Tractate [Zavim](#) in the Mishnah and Tosefta interpreted the laws of male genital discharges in [Leviticus 15:1–18](#). (Mishnah Zavim 1:1–5:12; Tosefta Zavim 1:1–5:12.)

The Mishnah taught that they inquired along seven lines before they determined that a genital discharge rendered a man unclean. A discharge caused by one of these reasons did not render the man impure or subject him to bringing an offering. They asked: (1) about his food, (2) about his drink, (3) what he had carried, (4)

whether he had jumped, (5) whether he had been ill, (6) what he had seen, and (7) whether he had obscene thoughts. It did not matter whether he had had thoughts before or after seeing a woman. Rabbi Judah taught that the discharge would not render him unclean if he had watched animals having intercourse or even if he merely saw a woman's dyed garments. Rabbi Akiba taught that the discharge would not render him unclean even if he had eaten any kind of food, good or bad, or had drunk any kind of liquid. The Sages exclaimed to Rabbi Akiba that according to his view, no more men would ever be rendered unclean by genital discharge. Rabbi Akiba replied that one does not have an obligation to ensure that there exist men unclean because of a genital discharges. (Mishnah Zavim 2:2.)

Rabbi [Eleazar ben Hisma](#) taught that even the apparently arcane laws of bird offerings in [Leviticus 12:8](#) and menstrual cycles in [Leviticus 12:1–8](#) and [15:19–33](#) are essential laws. ([Mishnah Avot 3:18.](#))

Tractate [Niddah](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, [Jerusalem Talmud](#), and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of menstruation in [Leviticus 15:19–33](#). (Mishnah Niddah 1:1–10:8; Tosefta Niddah 1:1–9:19; Jerusalem Talmud Niddah 1a–; [Babylonian Talmud Niddah 2a–73a.](#))

Rabbi Meir taught that the Torah ordained that menstruation should separate a wife from her husband for seven days, because if the husband were in constant contact with his wife, the husband might become disenchanted with her. The Torah, therefore, ordained that a wife might be unclean for seven days

(and therefore forbidden to her husband for intercourse) so that she should become as desirable to her husband as when she first entered the bridal chamber. ([Babylonian Talmud Niddah 31b.](#))

Interpreting the beginning of menstrual cycles, as in [Leviticus 15:19–33](#), the Mishnah ruled that if a woman loses track of her menstrual cycle, there is no return to the beginning of the *niddah* count in fewer than seven, nor more than seventeen days.

(Mishnah Arakhin 2:1; [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 8a.](#))

The Mishnah taught that a woman may attribute a bloodstain to any external cause to which she can possibly attribute it and thus regard herself as clean. If, for instance, she had killed an animal, she was handling bloodstains, she had sat beside those who handled bloodstains, or she had killed a louse, she may attribute the stain to those external causes. (Mishnah Niddah 8:2; [Babylonian Talmud Niddah 58b.](#))

The Mishnah related that a woman once came to Rabbi Akiba and told him that she had observed a bloodstain. He asked her whether she perhaps had a wound. She replied that she had a wound, but it had healed. He asked whether it was possible that it could open again and bleed. She answered in the affirmative, and Rabbi Akiba declared her clean. Observing that his disciples looked at each other in astonishment, he told them that the Sages did not lay down the rule for bloodstains to create a strict result but rather to produce a lenient result. for it is said in scripture, and if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood.¹⁴ only blood¹⁵ but not a bloodstain. (Mishnah Niddah 8:3; [Babylonian Talmud Niddah 58b.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Commandments

According [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 11 positive and no negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

- To carry out the prescribed rules for purifying the person affected by [tzara'at](#) ([Leviticus 14:2.](#))
- The person affected by tzara'at must shave off all his hair prior to purification. ([Leviticus 14:9.](#))
- Every impure person must immerse in a [mikvah](#) to become pure. ([Leviticus 14:9.](#))
- A person affected by tzara'at must bring an offering after going to the mikvah. ([Leviticus 14:10.](#))
- To observe the laws of impurity caused by a house's tzara'at ([Leviticus 14:35.](#))
- To observe the laws of impurity caused by a man's running issue ([Leviticus 15:3.](#))
- A man who had a running issue must bring an offering after he goes to the mikvah. ([Leviticus 15:13–14.](#))
- To observe the laws of impurity of a seminal emission ([Leviticus 15:16.](#))
- To observe the laws of menstrual impurity ([Leviticus 15:19.](#))

- To observe the laws of impurity caused by a woman's running issue ([Leviticus 15:25.](#))
- A woman who had a running issue must bring an offering after she goes to the mikvah. ([Leviticus 15:28–29.](#))

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 2:233–75. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-296-5.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Haftarah

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is [2 Kings 7:3–20.](#)



The lepers went into a tent (illustration by Charles Joseph Staniland (1838–1916))

[\[edit\]](#) Summary

During the Arameans' siege of Samaria, four leprous men at the gate asked each other why they should die there of starvation, when they might go to the Arameans, who would wither save them or leave them no worse than they were. ([2 Kings 7:3–4.](#))

When at twilight, they went to the Arameans' camp, there was no one there, for God had made the Arameans hear chariots, horses, and a great army, and fearing the [Hittites](#) and the Egyptians, they fled, leaving their tents, their horses, their donkeys, and their camp. ([2 Kings 7:5–7.](#)) The lepers went into a tent, ate and drank, and carried away silver, gold, and clothing from the tents and hid it. ([2 Kings 7:8.](#))



The four lepers bring the news to the guards at the gate of Samaria (illumination from [Petrus Comestor's 1372 Bible Historiale](#))

Feeling qualms of guilt, they went to go tell the king of Samaria, and called to the porters of the city telling them what they had seen, and the porters told the king's household within. ([2 Kings 7:9–11.](#)) The king arose in the night, and told his servants that he suspected that the Arameans had hidden in the field, thinking that when the Samaritans came out, they would be able to get into the city. ([2 Kings 7:12.](#)) One of his servants suggested that some men take five of the horses that remained and go see, and they took two chariots with horses to go and see. ([2 Kings 7:13–14.](#)) They went after the Arameans as far as the Jordan River, and all the way was littered with garments and vessels that the Arameans had cast away in their haste, and the messengers returned and told the king. ([2 Kings 7:15.](#)) So the people went out and looted Arameans' camp, so that the price of fine flour and two measures of barley each dropped to a shekel, as God had said it would. ([2 Kings 7:16.](#)) And the king appointed the captain on whom he leaned to take charge of the gate, and the people trampled him and killed him before he could taste of the flour, just as the man of God Elisha had said. ([2 Kings 7:17–20.](#))

[[edit](#)] Connection to the parshah

Both the parshah and the haftarah deal with people stricken with skin disease. Both the parshah and the haftarah employ the term for the person affected by skin disease (*metzora*, מְצֹרָא).

([Leviticus 14:2](#); [2 Kings 7:3, 8](#).) Just before parshah Metzora, in the sister parshah Tazria, [Leviticus 13:46](#) provides that the person with skin disease “shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be,” thus explaining why the four leprous men in the haftarah lived outside the gate. ([2 Kings 7:3](#).)

Rabbi Johanan taught that the four leprous men at the gate in [2 Kings 7:3](#) were none other than Elisha’s former servant Gehazi (whom the midrash, above, cited as having been stricken with leprosy for profanation of the Divine Name) and his three sons. ([Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 107b](#).)

In the parshah, when there “seems” to be a plague in the house ([Leviticus 14:35](#)), the priest must not jump to conclusions, but must examine the facts. ([Leviticus 14:36–37, 39, 44](#).) Just before the opening of the haftarah, in [2 Kings 7:2](#), the captain on whom the king leaned jumps to the conclusion that Elisha’s prophesy could not come true, and the captain meets his punishment in [2 Kings 7:17](#) and [19](#). (See Lainie Blum Cogan and Judy Weiss. *Teaching Haftarah: Background, Insights, and Strategies*, 203. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, 2005. [ISBN 0-86705-054-3](#).)



Ezekiel (1510 fresco by [Michelangelo](#) from the [Sistine Chapel](#))

[[edit](#)] On Shabbat HaChodesh

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat HaChodesh ("Sabbath [of] the month," the [special Sabbath](#) preceding the Hebrew month of [Nissan](#) — as it did in 2008), the haftarah is:

- for Ashkenazi Jews: [Ezekiel 45:16–46:18](#)
- for Sephardi Jews: [Ezekiel 45:18–46:15](#)



[Isaiah](#) (fresco circa 1508–1512 by Michelangelo from the Sistine Chapel)

[[edit](#)] Connection to the special Sabbath

On Shabbat HaChodesh, Jews read [Exodus 12:1–20](#), in which God commands that “This month [Nissan] shall be the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year” ([Exodus 12:2](#)), and in which God issued the commandments of Passover. ([Exodus 12:3–20](#).) Similarly, the haftarah in [Ezekiel 45:21–25](#) discusses Passover. In both the special reading and the haftarah, God instructs the Israelites to apply blood to doorposts. ([Exodus 12:7](#); [Ezekiel 45:19](#).)

[[edit](#)] On Shabbat Rosh Chodesh

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat [Rosh Chodesh](#) (as it did in 2009), the haftarah is [Isaiah 66:1–24](#).

[[edit](#)] In the liturgy

Some Jews refer to the guilt offerings for skin disease in [Leviticus 14:10–12](#) as part of readings on the offerings after the Sabbath morning blessings. (Menachem Davis. *The Schottenstein Edition Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals with an Interlinear Translation*, 239. Brooklyn: [Mesorah Publications](#), 2002. [ISBN 1-57819-697-3](#).)

The laws of a house afflicted with plague in [Leviticus 14:34–35](#) provide an application of the twelfth of the Thirteen Rules for interpreting the Torah in the [Baraita of Rabbi Ishmael](#) that many Jews read as part of the readings before the [Pesukei d’Zimrah](#)

[prayer service](#). The twelfth rule provides that one may elucidate a matter from its context or from a passage following it. [Leviticus 14:34–53](#) describes the laws of the house afflicted with plague generally. But because [Leviticus 14:45](#) instructs what to do with the “stones . . . timber . . . and all the mortar of the house,” the Rabbis interpret the laws of the house afflicted with plague to apply only to houses made of stones, timber, and mortar. (Davis, *Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals*, at 246.)

[\[edit\]](#) Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

[\[edit\]](#) Biblical

- [Exodus 12:22](#) (hyssop).
- [Leviticus 8:23](#) (right ear, thumb of right hand, and great toe of right foot); [16:10](#), [20–22](#) (riddance ritual).
- [Numbers 19:6](#) (cedar wood, hyssop, and red stuff); [19:18](#) (hyssop).
- [Deuteronomy 17:8–9](#) (priests’ duty to assess); [24:8–9](#) (priests’ duties regarding skin diseases).
- [2 Kings 5:10–14](#) (purification from skin disease with living water); [7:3–20](#) (people with skin disease).
- [Zechariah 5:8–9](#) (transporting away wickedness by wing).



Philo

- [Psalm 51:9](#) (“Purge me with hyssop”); [78:5–6](#) (to teach); [91:10](#) (plague on dwelling); [119:97–99](#) (learning from the law).

[[edit](#)] Early nonrabbinic

- [Philo](#). *Allegorical Interpretation* 3:4:15; *That the Worse Is Wont To Attack the Better* 6:16; *On the Unchangableness of God* 28:131–35. [Alexandria](#), Egypt, early 1st century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [Charles Duke Yonge](#), 51, 113, 169. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1993. [ISBN 0-943575-93-1](#).



Josephus

- [Josephus](#), *Antiquities of the Jews* 3:11:3–4. Circa 93–94. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and*

Unabridged, New Updated Edition. Translated by [William Whiston](#), 96–97. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1987. [ISBN 0-913573-86-8](#).

- [Hebrews 9:19](#) Late 1st century. (scarlet wool and hyssop).
- [John 19:29](#) (hyssop).

[[edit](#)] Classical rabbinic

- [Mishnah](#): Pesachim 8:5; Shekalim 5:3; Moed Katan 3:1–2; Nazir 7:3; Horayot 1:3; Zevachim 4:3; Menachot 5:6–7, 9:3; Bekhorot 7:2; Arakhin 2:1; Negaim 1:1–14:13; Parah 1:4, 6:5; Niddah 1:1–10:8; Zavim 1:1–5:12. Land of Israel, circa 200 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 245, 259, 327, 443–44, 690, 706, 743, 751, 801, 811, 981–1012, 1014, 1021, 1077–95, 1108–17. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).
- [Tosefta](#): Demai 2:7; Challah 2:7; Sotah 1:8; Menachot 7:16, 10:1; Chullin 10:14; Negaim 1:1–9:9; Niddah 1:1–9:19; Zavim 1:1–5:12. Land of Israel, circa 300 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew, with a New Introduction*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:85, 339, 835; 2:1404, 1438, 1450, 1709–44, 1779–808, 1887–99. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 2002. [ISBN 1-56563-642-2](#).

- [Sifra](#) 148:1–173:9. Land of Israel, 4th century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 2:325–429. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-206-2](#).
- [Jerusalem Talmud](#): Orlah 6a, 39a; Yoma 16b, 41b; Niddah 1a–. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 12, 21. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2007–2011.
- [Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon](#) 13:1; 57:3; 59:3. Land of Israel, 5th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai*. Translated by W. David Nelson, 43, 258, 268. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006. [ISBN 0-8276-0799-7](#).
- [Leviticus Rabbah](#) 16:1–19:6; 34:6. Land of Israel, 5th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:199–249, 431. London: Soncino Press, 1939. [ISBN 0-900689-38-2](#).



Talmud

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[\[edit\]](#) External links

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- [Masoretic text and 1917 JPS translation](#)

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[[edit](#)] Commentaries



- [Academy for Jewish Religion, New York](#)
- [Aish.com](#)
- [American Jewish University](#)
- [Anshe Emes Synagogue, Los Angeles](#)
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Acharei

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Not to be confused with [Achareli](#).

"[After the death](#)" redirects here. For other uses, see [After death \(disambiguation\)](#).

Acharei, **Achrei Mos**, **Aharei Mot**, or **Ahare Moth** (אֶחָרֵי מוֹת or אֶחָרֵי מוֹת — [Hebrew](#) for “after” or “after the death,” the fifth word or fifth and sixth words, and the first distinctive word or words, in the parshah) is the 29th [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the sixth in the [book of Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 16:1–18:30](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) generally read it in April or early May.

The [lunisolar Hebrew calendar](#) contains up to 55 [weeks](#), the exact number varying between 50 in common years and 54 or 55 in leap years. In leap years (for example, 2011, 2014, and 2016), parshah Acharei is read separately on the 29th [Sabbath](#) after [Simchat Torah](#). In common years (for example, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018), parshah Acharei is combined with the next parshah, [Kedoshim](#), to help achieve the needed number of weekly readings.

Traditional Jews also read parts of the parshah as Torah readings for [Yom Kippur](#). [Leviticus 16](#), which addresses the Yom Kippur ritual, is the traditional Torah reading for the Yom Kippur morning (*[Shacharit](#)*) service, and [Leviticus 18](#) is the traditional

Torah reading for the Yom Kippur afternoon ([*Minchah*](#)) service. Some [Conservative](#) congregations substitute readings from [Leviticus 19](#) for the traditional [Leviticus 18](#) in the Yom Kippur afternoon *Minchah* service. (See *Mahzor Lev Shalem for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*. Senior editor Edward Feld, 365–66. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2010. [ISBN 978-0-916219-46-8](#). *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*. Edited by [Jules Harlow](#), 628–31. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1972. [ISBN 0-87441-148-3](#).) And in the standard [Reform High Holidays](#) prayerbook (*machzor*), [Deuteronomy 29:9–14](#) and [30:11–20](#) are the Torah readings for the morning Yom Kippur service, in lieu of the traditional [Leviticus 16](#). (*Gates of Repentance: The New Union Prayerbook for the Days of Awe*. Edited by Chaim Stern, 342–45. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, Revised ed. 1996. [ISBN 0-88123-069-3](#).)

The parshah sets forth the law of the Yom Kippur ritual, centralized offerings, blood, and sexual practices.



The [Scapegoat](#) (1854 painting by [William Holman Hunt](#))

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[\[edit\]](#) Summary

[\[edit\]](#) Yom Kippur

The text tells the ritual of [Yom Kippur](#). After the death of [Aaron](#)'s sons, [God](#) told [Moses](#) to tell Aaron not to come at will into the Most Holy Place (the *Kodesh Hakodashim*), lest he die, for God appeared in the [cloud](#) there. ([Leviticus 16:1–2](#).) Aaron was to enter only after bathing in [water](#), dressing in his sacral [linen](#) tunic, breeches, sash, and [turban](#), and bringing a [bull](#) for a sin [offering](#), two [rams](#) for burnt offerings, and two he-[goats](#) for sin offerings. ([Leviticus 16:3–5](#).) Aaron was to take the two goats to the entrance of the [Tabernacle](#) and place lots upon them, one marked for the Lord and the other for [Azazel](#). ([Leviticus 16:7–8](#).) Aaron was to offer the goat designated for the Lord as a sin

offering, and to send off to the [wilderness](#) the goat designated for Azazel. ([Leviticus 16:9–10.](#)) Aaron was then to offer the bull of sin offering. ([Leviticus 16:11.](#)) Aaron was then to take a pan of glowing [coals](#) from the [altar](#) and two handfuls of [incense](#) and put the incense on the fire before the Most Holy Place, so that the cloud from the incense would screen the [Ark of the Covenant](#). ([Leviticus 16:12–13.](#)) He was to sprinkle some of the bull's blood and then some of the goat's blood over and in front of the Ark, to purge the Shrine of the uncleanness and transgression of the [Israelites](#). ([Leviticus 16:14–16.](#)) He was then to apply some of the bull's blood and goat's blood to the altar, to cleanse and consecrate it. ([Leviticus 16:17–19.](#))





one imagining of [Azazel](#) (from [Colin de Plancy's](#) 1825 [Dictionnaire Infernal](#))

Aaron was then to lay his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it the Israelites' sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and then through a designated man send it off to the wilderness to carry their sins to an inaccessible region. ([Leviticus 16:21–22.](#)) Then Aaron was to go into the Tabernacle, take off his linen vestments, bathe in water, put on his vestments, and then offer the burnt offerings. ([Leviticus 16:23–25.](#)) The one who set the Azazel-goat free was to wash his clothes and bathe in water. ([Leviticus 16:26.](#)) The bull and goat of sin offering were to be taken outside the camp and burned, and he who burned them was to wash his clothes and bathe in water. ([Leviticus 16:27–28.](#))

The text then commands this law for all time: On the tenth day of the seventh month, Jews and aliens who reside with them were to practice self-denial and do no work. ([Leviticus 16:29.](#)) On that day, the [High Priest](#) was to put on the linen vestments, purge the

Tabernacle, and make atonement for the Israelites once a year.
([Leviticus 16:30–34.](#))

[[edit](#)] Centralized offerings and blood

The text next begins what scholars call the [Holiness Code](#). God prohibited Israelites from slaughtering oxen, sheep, or goats without bringing them to the Tabernacle as an offering, on pain of exile. ([Leviticus 17:1–9.](#)) God prohibited consuming blood. ([Leviticus 17:10–12.](#)) One who hunted an animal for food was to pour out its blood and cover it with earth. ([Leviticus 17:13.](#)) Anyone who ate what had died or had been torn by beasts was to wash his clothes, bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening. ([Leviticus 17:15–16.](#))

[[edit](#)] Sexual practices

God prohibited any Israelite from uncovering the nakedness of his [father](#), [mother](#), father's [wife](#), [sister](#), grandchild, half-sister, aunt, daughter-in-law, or sister-in-law. ([Leviticus 18:1–16.](#)) A man could not marry a woman and her daughter, a woman and her granddaughter, or a woman and her sister during the other's lifetime. ([Leviticus 18:17–18.](#)) A man could not cohabit with a woman during her period or with his neighbor's wife. ([Leviticus 18:19–20.](#)) Israelites were not to allow their children to be offered up to [Molech](#). ([Leviticus 18:21.](#)) A man could not lie with a man as with a woman. ([Leviticus 18:22.](#)) God prohibited bestiality. ([Leviticus 18:23.](#)) God explained that the Canaanites defiled themselves by adopting these practices, and any who did any of

these things would be cut off from their people. ([Leviticus 18:24–30.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) In inner-biblical interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 16

[\[edit\]](#) Yom Kippur

[Leviticus 16:1–34](#) refers to the Festival of Yom Kippur. In the [Hebrew Bible](#), Yom Kippur is called:

- the Day of Atonement (יום הכִּפּוּרִים, *Yom HaKippurim*) ([Leviticus 23:27](#) and [25:9](#)) or a Day of Atonement (יום כיפור, *Yom Kippurim*) ([Leviticus 23:28](#));
- a Sabbath of solemn rest (שַׁבַּת שְׁבִיָּה, *Shabbat Shabbaton*) ([Leviticus 16:31](#) and [23:32](#)); and
- a holy convocation (מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, *mikrah kodesh*) ([Leviticus 23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#)).

Much as Yom Kippur, on the 10th of the month of [Tishrei](#), precedes the Festival of Sukkot, on the 15th of the month of Tishrei, [Exodus 12:3–6](#) speaks of a period starting on the 10th of the month of [Nisan](#) preparatory to the Festival of Passover, on the 15th of the month of Nisan.



Day of Atonement (painting circa 1900 by [Isidor Kaufmann](#))

[Leviticus 16:29–34](#) and [23:26–32](#) and [Numbers 29:7–11](#) present similar injunctions to observe Yom Kippur. [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) set the Holy Day on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishrei). [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) instruct that “you shall afflict your souls.” [Leviticus 23:32](#) makes clear that a full day is intended: “you shall afflict your souls; in the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening.” And [Leviticus 23:29](#) threatens that whoever “shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from his people.” [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [Leviticus 23:28](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) command that you “shall do no manner of work.” Similarly, [Leviticus 16:31](#) and [23:32](#) call it a “Sabbath of solemn rest.” And in [23:30](#), God threatens that whoever “does any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people.” [Leviticus 16:30](#), [16:32–34](#), and [23:27–28](#), and [Numbers 29:11](#) describe the

purpose of the day to make atonement for the people. Similarly, [Leviticus 16:30](#) speaks of the purpose “to cleanse you from all your sins,” and [Leviticus 16:33](#) speaks of making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of meeting, the altar; and the priests. [Leviticus 16:29](#) instructs that the commandment applies both to “the home-born” and to “the stranger who sojourns among you.” [Leviticus 16:3–25](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:8–11](#) command offerings to God. And [Leviticus 16:31](#) and [23:31](#) institute the observance as “a statute forever.”

[Leviticus 16:3–28](#) sets out detailed procedures for the priest’s atonement ritual during the time of the [Temple](#).

[Leviticus 25:8–10](#) instructs that after seven Sabbatical years, on the [Jubilee year](#), on the day of atonement, the Israelites were to proclaim liberty throughout the land with the blast of the horn and return every man to his possession and to his family.

In [Isaiah 57:14–58:14](#), the [Haftarah](#) for Yom Kippur morning, God describes “the fast that I have chosen [on] the day for a man to afflict his soul.” [Isaiah 58:3–5](#) make clear that “to afflict the soul” was understood as fasting. But [Isaiah 58:6–10](#) goes on to impress that “to afflict the soul,” God also seeks acts of social justice: “to loose the fetters of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke,” “to let the oppressed go free,” “to give your bread to the hungry, and . . . bring the poor that are cast out to your house,” and “when you see the naked, that you cover him.”



The Temple in Jerusalem

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 17

[Deuteronomy 12:1–28](#), like [Leviticus 17:1–10](#), addresses the centralization of sacrifices and the permissibility of eating meat. While [Leviticus 17:3–4](#) prohibited killing an ox, lamb, or goat (each a sacrificial animal) without bringing it to the door of the Tabernacle as an offering to God, [Deuteronomy 12:15](#) allows killing and eating meat in any place.



The Two Priests Are Destroyed (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

[\[edit\]](#) In classical rabbinic interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 16

[Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba](#) taught that Aaron's sons died on the first of Nisan, but [Leviticus 16:1](#) mentions their death in connection with the Day of Atonement. Rabbi Hiyya explained that this teaches that as the Day of Atonement effects atonement, so the death of the righteous effects atonement. We know that the Day of Atonement effects atonement from [Leviticus 16:30](#), which says, "For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you." And we learn that the death of the righteous effects atonement from [2 Samuel 21:14](#), which says, "And they buried the bones of [Saul](#) and [Jonathan](#) his son," and then says, "After that God was entreated for the land." ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 20:12.)

Reading the words of [Leviticus 16:1](#), "the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the Lord, and died," [Rabbi Jose](#) deduced that Aaron's sons died because they drew near to enter the Holy of Holies. ([Numbers Rabbah](#) 2:23.) (For other reasons for their death, see [Leviticus Rabbah](#) 20:8 (for offering a sacrifice that they had not been commanded to offer, for the strange fire that they brought, or for not having taken counsel from each other); [Babylonian Talmud Eruvin 63a](#); [Sifra](#) Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim 99:5:6 (because they gave a legal decision in the presence of their Master Moses); [Sifra](#) Shemini Mekhilta deMiluim 99:3:4 (because they had remarked to each other how Moses and Aaron would die and they would head the congregation).)

The Rabbis told in a [Baraita](#) an account in relation to [Leviticus 16:2](#). Once a [Sadducee](#) High Priest arranged the incense outside and then brought it inside the Holy of Holies. As he left the Holy, he was very glad. His father met him and told him that although they were Sadducees, they were afraid of the [Pharisees](#). He replied that all his life he was aggrieved because of the words of [Leviticus 16:2](#), “For I appear in the cloud upon the ark-cover.” (The Sadducees interpreted [Leviticus 16:2](#) as if it said: “Let him not come into the holy place except with the cloud of incense, for only thus, with the cloud, am I to be seen on the ark-cover.”) The Sadducee wondered when the opportunity would come for him to fulfill the verse. He asked how, when such an opportunity came to his hand, he could not have fulfilled it. The Baraita reported that only a few days later he died and was thrown on the dung heap and worms came forth from his nose. Some say he was smitten as he came out of the Holy of Holies. For Rabbi Hiyya taught that a noise was heard in the Temple Court, for an angel struck him down on his face. The priests found a mark like a calf's hoof on his shoulder, evincing, as [Ezekiel 1:7](#) reports of angels, “And their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot.” ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 19b.](#))

Tractate [Yoma](#) in the [Mishnah](#), [Tosefta](#), [Jerusalem Talmud](#), and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of Yom Kippur in [Leviticus 16](#) and [23:26–32](#) and [Numbers 29:7–11](#). ([Mishnah Yoma 1:1–8:9](#); [Tosefta Kippurim \(Yoma\) 1:1–4:17](#); [Jerusalem Talmud Yoma 1a–57a](#); [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 2a–88a.](#))

Tractate [Beitzah](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws common to all of the [Festivals](#) in [Exodus 12:3–27, 43–49; 13:6–10; 23:16; 34:18–23; Leviticus 16; 23:4–43; Numbers 9:1–14; 28:16–30:1; and Deuteronomy 16:1–17; 31:10–13.](#) ([Mishnah Beitzah 1:1–5:7; Tosefta Yom Tov \(Beitzah\) 1:1–4:11; Jerusalem Talmud Beitzah 1a–49b; Babylonian Talmud Beitzah 2a–40b.](#))



High Priest Offering Incense on the Altar (illustration from Henry Davenport Northrop's 1894 *Treasures of the Bible*)

The Mishnah taught that during the days of the Temple, seven days before Yom Kippur, they would move the High Priest from his house to the cell of the counselors and prepare another priest to take his place in case anything impure happened to him to make him unfit to perform the service. Rabbi Judah said that they prepared another wife for him, in case his wife should die, as [Leviticus 16:6](#) says that “he shall make atonement for himself and

for his house” and “his house” means “his wife.” But they told Rabbi Judah that if they would do so, then there would be no end to the matter, as they would have to prepare a third wife in case the second died, and so on. ([Mishnah Yoma 1:1](#); [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 2a](#).) The rest of the year, the High Priest would offer sacrifices only if he wanted to, but during the seven days before Yom Kippur, he would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices, burn the incense, trim the lamps, and offer the head and the hind leg of the sacrifices. ([Mishnah Yoma 1:2](#); [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 14a](#).) They brought sages from the court to the High Priest, and throughout the seven days they read to him about the order of the service. They asked the High Priest to read it aloud, in case he had forgotten or never learned. ([Mishnah Yoma 1:3](#); [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 18a](#).)

On the morning of the day before Yom Kippur, they placed the High Priest at the Eastern Gate and brought before him oxen, rams, and sheep, so that he could become familiar with the service. ([Mishnah Yoma 1:3](#); [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 18a](#).) The rest of the seven days, they did not withhold food or drink from him, but near nightfall on the eve of Yom Kippur, they would not let him eat much, as food might make him sleep. ([Mishnah Yoma 1:4](#); [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 18a](#).) The sages of the court took him up to the house of Avtinas and handed him over to the elders of the priesthood. As the sages of the court took their leave, they cautioned him that he was the messenger of the court, and adjured him in God’s Name that he not change anything in the service from what they had told him. He and they turned

aside and wept that they should have to suspect him of doing so.
([Mishnah Yoma 1:5](#); [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 18b.](#))



The High Priest (illustration from Braun and Schneider's *The History of Costume*, circa 1861–1880)

On the night before Yom Kippur, if the High Priest was a sage, he would expound the relevant Scriptures, and if he was not a sage, the disciples of the sages would expound before him. If he was used to reading the Scriptures, he would read, and if he was not, they would read before him. They would read from [Job](#), [Ezra](#), and [Chronicles](#), and Zechariah ben Kubetal said from [Daniel](#). (Mishnah Yoma 1:6; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 18b.](#)) If he tried to sleep, young priests would snap their middle finger

before him and say, “Mr. High Priest, arise and drive the sleep away!” They would keep him busy until near the time for the morning offering. (Mishnah Yoma 1:7; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 19b.](#))

On any other day, a priest would remove the ashes from the altar at about the time of the cock’s crow (in accordance with [Leviticus 6:3](#)). But for Yom Kippur, the ashes were removed beginning at midnight of the night before. Before the cock’s crow approached, Israelites filled the Temple Court. (Mishnah Yoma 1:8; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 20a.](#)) The officer told the priests to see whether the time for the morning sacrifice had arrived. If it had, then the priest who saw it would call out, “It’s daylight!” (Mishnah Yoma 3:1; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 28a.](#))

They led the High Priest down to the place of immersion (the *mikvah*). (Mishnah Yoma 3:2; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 28a.](#)) During the day of Yom Kippur, the High Priest would immerse himself five times and wash his hands and feet ten times. Except for this first immersion, he would do each on holy ground in the Parwah cell. (Mishnah Yoma 3:3; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 30a.](#)) They spread a linen sheet between him and the people. (Mishnah Yoma 3:4; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 30a.](#)) If the High Priest was either old or delicate, they warmed the water for him. (Mishnah Yoma 3:5; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 31b.](#)) He undressed, immersed himself, came up, and dried off. They brought him the golden garments; he put them on and washed his hands and feet. (Mishnah Yoma 3:4; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 31b.](#))

They brought him the continual offering; he cut its throat, and another priest finished slaughtering it. The High Priest received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. He entered the Sanctuary, burned the morning incense, and trimmed the lamps. Then he offered up the head, limbs, cakes, and wine-offering. (Mishnah Yoma 3:4; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 31b.](#))

They brought him to the Parwah cell, spread a sheet of linen between him and the people, he washed his hands and feet, and undressed. ([Rabbi Meir](#) said that he undressed first and then washed his hands and feet.) Then he went down and immersed himself for the second time, came up and dried himself. They brought him white garments (as required by [Leviticus 16:4](#)). He put them on and washed his hands and feet. (Mishnah Yoma 3:6; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 34b.](#)) [Rabbi Meir](#) taught that in the morning, he wore [Pelusium](#) linen worth 12 [minas](#), and in the afternoon he wore [Indian](#) linen worth 800 [zuz](#). But the sages said that in the morning, he wore garments worth 18 minas, and in the afternoon he wore garments worth 12 minas. The community paid for these sums, and the High Priest could spend more from his own funds if he wanted to. (Mishnah Yoma 3:7; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 34b.](#))

[Rav Hisda](#) asked why [Leviticus 16:4](#) instructed the High Priest to enter the inner precincts (the *Kodesh Hakodashim*) to perform the Yom Kippur service in linen vestments instead of gold. [Rav Hisda](#) taught that it was because the accuser may not act as defender. Gold played the accuser because it was used in the [Golden Calf](#), and thus gold was inappropriate for the High Priest

when he sought atonement and thus played the defender.

([Babylonian Talmud Rosh Hashanah 26a.](#))

A [midrash](#) taught that everything God created in heaven has a replica on earth. (And thus, since all that is above is also below, God dwells on earth just as God dwells in heaven.) Referring to a heavenly man, [Ezekiel 9:11](#) says, “And, behold, the man clothed in linen.” And of the High Priest on earth, [Leviticus 16:4](#) says, “He shall put on the holy linen tunic.” And the midrash taught that God holds the things below dearer than those above, for God left the things in heaven to descend to dwell among those below, as [Exodus 25:8](#) reports, “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” ([Exodus Rabbah](#) 33:4)

The Mishnah taught that the High Priest came to his bull (as required in [Leviticus 16:3](#) and [6](#)), which was standing between the hall and the altar with its head to the south and its face to the west. The High Priest stood on the east with his face to the west. And he pressed both his hands on the bull and made confession, saying: “O Lord! I have done wrong, I have transgressed, I have sinned before You, I and my house. O Lord! Forgive the wrongdoings, the transgressions, and the sins that I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before You, I and my house, as it is written in the Torah of Moses Your servant (in [Leviticus 16:30](#)): “For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you; from all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.” And the people answered: “Blessed is the Name of God’s glorious Kingdom, forever and ever!” (Mishnah Yoma 3:8; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 35b.](#))

The High Priest then went back to the east of the Temple Court, north of the altar. The two goats required by [Leviticus 16:7](#) were there, as was an urn containing two lots. The urn was originally made of [boxwood](#), but [Ben Gamala](#) remade them in gold, earning him praise. (Mishnah Yoma 3:9; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 37a.](#)) Rabbi Judah explained that [Leviticus 16:7](#) mentioned the two goats equally because they should be alike in color, height, and value. ([Babylonian Talmud Shevuot 13b.](#)) The Mishnah taught that the High Priest shook the urn and brought up the two lots. On one lot was inscribed “for the Lord,” and on the other “for Azazel.” The Deputy High Priest stood at the High Priest’s right hand and the head of the ministering family at his left. If the lot inscribed “for the Lord” came up in his right hand, the Deputy High Priest would say “Mr. High Priest, raise your right hand!” And if the lot inscribed “for the Lord” came up in his left hand, the head of the family would say “Mr. High Priest, raise your left hand!” Then he placed them on the goats and said: “A sin-offering ‘to the Lord!’” (Rabbi Ishmael taught that he did not need to say “a sin-offering” but just “to the Lord.”) And then the people answered “Blessed is the Name of God’s glorious Kingdom, forever and ever!” (Mishnah Yoma 4:1; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 39a.](#))

Then the High Priest bound a thread of crimson wool on the head of the Azazel goat, and placed it at the gate from which it was to be sent away. And he placed the goat that was to be slaughtered at the slaughtering place. He came to his bull a second time, pressed his two hands on it and made confession,

saying: “O Lord, I have dealt wrongfully, I have transgressed, I have sinned before You, I and my house, and the children of Aaron, Your holy people, o Lord, pray forgive the wrongdoings, the transgression, and the sins that I have committed, transgressed, and sinned before You, I and my house, and the children of Aaron, Your holy people. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant (in [Leviticus 16:30](#)): ‘For on this day atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all the sins shall you be clean before the Lord.’” And then the people answered: “Blessed is the Name of God’s glorious Kingdom, forever and ever!” (Mishnah Yoma 4:2; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 41b.](#)) Then he killed the bull. (Mishnah Yoma 4:3; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 43b.](#))

Rabbi Isaac noted two red threads, one in connection with the red cow in [Numbers 19:6](#), and the other in connection with the scapegoat in the Yom Kippur service of [Leviticus 16:7–10](#) (which [Mishnah Yoma 4:2](#) indicates was marked with a red thread).

Rabbi Isaac had heard that one required a definite size, while the other did not, but he did not know which was which. Rav Joseph reasoned that because (as [Mishnah Yoma 6:6](#) explains) the red thread of the scapegoat was divided, that thread required a definite size, whereas that of the red cow, which did not need to be divided, did not require a definite size. [Rami bar Hama](#) objected that the thread of the red cow required a certain weight (to be cast into the flames, as described in [Numbers 19:6](#)). [Raba](#) said that the matter of this weight is disputed by [Tannaim](#). ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 41b.](#))



High Priest Offering a Sacrifice of a Goat (illustration from Henry Davenport Northrop's 1894 *Treasures of the Bible*)

When Rav Dimi came from the [Land of Israel](#), he said in the name of [Rabbi Johanan](#) that there were three red threads: one in connection with the red cow, the second in connection with the scapegoat, and the third in connection with the person with skin disease (the *m'tzora*) in [Leviticus 14:4](#). Rav Dimi reported that one weighed ten [zuz](#), another weighed two selas, and the third weighed a [shekel](#), but he could not say which was which. When Rabin came, he said in the name of Rabbi Jonathan that the thread in connection with the red cow weighed ten zuz, that of the scapegoat weighed two selas, and that of the person with skin disease weighed a shekel. Rabbi Johanan said that Rabbi Simeon ben Halafta and the Sages disagreed about the thread of the red cow, one saying that it weighed ten shekels, the other that it

weighed one shekel. Rabbi Jeremiah of Difti said to [Rabina](#) that they disagreed not about the thread of the red cow, but about that of the scapegoat. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 41b–42a](#).)

Rabbi Joshua of Siknin taught in the name of Rabbi Levi that the Evil Inclination criticizes four laws as without logical basis, and Scripture uses the expression “statute” (*chuk*) in connection with each: the laws of (1) a [brother’s wife](#) (in [Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)), (2) [mingled kinds](#) (in [Leviticus 19:19](#) and [Deuteronomy 22:11](#)), (3) the scapegoat (in [Leviticus 16:7–10](#)), and (4) the [red cow](#) (in [Numbers 19](#)). (Numbers Rabbah 19:5.)



Sending Out the Scapegoat (illustration by William James Webb (1830–1904))

One would bring the High Priest the goat to be slaughtered, he would kill it, receive its blood in a basin, enter again the Sanctuary, and would sprinkle once upwards and seven times downwards. He would count: “one,” “one and one,” “one and two,” and so on. Then he would go out and place the vessel on the second golden stand in the sanctuary. (Mishnah Yoma 5:4; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 53b.](#))

Then the High Priest came to the scapegoat and laid his two hands on it, and he made confession, saying: “I beseech You, o Lord, Your people the house of Israel have failed, committed iniquity and transgressed before you. I beseech you, o Lord, atone the failures, the iniquities and the transgressions that Your people, the house of Israel, have failed, committed, and transgressed before you, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Your servant (in [Leviticus 16:30](#)): ‘For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord.’” And when the Priests and the people standing in the Temple Court heard the fully-pronounced Name of God come from the mouth of the High Priest, they bent their knees, bowed down, fell on their faces, and called out: “Blessed is the Name of God’s glorious Kingdom, forever and ever!” (Mishnah Yoma 6:2; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 66a.](#))



The Scape Goat (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)

They handed the scapegoat over to him who was to lead it away. All were permitted to lead it away, but the Priests made it a rule not to permit an ordinary Israelite to lead it away. Rabbi Jose said that Arsela of Sepphoris once led it away, although he was not a priest. (Mishnah Yoma 6:3; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 66a.](#)) The people went with him from booth to booth, except the last one. The escorts would not go with him up to the precipice, but watched from a distance. (Mishnah Yoma 6:5; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 67a.](#)) The one leading the scapegoat divided the thread of crimson wool, and tied one half to the rock, the other

half between the scapegoat horns, and pushed the scapegoat from behind. And it went rolling down and before it had reached half its way down the hill, it was dashed to pieces. He came back and sat down under the last booth until it grew dark. His garments unclean become unclean from the moment that he has gone outside the wall of [Jerusalem](#), although Rabbi Simeon taught that they became unclean from the moment that he pushed it over the precipice. (Mishnah Yoma 6:6; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 67a.](#))

The Sages taught that if one pushed the goat down the precipice and it did not die, then one had to go down after the goat and kill it. (Tosefta Kippurim (Yoma) 3:14.)

The Mishnah interpreted [Leviticus 16:21](#) to teach that the goat sent to Azazel could atone for all sins, even sins punishable by death. (Mishnah Shevuot 1:6; [Babylonian Talmud Shevuot 2b.](#))

They would set up guards at stations, and from these would waive towels to signal that the goat had reached the wilderness. When the signal was relayed to Jerusalem, they told the High Priest: “The goat has reached the wilderness.” Rabbi Ishmael taught that they had another sign too: They tied a thread of crimson to the door of the Temple, and when the goat reached the wilderness, the thread would turn white, as it is written in [Isaiah 1:18](#): “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” (Mishnah Yoma 6:8; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 68b.](#))

Chapter 8 of tractate Yoma in the Mishnah and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of self-denial in [Leviticus 16:29–34](#). (Mishnah Yoma 8:1–9; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 73b–88a.](#)) The

Mishnah taught that on Yom Kippur, one must not eat, drink, wash, anoint oneself, put on sandals, or have sexual intercourse. Rabbi Eliezer (whom the [halachah](#) follows) taught that a king or bride may wash the face, and a woman after childbirth may put on sandals. But the sages forbade doing so. (Mishnah Yoma 8:1; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 73b.](#)) The Mishnah held a person culpable to punishment for eating an amount of food equal to a large [date](#) (with its pit included), or for drinking a mouthful of liquid. For the purpose of calculating the amount consumed, one combines all amounts of food together, and all amounts liquids together, but not amounts of foods together with amounts of liquids. (Mishnah Yoma 8:2; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 73b.](#)) The Mishnah obliged one who unknowingly or forgetfully ate and drank to bring only one sin-offering. But one who unknowingly or forgetfully ate and performed labor had to bring two sin-offerings. The Mishnah did not hold one culpable who ate foods unfit to eat, or drank liquids unfit to drink (like fish-brine). (Mishnah Yoma 8:3; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 81a.](#)) The Mishnah taught that one should not afflict children at all on Yom Kippur. In the two years before they become [Bar or Bat Mitzvah](#), one should train children to become used to religious observances (for example by fasting for several hours). (Mishnah Yoma 8:4; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 82a.](#)) The Mishnah taught that one should give food to a pregnant woman who smelled food and requested it. One should feed to a sick person at the direction of experts, and if no experts are present, one feeds a sick person who requests food. (Mishnah Yoma 8:5; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 82a.](#)) The Mishnah taught that one may even give

unclean food to one seized by a ravenous hunger, until the person's eyes are opened. Rabbi Matthia ben Heresh said that one who has a sore throat may drink medicine even on the Sabbath, because it presented the possibility of danger to human life, and every danger to human life suspends the laws of the Sabbath. (Mishnah Yoma 8:6; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 83a.](#))



[Jews Praying in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur](#) (1878 painting by [Maurycy Gottlieb](#))

The Mishnah taught that death and observance of Yom Kippur with penitence atone for sin. Penitence atones for lighter sins, while for severer sins, penitence suspends God's punishment, until Yom Kippur comes to atone. (Mishnah Yoma 8:8;

[Babylonian Talmud Yoma 85b.](#)) The Mishnah taught that no opportunity for penance will be given to one who says: “I shall sin and repent, sin and repent.” And Yom Kippur does not atone for one who says: “I shall sin and Yom Kippur will atone for me.” Rabbi [Eleazar ben Azariah](#) derived from the words “From all your sins before the Lord shall you be clean” in [Leviticus 16:30](#) that Yom Kippur atones for sins against God, but Yom Kippur does not atone for transgressions between one person and another, until the one person has pacified the other. [Rabbi Akiba](#) said that Israel is fortunate, for just as waters cleanse the unclean, so does God cleanse Israel. (Mishnah Yoma 8:9; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 85b.](#))

[Rabbi Eleazar](#) interpreted the words of [Leviticus 16:30](#), “from all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord,” to teach that the Day of Atonement expiates sins that are known only to God. ([Babylonian Talmud Keritot 25b.](#))

[Mar Zutra](#) taught that the merit of a fast day lies in the charity dispensed. ([Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 6b.](#))

The [Gemara](#) told that a poor man lived in [Mar Ukba's](#) neighborhood to whom he regularly sent 400 zuz on the eve of every Yom Kippur. Once Mar Ukba sent his son to deliver the 400 zuz. His son came back and reported that the poor man did not need Mar Ukba's help. When Mar Ukba asked his son what he had seen, his son replied that they were sprinkling aged wine before the poor man to improve the aroma in the room. Mar Ukba said that if the poor man was that delicate, then Mar Ukba

would double the amount of his gift and send it back to the poor man. ([Babylonian Talmud Ketubot 67b.](#))

Rabbi Eleazar taught that when the Temple stood, a person used to bring a shekel and so make atonement. Now that the Temple no longer stands, if people give for charity, all will be well, and if they do not, heathens will come and take from them forcibly (what they should have given away). And even so, God will reckon to them as if they had given charity, as [Isaiah 60:17](#) says, "I will make your exactors righteousness [תְּדָאָה, *tzedakah*]." ([Babylonian Talmud Bava Batra 9a.](#))

Rav Bibi bar Abaye taught that on the eve of the Day of Atonement, a person should confess saying: "I confess all the evil I have done before You; I stood in the way of evil; and as for all the evil I have done, I shall no more do the like; may it be Your will, O Lord my God, that You should pardon me for all my iniquities, and forgive me for all my transgressions, and grant me atonement for all my sins." This is indicated by [Isaiah 55:7](#), which says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts." Rabbi Isaac compared it to a person fitting together two boards, joining them one to another. And Rabbi [Jose ben Hanina](#) compared it to a person fitting together two bed-legs, joining them one to another. (This harmoniously does a person become joined to God when the person genuinely repents.) ([Leviticus Rabbah 3:3.](#))

Our Rabbis taught that the obligation to confess sins comes on the eve of the Day of Atonement, as it grows dark. But the Sages said that one should confess before one has eaten and drunk, lest

one become inebriated in the course of the meal. And even if one has confessed before eating and drinking, one should confess again after having eaten and drunk, because perhaps some wrong happened during the meal. And even if one has confessed during the evening prayer, one should confess again during the morning prayer. And even if one has confessed during the morning prayer, one should do so again during the [Musaf](#) additional prayer. And even if one has confessed during the Musaf, one should do so again during the afternoon prayer. And even if one has done so in the afternoon prayer, one should confess again in the [Ne'ilah](#) concluding prayer. The Gemara taught that the individual should say the confession after the (silent recitation of the) [Amidah](#) prayer, and the public reader says it in the middle of the Amidah. [Rab](#) taught that the confession begins: "You know the secrets of eternity" [Samuel](#), however, taught that the confession begins: "From the depths of the heart" [Levi](#) said: "And in Your Torah it is said, ['For on this day He shall make atonement for you.]" ([Leviticus 16:30.](#)) Rabbi Johanan taught that the confession begins: "Lord of the Universe," [Rab Judah](#) said: "Our iniquities are too many to count, and our sins too numerous to be counted." Rav [Hamnuna](#) said: "My God, before I was formed, I was of no worth, and now that I have been formed, it is as if I had not been formed. I am dust in my life, how much more in my death. Behold, I am before You like a vessel full of shame and reproach. May it be Your will that I sin no more, and what I have sinned wipe away in Your mercy, but not through suffering." That was the confession of sins used by Rab all the year round, and by Rav Hamnuna the younger, on the Day of

Atonement. Mar Zutra taught that one should say such prayers only if one has not already said, “Truly, we have sinned,” but if one has said, “Truly, we have sinned,” no more is necessary. For Bar Hamdudi taught that once he stood before Samuel, who was sitting, and when the public reader said, “Truly, we have sinned,” Samuel rose, and so Bar Hamdudi inferred that this was the main confession. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 87b.](#))

Rav Kruspedai said in the name of Rabbi Johanan that on Rosh Hashanah, three books are opened in heaven — one for the thoroughly wicked, one for the thoroughly righteous, and one for those in between. The thoroughly righteous are forthwith inscribed definitively in the book of life. The thoroughly wicked are forthwith inscribed definitively in the book of death. And the fate of those in between is suspended from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. If they deserve well, then they are inscribed in the book of life; if they do not deserve well, then they are inscribed in the book of death. Rabbi Abin said that [Psalm 69:29](#) tells us this when it says, “Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.” “Let them be blotted out from the book” refers to the book of the wicked. “Of the living” refers to the book of the righteous. “And not be written with the righteous” refers to the book of those in between. [Rav Nahman bar Isaac](#) derived this from [Exodus 32:32](#), where Moses told God, “if not, blot me, I pray, out of Your book that You have written.” “Blot me, I pray” refers to the book of the wicked. “Out of Your book” refers to the book of the righteous. “That

you have written” refers to the book of those in between.

[\(Babylonian Talmud Rosh Hashanah 16b.\)](#)

Rav Mana of Sha'ab (in Galilee) and Rav Joshua of Siknin in the name of Rav Levi compared repentance at the High Holidays to the case of a province that owed arrears on its taxes to the king, and the king came to collect the debt. When the king was within ten miles, the nobility of the province came out and praised him, so he freed the province of a third of its debt. When he was within five miles, the middle-class people of the province came out and praised him, so he freed the province of another third of its debt. When he entered the province, all the people of the province — men, women, and children — came out and praised him, so he freed them of all of their debt. The king told them to let bygones be bygones; from then on they would start a new account. In a similar manner, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the leaders of the generation fast, and God absolves them of a third of their iniquities. From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, private individuals fast, and God absolves them of a third of their iniquities. On Yom Kippur, everyone fasts — men, women and children — and God tells Israel to let bygones be bygones; from then onwards we begin a new account. From Yom Kippur to Sukkot, all Israel are busy with the performance of religious duties. One is busy with a sukkah, one with a lulav. On the first day of Sukkot, all Israel stand in the presence of God with their palm-branches and etrogs in honor of God's name, and God tells them to let bygones be bygones; from now we begin a new account. Thus in [Leviticus 23:40](#), Moses exhorts Israel: "You shall

take on the first day [of Sukkot] the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God."

[Rabbi Aha](#) explained that the words, "For with You there is forgiveness," in [Psalm 130:4](#) signify that forgiveness waits with God from Rosh Hashanah onward. And forgiveness waits that long so (in the words of [Psalm 130:4](#)) "that You may be feared" and God may impose God's awe upon God's creatures (through the suspense and uncertainty). (Leviticus Rabbah 30:7.)

Rabban [Simeon ben Gamaliel](#) said that there never were greater days of joy in Israel than the [15th of Av](#) and Yom Kippur. On those days, the daughters of Jerusalem would come out in borrowed white garments, dance in the vineyards, and exclaim to the young men to lift up their eyes and choose for themselves. (Mishnah Taanit 4:8; [Babylonian Talmud Taanit 26b](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 17

A [Tanna](#) taught that the prohibition of the [high places](#) stated in [Leviticus 17:3–4](#) took place on the first of Nisan. The Tanna taught that the first of Nisan took ten crowns of distinction by virtue of the ten momentous events that occurred on that day. The first of Nisan was: (1) the first day of the Creation (as reported in [Genesis 1:1–5](#)), (2) the first day of the princes' offerings (as reported in [Numbers 7:10–17](#)), (3) the first day for the priesthood to make the sacrificial offerings (as reported in [Leviticus 9:1–21](#)), (4) the first day for public sacrifice, (5) the first day for the descent of fire from Heaven (as reported in [Leviticus](#)

[9:24](#)), (6) the first for the priests' eating of sacred food in the sacred area, (7) the first for the dwelling of the Shechinah in Israel (as implied by [Exodus 25:8](#)), (8) the first for the [Priestly Blessing](#) of Israel (as reported in [Leviticus 9:22](#), employing the blessing prescribed by [Numbers 6:22–27](#)), (9) the first for the prohibition of the high places (as stated in [Leviticus 17:3–4](#)), and (10) the first of the months of the year (as instructed in [Exodus 12:2](#)). Rav Assi of Hozna'ah deduced from the words, “And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month,” in [Exodus 40:17](#) that the Tabernacle was erected on the first of Nisan. ([Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 87b.](#))

The Gemara interpreted the prohibition on consuming blood in [Leviticus 17:10](#) to apply to the blood of any type of animal or fowl, but not to the blood of eggs, grasshoppers, and fish. ([Babylonian Talmud Keritot 20b–21a.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 18

Applying the prohibition against following the ways of the Canaanites in [Leviticus 18:3](#), the Sages of the Mishnah prohibited going out with talismans like a locust's egg, a fox's tooth, or a nail from a gallows, but Rabbi Meir allowed it, and the Gemara reported that [Abaye](#) and [Rava](#) agreed, excepting from the prohibition of [Leviticus 18:3](#) any practice of evident therapeutic value. (Mishnah Shabbat 6:10; [Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 67a.](#))

[Leviticus 18:4](#) calls on the Israelites to obey God's “statutes” (*chukim*) and “ordinances” (*mishpatim*). The Rabbis in a Baraita taught that the “ordinances” (*mishpatim*) were commandments

that logic would have dictated that we follow even had Scripture not commanded them, like the laws concerning idolatry, adultery, bloodshed, robbery, and blasphemy. And “statutes” (*chukim*) were commandments that the Adversary challenges us to violate as beyond reason, like those relating to *shaatnez* (in [Leviticus 19:19](#) and [Deuteronomy 22:11](#)), *halizah* (in [Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)), purification of the person with *tzaraat* (in [Leviticus 14](#)), and the scapegoat (in [Leviticus 16:7–10](#)). So that people do not think these “ordinances” (*mishpatim*) to be empty acts, in [Leviticus 18:4](#), God says, “I am the Lord,” indicating that the Lord made these statutes, and we have no right to question them. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 67b.](#))

[Rabbi Ishmael](#) interpreted the words “he shall live by them” in [Leviticus 18:5](#) to teach that a person should live by the laws, not die by them, and thus one could transgress a commandment to avoid death. And [Rabbi Johanan](#) reported in the name of Rabbi Simeon ben Jehozadak that a majority in the house of Nithza in [Lod](#) voted that a person could transgress any laws to avoid death, except idolatry, incest, or murder. But Rav Dimi taught that one could sin to avoid death only in times when there was no oppressive royal decree against observing the Torah, but in times of such a decree, one needed to suffer martyrdom rather than transgress even a minor precept. And Rabin said in the name of Rabbi Johanan that even absent such a royal decree, sinning to save one’s life was permitted only in private; whereas in public, one needed to suffer martyrdom rather than violate even a minor precept. ([Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 74a.](#))

The Gemara interpreted [Leviticus 18:7](#) to prohibit a man from lying with his father's wife, whether or not she was his mother, and whether or not the father was still alive. ([Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 54a.](#))

Rav Awira taught (sometimes in the name of [Rabbi Ammi](#), sometimes in the name of [Rabbi Assi](#)) that the words “And the child grew, and was weaned (*va-yigamal*, וַיִּגְמַל), and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned” in [Genesis 21:8](#) teach that God will make a great feast for the righteous on the day that God manifests (*yigmoḥ*) God’s love to Isaac’s descendants. After they have eaten and drunk, they will ask Abraham to recite the Grace after meals ([Birkat Hamazon](#)), but Abraham will answer that he cannot say Grace, because he fathered Ishmael. Then they will ask Isaac to say Grace, but Isaac will answer that he cannot say Grace, because he fathered [Esau](#). Then they will ask [Jacob](#), but Jacob will answer that he cannot, because he married two sisters during both their lifetimes, which [Leviticus 18:18](#) was destined to forbid. Then they will ask Moses, but Moses will answer that he cannot, because God did not allow him to enter the Land of Israel either in life or in death. Then they will ask [Joshua](#), but Joshua will answer that he cannot, because he was not privileged to have a son, for [1 Chronicles 7:27](#) reports, “[Nun](#) was his son, Joshua was his son,” without listing further descendants. Then they will ask [David](#), and he will say Grace, and find it fitting for him to do so, because [Psalm 116:13](#) records David saying, “I will lift up the cup of salvation, and call

upon the name of the Lord.” ([Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 119b.](#))



Offering to Molech (illustration from the 1897 *Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us* by Charles Foster)

A Baraita was taught in the Academy of Eliyahu: A certain scholar diligently studied Bible and Mishnah, and greatly served scholars, but nonetheless died young. His wife carried his [tefillin](#) to the [synagogues](#) and schoolhouses and asked if [Deuteronomy 30:20](#) says, “for that is your life, and the length of your days,” why her husband nonetheless died young. No one could answer her. On one occasion, Eliyahu asked her how he was to her during her days of white garments — the seven days after her menstrual period — and she reported that they ate, drank, and slept together without clothing. Eliyahu explained that God must

have slain him because he did not sufficiently respect the separation that [Leviticus 18:19](#) requires. ([Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 13a–b.](#))

Mishnah Sanhedrin 7:7 and [Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 64a–b](#) interpreted the laws prohibiting passing one's child through the fire to Molech in [Leviticus 18:21](#) and [20:1–5](#), and [Deuteronomy 18:10](#).

Rabbi Judah ben Pazzi deduced from the juxtaposition of the sexual prohibitions of [Leviticus 18](#) and the exhortation to holiness in [Leviticus 19:2](#) that those who fence themselves against sexual immorality are called holy, and Rabbi [Joshua ben Levi](#) taught that wherever one finds a fence against sexual immorality, one will also find sanctity. (Leviticus Rabbah 24:6.)

[\[edit\]](#) **Commandments**

According to [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 2 positive and 26 negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

- A Kohen must not enter the [Temple in Jerusalem](#) indiscriminately. ([Leviticus 16:2.](#))
- To follow the procedure of Yom Kippur ([Leviticus 16:3.](#))
- Not to slaughter sacrifices outside the courtyard ([Leviticus 17:4.](#))
- To cover the blood of a slaughtered beast or fowl with earth ([Leviticus 17:13.](#))

- Not to make pleasurable sexual contact with any forbidden woman ([Leviticus 18:6.](#))
- Not to have homosexual sexual relations with one's father ([Leviticus 18:7.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's mother ([Leviticus 18:7.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's father's wife ([Leviticus 18:8.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's sister ([Leviticus 18:9.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's son's daughter ([Leviticus 18:10.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's daughter's daughter ([Leviticus 18:10.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's daughter ([Leviticus 18:10.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's father's wife's daughter ([Leviticus 18:11.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's father's sister ([Leviticus 18:12.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's mother's sister ([Leviticus 18:13.](#))

- Not to have homosexual sexual relations with one's father's brother ([Leviticus 18:14.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's father's brother's wife ([Leviticus 18:14.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's son's wife ([Leviticus 18:15.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's brother's wife ([Leviticus 18:16.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with a woman and her daughter ([Leviticus 18:17.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with a woman and her son's daughter ([Leviticus 18:17.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with a woman and her daughter's daughter ([Leviticus 18:17.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with one's wife's sister while both are alive ([Leviticus 18:18.](#))
- Not to have sexual relations with a [menstrually impure woman](#) ([Leviticus 18:19.](#))
- Not to pass one's children through the fire to Molech ([Leviticus 18:21.](#))
- Not to have male [homosexual sexual relations](#) ([Leviticus 18:22.](#))

- A man must not have sexual relations with a beast.
([Leviticus 18:23.](#))
- A woman must not have sexual relations with a beast.
([Leviticus 18:23.](#))

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 2:275–377. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-296-5.](#))



Ezekiel (1510 fresco by [Michelangelo](#) in the [Sistine Chapel](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Haftarah

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is:

- for [Ashkenazi Jews](#): [Ezekiel 22:1–19](#)
- for [Sephardi Jews](#): [Ezekiel 22:1–16](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Connection to the parshah

Both the parshah (in [Leviticus 18](#)) and the haftarah (in [Ezekiel 22:10–11](#)) address prohibited sexual practices.

[\[edit\]](#) On Shabbat HaGadol

When the parshah coincides with Shabbat HaGadol (the [special Sabbath](#) immediately before [Passover](#) — as it does in 2011 and 2014), the haftarah is [Malachi Malachi 3:4–24](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Connection to the special Sabbath

Shabbat HaGadol means “the Great Sabbath,” and the haftarah for the special Sabbath refers to a great day that God is preparing. ([Malachi 3:17–19](#))



[Amos](#) (engraving by [Gustave Doré](#) from the 1865 *La Sainte Bible*)

[\[edit\]](#) Parshah Acharei-Kedoshim

When parshah Acharei is combined with parshah Kedoshim (as it is in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018), the haftarah is the haftarah for parshah Kedoshim:

- for Ashkenazi Jews: [Amos 9:7–15](#)
- for Sephardi Jews: [Ezekiel 20:2–20](#)

[\[edit\]](#) The Weekly Maqam

In [the Weekly Maqam](#), Sephardi Jews each week base the songs of the services on the content of that week's parshah. For parshah Acharei, Sephardi Jews apply Maqam Hijaz, the maqam that expresses mourning and sadness. This maqam is appropriate for this parshah because the parshah alludes to the deaths of [Nadab and Abihu](#), the first two sons of Aaron.

[\[edit\]](#) Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

[\[edit\]](#) Ancient

- “Temple Program for the New Year’s Festival at Babylon.” Babylonia. Reprinted in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by [James B. Pritchard](#). 331–34. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969. [ISBN 0-691-03503-2](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Biblical

- [Leviticus 14:4–7, 49–53](#) (riddance ritual); [20:2](#) (Molech); [23:26–32](#) (Yom Kippur).
- [Deuteronomy 18:10](#) (passing children through the fire).
- [1 Kings 11:4–8, 33](#) (Molech).
- [2 Kings 16:3](#) (son pass through fire); [17:17](#) (children pass through fire); [21:6](#) (son pass through fire); [23:10–14](#) (Molech).
- [Isaiah 57:9](#) (Molech or king).
- [Jeremiah 7:31](#) (child sacrifice); [32:35](#) (Molech); [49:1–3](#) (Molech or Malcam).
- [Ezekiel 16:20–21](#) (sacrificing children); [18:5–6](#) (the just man avoids contact with the menstruating woman); [23:37](#) (sacrifice of sons).
- [Amos 5:25–27](#) (Molech or king).
- [Zephaniah 1:4–6](#) (Molech).
- [Psalm 32:2](#) (God’s imputing iniquity to a person); [51:3–4](#) (cleansing from sin); [93:5](#) (holiness in God’s house); [103:1–18](#) (God’s forgiveness); [106:37](#) (sacrifice to demons).
- [2 Chronicles 33:6](#) (children pass through fire).



Philo

[[edit](#)] Early nonrabbinic

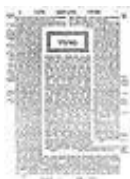
- [Philo](#). *[Allegorical Interpretation](#)* 2:14:52, 15:56; *[That the Worse Is Wont To Attack the Better](#)* 22:80; *[On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile](#)* 20:70; *[On the Giants](#)* 8:32; *[Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?](#)* 16:84; *[On Mating with the Preliminary Studies](#)* 16:85–87; *[On Flight and Finding](#)* 28:159; 34:193; *[On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent](#)* 2:28:189, 34:231; *[The Special Laws](#)* 4:23:122. [Alexandria](#), Egypt, early 1st Century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [Charles Duke Yonge](#), 43, 121, 138, 154, 283, 311, 335, 338, 401, 404, 628. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1993. [ISBN 0-943575-93-1](#).
- [Josephus](#), *[Antiquities of the Jews](#)* 3:10:3, 11:2, 12:1. Circa 93–94. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [William Whiston](#), 95. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1987. [ISBN 0-913573-86-8](#).
- [Acts 7:42–43](#) (Molech).

[\[edit\]](#) Classical rabbinic

- [Mishnah](#): Bikkurim 2:9; Shabbat 6:10; Shekalim 4:2; [Yoma 1:1](#)–8:9; Megillah 3:5; 4:9; Chagigah 2:1; Yevamot 2:3; Sotah 7:7; Sanhedrin 7:4; 9:1; Makkot 3:15; Shevuot 1:4–7; Zevachim 12:5; 14:1–2, 9; Menachot 9:7; Keritot 1:1; 2:4; 5:1; Parah 1:4. Land of Israel, circa 200 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 171, 256, 265–79, 321, 323, 330, 339, 459, 597, 602, 619, 621–22, 726, 729, 731, 752, 836, 839, 845–46, 1014. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).
- [Sifra](#) 174:1–194:3. Land of Israel, 4th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 3:1–84. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-207-0](#).
- [Jerusalem Talmud](#): Kilayim 76a; Maaser Sheni 12a; Yoma 1a–57a; Sukkah 3b, 27a; Beitzah 1a–49b. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 5, 10, 21–23. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2008–2011.
- [Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon](#) 9:5; 37:2; 47:1; 48:2; 54:1; 60:4; 69:3; 74:5. Land of Israel, 5th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai*. Translated by W. David Nelson, 29, 163, 205, 215, 243, 275, 317, 348.

Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006. [ISBN 0-8276-0799-7](#).

- [Leviticus Rabbah](#) 5:6; 17:3; 20:1–23:13; 27:9. Land of Israel, 5th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:71, 216, 250–303, 354. London: Soncino Press, 1939. [ISBN 0-900689-38-2](#).



Talmud

- Babylonian [Talmud](#): [Shabbat 13a–b, 22a, 67a, 86a](#); [Pesachim 22a, 26a, 47b, 65a, 75b, 77a, 79a, 85b](#); [Yoma 2a–88a](#); [Sukkah 5a, 24a, 28a, 33a](#); [Beitzah 2a, 7a–8a](#); [Rosh Hashanah 26a](#); [Megillah 7b, 20b, 24a, 25a, 30b–31a](#); [Moed Katan 9a, 15b, 28a](#); [Chagigah 9a, 10a, 11b, 16a, 23b](#); [Yevamot 2a, 3a–b, 5b–8b, 11a, 13a, 17b, 19a, 21a–23a, 28b, 33b, 49a, 50a, 54b–55b, 56b, 83b, 97a, 102b, 114a](#); [Ketubot 29a, 30a, 32b–33a, 36a, 47b, 56a, 72a, 82b](#); [Nedarim 51a, 78a](#); [Sotah 4b, 16a, 17a, 26b, 40b–41a](#); [Gittin 54b, 60a](#); [Kiddushin 13b–14a, 22b, 43a, 44b, 50b–51a, 57b, 67b–68a](#); [Bava Kamma 32a, 38a, 40b–41a, 76a, 91b, 96b](#); [Bava Batra 25a, 88b, 109b, 120a–21a](#); [Sanhedrin 12b, 18a, 19b, 28b, 33b, 34b, 42b, 43b, 49b](#),

[51a](#), [52b](#), [53b–55a](#), [57b](#), [58b–59a](#), [60b–61a](#), [74a](#), [75b–76a](#), [81a](#), [82a](#); [Makkot 5b](#), [13a–14b](#), [18a](#), [23a–24a](#); [Shevuot 2a–b](#), [7b–8b](#), [12a–14a](#), [17b–18b](#); [Avodah Zarah 3a](#), [11a](#), [17a–b](#), [27b](#), [47a](#), [51a–b](#), [54a](#), [74a](#); [Horayot 6a](#), [8b](#), [13a](#); [Zevachim 6a](#), [19b](#), [26a–b](#), [35a](#), [40a](#), [46a](#), [52a](#), [57a](#), [69a–70a](#), [78a](#), [81a](#), [83a](#), [84b](#), [98a](#), [104a](#), [105a–09b](#), [112a–b](#), [113b](#), [116b](#), [118a](#), [119b](#); [Menachot 8b](#), [12b](#), [16a](#), [22a](#), [26a](#), [27a–b](#), [83a](#), [91b–92a](#), [93b](#); [Chullin 10b–11a](#), [16b–17a](#), [20b](#), [22a](#), [24a](#), [27b](#), [29b](#), [31a](#), [41b](#), [72a](#), [78a](#), [79b](#), [83b–84a](#), [85a](#), [86b–87a](#), [88a](#), [98b](#), [117a](#), [120a](#), [131b](#), [138a–39a](#); [Bekhorot 39b](#), [56b](#); [Temurah 2b](#), [5b](#), [6b](#), [12a](#), [13a](#), [14a](#), [29b](#); [Keritot 2a–3b](#), [4b](#), [5a](#), [6a–b](#), [9a](#), [10b](#), [14a–15a](#), [20b–21a](#), [22a](#), [25b](#), [28a](#); [Meilah 11a–b](#), [13b](#); [Niddah 35a](#), [55a–b](#). Babylonia, 6th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Bavli*. Edited by Yisroel Simcha Schorr, Chaim Malinowitz, and Mordechai Marcus, 72 vols. Brooklyn: Mesorah Pubs., 2006.

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- [Maimonides](#). *Mishneh Torah*, [Intro.:25](#); [Structure](#). [Cairo](#), Egypt, 1170–1180.
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- [Zohar](#) [3:56a–80a](#). Spain, late 13th Century.

[[edit](#)] Modern

- [Thomas Hobbes](#). *Leviathan*, [3:40](#), [41](#). England, 1651.
Reprint edited by [C. B. Macpherson](#), 503–04, 513–14.
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[Gays, While Others Attempt a ‘Cure.’](#) *The Forward*.
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[[edit](#)] See also

- [Azazel in rabbinic literature](#)
- [Homosexuality and Conservative Judaism](#)
- [Leviticus 18](#)

[[edit](#)] External links

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- [Masoretic text and 1917 JPS translation](#)
- [Hear the parshah chanted](#)

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- [Academy for Jewish Religion, California](#)

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Kedoshim

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This page is about Kedoshim, a parshah in the yearly Torah cycle.

See [Kodashim](#) for the Order of the Mishnah by that name.

Kedoshim, **K'doshim**, or **Qedoshim** (קִדְּשִׁים — [Hebrew](#) for "holy ones," the 14th word, and the first distinctive word, in the parshah) is the 30th [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the seventh in the [book of Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 19:1–20:27](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) generally read it in late April or May.

The [lunisolar Hebrew calendar](#) contains up to 55 [weeks](#), the exact number varying between 50 in common years and 54 or 55 in leap years. In leap years (for example, 2011, 2014, and 2016), parshah Kedoshim is read separately. In common years (for example, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018), parshah Kedoshim is combined with the previous parshah, [Acharei](#), to help achieve the needed number of weekly readings.

Some [Conservative](#) congregations substitute readings from [Leviticus 19](#) for the traditional reading of [Leviticus 18](#) in the [Yom Kippur Minchah](#) service. (See *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*. Edited by [Jules Harlow](#). United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. [ISBN 0874411483](#).) And in the standard [Reform High Holidays](#) prayerbook (*machzor*), [Leviticus 19:1–4](#), [9–18](#), and [32–37](#) are the Torah readings for the afternoon Yom

Kippur service. (*Gates of Repentance: The New Union Prayerbook for the Days of Awe*. Edited by Chaim Stern, 452–55. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, Revised ed. 1996. [ISBN 0-88123-069-3](#).)

[Kodashim](#) is also the name of the fifth order in the [Mishnah](#), [Tosefta](#), and [Babylonian Talmud](#). The term “*kedoshim*” is sometimes also used to refer to the six million Jews murdered during [the Holocaust](#), whom some call “*kedoshim*” because they fulfilled the [mitzvah](#) of [Kiddush Hashem](#).



“You shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field.”

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[\[edit\]](#) Summary

[\[edit\]](#) Holiness

[God](#) told [Moses](#) to tell the [Israelites](#) to be [holy](#), for God is holy. ([Leviticus 19:1–2](#).) God’s instruction, considered by scholars to be part of the [Holiness Code](#), then enumerates how people can be holy. God instructed the Israelites:

- To revere their [mothers](#) and [fathers](#) ([Leviticus 19:3](#).)
- To keep the Sabbath ([Leviticus 19:3](#).)
- Not to turn to [idols](#) ([Leviticus 19:4](#).)
- To eat the [sacrifice](#) of well-being in the first two days ([Leviticus 19:5–8](#).)
- Not to reap all the way to the edges of a field, but to leave some for the poor and the stranger ([Leviticus 19:9–10](#).)
- Not to [steal](#), [deceive](#), [swear](#) falsely, or defraud ([Leviticus 19:11–13](#).)
- To pay laborers their [wages](#) promptly ([Leviticus 19:13](#).)
- Not to insult the [deaf](#) or impede the [blind](#) ([Leviticus 19:14](#).)

- To judge fairly ([Leviticus 19:15.](#))
- Not to deal basely with their countrymen, profit by their blood, or hate them in their hearts ([Leviticus 19:16–17.](#))
- To reprove kinsmen but incur no guilt because of them ([Leviticus 19:17.](#))
- Not to take vengeance or bear a grudge ([Leviticus 19:18.](#))
- To love others as oneself ([Leviticus 19:18.](#))
- To observe God's laws ([Leviticus 19:19.](#))
- Not to interbreed different species or sow fields with two kinds of seed ([Leviticus 19:19.](#))
- Not to wear [cloth](#) from a mixture of two kinds of material ([Leviticus 19:19.](#))
- A man who has carnal relations with a [slave](#) woman designated for another man must offer a [ram](#) of guilt offering ([Leviticus 19:20–22.](#))
- To regard the [fruit](#) of a newly-planted [tree](#) as forbidden for three years, set aside for God in the fourth year, and available to use in the fifth year ([Leviticus 19:23–25.](#))
- Not to eat anything with its [blood](#) ([Leviticus 19:26.](#))
- Not to practice [divination](#) or soothsaying ([Leviticus 19:26.](#))

- Not to round off the side-growth on their heads or destroy the side-growth of their [beards](#) ([Leviticus 19:27.](#))
- Not to make gashes in their flesh for the dead ([Leviticus 19:28.](#))
- Not to degrade their daughters or make them [harlots](#) ([Leviticus 19:29.](#))
- To venerate God's sanctuary ([Leviticus 19:30.](#))
- Not to turn to [ghosts](#) or inquire of spirits ([Leviticus 19:31.](#))
- To rise before the aged and show deference to the old ([Leviticus 19:32.](#))
- Not to wrong strangers who reside in the land, but to love them as oneself ([Leviticus 19:33–34.](#))
- Not to falsify weights or measures ([Leviticus 19:35–36.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Penalties for Transgressions

God then told Moses to instruct the Israelites of the following penalties for transgressions.



one imagining of Molech

The following were to be put to death:

- One who gave a child to [Molech](#) ([Leviticus 20:1–2.](#))
- One who insulted his father or mother ([Leviticus 20:9.](#))
- A man who committed adultery with a married woman, and the married woman with whom he committed it ([Leviticus 20:10.](#))
- A man who lay with his father's wife, and his father wife with whom he lay ([Leviticus 20:11.](#))
- A man who lay with his daughter-in-law, and his daughter-in-law with whom he lay ([Leviticus 20:12.](#))

- A man who lay with a male as one lies with a woman, and the male with whom he lay ([Leviticus 20:13.](#))
- A man who married a woman and her mother, and the woman and mother whom he married ([Leviticus 20:14.](#))
- A man who had carnal relations with a beast, and the beast with whom he had relations ([Leviticus 20:15.](#))
- A woman who approached any beast to mate with it, and the beast that she approached ([Leviticus 20:16.](#))
- One who had a ghost or a familiar spirit ([Leviticus 20:27.](#))

The following were to be cut off from their people:

- One who turned to ghosts or familiar spirits ([Leviticus 20:6.](#))
- A man who married his sister, and the sister whom he married ([Leviticus 20:17.](#))
- A man who lay with a woman in her infirmity, and the woman with whom he lay ([Leviticus 20:18.](#))

The following were to die childless:

- A man who uncovered the nakedness of his aunt, and the aunt whose nakedness he uncovered ([Leviticus 20:19–20.](#))

- A man who married his brother's wife, and the brother's wife whom he married ([Leviticus 20:21](#).)

God then enjoined the Israelites faithfully to observe all God's laws, lest the Promised Land spew them out. ([Leviticus 20:22](#).) For it was because the land's former inhabitants did all these things that God dispossessed them. ([Leviticus 20:23](#).) God designated the Israelites as holy to God, for God is holy, and God had set the Israelites apart from other peoples to be God's. ([Leviticus 20:26](#).)

[[edit](#)] In inner-biblical interpretation

[[edit](#)] Leviticus chapter 20

[Leviticus 20:20](#) addresses God's role in the creation of children. While [Leviticus 12:6–8](#) required a new mother to bring a burnt-offering and a sin-offering, [Leviticus 26:9](#), [Deuteronomy 28:11](#), and [Psalm 127:3–5](#) make clear that having children is a blessing from God; [Genesis 15:2](#) and [1 Samuel 1:5–11](#) characterize childlessness as a misfortune; and [Leviticus 20:20](#) and [Deuteronomy 28:18](#) threaten childlessness as a punishment.

[[edit](#)] In classical rabbinic interpretation

[[edit](#)] Leviticus chapter 19

Rabbi Judah ben Pazzi deduced from the juxtaposition of the sexual prohibitions of [Leviticus 18](#) and the exhortation to holiness in [Leviticus 19:2](#) that those who fence themselves against

sexual immorality are called holy, and Rabbi [Joshua ben Levi](#) taught that wherever one finds a fence against sexual immorality, one will also find sanctity. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 24:6.)

A [midrash](#) interpreted God's message to Israel in [Leviticus 19:1–2](#) to mean: “My children, as I am separate, so you be separate; as I am holy, so you be holy.” ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 24:4.)

Rabbi Abin likened the two exhortations to holiness in [Leviticus 19:1–2](#) and [20:7](#) to the case of a king who rewarded his drunkard watchmen twice as much as his sober watchmen. Similarly, God twice exhorted the Israelites to holiness, because the Evil Inclination sways people like drunkards, whereas the Evil Inclination does not exist among celestial beings. Similarly, Rabbi Abin likened the two exhortations to holiness to the case of the citizens who made three crowns for the king, and the king placed one on his own head and two on the heads of his sons. Similarly, every day the celestial beings crown God with three sanctities, calling him, in the words of [Isaiah 6:3](#), “Holy, holy, holy.” God then places one crown of holiness on God's own head and two crowns of holiness on the head of Israel. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 24:8.)

[Rabbi Hiyya](#) taught that the section beginning at [Leviticus 19:1](#) was spoken in the presence of the whole Israelite people, because it includes most of the essential principles of the Torah. And Rabbi Levi said it was because it includes each of the [Ten Commandments](#), noting that: (1) [Exodus 20:2](#) says, “I am the Lord your God,” and [Leviticus 19:3](#) says, “I am the Lord your God”; (2) [Exodus 20:2–3](#) says, “You shall have no other gods,” and [Leviticus 19:4](#) says, “Nor make to yourselves molten gods”;

(3) [Exodus 20:6](#) (20:7 in NJPS) says, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,” and [Leviticus 19:12](#) says, “And you shall not swear by My name falsely”; (4) [Exodus 20:7](#) (20:8 in NJPS) says, “Remember the Sabbath day,” and [Leviticus 19:3](#) says, “And you shall keep My Sabbaths”; (5) [Exodus 20:11](#) (20:12 in NJPS) says, “Honor your father and your mother,” and [Leviticus 19:3](#) says, “You shall fear every man his mother, and his father”; (6) [Exodus 20:12](#) (20:13 in NJPS) says, “You shall not murder,” and [Leviticus 19:16](#) says, “Neither shall you stand idly by the blood of your neighbor”; (7) [Exodus 20:12](#) (20:13 in NJPS) says, “You shall not commit adultery,” and [Leviticus 20:10](#) says, “Both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death; (8) [Exodus 20:12](#) (20:13 in NJPS) says, “You shall not steal,” and [Leviticus 19:11](#) says, “You shall not steal”; (9) [Exodus 20:12](#) (20:13 in NJPS) says, “You shall not bear false witness,” and [Leviticus 19:16](#) says, “You shall not go up and down as a talebearer”; and (10) [Exodus 20:13](#) (20:14 in NJPS) says, “You shall not covet . . . anything that is your neighbor's,” and [Leviticus 19:18](#) says, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Leviticus Rabbah 24:5.)

A [Baraita](#) cited the words of [Leviticus 19:3](#), “You shall fear every man his mother and his father, and you shall keep My Sabbaths,” to teach that one’s duty to honor one’s parent does not supersede one’s duty to keep the Sabbath. ([Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 5b.](#))

[Rabbi Shimon](#) noted that everywhere else, Scripture mentions a father's honor before the mother's honor. (E.g., [Exodus 20:11](#)

(20:12 in NJSP), [21:15](#), and [21:17](#), and [Deuteronomy 5:15](#) (5:16 in NJPS) and [27:16](#).) But [Leviticus 19:3](#) mentions the mother first to teach that one should honor both parents equally. ([Mishnah Keritot 6:9](#); [Babylonian Talmud Keritot 28a](#); see also [Genesis Rabbah 1:15](#).) The Sages, however, said that the father comes before the mother in all places, because both the son and the mother are bound to honor the father. ([Mishnah Keritot 6:9](#); [Babylonian Talmud Keritot 28a](#).)



Gleaners (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

Tractate [Peah](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Jerusalem Talmud interpreted the laws of the harvest of the corner of the field and gleanings to be given to the poor in [Leviticus 19:9–10](#) and [23:22](#), and [Deuteronomy 24:19–21](#). ([Mishnah Peah 1:1–8:9](#); Tosefta Peah 1:1–4:21; Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1a–73b.)

The Mishnah taught that the Torah defines no minimum or maximum for the donation of the corners of one's field to the

poor. ([Mishnah Peah 1:1](#); Tosefta Peah 1:1; Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1a.) But the Mishnah also taught that one should not make the amount left to the poor less than one-sixtieth of the entire crop. And even though no definite amount is given, the amount given should accord with the size of the field, the number of poor people, and the extent of the yield. ([Mishnah Peah 1:2](#); Jerusalem Talmud Peah 10b.)

Rabbi Eliezer taught that one who cultivates land in which one can plant a quarter [kav](#) of seed is obligated to give a corner to the poor. [Rabbi Joshua](#) said land that yields two [seah](#) of grain. [Rabbi Tarfon](#) said land of at least six handbreadths by six handbreadths. Rabbi Judah ben Betera said land that requires two strokes of a sickle to harvest, and the law is as he spoke. Rabbi Akiba said that one who cultivates land of any size is obligated to give a corner to the poor and the [first fruits](#). ([Mishnah Peah 3:6](#).)

The Mishnah taught that the poor could enter a field to collect three times a day — in the morning, at midday, and in the afternoon. Rabban [Gamliel](#) taught that they said this only so that landowners should not reduce the number of times that the poor could enter. Rabbi Akiba taught that they said this only so that landowners should not increase the number of times that the poor had to enter. The landowners of Beit Namer used to harvest along a rope and allowed the poor to collect a corner from every row. ([Mishnah Peah 4:5](#).)

The Mishnah taught that if a wife foreswore all benefit from other people, her husband could not annul his wife's vow, but she could still benefit from the gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and

the corner of the field that [Leviticus 19:9–10](#) and [23:22](#), and [Deuteronomy 24:19–21](#) commanded farmers to leave for the poor. ([Mishnah Nedarim 11:3](#).)

Tractates [Nedarim](#) and [Shevuot](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of vows in [Exodus 20:7](#), [Leviticus 5:1–10](#) and [19:12](#), [Numbers 30:2–17](#), and [Deuteronomy 23:24](#). ([Mishnah Nedarim 1:1–11:11](#); Tosefta Nedarim 1:1–7:8; Jerusalem Talmud Nedarim 1a–; [Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 2a–91b](#); [Mishnah Shevuot 1:1–8:6](#); Tosefta Shevuot 1:1–6:7; Jerusalem Talmud Shevuot 1a–; [Babylonian Talmud Shevuot 2a–49b](#).)

The Mishnah interpreted [Leviticus 19:13](#) and [Deuteronomy 24:14–15](#) to teach that a worker engaged by the day could collect the worker’s wages all of the following night. If engaged by the night, the worker could collect the wages all of the following day. If engaged by the hour, the worker could collect the wages all that day and night. If engaged by the week, month, year, or 7-year period, if the worker’s time expired during the day, the worker could collect the wages all that day. If the worker’s time expired during the night, the worker could collect the wages all that night and the following day. ([Mishnah Bava Metzia 9:11](#); [Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 110b](#).)

The Mishnah taught that the hire of persons, animals, or utensils were all subject to the law of [Deuteronomy 24:15](#) that “in the same day you shall give him his hire” and the law of [Leviticus 19:13](#) that “the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with you all night until the morning.” The employer became liable only

when the worker or vendor demanded payment from the employer. Otherwise, the employer did not infringe the law. If the employer gave the worker or vendor a draft on a shopkeeper or a money changer, the employer complied with the law. A worker who claimed the wages within the set time could collect payment if the worker merely swore that the employer had not yet paid. But if the set time had passed, the worker's oath was insufficient to collect payment. Yet if the worker had witnesses that the worker had demanded payment (within the set time), the worker could still swear and receive payment. ([Mishnah Bava Metzia 9:12](#); [Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 111a.](#))

The Mishnah taught that the employer of a resident alien was subject to the law of [Deuteronomy 24:15](#) that “in the same day you shall give him his hire” (as [Deuteronomy 24:14](#) refers to the stranger), but not to the law of [Leviticus 19:13](#) that “the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with you all night until the morning.” ([Mishnah Bava Metzia 9:12](#); [Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 111a.](#))

The Mishnah taught that one who pursues a neighbor with intent to kill must be saved from sin at the cost of the pursuer's own life. (Mishnah Sanhedrin 8:7; [Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 73a.](#))

The Rabbis taught in a Baraita that this rule could be derived from the injunction of [Leviticus 19:16](#) that “You shall not stand by the blood of your neighbor.” But the [Gemara](#) objected that [Leviticus 19:16](#) must be saved to support the Baraita that taught that if one person sees another drowning, mauled by beasts, or

attacked by robbers, the first person is bound to try to save the other. ([Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 73a.](#))

In a Baraita, the Rabbis reasoned that had [Leviticus 19:17](#) said simply, “You shall not hate your brother,” one might have believed that one should simply not smite, slap, or curse him; therefore [Leviticus 19:17](#) states “in your heart” to cover intentions as well as actions. Scripture speaks of hatred in the heart. ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16b.](#))

Thus, in [Leviticus 19:17](#), the heart hates. A midrash catalogued the wide range of additional capabilities of the heart reported in the Hebrew Bible. The heart speaks ([Ecclesiastes 1:16](#)), sees ([Ecclesiastes 1:16](#)), hears ([1 Kings 3:9](#)), walks ([2 Kings 5:26](#)), falls ([1 Samuel 17:32](#)), stands ([Ezekiel 22:14](#)), rejoices ([Psalm 16:9](#)), cries ([Lamentations 2:18](#)), is comforted ([Isaiah 40:2](#)), is troubled ([Deuteronomy 15:10](#)), becomes hardened ([Exodus 9:12.](#)), grows faint ([Deuteronomy 20:3](#)), grieves ([Genesis 6:6](#)), fears ([Deuteronomy 28:67](#)), can be broken ([Psalm 51:19](#)), becomes proud ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)), rebels ([Jeremiah 5:23](#)), invents ([1 Kings 12:33](#)), cavils ([Deuteronomy 29:18](#)), overflows ([Psalm 45:2](#)), devises ([Proverbs 19:21](#)), desires ([Psalm 21:3](#)), goes astray ([Proverbs 7:25](#)), lusts ([Numbers 15:39](#)), is refreshed ([Genesis 18:5](#)), can be stolen ([Genesis 31:20](#)), is humbled ([Leviticus 26:41](#)), is enticed ([Genesis 34:3](#)), errs ([Isaiah 21:4](#)), trembles ([1 Samuel 4:13](#)), is awakened ([Song of Songs 5:2](#)), loves ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#)), envies ([Proverbs 23:17](#)), is searched ([Jeremiah 17:10](#)), is rent ([Book of Joel 2:13](#)), meditates ([Psalm 49:4](#)), is like a fire ([Jeremiah 20:9](#)), is like a stone ([Ezekiel 36:26](#)), turns in repentance ([2 Kings](#)

[23:25](#)), becomes hot ([Deuteronomy 19:6](#)), dies ([1 Samuel 25:37](#)), melts ([Joshua 7:5](#)), takes in words ([Deuteronomy 6:6](#)), is susceptible to fear ([Jeremiah 32:40](#)), gives thanks ([Psalm 111:1](#)), covets ([Proverbs 6:25](#)), becomes hard ([Proverbs 28:14](#)), makes merry ([Judges 16:25](#)), acts deceitfully ([Proverbs 12:20](#)), speaks from out of itself ([1 Samuel 1:13](#)), loves bribes ([Jeremiah 22:17](#)), writes words ([Proverbs 3:3](#)), plans ([Proverbs 6:18](#)), receives commandments ([Proverbs 10:8](#)), acts with pride ([Obadiah 1:3](#)), makes arrangements ([Proverbs 16:1](#)), and aggrandizes itself ([Chronicles 25:19](#)). ([Ecclesiastes Rabbah](#) 1:36.)

In a Baraita, the Rabbis deduced from the command in [Leviticus 19:17](#) that “you shall surely rebuke your neighbor” that one is obliged to reprove a neighbor whom one observes doing something wrong. And they deduced from the emphatic words “you shall surely rebuke” that if one has rebuked one’s neighbor and the neighbor does not accept the rebuke, then one must rebuke the neighbor again. But the Rabbis deduced that [Leviticus 19:17](#) continues to say “you shall not bear sin because of him” to teach that one should not rebuke a neighbor to the neighbor’s embarrassment. ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16b](#).)

Rabbi [Tarfon](#) wondered whether anyone in his generation could accept reproof, for if one told another, “Remove the mote from between your eyes,” the other would answer, “Remove the beam from between your eyes!” Rabbi [Eleazar ben Azariah](#) wondered whether anyone in his generation knew how to *reprove*. Rabbi [Johanan ben Nuri](#) said that he would often complain about [Akiba](#) to Rabban Gamaliel Beribbi, causing Akiba to be punished as a

result, but Akiba all the more showered love upon Rabbi Johanan ben Nuri, bearing out what [Proverbs 9:8](#) says: “Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16b.](#))

Rabbi Judah the son of Rabbi Simeon ben Pazzi asked his father whether it was preferable to reprove honestly or to forgo reproof out of false modesty. Rabbi Simeon answered that restraint out of true modesty is better still, for a Master said modesty is greatest of all. Thus false modesty is also preferable, he reasoned, for [Rav Judah](#) said in the name of [Rav](#) that one should engage in Torah study and good deeds, even if not for their own sake, because through doing good for an ulterior motive one will come to do good for its own sake. To illustrate honest reproof and forbearance out of false modesty, the Gemara told how [Rav Huna](#) and Hiyya bar Rav were sitting before Samuel, when Hiyya bar Rav complained about how Rav Huna was bothering him. Rav Huna undertook not to bother Hiyya bar Rav anymore. After Hiyya bar Rav left, Rav Huna told Samuel how Hiyya bar Rav had done this and that wrong thing. So Samuel asked Rav Huna why he had not told Hiyya bar Rav to his face. Rav Huna replied that he did not want to put the son of Rav to shame (and thus chose insincere forbearance over honest rebuke). ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16b.](#))

The Gemara discussed how far one should reprove another. Rav said that one should reprove until the one reprovved strikes the reprover. Samuel said that one should reprove until the one reprovved *curses* the reprover. [Rabbi Johanan](#) said that one should

reprove only until the one reproved *rebukes* the reprover. The Gemara noted a similar dispute among [Tannaim](#). [Rabbi Eliezer](#) said until the one reproved strikes the reprover. [Rabbi Joshua](#) said until the one reproved curses the reprover. [Ben Azzai](#) said until the one reproved rebukes the reprover. [Rav Nahman bar Isaac](#) said that all three cited [1 Samuel 20:30](#) to support their positions. [1 Samuel 20:30](#) says: “Then [Saul](#)'s anger was kindled against [Jonathan](#) and he said to him: ‘You son of perverse rebellion, do not I know that you have chosen the son of [Jesse](#) ([David](#)) to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?’” And shortly thereafter, [1 Samuel 20:33](#) says: “And Saul cast his spear at him to smite him.” Rabbi Eliezer said “until the one reproved strikes” because [1 Samuel 20:33](#) says “to smite him.” Rabbi Joshua said “until the one reproved curses” because [1 Samuel 20:33](#) says: “to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness.” Ben Azzai said “until the one reproved rebukes” because [1 Samuel 20:30](#) says: “Then Saul's anger was kindled.” The Gemara asked how Ben Azzai, who said “until the one reproved rebukes,” explained how [1 Samuel 20:33](#) also mentions beating and cursing. The Gemara reasoned that Jonathan risked his life even further (and rebuked even more than required) because of his great love of David. ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 16b.](#))



Hillel (sculpture at the [Knesset](#) Menorah, Jerusalem)

But Rabbi Il'a said in the name of Rabbi Eleazar son of Rabbi Simeon that just as one is obliged to say words of reproof that will be accepted, so one is obliged *not* to say words of reproof that will *not* be accepted. Rabbi Abba said that it is a duty to forgo reproof that will not be accepted, as [Proverbs 9:8](#) says: “Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” ([Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 65b.](#))

Once a [gentile](#) came before [Shammai](#) and said, “I will [convert to Judaism](#), on the condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot.” Shammai pushed him away with a builder's ruler. When the gentile repeated his challenge before [Hillel](#), Hillel said to him (paraphrasing [Leviticus 19:18](#)), “What is

hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah, and the rest is the explanation — go and learn it.” ([Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 31a.](#))

[Rav Nahman](#) said in the name of Rabbah bar Abbuha that [Leviticus 19:18](#) requires that even when executing a person, one must choose for the condemned an easy death. ([Babylonian Talmud Ketubot 37b, Sanhedrin 45a.](#))

And other Rabbis counseled that [Leviticus 19:18](#) prohibits taking actions that would make one’s spouse unattractive. Thus Rav Judah said in the name of Rav that [Leviticus 19:18](#) requires a man not to become engaged to a woman before he sees her, lest he subsequently see something in her that might make her repulsive to him. ([Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin 41a.](#)) Similarly, [Rav Hisda](#) taught that [Leviticus 19:18](#) prohibited one from engaging in marital relations during the daytime, and [Abaye](#) explained that this was because one might observe something that should make one’s spouse repulsive. ([Babylonian Talmud Niddah 17a.](#))

Tractate [Kilayim](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Jerusalem Talmud interpreted the laws of mixing plants, cloth, and animals in [Leviticus 19:19](#). (Mishnah Kilayim 1:1–9:10; Tosefta Kilayim 1:1–5:27; Jerusalem Talmud Kilayim 1a–84b.)

[Leviticus 18:4](#) calls on the Israelites to obey God’s “statutes” (*hukim*) and “ordinances” (*mishpatim*). The Rabbis in a Baraita taught that the “ordinances” (*mishpatim*) were commandments that logic would have dictated that we follow even had Scripture not commanded them, like the laws concerning idolatry, adultery,

bloodshed, robbery, and blasphemy. And “statutes” (*bukim*) were commandments that the Adversary challenges us to violate as beyond reason, like those relating to [shaatnez](#) (in [Leviticus 19:19](#) and [Deuteronomy 22:11](#)), [halizah](#) (in [Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)), purification of the person with [tzaraat](#) (in [Leviticus 14](#)), and the [scapegoat](#) (in [Leviticus 16](#)). So that people do not think these “ordinances” (*mishpatim*) to be empty acts, in [Leviticus 18:4](#), God says, “I am the Lord,” indicating that the Lord made these statutes, and we have no right to question them. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 67b.](#)) Similarly, Rabbi Joshua of Siknin taught in the name of Rabbi Levi that the Evil Inclination criticizes four laws as without logical basis, and Scripture uses the expression “statute” (*chuk*) in connection with each: the laws of (1) a [brother’s wife](#) (in [Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)), (2) mingled kinds (in [Leviticus 19:19](#) and [Deuteronomy 22:11](#)), (3) the [scapegoat](#) (in [Leviticus 16](#)), and (4) the [red cow](#) (in [Numbers 19](#)). ([Numbers Rabbah](#) 19:5.)

Tractate [Orlah](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Jerusalem Talmud interpreted the laws of the prohibition in [Leviticus 19:23–25](#) against using the fruits of a tree in its first three years. ([Mishnah Orlah 1:1–3:9](#); Tosefta Orlah 1:1–8; Jerusalem Talmud Orlah 1a–42a.)

Judah ben Padiah noted [Adam’s](#) frailty, for he could not remain loyal even for a single hour to God’s charge that he not eat from the [Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil](#), yet in accordance with [Leviticus 19:23](#), Adam’s descendants the Israelites waited three years for the fruits of a tree. ([Genesis Rabbah](#) 21:7.)

[edit] Leviticus chapter 20

Mishnah Sanhedrin 7:7 and [Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 64a–b](#) interpreted the laws prohibiting passing one's child through the fire to [Molech](#) in [Leviticus 18:21](#) and [20:1–5](#) and [Deuteronomy 18:10](#).

The Mishnah asked about the command of [Leviticus 20:15–16](#) that the animal be killed: If the person had sinned, in what way did the animal sin? The Mishnah concluded that Scripture ordered it killed because it enticed the person to sin.

Alternatively, the Mishnah explained that the animal was killed so that it should not pass through the streets provoking people to say, “This is the animal on account of which so and so was stoned.” (Mishnah Sanhedrin 7:4; [Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 54a](#).)

The Gemara reported a number of Rabbis' reports of how the Land of Israel did indeed flow with “milk and honey,” as described in [Exodus 3:8](#) and [17, 13:5](#), and [33:3, Leviticus 20:24, Numbers 13:27](#) and [14:8](#), and [Deuteronomy 6:3, 11:9, 26:9](#) and [15, 27:3](#), and [31:20](#). Once when Rami bar Ezekiel visited [Bnei Brak](#), he saw goats grazing under fig trees while honey was flowing from the figs, and milk dripped from the goats mingling with the fig honey, causing him to remark that it was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey. Rabbi Jacob ben Dostai said that it is about three miles from [Lod](#) to [Ono](#), and once he rose up early in the morning and waded all that way up to his ankles in fig honey. Resh Lakish said that he saw the flow of the milk and honey of [Sepphoris](#) extend over an area of sixteen miles by

sixteen miles. Rabbah bar Bar Hana said that he saw the flow of the milk and honey in all the Land of Israel and the total area was equal to an area of twenty-two [parasangs](#) by six parasangs.

([Babylonian Talmud Ketubot 111b–12a.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Commandments

According to [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 13 positive and 38 negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

- To revere one's father and mother ([Leviticus 19:3.](#))
- Not to turn to idolatry ([Leviticus 19:4.](#))
- Not to make an idol ([Leviticus 19:4.](#))
- Not to eat meat left over from sacrifices ([Leviticus 19:8.](#))



“[The Red Vineyard](#)” (painting by [Vincent van Gogh](#))

- Not to reap a corner of one’s field, so that the poor may glean ([Leviticus 19:9.](#))
- Not to reap the very last end of one’s field, so that the poor may glean ([Leviticus 19:9.](#))
- To leave [gleanings](#) for the poor ([Leviticus 19:9.](#))
- Not to gather the gleanings, so that the poor may take them ([Leviticus 19:9.](#))
- To leave a part of a [vineyard](#) unreaped, for the poor ([Leviticus 19:10.](#))
- Not to gather the gleanings of a vineyard, so that the poor may take them ([Leviticus 19:10.](#))
- To leave the unformed clusters of [grapes](#) for the poor ([Leviticus 19:10.](#))
- Not to steal ([Leviticus 19:11.](#))
- Not to deny possession of something entrusted to you ([Leviticus 19:11.](#))
- Not to swear in denial of a monetary claim ([Leviticus 19:11.](#))
- Not to swear falsely in God's Name ([Leviticus 19:12.](#))

- Not to withhold wages or fail to repay a debt ([Leviticus 19:13.](#))
- Not to rob or defraud one's neighbor ([Leviticus 19:13.](#))
- Not to delay payment of wages past the agreed time ([Leviticus 19:13.](#))
- Not to curse any upstanding Jew ([Leviticus 19:14.](#))
- Not to put a stumbling block before nor give harmful advice ([Lifnei iver](#)) to a trusting person ([Leviticus 19:14.](#))
- Not to pervert justice ([Leviticus 19:15.](#))
- A judge must not respect the great man at the trial. ([Leviticus 19:15.](#))
- To judge righteously ([Leviticus 19:15.](#))
- Not to [speak derogatorily of others](#) ([Leviticus 19:16.](#))
- Not to stand idly by if someone's life is in danger ([Leviticus 19:16.](#))
- Not to hate fellow Jew ([Leviticus 19:17.](#))
- To reprove a sinner ([Leviticus 19:17.](#))
- Not to embarrass others ([Leviticus 19:17.](#))
- Not to take revenge ([Leviticus 19:18.](#))
- Not to bear a [grudge](#) ([Leviticus 19:18.](#))

- To love others as one loves oneself (brotherly love is commanded 19:18 for one's "neighbor" [other Jews] and at 19:34 for "strangers"). ([Leviticus 19:18.](#));([Leviticus 19:34.](#))
- Not to [crossbreed](#) animals ([Leviticus 19:19.](#))
- Not to plant diverse seeds together ([Leviticus 19:19.](#))
- Not to eat fruit of a tree during its first three years ([Leviticus 19:23.](#))
- The fourth year crops must be totally for holy purposes. ([Leviticus 19:24.](#))
- Not to eat like a glutton or drink like a drunkard ([Leviticus 19:26.](#))
- Not to be superstitious ([Leviticus 19:26.](#))
- Not to engage in [astrology](#) ([Leviticus 19:26.](#))
- Men must not shave the hair off the sides of their head. ([Leviticus 19:27.](#))
- Men must not shave their beards with a [razor](#). ([Leviticus 19:27.](#))
- Not to [tattoo](#) the skin ([Leviticus 19:28.](#))
- To show reverence to the [Temple](#) ([Leviticus 19:30.](#))
- Not to act as a medium ([Leviticus 19:31.](#))

- Not to act as a magical seer ([Leviticus 19:31.](#))
- To honor those who teach and know [Torah](#) ([Leviticus 19:32.](#))
- Not to commit injustice with [scales](#) and weights ([Leviticus 19:35.](#))
- Each individual must ensure that his scales and weights are accurate ([Leviticus 19:36.](#))
- Not to curse one's father or mother ([Leviticus 20:9.](#))
- The courts must carry out the death penalty of burning ([Leviticus 20:14.](#))
- Not to imitate idolaters in customs and clothing ([Leviticus 20:23.](#))



[Amos](#) (illustration by [Gustave Doré](#))



Ezekiel (painting by [Michelangelo](#))

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 3:3–163. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-297-3](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) Haftarah

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is:

- for [Ashkenazi Jews](#): [Amos 9:7–15](#)
- for [Sephardi Jews](#): [Ezekiel 20:2–20](#)

When parshah Kedoshim is combined with parshah Acharei (as it is in 2012, 2013, and 2015), the haftarah is still the haftarah for parshah Kedoshim.

[\[edit\]](#) In the liturgy

God's characteristic of holiness in [Leviticus 19:2](#) is reflected in [Isaiah 6:2–3](#) and in turn in the [Kedushah](#) section of the [Amidah](#)

prayer in each of the three [prayer services](#). (Reuven Hammer. *Or Hadash: A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*, 4. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2003. [ISBN 0916219208](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

[\[edit\]](#) Biblical

- [Exodus 19:6](#) (being holy).
- [Leviticus 18:21](#) (Molech); [23:22](#) (corners of fields).
- [Deuteronomy 18:10](#) (passing children through the fire); [24:14–15](#) (paying wages promptly).
- [1 Kings 11:4–8](#), [33](#) (Molech).
- [2 Kings 16:3](#) (son pass through fire); [17:17](#) (children pass through fire); [21:6](#) (son pass through fire); [23:10–14](#) (Molech).
- [Isaiah 57:9](#) (Molech or king).
- [Jeremiah 7:31](#) (child sacrifice); [16:6](#) (shaving); [22:13–14](#) (paying wages); [32:35](#) (Molech); [41:5](#) (shaving); [48:37](#) (shaving); [49:1–3](#) (Molech or Malcam).

- [Ezekiel 16:20–21](#) (sacrificing children); [Ezekiel 18:5–7](#) (the just does not rob); [Ezekiel 23:6–12](#) (violations of the Holiness Code); [Ezekiel 23:37](#) (sacrifice of sons).
- [Amos 5:25–27](#) (Molech or king).



Confucius

- [Zephaniah 1:4–6](#) (Molech).
- [Psalm 41:2](#) (consideration for the poor); [82:2](#) (unrighteous judgment); [135:4](#) (God’s choice of Israel); [140:13](#) (the poor).
- [2 Chronicles 33:6](#) (children pass through fire).

[\[edit\]](#) Ancient

- [Confucius](#). [The Analects 3:15:23](#). (“Tsze-kung asked, saying, ‘Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?’ The Master said, ‘Is not Reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.’”). China, circa 5th Century B.C.E.



Aristotle

- [Aristotle](#). 4th Century B.C.E. (“We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us.”)
Quoted in [Diogenes Laërtius](#). *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 5:11. 3rd century CE. Translated by [C.D. Yonge](#). 19th century. Reprinted Kessinger Publishing, 2007. [ISBN 0548116822](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Early nonrabbinic

- [James 2:8](#) (“If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right.”). Circa 45–62 C.E.
- [Galatians 5:14](#) (“The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”). Circa 49–58 C.E.
- [Romans 13:8–9](#) (“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments . . . are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”). Greece, circa 58 C.E.

- [Mark 12:31](#) (“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”). Circa 70 C.E.
- [Matthew 7:12](#) (“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”); [19:19](#) (“‘love your neighbor as yourself.’”); [22:39–40](#) (“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”). Circa 70–100 C.E.
- [Luke 6:31](#) (“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”); [10:25–28](#) (“Love your neighbor as yourself.”). Circa 80–150 CE.
- [Acts 7:42–43](#) (Molech). Circa 80–150 CE.

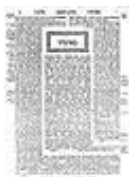
[[edit](#)] Classical rabbinic

- **Mishnah:** [Peah 1:1–8:9](#); Kilayim 1:1–9:10; Sheviit 1:8; Terumot 3:9; [Orlah 1:1–3:9](#); Shekalim 1:1; Yevamot 8:6; Nedarim 9:4, 11:3; [Kiddushin 1:7, 1:9](#); Bava Kamma 5:7; Bava Metzia 5:11, 7:7, [9:11–12](#); [Sanhedrin 1:3–4, 3:7](#), 7:4, [7:6–8](#), 7:10–11, 9:1; Makkot 3:5–6, 3:8–9; Keritot 1:1, 2:4–6, 6:9. Land of Israel, circa 200 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 14–36, 49–68, 70, 100, 158–66, 251, 356, 424, 428, 489, 515, 544, 548, 583–84, 589, 597–98, 602, 617–18, 836, 840, 851. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).

- [Tosefta](#): Peah 1:1–4:21; Demai 5:2; Kilayim 1:1–5:27; Maasrot 3:12; Orlah 1:1–8; Bikkurim 2:4; Shabbat 15:9; 17:1; Megillah 3:24; Sotah 5:11; 15:7; Gittin 2:7; Kiddushin 1:4; Bava Metzia 10:3; Bava Batra 5:7; Sanhedrin 3:1; 6:2; 9:11; 12:1; Shevuot 3:1. Land of Israel, circa 300 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew, with a New Introduction*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:47–76, 103, 251–76, 292, 341–43, 349, 415, 423, 650, 853, 891, 901, 925–26; 2:1084, 1115, 1150, 1164, 1178, 1185, 1229. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 2002. [ISBN 1-56563-642-2](#).
- [Sifra](#) 195:1–210:2. Land of Israel, 4th century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 3:85–159. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-207-0](#).
- [Jerusalem Talmud](#): Berakhot 60a; Peah 1a–73b; Kilayim 1a–84b; Sheviit 12a, 59a; Maasrot 37b; Maaser Sheni 49b, 51a; Orlah 1a–42a; Bikkurim 23a–b; Shevuot 1a–. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 2–3, 6a–b, 9–10, 12. Brooklyn: Mesorah Pubs., 2006–2009.
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284–85, 294, 348, 355, 359. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006. [ISBN 0-8276-0799-7](#).

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- Babylonian [Talmud](#): [Berakhot](#) 10b, 21b, 35a, 36a–b; [Shabbat](#) 23a, 31a, 69b, 71b, 108a, 149a; [Eruvin](#) 17b; [Pesachim](#) 3a, 16b, 22b, 75a, 78a, 113b; [Yoma](#) 18b, 23a, 36a–b, 43a, 69a, 81b, 85b; [Sukkah](#) 34b–35a; [Beitzah](#) 3b, 5a, 14b, 25b, 28b; [Rosh Hashanah](#) 2a, 9b, 31b; [Ta'anit](#) 6b; [Megillah](#) 7b, 17b; [Moed Katan](#) 2a–b, 4b–5a, 9a, 14b, 17a; [Chagigah](#) 4a, 7a, 16a, 25b; [Yevamot](#) 2b, 4a–6b, 37b, 46b–47a, 54a–55b, 65b, 94b–95a, 97a, 122a; [Ketubot](#) 29a, 30b, 36a, 37b, 46a, 80a; [Nedarim](#) 2a–91b; [Nazir](#) 29a, 37a, 41a, 57b, 58b; [Sotah](#) 7a, 8b, 43b; [Gittin](#) 39b, 41b, 43a–b, 47a, 53a–b, 54b, 59b, 85a; [Kiddushin](#) 6a, 19a, 23a, 29a, 30b, 31b–32b, 33b, 34b, 35b, 37a, 39a, 41a, 54b, 56b; [Bava Kamma](#) 16b, 28a, 51a, 54b–55a, 68b–69b, 70b, 76b,

[80b](#), [94a](#), [99a](#), [101a](#), [105b](#), [113a](#); [Bava Metzia 5b](#), [9b](#), [10b](#),
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[36a](#), [89b](#), [94a](#); [Sanhedrin 2a](#), [3a](#), [15a](#), [29a](#), [30a](#), [31a](#), [32b](#),
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[Shevuot 2a–49b](#); [Avodah Zarah 6a–b](#), [10b](#), [22a](#), [54b](#), [62a](#),
[64a](#), [65b](#), [68a](#); [Horayot 4a](#), [11a](#); [Zevachim 5b](#), [23b](#), [28a–b](#),
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[\[edit\]](#) See also

- [Homosexuality and Conservative Judaism](#)

[\[edit\]](#) External links

[\[edit\]](#) Texts

- [Masoretic text and 1917 JPS translation](#)
- [Hear the parshah chanted](#)
- [Hear the parshah read in Hebrew](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Commentaries



- [Academy for Jewish Religion, California](#)
- [Academy for Jewish Religion, New York](#)
- [Aish.com](#)
- [American Jewish University](#)

- [Anshe Emes Synagogue, Los Angeles](#)
- [Bar-Ilan University](#)
- [Chabad.org](#)
- [eparsha.com](#)
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- [The Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash](#)
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- [MyJewishLearning.com](#)
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- [What's Bothering Rashi?](#)

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Emor

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For the EP by Les Savy Fav, see [Emor: Rome Upside Down](#).

Emor (אֶמֹר — [Hebrew](#) for "speak," the fifth word, and the first distinctive word, in the parshah) is the 31st [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the eighth in the [book of Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 21:1–24:23](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) generally read it in late April or early May. Jews also read parts of the parshah, [Leviticus 22:26–23:44](#), as the initial Torah readings for the second day of [Passover](#) and the first and second days of [Sukkot](#).

The parshah provides purity rules for [priests](#), recounts the [holy days](#), provides for lights and bread in the sanctuary, and tells the story of a blasphemer and his punishment.



The Blasphemer (ink and watercolor circa 1800 by [William Blake](#))

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[\[edit\]](#) Summary

[\[edit\]](#) Rules for priests

[God](#) told [Moses](#) to tell the priests these laws for the priests. ([Leviticus 21:1](#).) None were to come in contact with a [dead](#) body except for that of his closest relatives: his parent, child, brother, or [virgin](#) sister. ([Leviticus 21:1–4](#).) They were not to shave any part of their heads or the side-growth of their [beards](#) or gash their flesh. ([Leviticus 21:5](#).) They were not to marry a [harlot](#) or divorcee. ([Leviticus 21:7](#).) The daughter of a priest who became a harlot was to be executed. ([Leviticus 21:9](#).)

The High Priest was not to bare his head or rend his vestments. ([Leviticus 21:10.](#)) He was not to come near any dead body, even that of his father or mother. ([Leviticus 21:11.](#)) He was to marry only a virgin of his own kin. ([Leviticus 21:13–15.](#))

No disabled priest could offer [sacrifices](#). ([Leviticus 21:16–21.](#)) He could eat the meat of sacrifices, but could not come near the [altar](#). ([Leviticus 21:22–23.](#)) No priest who had become unclean could eat the meat of sacrifices. ([Leviticus 22:1–9.](#)) A priest could not share his sacrificial meat with lay persons, persons whom the priest had hired, or the priest's married daughters, but the priest could share that meat with his [slaves](#) and widowed or divorced daughters, if those daughters had no children. ([Leviticus 22:10–16.](#)) Only animals without defect qualified for sacrifice. ([Leviticus 22:17–25.](#))



a [shofar](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Holy days

God told Moses to instruct the [Israelites](#) to proclaim the following sacred occasions:

- The [Sabbath](#) on the seventh day ([Leviticus 23:3.](#))
- Passover for 7 days beginning at twilight of the 14th day of the first month ([Leviticus 23:4–8.](#))
- [Shavuot](#) 50 days later ([Leviticus 23:15–21.](#))
- [Rosh Hashanah](#) on the first day of the seventh month ([Leviticus 23:23–25.](#))
- [Yom Kippur](#) on the 10th day of the seventh month ([Leviticus 23:26–32.](#))
- Sukkot for 8 days beginning on the 15th day of the seventh month ([Leviticus 23:33–42.](#))



The Blasphemer Stoned (illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

[[edit](#)] Lights and bread in the sanctuary

God told Moses to command the Israelites to bring clear [olive oil](#) for lighting the lamps of the [Tabernacle](#) regularly, from evening to morning. ([Leviticus 24:1–4.](#)) And God called for baking twelve loaves to be placed in the Tabernacle every Sabbath, and thereafter given to the priests, who were to eat them in the sacred precinct. ([Leviticus 24:5–9.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) A blasphemer



The Blasphemer (16th Century drawing by [Niccolò dell'Abbate](#))

A man with an Israelite mother (from the tribe of [Dan](#)) and an [Egyptian](#) father got in a fight, and pronounced God's Name in blasphemy. ([Leviticus 24:10–11.](#)) The people brought him to Moses and placed him in custody until God's decision should be made clear. ([Leviticus 24:11–12.](#)) God told Moses to take the blasphemer outside the camp where all who heard him were to lay their hands upon his head, and the whole community was to stone him, and they did so. ([Leviticus 24:13–14, 23.](#))

God instructed that anyone who blasphemed God was to be put to death. ([Leviticus 24:15–16.](#)) Anyone who killed any human being was to be put to death. ([Leviticus 24:17.](#)) One who killed a beast was to make restitution. ([Leviticus 24:18.](#)) And anyone who maimed another person was to pay proportionately (in what has been called [lex talionis](#)). ([Leviticus 24:19–20.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) In inner-Biblical interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 21

[\[edit\]](#) Corpse contamination

In [Leviticus 21:1–5](#), God instructed Moses to direct the priests not to allow themselves to become defiled by contact with the dead, except for a mother, father, son, daughter, brother, or unmarried sister. And the priests were not to engage in mourning rituals of making baldness upon their heads, shaving off the corners of their beards, or cutting their flesh. This prohibition of corpse contamination is one of a series of passages in the [Hebrew Bible](#) setting out the teaching that contact with the dead is antithetical to purity.

In [Numbers 5:1–4](#), God instructed Moses to command the Israelites to put out of the camp every person defiled by contact with the dead, so that they would not defile their camps, in the midst of which God dwelt.

[Numbers 19](#) sets out a procedure for a red cow mixture for decontamination from corpse contamination.

In its profession associated with tithing, [Deuteronomy 26:13–14](#) instructed Israelites to aver that they had not eaten from the tithe in mourning, nor put away any of it while unclean, nor given any of it to the dead.

In [Ezekiel 43:6–9](#), the [prophet Ezekiel](#) cites the burial of kings within the [Temple](#) as one of the practices that defiled the Temple and cause God to abandon it.

In the Hebrew Bible, uncleanness has a variety of associations. [Leviticus 11:8, 11; 21:1–4, 11](#); and [Numbers 6:6–7](#); and [19:11–16](#); associate it with death. And perhaps similarly, [Leviticus 13–14](#) associates it with skin disease. [Leviticus 12](#) associates it with childbirth. [Leviticus 15](#) associates it with various sexuality-related events. And [Jeremiah 2:7, 23; 3:2](#); and [7:30](#); and [Hosea 6:10](#) associate it with contact with the worship of alien gods.

[\[edit\]](#) **Leviticus chapter 23**

[\[edit\]](#) **Passover**



The Search for Leaven (illustration circa 1733–1739 by [Bernard Picart](#))

[Leviticus 23:4–8](#) refers to the [Festival](#) of Passover. In the Hebrew Bible, Passover is called:

- “Passover” (*Pesach*, פֶּסַח) ([Exodus 12:11, 21, 27, 43, 48; 34:25; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9:2, 4–6, 10, 12–14; 28:16; 33:3; Deuteronomy 16:1–2, 5–6; Joshua 5:10–11; 2 Kings 23:21–23; Ezekiel 45:21; Ezra 6:19–20; 2 Chronicles 30:1–2, 5, 15, 17–18; 35:1, 6–9, 11, 13, 16–19](#));
- “The Feast of Unleavened Bread” (*Chag haMatzot*, חַג הַמַּצּוֹת) ([Exodus 12:17; 23:15; 34:18; Leviticus 23:6; Deuteronomy 16:16; Ezekiel 45:21; Ezra 6:22; 2 Chronicles 8:13; 30:13, 21; 35:17](#)); and
- “A holy convocation” or “a solemn assembly” (*mikrah kodesh*, מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ) ([Exodus 12:16; Leviticus 23:7–8; Numbers 28:18, 25](#)).

Some explain the double nomenclature of “Passover” and “Feast of Unleavened Bread” as referring to two separate feasts that the Israelites combined sometime between [the Exodus](#) and when the Biblical text became settled. (See, e.g., [W. Gunther Plaut](#), *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, 456. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981. [ISBN 0-8074-0055-6](#).) [Exodus 34:18–20](#) and [Deuteronomy 15:19–16:8](#) indicate that the dedication of the firstborn also became associated with the festival.



The Passover Seder of the Portuguese Jews (illustration circa 1733–1739 by Bernard Picart)

Some believe that the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” was an agricultural festival at which the Israelites celebrated the beginning of the grain harvest. Moses may have had this festival in mind when in [Exodus 5:1](#) and [10:9](#) he petitioned Pharaoh to let the Israelites go to celebrate a feast in the wilderness. (Plaut, at 464.)

“Passover,” on the other hand, was associated with a thanksgiving sacrifice of a lamb, also called “the Passover,” “the Passover lamb,” or “the Passover offering.” ([Exodus 12:11, 21, 27, 43, 48](#); [Deuteronomy 16:2, 5–6](#); [Ezra 6:20](#); [2 Chronicles 30:15, 17–18](#); [35:1, 6–9, 11, 13](#).)

[Exodus 12:5–6](#), [Leviticus 23:5](#), and [Numbers 9:3](#) and [5](#), and [28:16](#) direct “Passover” to take place on the evening of the fourteenth of [Aviv](#) ([Nisan](#) in the [Hebrew calendar](#) after the [Babylonian](#)

[captivity](#)). [Joshua 5:10](#), [Ezekiel 45:21](#), [Ezra 6:19](#), and [2 Chronicles 35:1](#) confirm that practice. [Exodus 12:18–19](#), [23:15](#), and [34:18](#), [Leviticus 23:6](#), and [Ezekiel 45:21](#) direct the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” to take place over seven days and [Leviticus 23:6](#) and [Ezekiel 45:21](#) direct that it begin on the fifteenth of the month. Some believe that the propinquity of the dates of the two festivals led to their confusion and merger. (Plaut, at 464.)

[Exodus 12:23](#) and [27](#) link the word “Passover” (*Pesach*, פֶּסַח) to God’s act to “pass over” (*pasach*, פָּסַח) the Israelites’ houses in the [plague](#) of the firstborn. In the Torah, the consolidated Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread thus commemorate the Israelites’ liberation from [Egypt](#). ([Exodus 12:42](#); [23:15](#); [34:18](#); [Numbers 33:3](#); [Deuteronomy 16:1](#), [3](#), [6](#).)

The Hebrew Bible frequently notes the Israelites’ observance of Passover at turning points in their history. [Numbers 9:1–5](#) reports God’s direction to the Israelites to observe Passover in the wilderness of [Sinai](#) on the anniversary of their liberation from Egypt. [Joshua 5:10–11](#) reports that upon entering the [Promised Land](#), the Israelites kept the Passover on the plains of [Jericho](#) and ate unleavened cakes and parched corn, produce of the land, the next day. [2 Kings 23:21–23](#) reports that King [Josiah](#) commanded the Israelites to keep the Passover in [Jerusalem](#) as part of Josiah’s reforms, but also notes that the Israelites had not kept such a Passover from the days of the [Biblical judges](#) nor in all the days of the [kings of Israel](#) or the [kings of Judah](#), calling into question the observance of even Kings [David](#) and [Solomon](#). The more reverent [2 Chronicles 8:12–13](#), however, reports that Solomon

offered sacrifices on the festivals, including the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And [2 Chronicles 30:1–27](#) reports King [Hezekiah](#)’s observance of a second Passover anew, as sufficient numbers of neither the priests nor the people were prepared to do so before then. And [Ezra 6:19–22](#) reports that the Israelites returned from the Babylonian captivity observed Passover, ate the Passover lamb, and kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy.



offering of first fruits (illustration from a Bible card published between 1896 and 1913 by the Providence Lithograph Company)

[\[edit\]](#) Shavuot

[Leviticus 23:15–21](#) refers to the Festival of Shavuot. In the Hebrew Bible, Shavuot is called:

- The Feast of Weeks (חג שבועות, *Chag Shavuot*) ([Exodus 34:22](#); [Deuteronomy 16:10](#); see also [2 Chronicles 8:13](#) (חג השבועות, *Chag haShavuot*));
- The Day of the First-fruits (יום הבכורים, *Yom haBikurim*) ([Numbers 28:26](#));
- The Feast of Harvest (חג הקציר, *Chag haKatzir*) ([Exodus 23:16](#)); and
- A holy convocation (מיקרא קדש, *mikrah kodesh*) ([Leviticus 23:21](#); [Numbers 28:26](#))

[Exodus 34:22](#) associates Shavuot with the first-fruits (בִּכּוּרֵי, *bikurei*) of the wheat harvest. (See also [Exodus 23:16](#); [Leviticus 23:17](#); [Numbers 28:26](#).) In turn, [Deuteronomy 26:1–11](#) set out the ceremony for the bringing of the first fruits.

To arrive at the correct date, [Leviticus 23:15](#) instructs counting seven weeks from the day after the day of rest of Passover, the day that they brought the sheaf of barley for waving. Similarly, [Deuteronomy 16:9](#) directs counting seven weeks from when they first put the sickle to the standing barley.

[Leviticus 23:16–19](#) sets out a course of offerings for the fiftieth day, including a meal-offering of two loaves made from fine flour from the first-fruits of the harvest; burnt-offerings of seven lambs, one bullock, and two rams; a sin-offering of a goat; and a peace-offering of two lambs. Similarly, [Numbers 28:26–30](#) sets out a course of offerings including a meal-offering; burnt-offerings of two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs; and one

goat to make atonement. [Deuteronomy 16:10](#) directs a freewill-offering in relation to God's blessing.

[Leviticus 23:21](#) and [Numbers 28:26](#) ordain a holy convocation in which the Israelites were not to work.

[2 Chronicles 8:13](#) reports that Solomon offered burnt-offerings on the Feast of Weeks.



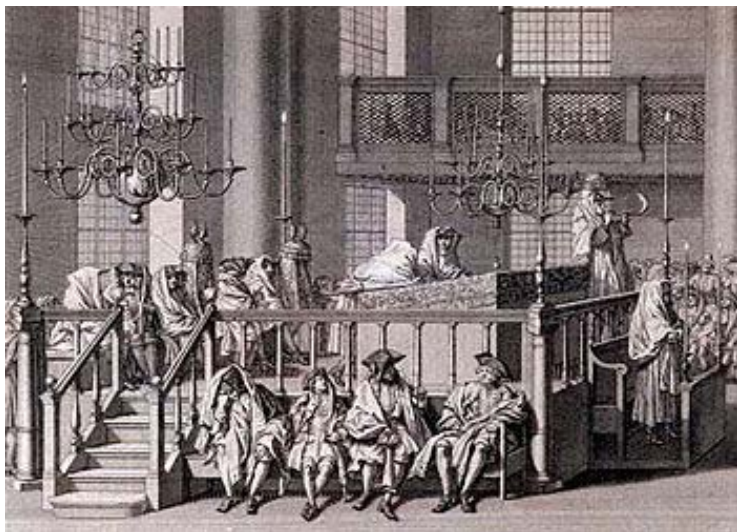
Blowing the Shofar (illustration from the 1894 *Treasures of the Bible*)

[\[edit\]](#) Rosh Hashanah

[Leviticus 23:23–25](#) refers to the Festival of Rosh Hashanah. In the Hebrew Bible, Rosh Hashanah is called:

- a memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns (זְכֵרוֹן (תְּרוּעָה, *Zichron Teruah*) ([Leviticus 23:24](#));
- a day of blowing the horn (יוֹם תְּרוּעָה, *Yom Teruah*) ([Numbers 29:1](#)); and

- a holy convocation (מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, *mikrah kodesh*) ([Leviticus 23:24](#); [Numbers 29:1](#)).



The Sounding of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah (illustration circa 1733–1739 by Bernard Picart)

Although [Exodus 12:2](#) instructs that the spring month of Aviv (since the [Babylonian captivity](#) called [Nisan](#)) “shall be the first month of the year,” [Exodus 23:16](#) and [34:22](#) also reflect an “end of the year” or a “turn of the year” in the autumn harvest month of [Tishrei](#).

[Leviticus 23:23–25](#) and [Numbers 29:1–6](#) both describe Rosh Hashanah as an holy convocation, a day of solemn rest in which no servile work is to be done, involving the blowing of horns and an offering to God.

[Ezekiel 40:1](#) speaks of "in the beginning of the year" (בִּרְאֵשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה, b'Rosh HaShanah) in Tishrei, although the Rabbis traditional interpreted [Ezekiel](#) to refer to Yom Kippur.

[Ezra 3:1–3](#) reports that in the Persian era, when the seventh month came, the Israelites gathered together in Jerusalem, and the priests offered burnt-offerings to God, morning and evening, as written in the Law of Moses.

[Nehemiah 8:1–4](#) reports that it was on Rosh Hashanah (the first day of the seventh month) that all the Israelites gathered together before the water gate and [Ezra](#) the scribe read the Law from early morning until midday. And [Nehemiah](#), Ezra, and the Levites told the people that the day was holy to the Lord their God; they should neither mourn nor weep; but they should go their way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those who had nothing. ([Nehemiah 8:9–12. HE](#))

[Psalm 81:4–5](#) likely refers to Rosh Hashanah when it enjoins, "Blow the horn at the new moon, at the full moon of our feast day. For it is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob."



[Jews Praying in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur](#) (1878 painting by [Maurycy Gottlieb](#))

[edit] Yom Kippur

[Leviticus 23:26–32](#) refers to the Festival of Yom Kippur. In the Hebrew Bible, Yom Kippur is called:

- the Day of Atonement (יום הכִּפּוּרִים, *Yom HaKippurim*) ([Leviticus 23:27](#) and [25:9](#)) or a Day of Atonement (יום כיפור, *Yom Kippurim*) ([Leviticus 23:28](#));
- a Sabbath of solemn rest (שַׁבַּת שְׁמִינִי, *Shabbat Shabbaton*) ([Leviticus 16:31](#) and [23:32](#)); and
- a holy convocation (מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, *mikrah kodesh*) ([Leviticus 23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#)).

Much as Yom Kippur, on the 10th of the month of [Tishrei](#), precedes the Festival of Sukkot, on the 15th of the month of Tishrei, [Exodus 12:3–6](#) speaks of a period starting on the 10th of the month of [Nisan](#) preparatory to the Festival of Passover, on the 15th of the month of Nisan.



Day of Atonement (painting circa 1900 by [Isidor Kaufmann](#))

[Leviticus 16:29–34](#) and [23:26–32](#) and [Numbers 29:7–11](#) present similar injunctions to observe Yom Kippur. [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) set the Holy Day on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishrei). [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) instruct that “you shall afflict your souls.” [Leviticus 23:32](#) makes clear that a full day is intended: “you shall afflict your souls; in the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening.” And [Leviticus 23:29](#) threatens that whoever “shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from his people.” [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [Leviticus 23:28](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) command that you “shall do no manner of work.” Similarly, [Leviticus 16:31](#)

and [23:32](#) call it a “Sabbath of solemn rest.” And in [23:30](#), God threatens that whoever “does any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people.” [Leviticus 16:30](#), [16:32–34](#), and [23:27–28](#), and [Numbers 29:11](#) describe the purpose of the day to make atonement for the people. Similarly, [Leviticus 16:30](#) speaks of the purpose “to cleanse you from all your sins,” and [Leviticus 16:33](#) speaks of making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of meeting, the altar; and the priests. [Leviticus 16:29](#) instructs that the commandment applies both to “the home-born” and to “the stranger who sojourns among you.” [Leviticus 16:3–25](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:8–11](#) command offerings to God. And [Leviticus 16:31](#) and [23:31](#) institute the observance as “a statute forever.”

[Leviticus 16:3–28](#) sets out detailed procedures for the priest’s atonement ritual during the time of the Temple.

[Leviticus 25:8–10](#) instructs that after seven [Sabbatical years](#), on the [Jubilee year](#), on the day of atonement, the Israelites were to proclaim liberty throughout the land with the blast of the horn and return every man to his possession and to his family.

In [Isaiah 57:14–58:14](#), the [Haftarah](#) for Yom Kippur morning, God describes “the fast that I have chosen [on] the day for a man to afflict his soul.” [Isaiah 58:3–5](#) make clear that “to afflict the soul” was understood as fasting. But [Isaiah 58:6–10](#) goes on to impress that “to afflict the soul,” God also seeks acts of social justice: “to loose the fetters of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke,” “to let the oppressed go free,” “to give your bread to

the hungry, and . . . bring the poor that are cast out to your house,” and “when you see the naked, that you cover him.”



Eating in a [Sukkah](#) (1723 engraving by Bernard Picart)

[\[edit\]](#) Sukkot

And [Leviticus 23:33–42](#) refers to the Festival of Sukkot. In the Hebrew Bible, Sukkot is called:

- “The Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths)” ([Leviticus 23:34](#); [Deuteronomy 16:13](#), [16](#); [31:10](#); [Zechariah 14:16](#), [18](#), [19](#); [Ezra 3:4](#); [2 Chronicles 8:13](#));
- “The Feast of Ingathering” ([Exodus 23:16](#), [34:22](#));
- “The Feast” or “the festival” ([1 Kings 8:2](#), [65](#); [12:32](#); [2 Chronicles 5:3](#); [7:8](#));

- “The Feast of the Lord” ([Leviticus 23:39](#); [Judges 21:19](#));
- “The festival of the seventh month” ([Ezekiel 45:25](#); [Nehemiah 8:14](#)); and
- “A holy convocation” or “a sacred occasion” ([Numbers 29:12](#)).

Sukkot’s agricultural origin is evident from the name "The Feast of Ingathering," from the ceremonies accompanying it, and from the season and occasion of its celebration: "At the end of the year when you gather in your labors out of the field" ([Exodus 23:16](#)); "after you have gathered in from your threshing-floor and from your winepress." ([Deuteronomy 16:13](#).) It was a thanksgiving for the fruit harvest. (Compare [Judges 9:27](#).) And in what may explain the festival’s name, [Isaiah](#) reports that grape harvesters kept booths in their [vineyards](#). ([Isaiah 1:8](#).) Coming as it did at the completion of the harvest, Sukkot was regarded as a general thanksgiving for the bounty of nature in the year that had passed.



Celebrating Sukkot with the Four Species (painting circa 1894–1895 by Leopold Pilichowski)

Sukkot became one of the most important feasts in Judaism, as indicated by its designation as “the Feast of the Lord” ([Leviticus 23:39; Judges 21:19](#)) or simply “the Feast.” ([1 Kings 8:2, 65; 12:32; 2 Chronicles 5:3; 7:8.](#)) Perhaps because of its wide attendance, Sukkot became the appropriate time for important state ceremonies. Moses instructed the children of Israel to gather for a reading of the Law during Sukkot every seventh year. ([Deuteronomy 31:10–11.](#)) King Solomon dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem on Sukkot. ([1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 7.](#)) And Sukkot was the first sacred occasion observed after the resumption of sacrifices in Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. ([Ezra 3:2–4.](#))



Sephardic Jews Observe Hoshanah Rabbah (engraving circa 1723–1743 by Bernard Picart)

In the time of Nehemiah, after the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites celebrated Sukkot by making and dwelling in booths, a practice of which Nehemiah reports: “the Israelites had not done so from the days of Joshua.” ([Nehemiah 8:13–17](#).) In a practice related to that of the [Four Species](#), Nehemiah also reports that the Israelites found in the Law the commandment that they “go out to the mountains and bring leafy branches of [olive](#) trees, [pine](#) trees, [myrtles](#), [palms](#) and [other] leafy trees to make booths.” ([Nehemiah 8:14–15](#).) In [Leviticus 23:40](#), God told Moses to command the people: “On the first day you shall take the product of *hadar* trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and [willows](#) of the brook,” and “You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.” ([Leviticus 23:42–43](#).) The book of Numbers, however, indicates that while in the wilderness, the Israelites dwelt in tents. ([Numbers 11:10](#); [16:27](#).) Some secular scholars consider [Leviticus 23:39–43](#) (the commandments regarding booths and the four species) to be an insertion by a late [redactor](#). (E.g., [Richard Elliott Friedman](#). *The Bible with Sources Revealed*, 228–29. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003.)

[Jeroboam](#) son of Nebat, King of the northern [Kingdom of Israel](#), whom [1 Kings 13:33](#) describes as practicing “his evil way,” celebrated a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, one month after Sukkot, “in imitation of the festival in Judah.” ([1 Kings 12:32–33](#).) “While Jeroboam was standing on the [altar](#) to

present the offering, the man of God, at the command of the Lord, cried out against the altar” in disapproval. ([1 Kings 13:1](#).)

According to the prophet [Zechariah](#), in the messianic era, Sukkot will become a universal festival, and all nations will make pilgrimages annually to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast there. ([Zechariah 14:16–19](#).)

[[edit](#)] In classical rabbinic interpretation

[[edit](#)] Leviticus chapter 21

Rabbi Tanhum son of Rabbi Hannilai taught that [Leviticus 21](#) was one of two sections in the Torah (along with [Numbers 19](#), on the [Red Cow](#)) that Moses gave us in writing that are both pure, dealing with the law of purity. Rabbi Tanhum taught that they were given on account of the [tribe of Levi](#), of whom it is written (in [Malachi 3:3](#)), “he [God’s messenger] shall purify the sons of [Levi](#) and purge them.” ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 26:3.)

The [Gemara](#) noted the apparently superfluous “say to them” in [Leviticus 21:1](#) and reported an interpretation that the language meant that adult [Kohanim](#) must warn their children away from becoming contaminated by contact with a corpse. But then the Gemara stated that the correct interpretation was that the language meant to warn adults to avoid contaminating the children through their own contact. ([Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 114a](#).) And a [Midrash](#) explained the apparent redundancy by teaching that the first expression of “speak” was intended to intimate that a priest may defile himself on account

of an unattended corpse (*met mitzvah*), while the second expression “say” was intended to intimate that he may not defile himself on account of any other corpse. (Leviticus Rabbah 26:8.)

The [Mishnah](#) taught that the commandment of [Leviticus 21:1](#) for Kohanim not to become ritually impure for the dead is one of only three exceptions to the general rule that every commandment that is a prohibition (whether time-dependent or not) governs both men and women. The other exceptions are the commandments of [Leviticus 19:27](#) not to round off the side-growth of one’s head and not to destroy the corners of one’s beard. ([Mishnah Kiddushin 1:7](#); [Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin 29a](#).)

The Mishnah employed the prohibitions of [Leviticus 21:1](#) and [23:7](#) to imagine how one could with one action violate up to nine separate commandments. One could (1) plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together (in violation of [Deuteronomy 22:10](#)) (2 and 3) that are two animals dedicated to the sanctuary, (4) plowing mixed seeds sown in a vineyard (in violation of [Deuteronomy 22:9](#)), (5) during a Sabbatical year (in violation of [Leviticus 25:4](#)), (6) on a Festival-day (in violation of, for example, [Leviticus 23:7](#)), (7) when the plower is a priest (in violation of [Leviticus 21:1](#)) and (8) a Nazirite (in violation of [Numbers 6:6](#)) plowing in a contaminated place. [Chananya ben Chachinai](#) said that the plower also may have been wearing a garment of wool and linen (in violation of [Leviticus 19:19](#) and [Deuteronomy 22:11](#)). They said to him that this would not be in the same category as the other violations. He replied that neither is the

Nazirite in the same category as the other violations. ([Mishnah Makkot 3:9](#); [Babylonian Talmud Makkot 21b](#).)

The Gemara taught that where [Leviticus 21:1–2](#) prohibited the priest from defiling himself by contact with the dead “except for his flesh, that is near to him” the words “his flesh” meant to include his wife in the exception. ([Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 22b](#).)

The Mishnah interpreted [Leviticus 21:7](#) to teach that both acting and retired High Priests had to marry a virgin and were forbidden to marry a widow. And the Mishnah interpreted [Leviticus 21:1–6](#) to teach that both could not defile themselves for the dead bodies of their relatives, could not let their hair grow wild in mourning, and could not rend their clothes as other Jews did in mourning. (Mishnah Horayot 3:4; [Babylonian Talmud Horayot 11b](#).) The Mishnah taught that while an ordinary priest in mourning rent his garments from above, a High Priest rent his garments from below. And the Mishnah taught that on the day of a close relative’s death, the High Priest could still offer sacrifices but could not eat of the sacrificial meat, while under those circumstances an ordinary priest could neither offer sacrifices nor eat sacrificial meat. (Mishnah Horayot 3:5; [Babylonian Talmud Horayot 12b](#).)

[Rabbi Hiyya](#) bar Abba cited [Leviticus 21:8](#) to support the proposition that a Kohen should be called up first to read the law, for the verse taught to give Kohanim precedence in every matter of sanctity. And a [Baraita](#) was taught in the school of [Rabbi Ishmael](#) that [Leviticus 21:8](#) meant that Jews should give

Kohanim precedence in every matter of sanctity, including speaking first at every assembly, saying grace first, and choosing his portion first when an item was to be divided. ([Babylonian Talmud Gittin 59b.](#)) The Mishnah recognized the status of the Kohanim over Levites, Levites over Israelites, and Israelites over [those born from forbidden relationships](#), but only when they were equal in all other respects. The Mishnah taught that a learned child of forbidden parents took precedence over an ignorant High Priest. (Mishnah Horayot 3:8; [Babylonian Talmud Horayot 13a.](#))

The Gemara interpreted the law of the Kohen's adulterous daughter in [Leviticus 21:9](#) in [Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 50a–52a.](#)

Interpreting the words “the priest that is highest among his brethren” in [Leviticus 21:10](#), a Midrash taught that the High Priest was superior in five things: wisdom, strength, beauty, wealth, and age. (Leviticus Rabbah 26:9.)

[Rabbi](#) said that a priest with a blemish within the meaning of [Leviticus 21:20](#) who officiated at services in the Sanctuary was liable to death at the hands of Heaven, but the Sages maintained that he was merely prohibited. ([Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 83a.](#))



position of the Kohen's hands during the priestly blessing

The Mishnah taught that a priest whose hands were deformed should not lift up his hands to say the [priestly blessing](#), and Rabbi Judah said that a priest whose hands were discolored should not lift up his hands, because it would cause the congregation to look at him during this blessing when they should not. (Mishnah Megillah 4:7; [Babylonian Talmud Megillah 24b.](#)) A Baraita stated that deformities on the face, hands, or feet were disqualifying for saying the priestly blessing. Rabbi [Joshua ben Levi](#) said that a Kohen with spotted hands should not say the blessing. A Baraita taught that one whose hands were curved inwards or bent sideways should not say the blessing. And [Rav Huna](#) said that a man whose eyes ran should not say the blessing. But the Gemara noted that such a Kohen in Rav Huna's neighborhood used to say the priestly blessing and apparently even Rav Huna did not object, because the townspeople had become accustomed to the Kohen. And the Gemara cited a Baraita that taught that a man whose eyes ran should not lift up his hands, but he was permitted to do so if the townspeople were accustomed to him. [Rabbi](#)

[Johanan](#) said that a man blind in one eye should not lift up his hands. But the Gemara noted that there was one in Rabbi Johanan's neighborhood who used to lift up his hands, as the townspeople were accustomed to him. And the Gemara cited a Baraita that taught that a man blind in one eye should not lift up his hands, but if the townspeople were accustomed to him, he was permitted. Rabbi Judah said that a man whose hands were discolored should not lift up his hands, but the Gemara cited a Baraita that taught that if most of the men of the town follow the same hand-discoloring occupation, it was permitted. ([Babylonian Talmud Megillah 24b.](#))

[Rav Ashi](#) deduced from [Leviticus 21:20](#) that arrogance constitutes a blemish. ([Babylonian Talmud Megillah 29a.](#))

[edit] Leviticus chapter 22

The Mishnah reported that when a priest performed the service while unclean in violation of [Leviticus 22:3](#), his brother priests did not charge him before the [bet din](#), but the young priests took him out of the Temple court and split his skull with clubs. (Mishnah Sanhedrin 9:6; [Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 81b.](#))

A Baraita interpreted the words “there shall be no blemish therein” in [Leviticus 22:21](#) to forbid causing a blemish in a sacrificial animal even indirectly. ([Babylonian Talmud Bekhorot 33b–34a.](#))

[Ben Zoma](#) interpreted the words “neither shall you do this in your land” in [Leviticus 22:24](#) to forbid castrating even a dog (an

animal that one could never offer as a sacrifice). ([Babylonian Talmud Chagigah 14b.](#))

The Gemara interpreted what constitutes profanation of God's Name within the meaning of [Leviticus 22:32](#). [Rab](#) said that it would profane God's Name if a Torah scholar took meat from a butcher without paying promptly. [Abaye](#) said that this would profane God's Name only in a place where vendors did not have a custom of going out to collect payment from their customers. Rabbi Johanan said that it would profane God's Name if a Torah scholar walked six feet without either contemplating Torah or wearing [tefillin](#). Isaac of the School of Rabbi Jannai said that it would profane God's Name if one's bad reputation caused colleagues to become ashamed. [Rav Nahman bar Isaac](#) said that an example of this would be where people called on God to forgive so-and-so. Abaye interpreted the words "and you shall love the Lord your God" in [Deuteronomy 6:5](#) to teach that one should strive through one's actions to cause others to love the Name of Heaven. So that if people see that those who study Torah and Mishnah are honest in business and speak pleasantly, then they will accord honor to the Name of God. But if people see that those who study Torah and Mishnah are dishonest in business and discourteous, then they will associate their shortcomings with their being Torah scholars. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 86a.](#))



The Punishment of Korah's Congregation (woodcut by [Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld](#) from the 1860 *Die Bibel in Bildern*)

Rav Adda bar Abahah taught that a person praying alone does not say the Sanctification (*Kedushah*) prayer (which includes the words from [Isaiah 6:3](#): כָּל-קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת; מִלְאֵה, *Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh, Adonai Tz'vaot melo kol haaretz kevodo*, “Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord of Hosts, the entire world is filled with God’s Glory”), because [Leviticus 22:32](#) says: “I will be hallowed among the children of Israel,” and thus sanctification requires ten people (a *minyan*). Rabinai the brother of Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba taught that we derive this by drawing an analogy between the two occurrences of the word “among” (תּוֹךְ, *toch*) in [Leviticus 22:32](#) (“I will be hallowed *among* the children of Israel”) and in [Numbers 16:21](#), in which God tells Moses and Aaron: “Separate yourselves from *among* this congregation,” referring to

[Korah](#) and his followers. Just as [Numbers 16:21](#), which refers to a congregation, implies a number of at least ten, so [Leviticus 22:32](#) implies at least ten. ([Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 21b.](#))

[edit] Leviticus chapter 23

Tractate [Beitzah](#) in the Mishnah, [Tosefta](#), [Jerusalem Talmud](#), and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws common to all of the [Festivals](#) in [Exodus 12:3–27, 43–49; 13:6–10; 23:16; 34:18–23; Leviticus 16; 23:4–43; Numbers 9:1–14; 28:16–30:1; and Deuteronomy 16:1–17; 31:10–13.](#) ([Mishnah Beitzah 1:1–5:7; Tosefta Yom Tov \(Beitzah\) 1:1–4:11; Jerusalem Talmud Beitzah 1a–49b; Babylonian Talmud Beitzah 2a–40b.](#))

Tractate [Pesachim](#) in the Mishnah, [Tosefta](#), [Jerusalem Talmud](#), and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of the Passover in [Exodus 12:3–27, 43–49; 13:6–10; 34:18; Leviticus 23:4–8; Numbers 9:1–14; 28:16–25; and Deuteronomy 16:1–8.](#) ([Mishnah Pesachim 1:1–10:9; Tosefta Pisha \(Pesachim\) 1:1–10:13; Jerusalem Talmud Pesachim 1a–; Babylonian Talmud Pesachim 2a–121b.](#))

The Gemara noted that in listing the several festivals in [Exodus 23:15, Leviticus 23:5, Numbers 28:16, and Deuteronomy 16:1](#), the Torah always begins with Passover. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 2b.](#))

Tractate [Peah](#) in the Mishnah, [Tosefta](#), and [Jerusalem Talmud](#) interpreted the laws of the harvest of the corner of the field and gleanings to be given to the poor in [Leviticus 19:9–10](#) and [23:22](#),

and [Deuteronomy 24:19–21](#). ([Mishnah Peah 1:1–8:9](#); Tosefta Peah 1:1–4:21; Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1a–73b.)

The Mishnah taught that the Torah defines no minimum or maximum for the donation of the corners of one's field to the poor. ([Mishnah Peah 1:1](#); Tosefta Peah 1:1; Jerusalem Talmud Peah 1a.) But the Mishnah also taught that one should not make the amount left to the poor less than one-sixtieth of the entire crop. And even though no definite amount is given, the amount given should accord with the size of the field, the number of poor people, and the extent of the yield. ([Mishnah Peah 1:2](#); Jerusalem Talmud Peah 10b.)

Rabbi Eliezer taught that one who cultivates land in which one can plant a quarter *ḵav* of seed is obligated to give a corner to the poor. [Rabbi Joshua](#) said land that yields two *seah* of grain. [Rabbi Tarfon](#) said land of at least six handbreadths by six handbreadths. Rabbi Judah ben Betera said land that requires two strokes of a sickle to harvest, and the law is as he spoke. Rabbi Akiba said that one who cultivates land of any size is obligated to give a corner to the poor and the *first fruits*. ([Mishnah Peah 3:6](#).)

The Mishnah taught that the poor could enter a field to collect three times a day — in the morning, at midday, and in the afternoon. Rabban [Gamliel](#) taught that they said this only so that landowners should not reduce the number of times that the poor could enter. Rabbi Akiba taught that they said this only so that landowners should not increase the number of times that the poor had to enter. The landowners of Beit Namer used to harvest

along a rope and allowed the poor to collect a corner from every row. ([Mishnah Peah 4:5](#).)

The Mishnah taught that if a wife foreswore all benefit from other people, her husband could not annul his wife's vow, but she could still benefit from the gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and the corner of the field that [Leviticus 19:9–10](#) and [23:22](#), and [Deuteronomy 24:19–21](#) commanded farmers to leave for the poor. ([Mishnah Nedarim 11:3](#).)

Tractate [Rosh Hashanah](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of Rosh Hashanah in [Leviticus 23:23–25](#) and [Numbers 29:1–6](#). ([Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1–4:9](#); Tosefta Rosh Hashanah 1:1–2:18; Jerusalem Talmud Rosh Hashanah 1a–; [Babylonian Talmud Rosh Hashanah 2a–35a](#).)

A Baraita taught that on Rosh Hashanah God remembered each of Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah and decreed that they would bear children. Rabbi Eliezer found support for the Baraita from the parallel use of the word “remember” in [Genesis 30:22](#), which says about Rachel, “And God *remembered* Rachel,” and in [Leviticus 23:24](#), which calls Rosh Hashanah “a *remembrance* of the blast of the trumpet.” ([Babylonian Talmud Rosh Hashanah 11a](#).)

Tractate [Yoma](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of Yom Kippur in [Leviticus 16](#) and [23:26–32](#) and [Numbers 29:7–11](#). ([Mishnah Yoma 1:1–8:9](#); Tosefta Kippurim (Yoma) 1:1–4:17; Jerusalem Talmud Yoma 1a–57a; [Babylonian Talmud Yoma 2a–88a](#).)



A sukkah in [medieval Italy](#) (1374 manuscript illustration at the [British Library](#))

Rav Mana of Sha'ab (in Galilee) and Rav Joshua of Siknin in the name of Rav Levi compared repentance at the High Holidays to the case of a province that owed arrears on its taxes to the king, and the king came to collect the debt. When the king was within ten miles, the nobility of the province came out and praised him, so he freed the province of a third of its debt. When he was within five miles, the middle-class people of the province came out and praised him, so he freed the province of another third of its debt. When he entered the province, all the people of the province — men, women, and children — came out and praised him, so he freed them of all of their debt. The king told them to let bygones be bygones; from then on they would start a new

account. In a similar manner, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the leaders of the generation fast, and God absolves them of a third of their iniquities. From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, private individuals fast, and God absolves them of a third of their iniquities. On Yom Kippur, everyone fasts — men, women and children — and God tells Israel to let bygones be bygones; from then onwards we begin a new account. From Yom Kippur to Sukkot, all Israel are busy with the performance of religious duties. One is busy with a sukkah, one with a lulav. On the first day of Sukkot, all Israel stand in the presence of God with their palm-branches and etrogs in honor of God's name, and God tells them to let bygones be bygones; from now we begin a new account. Thus in [Leviticus 23:40](#), Moses exhorts Israel: "You shall take on the first day [of Sukkot] the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God." [Rabbi Aha](#) explained that the words, "For with You there is forgiveness," in [Psalm 130:4](#) signify that forgiveness waits with God from Rosh Hashanah onward. And forgiveness waits that long so (in the words of [Psalm 130:4](#)) "that You may be feared" and God may impose God's awe upon God's creatures (through the suspense and uncertainty). (Leviticus Rabbah 30:7.)



A sukkah in 1933 [Berlin](#) (photograph from the [German Federal Archives](#))

Tractate [Sukkah](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of Sukkot in [Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:33–43; Numbers 29:12–34; and Deuteronomy 16:13–17; 31:10–13](#). ([Mishnah Sukkah 1:1–5:8](#); Tosefta Sukkah 1:1–4:28; Jerusalem Talmud Sukkah 1a–33b; [Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 2a–56b](#).)

The Mishnah taught that a sukkah can be no more than 20 [cubits](#) high. [Rabbi Judah](#), however, declared taller sukkot valid. The Mishnah taught that a sukkah must be at least 10 handbreadths high, have three walls, and have more shade than sun. ([Mishnah Sukkah 1:1](#); [Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 2a](#).) The [House of Shammai](#) declared invalid a sukkah made 30 days or more before the festival, but the [House of Hillel](#) pronounced it valid. The Mishnah taught that if one made the sukkah for the purpose of the festival, even at the beginning of the year, it is valid. ([Mishnah Sukkah 1:1](#); [Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 9a](#).)



A city of sukkot in 2006 [Jerusalem](#) (photograph by Effi B.)

The Mishnah taught that a sukkah under a tree is as invalid as a sukkah within a house. If one sukkah is erected above another, the upper one is valid, but the lower is invalid. Rabbi Judah said that if there are no occupants in the upper one, then the lower one is valid. ([Mishnah Sukkah 1:2](#); [Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 9b.](#))

It invalidates a sukkah to spread a sheet over the sukkah because of the sun, or beneath it because of falling leaves, or over the frame of a four-post bed. One may spread a sheet, however, over the frame of a two-post bed. ([Mishnah Sukkah 1:3](#); [Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 10a.](#))

It is not valid to train a vine, gourd, or ivy to cover a sukkah and then cover it with sukkah covering (*s'chach*). If, however, the sukkah-covering exceeds the vine, gourd, or ivy in quantity, or if the vine, gourd, or ivy is detached, it is valid. The general rule is that one may not use for sukkah-covering anything that is susceptible to ritual impurity (*tumah*) or that does not grow from

the soil. But one may use for sukkah-covering anything not susceptible to ritual impurity that grows from the soil. ([Mishnah Sukkah 1:4](#); [Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 11a.](#))

Bundles of straw, wood, or brushwood may not serve as sukkah-covering. But any of them, if they are untied, are valid. All materials are valid for the walls. ([Mishnah Sukkah 1:5](#); [Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 12a.](#))

Rabbi Judah taught that one may use planks for the sukkah-covering, but [Rabbi Meir](#) taught that one may not. The Mishnah taught that it is valid to place a plank four handbreadths wide over the sukkah, provided that one does not sleep under it. ([Mishnah Sukkah 1:6](#); [Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 14a.](#))

[[edit](#)] [Leviticus chapter 24](#)

The Gemara taught that the words “eye for eye” in [Leviticus 24:20](#) meant pecuniary compensation. Rabbi [Simon ben Yohai](#) asked those who would take the words literally how they would enforce equal justice where a blind man put out the eye of another man, or an amputee cut off the hand of another, or where a lame person broke the leg of another. The school of Rabbi Ishmael cited the words “so shall it be given to him” in [Leviticus 24:20](#), and deduced that the word “give” could apply only to pecuniary compensation. The school of Rabbi Hiyya cited the words “hand for hand” in the parallel discussion in [Deuteronomy 19:21](#) to mean that an article was given from hand to hand, namely money. [Abaye](#) reported that a sage of the school of Hezekiah taught that [Exodus 21:23–24](#) said “eye for eye” and

“life for life,” but not “life and eye for eye,” and it could sometimes happen that eye and life would be taken for an eye, as when the offender died while being blinded. [Rav Papa](#) said in the name of [Raba](#) that [Exodus 21:19](#) referred explicitly to healing, and the verse would not make sense if one assumed that retaliation was meant. And Rav Ashi taught that the principle of pecuniary compensation could be derived from the analogous use of the term “for” in [Exodus 21:24](#) in the expression “eye for eye” and in [Exodus 21:36](#) in the expression “he shall surely pay ox for ox.” As the latter case plainly indicated pecuniary compensation, so must the former. ([Babylonian Talmud Bava Kamma 84a.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Commandments

According to the [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 24 positive and 39 negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

- A Kohen must not defile himself for anyone except certain relatives. ([Leviticus 21:1.](#))
- To mourn for a close relative ([Leviticus 21:3.](#))
- An impure Kohen, following immersion, must wait until after sundown before returning to service. ([Leviticus 22:7.](#))
- A Kohen must not marry a woman who had forbidden relations. ([Leviticus 21:7.](#))

- A Kohen must not marry a woman born from a disqualified marriage. ([Leviticus 21:7.](#))
- A Kohen must not marry a divorcee. ([Leviticus 21:7.](#))
- To dedicate the Kohen for service ([Leviticus 21:8.](#))
- The High Priest must not enter under the same roof as a corpse. ([Leviticus 21:11.](#))
- The High Priest must not defile himself for any relative. ([Leviticus 21:11.](#))
- The High Priest must marry a virgin. ([Leviticus 21:13.](#))
- The High Priest must not marry a widow. ([Leviticus 21:14.](#))
- The High Priest must not have sexual relations with a widow even outside of marriage. ([Leviticus 21:15.](#))
- A Kohen with a physical blemish must not serve. ([Leviticus 21:17.](#))
- A Kohen with a temporary blemish must not serve. ([Leviticus 21:17.](#))
- A Kohen with a physical blemish must not enter the sanctuary or approach the altar. ([Leviticus 21:23.](#))
- Impure Kohanim must not do service in the Temple. ([Leviticus 22:2.](#))

- An impure Kohen must not eat [terumah](#). ([Leviticus 22:4.](#))
- A non-Kohen must not eat terumah. ([Leviticus 22:10.](#))
- A hired worker or a Jewish bondsman of a Kohen must not eat terumah. ([Leviticus 22:10.](#))
- An uncircumcised person must not eat terumah. ([Leviticus 22:10.](#))
- A woman born from a disqualified marriage must not eat terumah. ([Leviticus 22:12.](#))
- Not to eat produce from which the tithes have not been separated ([Leviticus 22:15.](#))
- Not to dedicate a blemished animal for the altar ([Leviticus 22:20.](#))
- To offer only unblemished animals ([Leviticus 22:21.](#))
- Not to wound dedicated animals ([Leviticus 22:21.](#))
- Not to sprinkle the blood of a blemished animal ([Leviticus 22:24.](#))
- Not to slaughter a blemished animal for an offering ([Leviticus 22:22.](#))
- Not to burn the fat of a blemished animal on the altar ([Leviticus 22:22.](#))

- Not to castrate animals ([Leviticus 22:24.](#))
- Not to sacrifice blemished animals even if offered by non-Jews ([Leviticus 22:25.](#))
- To offer only animals which are at least eight days old ([Leviticus 22:27.](#))
- Not to slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day ([Leviticus 22:28.](#))
- Not to profane God's Name ([Leviticus 22:32.](#))
- To sanctify God's Name ([Leviticus 22:32.](#))
- To rest on the first day of Passover ([Leviticus 23:7.](#))
- Not to do prohibited labor on the first day of Passover ([Leviticus 23:8.](#))
- To offer the musaf offering all seven days of Passover ([Leviticus 23:8.](#))
- To rest on the seventh day of Passover ([Leviticus 23:8.](#))
- Not to do prohibited labor on the seventh day of Passover ([Leviticus 23:8.](#))
- To offer the wave offering from the meal of the new wheat ([Leviticus 23:10.](#))
- Not to eat bread from new grain before the omer ([Leviticus 23:14.](#))

- Not to eat [parched grains](#) from new grain before the omer ([Leviticus 23:14.](#))
- Not to eat ripened grains from new grain before the omer ([Leviticus 23:14.](#))
- To count the omer ([Leviticus 23:15.](#))
- To bring two loaves to accompany the Shavuot sacrifice ([Leviticus 23:17.](#))
- To offer the musaf offering on Yom Kippur ([Leviticus 23:27.](#))
- To rest on Shavuot ([Leviticus 23:21.](#))
- Not to do prohibited labor on Shavuot ([Leviticus 23:21.](#))



lulav and etrog

- To rest on Rosh Hashanah ([Leviticus 23:24.](#))

- Not to do prohibited labor on Rosh Hashanah ([Leviticus 23:25.](#))
- To offer the musaf offering on Rosh Hashanah ([Leviticus 23:25.](#))
- To fast on Yom Kippur ([Leviticus 23:27.](#))
- Not to do prohibited labor on Yom Kippur ([Leviticus 23:27.](#))
- Not to eat or drink on Yom Kippur ([Leviticus 23:29.](#))
- To rest from prohibited labor on Yom Kippur ([Leviticus 23:32.](#))
- To rest on Sukkot ([Leviticus 23:35.](#))
- Not to do prohibited labor on Sukkot ([Leviticus 23:35.](#))
- To offer the musaf offering all the days of Sukkot ([Leviticus 23:36.](#))
- To rest on Shmini Atzeret ([Leviticus 23:36.](#))
- To offer the musaf offering on Shmini Atzeret ([Leviticus 23:36.](#))
- Not to do prohibited labor on Shmini Atzeret ([Leviticus 23:36.](#))
- To take up a [lulav](#) and [etrog](#) all seven days ([Leviticus 23:40.](#))

- To dwell in a sukkah for the seven days of Sukkot
([Leviticus 23:42.](#))



Ezekiel (painting by [Michelangelo](#))

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 3:163–363. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-297-3.](#))

[[edit](#)] Haftarah

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is [Ezekiel 44:15–31.](#)

[[edit](#)] In the liturgy

Some Jews refer to the 24 priestly gifts deduced from [Leviticus 21](#) and [Numbers 18](#) as they study [chapter 6](#) of *Pirkei Avot* on a Sabbath between Passover and Rosh Hashanah. (Menachem Davis. *The Schottenstein Edition Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals with an Interlinear Translation*, 587. Brooklyn: [Mesorah Publications](#), 2002. [ISBN 1-57819-697-3.](#))



A page from a 14th century German Haggadah

The laws of a priest's family eating meat from sacrifices in [Leviticus 22:11–13](#) provide an application of the eleventh of the Thirteen Rules for interpreting the Torah in the [Baraita of Rabbi Ishmael](#) that many Jews read as part of the readings before the [Pesukei d'Zimrah prayer service](#). The eleventh rule provides that any item that was included in a generalization but was then singled out to be treated as a special case is not governed by the generalization unless Scripture explicitly returns it to the generalization. [Leviticus 22:11](#) states the general rule that a priest's entire household could eat meat from sacrifices. But [Leviticus 22:12](#) then says that if a priest's daughter married a non-priest, then she could no longer eat meat from sacrifices. What if she was then widowed or divorced without children and returned to live with her father's household? Reading [Leviticus 22:12](#), one might think that she still could not eat meat from sacrifices, but [Leviticus 22:13](#) explicitly returns her to the general rule that she

could eat meat from sacrifices. (Davis, *Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals*, at 245–46.)

The Passover [Haggadah](#), in the concluding *nirtzah* section of the [Seder](#), ties together a reference to Abraham’s hospitality to his visitors in [Genesis 18:7](#) with the reading for the second day of Passover that includes in [Leviticus 22:27](#) a discussion of a bullock offering. The Haggadah reports that Abraham ran to the cattle to commemorate the ox in the reading for Passover, deducing the season from the report in [Genesis 19:3](#) that Lot fed his visitors [matzah](#). (Joseph Tabory. *JPS Commentary on the Haggadah: Historical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, 126. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2008. [ISBN 978-0-8276-0858-0](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

[\[edit\]](#) Biblical

- [Exodus 4:10–11](#) (God makes people disabled); [12:3–27](#), [43–49](#) (Passover); [13:6–10](#) (Passover); [21:22–25](#) (eye for eye); [23:14–19](#) (three pilgrim festivals); [34:22–26](#) (three pilgrim festivals).
- [Leviticus 16:1–34](#) (Yom Kippur); [19:9–10](#) (corners of fields).
- [Numbers 9:1–14](#) (Passover, inquiry of God on the law); [15:32–36](#) (inquiry of God on the law); [27:1–11](#)

(inquiry of God on the law); [28:16–31](#) (Passover, Shavuot); [29:1–39](#) (holidays).

- [Deuteronomy 16:1–17](#) (three pilgrim festivals); [19:15–21](#) (eye for eye); [31:10–13](#) (Sukkot).
- [Judges 21:19](#) (Sukkot).
- [1Kings 8:1–66](#) (Sukkot); [12:32](#) (northern feast like Sukkot).
- [Ezekiel 45:25](#) (Sukkot).
- [Zechariah 14:16–19](#) (Sukkot).
- [Psalm 15:1–5](#) (who shall sojourn in God's Tabernacle); [61:9](#) (performing vows); [65:2](#) (performing vows); [74:10–11](#), [18](#) (blasphemers); [78:4–7](#) (that succeeding generations may learn); [81:4](#) (proclaiming feast days); [107:22](#) (sacrifices of thanksgiving); [116:17](#) (sacrifices of thanksgiving).
- [Ezra 3:4](#) (Sukkot).
- [Nehemiah 8:14–18](#) (Sukkot).
- [2 Chronicles 5:3–14](#) (Sukkot); [7:8](#) (Sukkot); [8:12–13](#) (three Pilgrim festivals).





Plato

[[edit](#)] Ancient

- Plato. *Laws* [6:759](#). Greece, 4th century BCE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Laws of Plato*. Translated by Thomas L. Pangle, 145. New York: Basic Books, 1980. [ISBN 0-465-03856-5](#). (priests sound of body).

[[edit](#)] Early nonrabbinic

1. John [7:1–53](#) (Sukkot).

[[edit](#)] Classical rabbinic

1. Mishnah: [Peah 1:1–8:9](#); [Demai 1:1–7:8](#); Sheviit 2:1; Terumot 3:9, 6:6–7:4; Challah 1:1; Bikkurim 1:8; [Pesachim 1:1–10:9](#); [Yoma 1:1–8:9](#); [Sukkah 1:1–5:8](#); [Beitzah 1:1–5:7](#); [Rosh Hashanah 1:1–4:9](#); Megillah 3:5–6; Yevamot 2:4, 6:2–5, 7:1–8:2, 8:6, 9:2, 9:4–6, 10:3; [Kiddushin 1:7, 1:9](#); [Sanhedrin 2:1, 4:1](#), 6:1, 7:4–5, 9:1, 6; Makkot 3:8–9; Zevachim 9:5, 14:2; Menachot 2:2–3, 3:6, 4:2–3, 5:1, 5:3, 5:6–7, 6:2, 6:5–7, 8:1, 9:4, 10:1–11:2, 11:4–5, 11:9; Chullin 4:5, 5:5; Bekhorot 6:1–7:7; Keritot 1:1; Meilah 2:6; Parah 2:1. Land of Israel, circa 200 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 14–36, 41, 70, 100, 108, 148, 168, 229–51, 265–307, 321, 340, 352–54, 358, 360,

489, 585, 589, 593, 602, 604, 618, 720, 730, 735–36, 739–45, 748, 752, 755, 757, 774–75, 777, 800, 802, 836, 854, 1014. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).

13. Tosefta: Peah 1:1–4:21; Demai 1:28; Challah 2:7; Bikkurim 2:4; Shabbat 15:7, 17; Pisha (Pesachim) 1:1–10:13; Kippurim (Yoma) 1:1–4:17; Sukkah 1:1–4:28; Yom Tov (Beitzah) 1:1–4:11; Rosh Hashanah 1:1–2:18; Megillah 3:5–6, 8; Yevamot 10:3, 5; Sanhedrin 4:1, 12:1; Makkot 5:4; Shevuot 1:6, 3:8; Eduyot 3:4; Shechitat Chullin 4:5; Menachot 7:7, 20, 10:26, 11:15; Bekhorot 2:3–4, 7–10, 17–19, 3:2, 6, 20, 24–25; 4:1–5:9; Temurah 1:10–11. Land of Israel, circa 300 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew, with a New Introduction*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:47–76, 83, 339, 349, 414, 419, 471–522, 541–618, 645, 718; 2:1156, 1185, 1215, 1221, 1233, 1259, 1388, 1435, 1438, 1455, 1459, 1483, 1485, 1521. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 2002. [ISBN 1-56563-642-2](#).
14. Sifra 211:1–244:1. Land of Israel, 4th century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 3:161–290. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-207-0](#).
15. Jerusalem Talmud: Berakhot 4b, 57b, 75b; Peah 1a–73b; Demai 56a; Sheviit 5b, 27b–28a, 83a; Maaser Sheni 13a; Challah 2a, 6a, 8a, 11a; Orlah 2b–3a, 19a, 34a, 41b;

Bikkurim 6a, 11a–12b; Pesachim 1a–; Yoma 1a–57a; Sukkah 1a–33b; Beitzah 1a–49b; Rosh Hashanah 1a–. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 1–4, 6a–b, 10–12, 21–23. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2005–2011.

16. Leviticus Rabbah 7:2; 10:3; 24:6; 26:1–32:8. Land of Israel, 5th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:92, 124, 309, 325–417. London: Soncino Press, 1939.
[ISBN 0-900689-38-2](#).



Talmud

1. Babylonian Talmud: [Shabbat 65a](#); [Eruvin 105a](#); [Pesachim 2a–121b](#); [Rosh Hashanah 2a–35a](#); [Yoma 2a–88a](#); [Megillah 29a](#); [Chagigah 13a, 14b](#); [Mo'ed Katan 14b, 20a–b, 28b](#); [Yevamot 5a, 6a, 15b, 20a–b, 22b, 24a, 37a, 44a, 52a, 55a–b, 56b, 58b–60a, 61a–b, 66a, 69a, 77b, 84a–85b, 86b, 87b, 88b, 89b, 90b–91a, 92a–b, 94a, 99b, 100b, 108a, 114a–b, 120a](#); [Ketubot 14b, 26a, 29b–30a, 36b, 51b, 53a, 70a, 72b, 81a, 89b, 97b–98a, 100b–101b](#); [Nedarim 10b, 62a](#); [Nazir 38a](#),

[40b–41a](#), [42b–44a](#), [47b–49a](#), [52b](#), [58a–b](#); [Sotah 3a](#), [6a](#), [23b](#), [26b](#), [29a](#), [44a](#); [Gittin 24b](#), [59b–60a](#), [82b](#); [Kiddushin 10a](#), [13b](#), [18b](#), [35b–36a](#), [64a](#), [68a](#), [72b](#), [74b](#), [77a–78a](#); [Bava Kamma 84a](#), [109b–110a](#), [114b](#); [Bava Metzia 10b](#), [18a](#), [30a](#); [Bava Batra 32a](#), [160b](#); [Sanhedrin 4a](#), [5b](#), [18a–19a](#), [28b](#), [46a](#), [47a](#), [50a–52a](#), [53b](#), [66b](#), [69b](#), [76a](#), [83a–84a](#); [Makkot 2a](#), [13a](#), [15a](#), [16a](#), [20a](#), [21a–b](#); [Horayot 9a](#), [11b](#), [12b](#); [Zevachim 13a](#), [15a–16a](#), [17a](#), [100a](#), [101b](#); [Menachot 6a](#), [109a](#); [Chullin 24a–b](#), [72a](#), [134b](#); [Bekhorot 29a](#), [43a–45a](#), [56b](#); [Temurah 5b](#), [29b](#); [Keritot 7a](#); [Niddah 8b](#), [69b](#).
 Babylonia, 6th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Bavli*. Edited by Yisroel Simcha Schorr, Chaim Malinowitz, and Mordechai Marcus, 72 vols.
 Brooklyn: Mesorah Pubs., 2006.

[[edit](#)] Medieval

1. Saadia Gaon. *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, 3:1, 5; 5:1, 8. Baghdad, Babylonia, 933. Translated by Samuel Rosenblatt, 139, 154, 205, 234. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1948. [ISBN 0-300-04490-9](#).
2. Rashi. *Commentary*. [Leviticus 21–24](#). Troyes, France, late 11th century. Reprinted in, e.g., Rashi. *The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated*. Translated and annotated by Yisrael Isser Zvi Herczeg,

3:261–315. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1994. [ISBN 0-89906-028-5](#).

3. [Judah Halevi](#). *Kuzari*. [2:20, 26, 50; 3:41, 46–47; Conclusion:27](#). Toledo, Spain, 1130–1140.
Reprinted in, e.g., Jehuda Halevi. *Kuzari: An Argument for the Faith of Israel*. Intro. by Henry Slonimsky, 94, 102, 115, 173, 175, 295. New York: Schocken, 1964. [ISBN 0-8052-0075-4](#).



Maimonides

1. Maimonides. *Mishneh Torah*, [Structure](#). Cairo, Egypt, 1170–1180.
2. Maimonides. *The Guide for the Perplexed*, [1:64; 3:17, 41, 43, 46, 47, 48, 49](#). Cairo, Egypt, 1190. Reprinted in, e.g., Moses Maimonides. *The Guide for the Perplexed*. Translated by Michael Friedländer, 96, 287, 344, 346, 353, 360, 369, 371, 379. New York: Dover Publications, 1956. [ISBN 0-486-20351-4](#).
3. Zohar 1:65a, 112a, 166b, 181a; 2:39b, 40b, 95a, 101a, 108b, 121b, 129b, 133a, 153b,

183a–b, 215a, 216b, 231a, 237a; 3:7a, 67a, 69b, 73b, [88a–107b](#). Spain, late 13th century. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Zohar*. Translated by Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon. 5 vols. London: Soncino Press, 1934.

[\[edit\]](#) Modern

- Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*, [3:40](#), [42](#). England, 1651. Reprint edited by C. B. Macpherson, 503–04, 572. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Classics, 1982. [ISBN 0140431950](#).
- Louis Ginzberg. *Legends of the Jews*, [3:238–42](#). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1911.
- Thomas Mann. *Joseph and His Brothers*. Translated by John E. Woods, 131–32. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. [ISBN 1-4000-4001-9](#). Originally published as *Joseph und seine Brüder*. Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1943.
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- Jacob Milgrom. “Lex Talionis and the Rabbis: The Talmud reflects an uneasy rabbinic conscience toward the ancient law of talion, ‘eye for eye, tooth for tooth.’” *Bible Review*. 12 (2) (Apr. 1996).

- Marc Gellman. “Three Green Things and a Yellow.” In *God’s Mailbox: More Stories About Stories in the Bible*, 85–89. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1996. [ISBN 0-688-13169-7](#).
- Jacob Milgrom. *Leviticus 17–22*, 3A:1791–1892. New York: Anchor Bible, 2000. [ISBN 0-385-41255-X](#).
- Jacob Milgrom. *Leviticus 23–27*, 3B:1947–2145. New York: Anchor Bible, 2000. [ISBN 0-385-50035-1](#).
- Joseph Telushkin. *The Ten Commandments of Character: Essential Advice for Living an Honorable, Ethical, Honest Life*, 275–78. New York: Bell Tower, 2003. [ISBN 1-4000-4509-6](#).
- Judith Z. Abrams. “Misconceptions About Disabilities in the Hebrew Bible.” In *Jewish Perspectives on Theology and the Human Experience of Disability*. Edited by Judith Z. Abrams & William C. Gaventa, 73–84. Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2006. [ISBN 0-7890-3444-1](#).
- Suzanne A. Brody. “Momentous experiences” and “Blind Interpretations.” In *Dancing in the White Spaces: The Yearly Torah Cycle and More Poems*, 21, 91. Shelbyville, Kentucky: Wasteland Press, 2007. [ISBN 1-60047-112-9](#).

- Saul M. Olyan. *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008. [ISBN 0521888077](#).
- Jay Michaelson. [“Are Corporations Evil?”](#) In *The Forward*. (Aug. 6, 2010). (a proposal for requiring corporate public charity).

[\[edit\]](#) External links

[\[edit\]](#) Texts

1. [Masoretic text and 1917 JPS translation](#)
2. [Hear the parshah chanted](#)
3. [Hear the parshah read in Hebrew](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Commentaries



1. [Academy for Jewish Religion, California](#)
2. [Academy for Jewish Religion, New York](#)
3. [Aish.com](#)
4. [American Jewish University](#)

5. [Anshe Emes Synagogue, Los Angeles](#)
6. [Bar-Ilan University](#)
7. [Chabad.org](#)
8. [eparsha.com](#)
9. [G-dcast](#)
10. [The Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash](#)
11. [Jewish Agency for Israel](#)
12. [Jewish Theological Seminary](#)
13. [LearningTorah.org](#)
14. [MyJewishLearning.com](#)
15. [Ohr Sameach](#)
16. [Orthodox Union](#)
17. [OzTorah, Torah from Australia](#)
18. [Oz Ve Shalom — Netivot Shalom](#)
19. [Pardes from Jerusalem](#)
20. [Rabbi Dov Linzer](#)
21. [RabbiShimon.com](#)
22. [Rabbi Shlomo Riskin](#)

23. [Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld](#)
24. [Reconstructionist Judaism](#)
25. [Sephardic Institute](#)
26. [Shiur.com](#)
27. [613.org Jewish Torah Audio](#)
28. [Tanach Study Center](#)
29. [Torah from Dixie](#)
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Behar

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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For the Indian state, see [Bihar](#). For other uses, see [Behar \(disambiguation\)](#).

Behar, **BeHar**, **Be-har**, or **B'har** (בְּ·הָרָה — [Hebrew](#) for "on the mount," the fifth word, and the first distinctive word, in the parshah) is the 32nd [weekly Torah portion](#) (*parshah*) in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the ninth in the book of [Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 25:1–26:2](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) generally read it in May.

The [lunisolar Hebrew calendar](#) contains up to 55 [weeks](#), the exact number varying between 50 in common years and 54 or 55 in leap years. In leap years (for example, 2011, 2014, and 2016), parshah Behar is read separately. In common years (for example, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018), parshah Behar is combined with the next parshah, [Bechukotai](#), to help achieve the needed number of weekly readings.





a [shofar](#)

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[[edit](#)] Summary

[[edit](#)] A Sabbatical year for the land

On [Mount Sinai](#), [God](#) told [Moses](#) to tell the [Israelites](#) the law of the [Sabbatical year](#) for the land. ([Leviticus 25:1–2.](#)) The people could work the fields for six years, but in the seventh year the land was to have a Sabbath of complete rest during which the people were not to sow their fields, prune their vineyards, or reap the aftergrowth. ([Leviticus 25:3–5.](#)) They could, however, eat whatever the land produced on its own. ([Leviticus 25:6–7.](#))

The people were further to hallow the 50th year, the [Jubilee](#) year, and to proclaim release for all with a blast on the horn. ([Leviticus 25:8–10.](#)) Each Israelite was to return to his family and his ancestral land holding. ([Leviticus 25:10.](#)) In selling or buying property, the people were to charge only for the remaining number of crop years until the jubilee, when the land would be returned to its ancestral holder. ([Leviticus 25:14–17.](#))



land near the [Dead Sea](#)

God promised to bless the people in the sixth year, so that the land would yield a crop sufficient for three years. ([Leviticus 25:20–22.](#)) God prohibited selling the land beyond reclaim, for God owned the land, and the people were but strangers living with God. ([Leviticus 25:23.](#))



land in [Judea](#)

If one fell into straits and had to sell land, his nearest relative was to redeem what was sold. ([Leviticus 25:25.](#)) If one had no one to

redeem, but prospered and acquired enough wealth, he could refund the pro rata share of the sales price for the remaining years until the jubilee, and return to his holding. ([Leviticus 25:26–27.](#))

If one sold a house in a [walled](#) city, one could redeem it for a year, and thereafter the house would pass to the purchaser beyond reclaim and not be released in the jubilee. ([Leviticus 25:29–30.](#)) But houses in villages without encircling walls were treated as open country subject to redemption and release through the jubilee. ([Leviticus 25:31.](#)) [Levites](#) were to have a permanent right of redemption for houses and property in the cities of the Levites. ([Leviticus 25:32–33.](#)) The unenclosed land about their cities could not be sold. ([Leviticus 25:34.](#))

[[edit](#)] Limits on debt servitude

If a kinsman fell into straits and came under one's authority by virtue of his [debts](#), one was to let him live by one's side as a kinsman and not exact from him interest. ([Leviticus 25:35–36.](#)) Israelites were not to lend money to countrymen at interest. ([Leviticus 25:37.](#)) If the kinsman continued in straits and had to give himself over to a creditor for debt, the creditor was not to subject him to the treatment of a [slave](#), but to treat him as a hired or bound laborer until the jubilee year, at which time he was to be freed to go back to his family and ancestral holding. ([Leviticus 25:39–42.](#)) Israelites were not to rule over such debtor Israelites ruthlessly. ([Leviticus 25:43.](#)) Israelites could, however, buy and

own as inheritable property slaves from other nations. ([Leviticus 25:44–46.](#))

If an Israelite fell into straits and came under a resident alien's authority by virtue of his debts, the Israelite debtor was to have the right of redemption. ([Leviticus 25:47–48.](#)) A relative was to redeem him or, if he prospered, he could redeem himself by paying the pro rata share of the sales price for the remaining years until the jubilee. ([Leviticus 25:48–52.](#))



[Jews Praying in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur](#) (1878 painting by [Maurycy Gottlieb](#))

[\[edit\]](#) In inner-biblical interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 25

[\[edit\]](#) Yom Kippur

[Leviticus 25:8–10](#) refers to the Festival of [Yom Kippur](#). In the [Hebrew Bible](#), Yom Kippur is called:

the Day of Atonement (יּוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים, *Yom HaKippurim*)
([Leviticus 23:27](#) and [25:9](#)) or a Day of Atonement (יּוֹם
כִּפּוּרִים, *Yom Kippurim*) ([Leviticus 23:28](#));

a Sabbath of solemn rest (שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּבוֹת, *Shabbat Shabbaton*)
([Leviticus 16:31](#) and [23:32](#)); and

a holy convocation (מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, *mikrah kodesh*) ([Leviticus 23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#)).

Much as Yom Kippur, on the 10th of the month of [Tishrei](#), precedes the Festival of Sukkot, on the 15th of the month of Tishrei, [Exodus 12:3–6](#) speaks of a period starting on the 10th of the month of [Nisan](#) preparatory to the Festival of Passover, on the 15th of the month of Nisan.



Day of Atonement (painting circa 1900 by [Isidor Kaufmann](#))

[Leviticus 16:29–34](#) and [23:26–32](#) and [Numbers 29:7–11](#) present similar injunctions to observe Yom Kippur. [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) set the Holy Day on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishrei). [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) instruct that “you shall afflict your souls.” [Leviticus 23:32](#) makes clear that a full day is intended: “you shall afflict your souls; in the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening.” And [Leviticus 23:29](#) threatens that whoever “shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from his people.” [Leviticus 16:29](#) and [Leviticus 23:28](#) and [Numbers 29:7](#) command that you “shall do no manner of work.” Similarly, [Leviticus 16:31](#) and [23:32](#) call it a “Sabbath of solemn rest.” And in [23:30](#), God threatens that whoever “does any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people.” [Leviticus 16:30](#), [16:32–34](#), and [23:27–28](#), and [Numbers 29:11](#) describe the purpose of the day to make atonement for the people. Similarly,

[Leviticus 16:30](#) speaks of the purpose “to cleanse you from all your sins,” and [Leviticus 16:33](#) speaks of making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of meeting, the altar; and the priests. [Leviticus 16:29](#) instructs that the commandment applies both to “the home-born” and to “the stranger who sojourns among you.” [Leviticus 16:3–25](#) and [23:27](#) and [Numbers 29:8–11](#) command offerings to God. And [Leviticus 16:31](#) and [23:31](#) institute the observance as “a statute forever.”

[Leviticus 16:3–28](#) sets out detailed procedures for the priest’s atonement ritual during the time of the [Temple](#).

[Leviticus 25:8–10](#) instructs that after seven Sabbatical years, on the [Jubilee year](#), on the day of atonement, the Israelites were to proclaim liberty throughout the land with the blast of the horn and return every man to his possession and to his family.

In [Isaiah 57:14–58:14](#), the [Haftarah](#) for Yom Kippur morning, God describes “the fast that I have chosen [on] the day for a man to afflict his soul.” [Isaiah 58:3–5](#) make clear that “to afflict the soul” was understood as fasting. But [Isaiah 58:6–10](#) goes on to impress that “to afflict the soul,” God also seeks acts of social justice: “to loose the fetters of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke,” “to let the oppressed go free,” “to give your bread to the hungry, and . . . bring the poor that are cast out to your house,” and “when you see the naked, that you cover him.”

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 26

[Leviticus 26:1](#) directs the Israelites not to rear up a pillar (מִזְבֵּחַ, *matzeivah*). [Exodus 23:24](#) directed the Israelites to break in pieces

the [Canaanites](#)' pillars (מַצֵּיבֵי תִּיהֶם, *matzeivoteihem*). And [Deuteronomy 16:22](#) prohibits setting up a pillar (מַצֵּבָה, *matzeivah*), “which the Lord your God hates.” But before these commandments were issued, in [Genesis 28:18](#), [Jacob](#) took the stone on which he had slept, set it up as a pillar (מַצֵּבָה, *matzeivah*), and poured oil on the top of it.

[\[edit\]](#) In classical rabbinic interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 25

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus 25:1–34 — a Sabbatical year for the land

Tractate [Sheviit](#) in the [Mishnah](#), [Tosefta](#), and [Jerusalem Talmud](#) interpreted the laws of the Sabbatical year in [Exodus 23:10–11](#), [Leviticus 25:1–34](#), and [Deuteronomy 15:1–18](#) and [31:10–13](#). (Mishnah Sheviit 1:1–10:9; Tosefta Sheviit 1:1–8:11; Jerusalem Talmud Sheviit 1a–87b.)

Rabbi Isaac taught that the words of [Psalm 103:20](#), “mighty in strength that fulfill His word,” speak of those who observe the Sabbatical year. Rabbi Isaac said that we often find that a person fulfills a precept for a day, a week, or a month, but it is remarkable to find one who does so for an entire year. Rabbi Isaac asked whether one could find a mightier person than one who sees his field untilled, see his vineyard untilled, and yet pays his taxes and does not complain. And Rabbi Isaac noted that [Psalm 103:20](#) uses the words “that fulfill His *word* (*dabar*),” and [Deuteronomy 15:2](#) says regarding observance of the Sabbatical

year, “And this is the *manner* (*dabar*) of the release,” and argued that “*dabar*” means the observance of the Sabbatical year in both places. ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 1:1.)

The Mishnah employed the prohibition of [Leviticus 25:4](#) to imagine how one could with one action violate up to nine separate commandments. One could (1) plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together (in violation of [Deuteronomy 22:10](#)) (2 and 3) that are two animals dedicated to the sanctuary, (4) plowing mixed seeds sown in a vineyard (in violation of [Deuteronomy 22:9](#)), (5) during a Sabbatical year (in violation of [Leviticus 25:4](#)), (6) on a Festival-day (in violation of, for example, [Leviticus 23:7](#)), (7) when the plower is a priest (in violation of [Leviticus 21:1](#)) and (8) a [Nazirite](#) (in violation of [Numbers 6:6](#)) plowing in a contaminated place. [Chananya ben Chachinai](#) said that the plower also may have been wearing a garment of wool and linen (in violation of [Leviticus 19:19](#) and [Deuteronomy 22:11](#)). They said to him that this would not be in the same category as the other violations. He replied that neither is the Nazirite in the same category as the other violations. ([Mishnah Makkot 3:9](#); [Babylonian Talmud Makkot 21b](#).)

The Gemara implied that the sin of Moses in striking the rock at [Meribah](#) compared favorably to the sin of [David](#). The Gemara reported that Moses and David were two good leaders of Israel. Moses begged God that his sin be recorded, as it is in [Numbers 20:12](#), [20:23–24](#), and [27:13–14](#), and [Deuteronomy 32:51](#). David, however, begged that his sin be blotted out, as [Psalm 32:1](#) says, “Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is

pardoned.” The Gemara compared the cases of Moses and David to the cases of two women whom the court sentenced to be lashed. One had committed an indecent act, while the other had eaten unripe figs of the seventh year in violation of [Leviticus 25:6](#). The woman who had eaten unripe figs begged the court to make known for what offense she was being flogged, lest people say that she was being punished for the same sin as the other woman. The court thus made known her sin, and the Torah repeatedly records the sin of Moses. ([Babylonian Talmud Yoma 86b.](#))



The Year of Jubilee (painting by Henry Le Jeune)

The latter parts of tractate [Arakhin](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of the jubilee year in [Leviticus 25:8–34](#). (Mishnah Arakhin 7:1–9:8; Tosefta Arakhin 5:1–19; [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 24a–34a](#).)

The Mishnah taught that the jubilee year had the same ritual as [Rosh Hashanah](#) for blowing the shofar and for blessings. But [Rabbi Judah](#) said that on Rosh Hashanah, the blast was made with a ram’s horn shofar, while on jubilee the blast was made with an antelope’s (or some say a goat’s) horn shofar. (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 3:5; [Babylonian Talmud Rosh Hashanah 26b](#).)

The Mishnah taught that exile resulted from (among other things) transgressing the commandment (in [Leviticus 25:3–5](#) and [Exodus 23:10–11](#)) to observe a Sabbatical year for the land. (Mishnah Avot 5:9.) And pestilence resulted from (among other things) violation of the laws governing the produce of the Sabbatical year. ([Mishnah Avot 5:8](#).)

A [midrash](#) interpreted the words “it shall be a jubilee *unto you*” in [Leviticus 25:10](#) to teach that God gave the year of release and the jubilee to the Israelites alone, and not to other nations. And similarly, the midrash interpreted the words “To give *you* the land of Canaan” in [Leviticus 25:38](#) to teach that God gave the [Land of Israel](#) to the Israelites alone. ([Exodus Rabbah](#) 25:23.)

At a feast, [Rabbi](#) served his disciples tender and tough cuts of [beef tongue](#). When his disciples chose the tender over the tough, Rabbi instructed them so to let their tongues be tender to one another. Rabbi taught that this was the meaning of [Leviticus](#)

[25:14](#) when Moses admonished: “And if you sell anything . . . you shall not wrong one another.” (Leviticus Rabbah 33:1.) Similarly, a midrash concluded that these words of [Leviticus 25:14](#) taught that anyone who wrongs a neighbor with words will be punished according to Scripture. (Leviticus Rabbah 33:5.)

In a [Baraita](#), the [Rabbis](#) interpreted the words “you shall not wrong one another” in [Leviticus 25:17](#) to prohibit verbal wrongs, as [Leviticus 25:14](#) had already addressed monetary wrongs. The Baraita cited as examples of verbal wrongs: (1) reminding penitents of their former deeds, (2) reminding converts’ children of their ancestors’ deeds, (3) questioning the propriety of converts’ coming to study Torah, (4) speaking to those visited by suffering as [Job’s](#) companions spoke to him in [Job 4:6–7](#), and (5) directing donkey drivers seeking grain to a person whom one knows has never sold grain. The Gemara said that Scripture uses the words “and you shall fear your God” (as in [Leviticus 25:17](#)) concerning cases where intent matters, cases that are known only to the heart. [Rabbi Johanan](#) said on the authority of Rabbi [Simeon ben Yohai](#) that verbal wrongs are more heinous than monetary wrongs, because of verbal wrongs it is written (in [Leviticus 25:17](#)), “and you shall fear your God,” but not of monetary wrongs (in [Leviticus 25:14](#)). Rabbi Eleazar said that verbal wrongs affect the victim's person, while monetary wrongs affect only the victim's money. Rabbi Samuel bar Nahmani said that while restoration is possible in cases of monetary wrongs, it is not in cases of verbal wrongs. And a [Tanna](#) taught before Rav Nahman bar Isaac that one who publicly makes a neighbor

blanch from shame is as one who sheds blood. Whereupon Rav Nahman remarked how he had seen the blood rush from a person's face upon such shaming. ([Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 58b.](#))

Rabbi Phinehas in the name of Rabbi Reuben interpreted the words “If your brother grows poor . . . then shall his kinsman . . . redeem” in [Leviticus 25:25](#) to exhort Israel to acts of charity.

Rabbi Phinehas taught that God will reward with life anyone who gives a coin to a poor person, for the donor could be giving not just a coin, but life. Rabbi Phinehas explained that if a loaf costs ten coins, and a poor person has but nine, then the gift of a single coin allows the poor person to buy the loaf, eat, and become refreshed. Thus, Rabbi Phinehas taught, when illness strikes the donor, and the donor's soul presses to leave the donor's body, God will return the gift of life. (Leviticus Rabbah 34:2.) Similarly, [Rav Nahman](#) taught that [Leviticus 25:25](#) exhorts Israel to acts of charity, because fortune revolves like a wheel in the world, sometimes leaving one poor and sometimes well off. (Leviticus Rabbah 34:3.) And similarly, Rabbi Tanhum son of [Rabbi Hiyya](#) taught that [Leviticus 25:25](#) exhorts Israel to acts of charity, because God made the poor as well as the rich, so that they might benefit each other; the rich one benefiting the poor one with charity, and the poor one benefiting the rich one by affording the rich one the opportunity to do good. Bearing this in mind, when Rabbi Tanhum's mother went to buy him a pound of meat, she would buy him two pounds, one for him and one for the poor. (Leviticus Rabbah 34:5.)

The Gemara employed [Leviticus 25:29](#) to deduce that the term *yamim* (literally “days”) sometimes means “a year,” and [Rab Hisda](#) thus interpreted the word *yamim* in [Genesis 24:55](#) to mean “a year.” [Genesis 24:55](#) says, “And her brother and her mother said: ‘Let the maiden abide with us *yamim*, at the least ten.’” The Gemara reasoned that if *yamim* in [Genesis 24:55](#) means “days” and thus to imply “two days” (as the plural implies more than one), then [Genesis 24:55](#) would report [Rebekah](#)’s brother and mother suggesting that she stay first two days, and then when [Eliezer](#) said that that was too long, nonsensically suggesting ten days. The Gemara thus deduced that *yamim* must mean “a year” in [Genesis 24:55](#), as [Leviticus 25:29](#) implies when it says, “if a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; for a full year (*yamim*) shall he have the right of redemption.” Thus [Genesis 24:55](#) might mean, “Let the maiden abide with us a year, or at the least ten months.” The Gemara then suggested that *yamim* might mean “a month,” as [Numbers 11:20](#) suggests when it uses the phrase “a month of days (*yamim*).” The Gemara concluded, however, that *yamim* means “a month” only when the term “month” is specifically mentioned, but otherwise means either “days” (at least two) or “a year.” ([Babylonian Talmud Ketubot 57b.](#))

[edit] Leviticus 25:35–55 — limits on debt servitude

In the words, “Take no interest or increase, but fear your God,” in [Leviticus 25:36](#), “interest” (*neshech*) literally means “bite.” A midrash played on this meaning, teaching not to take interest

from the poor person, not to bite the poor person as the serpent — cunning to do evil — bit [Adam](#). The midrash taught that one who exacts interest from an Israelite thus has no fear of God. (Exodus Rabbah 31:13.)

[Rav Nahman bar Isaac](#) (explaining the position of Rabbi Eleazar) interpreted the words “that your brother may live with you” in [Leviticus 25:36](#) to teach that one who has exacted interest should return it to the borrower, so that the borrower could survive economically. ([Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 61b–62a.](#))

A Baraita considered the case where two people were traveling on a journey, and one had a container of water; if both drank, they would both die, but if only one drank, then that one might reach civilization and survive. Ben Patura taught that it is better that both should drink and die, rather than that only one should drink and see the other die. But [Rabbi Akiba](#) interpreted the words “that your brother may live *with you*” in [Leviticus 25:36](#) to teach that concern for one’s own life takes precedence over concern for another’s. ([Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 62a.](#))

Part of chapter 1 of Tractate [Kiddushin](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of the Hebrew servant in [Exodus 21:2–11](#) and [21:26–27](#); [Leviticus 25:39–55](#); and [Deuteronomy 15:12–18](#). ([Mishnah Kiddushin 1:2](#); Tosefta Kiddushin 1:5–6; Jerusalem Talmud Kiddushin ch. 1; [Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin 14b–22b.](#))

[Abaye](#) said that because the law (in [Leviticus 25:39–43](#) and elsewhere) required the master to treat a Hebrew slave well —

and as an equal in food, drink, and sleeping accommodations — it was said that buying a Hebrew slave was like buying a master. ([Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin 20a.](#)) The Rabbis taught in a Baraita that the words of [Deuteronomy 15:16](#) regarding the Hebrew servant, “he fares well *with you*,” indicate that the Hebrew servant had to be “with” — that is, equal to — the master in food and drink. Thus the master could not eat white bread and have the servant eat black bread. The master could not drink old wine and have the servant drink new wine. The master could not sleep on a feather bed and have the servant sleep on straw. Hence, they said that buying a Hebrew servant was like buying a master. Similarly, [Rabbi Simeon](#) deduced from the words of [Leviticus 25:41](#), “Then he shall go out from you, he and his children *with him*,” that the master was liable to provide for the servant’s children until the servant went out. And Rabbi Simeon deduced from the words of [Exodus 21:3](#), “If he is married, then his wife shall go out *with him*,” that the master was responsible to provide for the servant’s wife, as well. ([Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin 22a.](#))

Rabbi Levi interpreted [Leviticus 25:55](#) to teach that God claimed Israel as God’s own possession when God said, “To Me the children of Israel are servants.” (Exodus Rabbah 30:1; see also Exodus Rabbah 33:5.)

[\[edit\]](#) Commandments

According to [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 7 positive and 17 negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

Not to work the land during the seventh year ([Leviticus 25:4.](#))

Not to work with [trees](#) to produce [fruit](#) during that year ([Leviticus 25:4.](#))

Not to reap crops that grow wild that year in the normal manner ([Leviticus 25:5.](#))

Not to gather [grapes](#) which grow wild that year in the normal way ([Leviticus 25:5.](#))

The [Sanhedrin](#) must count seven groups of seven years. ([Leviticus 25:8.](#))

To blow the [shofar](#) on the tenth of [Tishrei](#) to free the slaves ([Leviticus 25:9.](#))

The Sanhedrin must sanctify the 50th year. ([Leviticus 25:10.](#))

Not to work the [soil](#) during the 50th year ([Leviticus 25:11.](#))

Not to reap in the normal manner that which grows wild in the fiftieth year ([Leviticus 25:11.](#))

Not to pick grapes which grew wild in the normal manner in the fiftieth year ([Leviticus 25:11.](#))

To buy and sell according to [Torah](#) law ([Leviticus 25:14.](#))

Not to overcharge or underpay for an article ([Leviticus 25:14.](#))

Not to insult or harm anybody with [words](#) ([Leviticus 25:17.](#))

Not to sell the land in [Israel](#) indefinitely ([Leviticus 25:23.](#))

To carry out the laws of sold family properties ([Leviticus 25:24.](#))

To carry out the laws of houses in walled cities ([Leviticus 25:29.](#))

Not to sell the fields but they shall remain the Levites' before and after the Jubilee year ([Leviticus 25:34.](#))

Not to lend with interest ([Leviticus 25:37.](#))

Not to have a Hebrew servant do menial slave labor ([Leviticus 25:39.](#))

Not to sell a Hebrew servant as a slave is sold ([Leviticus 25:42.](#))

Not to work a Hebrew servant oppressively ([Leviticus 25:43.](#))

[Canaanite](#) slaves must be kept forever ([Leviticus 25:46.](#))

Not to allow a non-Jew to work a Hebrew servant oppressively ([Leviticus 25:53.](#))

Not to bow down on smooth stone ([Leviticus 26:1.](#))



[\[Jeremiah\]](#) Lamenting the Destruction of [Jerusalem](#) (painting by [Rembrandt](#))

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 3:363–461. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-297-3](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) Haftarah

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is [Jeremiah 32:6–27](#).

When parshah Behar is combined with parshah Behukotai, the haftarah is the haftarah for Behukotai, [Jeremiah 16:19–17:14](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

[\[edit\]](#) Ancient



Hammurabi

[Code of Hammurabi § 117](#). Babylonia, Circa 1780 BCE.

Reprinted in e.g. [Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament](#). Edited by [James B. Pritchard](#), 163, 170–71. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969. [ISBN 0691035032](#). (3-year limit on debt servitude for wife or child).

Julius Lewy. “The Biblical Institution of *ḏrwr* in the Light of Akkadian Documents.” *Eretz-Israel* 5 (1958): 21–31.

[\[edit\]](#) Biblical

[Exodus 21:1–11](#) (slavery); [23:10–11](#) (Sabbatical year)

[Leviticus 26:34–35](#) (Sabbatical year).

[Deuteronomy 15:1–6](#) (Sabbatical year); [15:12–18](#) (Sabbatical year); [31:10–13](#) (Sabbatical year).

[2 Kings 4:1–7](#) (slavery).

[Isaiah 61:1–2](#) (proclaim release).

[Jeremiah 32:6–15](#) (next of kin redeemer); [34:6–27](#) (releasing Hebrew slaves).

[Ezekiel 7:12-13, 19](#) (economic equalization); [46:17](#) (year of release).

[Amos 2:6](#) (slavery).

[Psalms 4:9](#) (dwell in safety); [15:5](#) (lending); [37:26](#) (lending); [119:19](#) (sojourner on earth).

[Nehemiah 5:1–13](#) (slavery).

[2 Chronicles 36:20–21](#) (Sabbatical year).

[[edit](#)] Early nonrabbinic

[Jubilees chs. 1–50](#) Land of Israel, 2nd Century BCE.

[[edit](#)] Classical rabbinic

[Mishnah](#): Sheviit 1:1–10:9; Rosh Hashanah 3:5; Ketubot 9:9; Nedarim 9:4; [Kiddushin 1:2–3](#); Bava Metzia 5:1–11; [Sanhedrin 3:4](#); [Makkot 3:9](#); [Avot 5:8–9](#); Bekhorot 9:10; Arakhin 7:1–9:8. Land of Israel, circa 200 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 68–93, 304, 424, 487, 544, 588, 618, 687, 807, 821–24. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).

[Sifra](#) 245:1–259:2. Land of Israel, 4th Century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by

Jacob Neusner, 3:291–344. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.
[ISBN 1-55540-207-0.](#)

[Jerusalem Talmud](#): Peah 67a; Demai 24a, 48b; Sheviit 1a–87b; Maasrot 31b, 42b; Orlah 8a. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 3–4, 6a–b, 9, 12. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2006–2009.

[Mekhilta According to Rabbi Ishmael](#) 1:2. Land of Israel, late 4th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Mekhilta According to Rabbi Ishmael*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 1:6. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-237-2.](#)

[Leviticus Rabbah](#) 1:1; 2:2; 7:6; 29:11; 33:1–34:16. Land of Israel, 5th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:2, 21, 98, 378, 418–45. London: Soncino Press, 1939.
[ISBN 0-900689-38-2.](#)



Talmud

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Bechukotai

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Bechukotai, **Bechukosai**, or **B'hukkothai** (בְּחֻקֹּתַי —

[Hebrew](#) for “by my decrees,” the second word, and the first distinctive word, in the *parshah*) is the 33rd [weekly Torah portion](#) ("*parshah*") in the annual [Jewish](#) cycle of [Torah reading](#) and the 10th and last in the book of [Leviticus](#). It constitutes [Leviticus 26:3–27:34](#). [Jews](#) in the [Diaspora](#) generally read it in May.

The [lunisolar Hebrew calendar](#) contains up to 55 [weeks](#), the exact number varying between 50 in common years and 54 or 55 in leap years. In leap years (for example, 2011, 2014, and 2016), parshah Bechukotai is read separately. In common years (for example, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018), parshah Bechukotai is combined with the previous parshah, [Behar](#), to help achieve the needed number of weekly readings.



“Summer” (1890 painting by [Leopold Graf von Kalckreuth](#))

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[\[edit\]](#) Summary



Israelites Carried Captive (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)

[\[edit\]](#) Blessings and curses

[God](#) promised that if the [Israelites](#) followed God's [laws](#), God would bless [Israel](#) with [rains](#) in their season, abundant [harvests](#), [peace](#), victory over enemies, fertility, and God's presence.

([Leviticus 26:3–14.](#)) But if the Israelites did not observe God's [commandments](#), God would wreak upon Israel misery, consumption, fever, stolen harvests, defeat by enemies, poor harvests, attacks of wild beasts, pestilence, famine, desolation, and timidity. ([Leviticus 26:15–38.](#))

Those who survived would be removed to the land of their enemies, where they would become heartsick over their iniquity, confess their [sin](#), and atone. ([Leviticus 26:39–41.](#)) God promised then to remember God's covenants with [Jacob](#), [Isaac](#), [Abraham](#), and the ancients whom God [freed](#) from [Egypt](#). ([Leviticus 26:42–45.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Payment of vows

God told [Moses](#) to instruct the Israelites that when anyone [vowed](#) to offer God the value of a human being, the following scale would apply:

for a man from 20 to 60 years of age, 50 [shekels](#) of [silver](#) ([Leviticus 27:3](#)),

for a woman from 20 to 60 years, 30 shekels ([Leviticus 27:4](#)),

for a boy from 5 to 20 years, 20 shekels ([Leviticus 27:5](#)),

for a girl from 5 to 20 years, 10 shekels ([Leviticus 27:5](#)),

for a boy from 1 month to 5 years, 5 shekels ([Leviticus 27:6](#)),

for a girl from 1 month to 5 years, 3 shekels ([Leviticus 27:6](#)),

for a man 60 years or over, 15 shekels ([Leviticus 27:7](#)), and

for a woman 60 years or over, 10 shekels ([Leviticus 27:7](#)).

But if a vower could not afford the payment, the vower was to appear before the [priest](#), and the priest was to assess the vower according to what the vower could afford. ([Leviticus 27:8](#))

If the vow concerned an animal that could be brought as an [offering](#), the animal was to be [holy](#), and one could not exchange another for it, and if one did substitute one animal for another, the thing vowed and its substitute were both to be holy. ([Leviticus 27:9–10](#).) If the vow concerned an unclean animal that could not be brought as an offering, the vower was to present the

animal to the priest, the priest was to assess it, and if the vower wished to redeem it, the vower was to add one-fifth to its assessment. ([Leviticus 27:11–13.](#)) No firstling of a clean animal could be consecrated, for it already belonged to God. ([Leviticus 27:26.](#)) But a firstling of an unclean animal could be redeemed at its assessment plus one-fifth, and if not redeemed, was to be sold at its assessment. ([Leviticus 27:27.](#))

If one consecrated a house to God, the priest was to assess it, and if the vower wished to redeem it, the vower was to add one-fifth to the assessment. ([Leviticus 27:14–15.](#)) If one consecrated to God land of one's ancestral holding, the priest was to assess it in accordance with its seed requirement. ([Leviticus 27:16–17.](#)) If the vower consecrated the land after the [jubilee](#) year, the priest was to compute the price according to the years left until the next jubilee year, and reduce the assessment accordingly. ([Leviticus 27:18.](#)) If the vower wished to redeem the land, the vower was to add one-fifth to the assessment and retain title, but if the vower did not redeem the land and the land was sold, it was no longer to be redeemable, and at the jubilee the land was to become the priest's holding. ([Leviticus 27:19–21.](#)) If one consecrated land that one purchased (not land of ancestral holding), the priest was to compute the assessment up to the jubilee year, the vower was to pay the assessment as of that day, and in the jubilee the land was to revert to the person whose ancestral holding the land was. ([Leviticus 27:22–24.](#))

But nothing that one had proscribed for God (subjected to [cherem](#)) could be sold or redeemed, and no human being

proscribed could be ransomed, but he was to be put to death.
([Leviticus 27:28–29](#).)

All tithes from crops were to be God’s, and if one wished to redeem any of the tithes, the tither was to add one-fifth to them.
([Leviticus 27:30–31](#).) Every tenth head of livestock was to be holy to God, and the owner was not to choose among good or bad when counting off the tithe. ([Leviticus 27:32–33](#).)

[\[edit\]](#) In inner-biblical interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 26

[Leviticus 26:9](#) addresses God’s role in the creation of children. While [Leviticus 12:6–8](#) required a new mother to bring a burnt-offering and a sin-offering, [Leviticus 26:9](#), [Deuteronomy 28:11](#), and [Psalm 127:3–5](#) make clear that having children is a blessing from God; [Genesis 15:2](#) and [1 Samuel 1:5–11](#) characterize childlessness as a misfortune; and [Leviticus 20:20](#) and [Deuteronomy 28:18](#) threaten childlessness as a punishment.

[\[edit\]](#) In classical rabbinic interpretation

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 26

The [Sifra](#) asked whether the words “If you walk in My statutes” in [Leviticus 26:3](#) might refer to observing religious duties. But the Sifra noted that the continuation of [Leviticus 26:3](#) says, “and keep My commandments, and do them,” and that must cover observing religious duties. Thus the Sifra concluded that the

words “If you walk in My statutes” must mean laboring in the Torah. (Sifra Bechukotai 260:1:2.)



Despair of the defenders of Jerusalem (illustration from the 1890 Holman Bible)

The [Mishnah](#) taught that they read the blessings and curses of [Leviticus 26:3–45](#) and [Deuteronomy 28:1–68](#) on public fast days. The Mishnah taught that they did not interrupt the reading of the curses, but had one person read them all. (Mishnah Megillah 3:6.)

A [Baraita](#) taught that several of the curses in [Leviticus 26:16–35](#) result from particular transgressions. Rabbi Eleazar the son of Rabbi Judah read the word “*behalab*” (“terror”) in [Leviticus 26:16](#) as “*be-challah*” (“on account of [challah](#)”) to interpret [Leviticus 26:16](#) to teach that as punishment for the neglect of the [challah](#) [tithe](#), God fails to bless what is stored, a curse is sent on prices, and people sow seed but others eat the harvest. The Baraita interpreted [Leviticus 26:22–23](#) to teach that as punishment for

vain oaths, false oaths, desecration of God's Name, and desecration of the Sabbath, wild beasts multiply, domestic animals cease, population decreases, and roads become desolate. Using [Jeremiah 33:25](#) to equate the word "covenant" with the Torah, the Baraita interpreted [Leviticus 26:25–26](#) to teach that as punishment for delaying judgment, perverting judgment, corrupting judgment, and neglecting Torah, sword and spoil increase, pestilence and famine come, people eat and are not satisfied, and people eat their scarce bread by weight. And the Baraita interpreted [Leviticus 26:30–35](#) to teach that as punishment for idolatry and failure to observe the [Sabbatical](#) (*Shmita*) and [Jubilee](#) (*Yovel*) years, the Jews are exiled and others come to dwell in their land. ([Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 32b–33a.](#))



A priest blowing a horn (illustration from Henry Davenport Northrop's 1894 *Treasures of the Bible*)

Just as [Leviticus 26:19](#) attributes famine to sin, the Mishnah taught that a famine from drought comes when some of the people do not give tithes, a famine from tumult and drought

comes when all decide not to give tithes, and a famine of annihilation comes when they decide (in addition) not to set apart the dough offering. Just as [Leviticus 26:25](#) attributes the sword to sin, the Mishnah taught that the sword comes to the world for the delay of justice, for the perversion of justice, and because of those who interpret the Torah counter to the accepted law. And just as [Leviticus 26:25](#) attributes pestilence to sin, the Mishnah taught that pestilence comes to the world for failure to execute judgment in capital crimes and for violation of the laws governing the produce of the Sabbatical year. ([Mishnah Avot 5:8](#).)

The Mishnah taught that the coming of the sword, as in [Leviticus 26:25](#), was one of several afflictions for which they sounded the ram's horn (*shofar*) in alarm in every locale, because it is an affliction that spreads. (Mishnah Taanit 3:5; [Babylonian Talmud Taanit 19a](#).)

The [Gemara](#) reconciled apparently discordant verses touching on vicarious responsibility. The Gemara noted that [Deuteronomy 24:16](#) states: “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin,” but [Exodus 20:4](#) (20:5 in NJPS) says: “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.” The Gemara cited a Baraita that interpreted the words “the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them” in [Leviticus 26:39](#) to teach that God punishes children only when they follow their parents' sins. The Gemara then questioned whether the words “they shall stumble one upon another” in [Leviticus 26:37](#) do not teach that one will stumble through the sin

of the other, that all are held responsible for one another. The Gemara answered that the vicarious responsibility of which [Leviticus 26:37](#) speaks is limited to those who have the power to restrain their fellow from evil but do not do so. ([Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 27b.](#))



The Flight of the Prisoners (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

A [midrash](#) noted that everywhere else, Scripture mentions Abraham before Isaac, and Isaac before Jacob. (E.g., [Genesis 50:24](#); [Exodus 2:24](#); [3:6](#), [15–16](#); [4:5](#); [6:3](#), [8](#); [33:1](#); [Numbers 32:11](#); [Deuteronomy 1:8](#); [6:10](#); [9:5](#), [27](#); [29:12](#) (English 29:13); [30:20](#); [34:4](#).) But [Leviticus 26:42](#) mentions Jacob before Isaac, and Isaac

before Abraham, to teach that the three were on a par. ([Genesis Rabbah](#) 1:15.)

In [Leviticus 26:41](#), the heart is humbled. A midrash catalogued the wide range of additional capabilities of the heart reported in the Hebrew Bible. The heart speaks ([Ecclesiastes 1:16](#)), sees ([Ecclesiastes 1:16](#)), hears ([1 Kings 3:9](#)), walks ([2 Kings 5:26](#)), falls ([1 Samuel 17:32](#)), stands ([Ezekiel 22:14](#)), rejoices ([Psalm 16:9](#)), cries ([Lamentations 2:18](#)), is comforted ([Isaiah 40:2](#)), is troubled ([Deuteronomy 15:10](#)), becomes hardened ([Exodus 9:12.](#)), grows faint ([Deuteronomy 20:3](#)), grieves ([Genesis 6:6](#)), fears ([Deuteronomy 28:67](#)), can be broken ([Psalm 51:19](#)), becomes proud ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)), rebels ([Jeremiah 5:23](#)), invents ([1 Kings 12:33](#)), cavils ([Deuteronomy 29:18](#)), overflows ([Psalm 45:2](#)), devises ([Proverbs 19:21](#)), desires ([Psalm 21:3](#)), goes astray ([Proverbs 7:25](#)), lusts ([Numbers 15:39](#)), is refreshed ([Genesis 18:5](#)), can be stolen ([Genesis 31:20](#)), is enticed ([Genesis 34:3](#)), errs ([Isaiah 21:4](#)), trembles ([1 Samuel 4:13](#)), is awakened ([Song of Songs 5:2](#)), loves ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#)), hates ([Leviticus 19:17](#)), envies ([Proverbs 23:17](#)), is searched ([Jeremiah 17:10](#)), is rent ([Book of Joel 2:13](#)), meditates ([Psalm 49:4](#)), is like a fire ([Jeremiah 20:9](#)), is like a stone ([Ezekiel 36:26](#)), turns in repentance ([2 Kings 23:25](#)), becomes hot ([Deuteronomy 19:6](#)), dies ([1 Samuel 25:37](#)), melts ([Joshua 7:5](#)), takes in words ([Deuteronomy 6:6](#)), is susceptible to fear ([Jeremiah 32:40](#)), gives thanks ([Psalm 111:1](#)), covets ([Proverbs 6:25](#)), becomes hard ([Proverbs 28:14](#)), makes merry ([Judges 16:25](#)), acts deceitfully ([Proverbs 12:20](#)), speaks from out of itself ([1 Samuel 1:13](#)), loves bribes ([Jeremiah 22:17](#)),

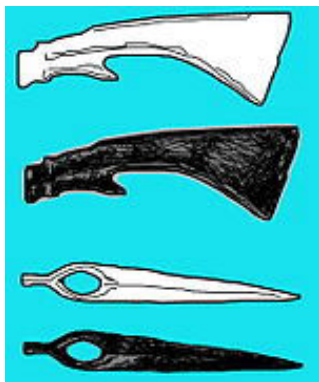
writes words ([Proverbs 3:3](#)), plans ([Proverbs 6:18](#)), receives commandments ([Proverbs 10:8](#)), acts with pride ([Obadiah 1:3](#)), makes arrangements ([Proverbs 16:1](#)), and aggrandizes itself ([2 Chronicles 25:19](#)). ([Ecclesiastes Rabbah](#) 1:36.)



An engraving that might depict Nebuchadrezzar II, the Biblical Nebuchadnezzar

A midrash interpreted the words, “And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them,” in [Leviticus 26:44](#) to teach that the [Shekhinah](#) accompanied Israel into exile. ([Exodus Rabbah](#) 23:5.) [Samuel of Nehardea](#) interpreted the words, “I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God,” in [Leviticus 26:44](#) to teach that God did “not reject” the Jews in the [days of the Greeks](#), nor “abhor them” in the days of [Nebuchadnezzar](#), nor “destroy them utterly” in the days of [Haman](#), nor “break [God’s] covenant with them” in the days of the [Persians](#); “for [God will be] the Lord their God” in the days of [Gog and Magog](#). Similarly, a Baraitha taught that God did “not reject” them in the days of the [Chaldeans](#), for God sent

them [Daniel](#), [Hananiah](#), [Mishael](#), and [Azariah](#); God did not “abhor them” in the days of the Greeks, for God sent them [Simeon the Righteous](#), the [Hasmonean](#) and his sons, and [Mattathias](#) the [High Priest](#); and God did not “destroy them utterly” in the days of Haman, for God sent them [Mordecai](#) and [Esther](#); and God did not “break [God’s] covenant with them” in the days of the Persians, for God sent them the house of [Rabbi](#) and the generations of [Sages](#); “for [God will be] the Lord their God” in the time to come, when no nation or people will be able to subject them. ([Babylonian Talmud Megillah 11a](#).)



bronze ax heads of the type used between 1500 BCE and 500 BCE in the region of the [Adriatic Sea](#) (2008 drawing by Bratislav Tabaš)

[\[edit\]](#) Leviticus chapter 27

Tractate [Arakhin](#) in the Mishnah, [Tosefta](#), and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of dedicatory vows in [Leviticus](#)

[27:1–33](#). (Mishnah Arakhin 1:1–9:8; Tosefta Arakhin 1:1–5:19; [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 2a–34a](#).)

The Mishnah taught that the law of valuation sometimes tended toward leniency, and at other times tended toward stringency. The law valued equally the handsomest and the ugliest men in the country; either one owed 50 *selas*. (Mishnah Arakhin 3:1; [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 13b](#).)

The Mishnah taught that to secure a vow to the Temple, they seized property from the one who made the vow. (Mishnah Arakhin 5:6; [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 21a](#).) But they let the one who made the vow keep food for 30 days, garments for 12 months, bed and bedding, shoes, and [tefillin](#). If the one who made the vow was a craftsperson, they left two of every kind of tool. If the one who made the vow was a carpenter, they left two axes and two saws. [Rabbi Eliezer](#) said that if the one who made the vow was a farmer, they left a yoke of oxen. If the one who made the vow was a donkey-driver, they left a donkey. (Mishnah Arakhin 6:3; [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 23b](#).)

Tractate [Temurah](#) in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Babylonian Talmud interpreted the laws of substituting one sacrifice for another in [Leviticus 27:1–33](#). (Mishnah Temurah 1:1–7:6; Tosefta Temurah 1:1–4:17; [Babylonian Talmud Temurah 2a–34a](#).)





a silver shekel from Judaea at about 70 CE (illustration from the 1903 *Encyclopaedia Biblica*)

Rabbi [Simeon ben Yohai](#) taught that just as the texts “He shall not break his word” in [Numbers 30:3](#) and “Defer not to pay it” in [Ecclesiastes 5:3](#) apply to vows, so they also apply to valuations, and thus Moses exhorted the Israelites in [Leviticus 27:7](#): “When a man shall clearly utter a vow of persons to the Lord, according to your valuation” ([Leviticus Rabbah](#) 37:2.)

Interpreting the instruction of [Leviticus 27:8](#) that “according to the means of him that vowed shall the priest value him,” the Mishnah taught that this was done according to the ability of the one who vowed. The Mishnah taught that if a poor person vowed to give the value of a rich person, the poor person would pay only the valuation for a poor person. But if a rich person vowed to give the value of a poor person, the rich person still had to pay the full value of a rich person. (Mishnah Arakhin 4:1; [Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 17a](#).) Citing [Leviticus 27:8](#), the Gemara explained that the Merciful One made the obligation dependent upon the means of the one who vowed. ([Babylonian Talmud Arakhin 17a](#).) The Tosefta taught that while the valuation of a rich man was 50 *selas* as stated in [Leviticus 27:3](#), the valuation of a poor man was one *sela*. (Tosefta Arakhin 1:5.)

[\[edit\]](#) Commandments

According to [Sefer ha-Chinuch](#), there are 7 positive and 5 negative [commandments](#) in the parshah:

When one vows a person's value, to estimate the value as determined by the Torah ([Leviticus 27:2.](#))

Not to substitute another beast for one set apart for sacrifice ([Leviticus 27:10.](#))

The new animal, in addition to the substituted one, retains consecration. ([Leviticus 27:10.](#))

To estimate the value of consecrated animals ([Leviticus 27:12–13.](#))

To estimate the value of consecrated houses ([Leviticus 27:14.](#))

To estimate the value of consecrated fields ([Leviticus 27:16.](#))

Not to change consecrated animals from one type of offering to another ([Leviticus 27:26.](#))

To carry out the laws of interdicting possessions ([Leviticus 27:28.](#))

Not to sell interdicted possessions ([Leviticus 27:28.](#))

Not to redeem interdicted possessions ([Leviticus 27:28.](#))

To separate the tithe from animals every year ([Leviticus 27:32.](#))

Not to redeem the tithe ([Leviticus 27:33.](#))



[Jeremiah](#) Lamenting the Destruction of [Jerusalem](#) (painting by [Rembrandt](#))

(*Sefer HaHinnuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education*. Translated by Charles Wengrov, 3:461–517. Jerusalem: Feldheim Pub., 1984. [ISBN 0-87306-297-3.](#))

[\[edit\]](#) Haftarah

The [haftarah](#) for the parshah is [Jeremiah 16:19–17:14](#). The blessings and curses in [Leviticus 26](#) are matched by a curse on “the man that trusts in man” in [Jeremiah 17:5](#) and a blessing on “the man that trusts in the Lord” in [Jeremiah 17:7](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Further reading

The parshah has parallels or is discussed in these sources:

[\[edit\]](#) Ancient

[Vassal treaties](#) of [Esarhaddon](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Biblical

[Deuteronomy 27:9–28:69](#) (blessings and curses).

[2 Kings 6:25–30](#) (cannibalism).

[Isaiah 9:19](#) (cannibalism).

[Jeremiah 19:9](#) (parents eating children).

[Ezekiel 5:10](#) (parents eating children); [6:3–14](#) (sword, famine, pestilence; destroy high places; bring the sword against; cast slain men before idols; make the land desolate; make cities a waste; the savor).

[Zechariah 11:9](#) (cannibalism).

[Psalms 1:1–6](#) (blessings and curses); [3:6](#) (to lie down in peace); [44:12](#) (scattered among the nations); [50:14–15](#) (performing vows); [65:2](#) (performing vows); [76:12](#) (performing vows); [78:59](#) (God abhorred Israel); [97:7](#) (graven images); [98:2](#) (in the sight of the nations); [106:41, 45](#) (they that hated them ruled over them; but God remembered God's covenant); [127:1](#) (labor in vain); [136:23](#) (God remembered).

[Lamentations 4:10](#) (mothers eating children).



Josephus

[[edit](#)] Early nonrabbinic

[Josephus](#). *The Wars of the Jews*, [6:3:3–5](#). Circa 75 CE.

Reprinted in, e.g., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition*. Translated by [William Whiston](#), 737–38. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1987. [ISBN 0-913573-86-8](#).

[[edit](#)] Classical rabbinic

[Mishnah](#): Challah 4:9; Taanit 3:5; Megillah 3:3, 6; [Chagigah 1:4](#); [Avot 5:8](#); Menachot 9:7, 12:1; Bekhorot 1:7, 9:1–8; Arakhin 1:1–9:8; Temurah 1:1–7:6. Land of Israel, circa 200 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Translated by [Jacob Neusner](#), 157, 312, 320–21, 329, 752, 759, 790, 807–36. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. [ISBN 0-300-05022-4](#).

[Sifra](#) 260:1–277:1. Land of Israel, 4th Century CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*. Translated by Jacob Neusner, 3:345–409. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988. [ISBN 1-55540-207-0](#).

[Jerusalem Talmud](#): Berakhot 90b; Peah 8a, 64a; Maasrot 1a; Maaser Sheni 4a, 24a, 31b, 37b, 48a, 50a; Challah 15b, 31b, 46b. Land of Israel, circa 400 CE. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Edited by Chaim Malinowitz, Yisroel Simcha Schorr, and Mordechai Marcus, vols. 2–3, 9–11. Brooklyn: Mesorah Pubs., 2006–2009.

[Leviticus Rabbah](#) 6:5; 10:7; 11:3; 15:1; 34:9; 35:1–37:4. Land of Israel, 5th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*. Translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, 4:84, 131, 137, 189, 435, 446–71. London: Soncino Press, 1939. [ISBN 0-900689-38-2](#).



Talmud

Babylonian [Talmud](#): [Berakhot 47b](#); [Shabbat 32b–33a](#), [77b](#), [104a](#), [136b](#), [148b](#); [Eruvin 2a](#), [31b](#), [50a](#); [Pesachim 37b](#), [63a](#), [66b](#); [Yoma 50b](#), [66a](#), [80a](#); [Beitzah 36b](#); [Rosh Hashanah 2a](#), [4a](#); [Taanit 7b](#), [22b](#); [Megillah 2b](#), [11a](#), [23b](#), [25b](#), [28a](#), [31a–b](#); [Chagigah 10a](#); [Yevamot 20a](#), [84a](#); [Ketubot 37b](#), [46a](#), [54a](#); [Nedarim 18b](#), [20a](#), [36b](#), [69b](#); [Nazir 25a](#), [31a–b](#), [61a](#), [62a](#); [Gittin 12a](#), [37a](#), [38b](#), [48a](#); [Kiddushin 5a](#), [7a](#), [17a](#), [24a](#), [29a](#), [32a](#), [53a](#), [54b](#), [61a–b](#); [Bava Kamma 10a](#), [13a](#), [40a](#), [68b](#), [69b](#), [73b](#), [78a](#), [102b](#),

[109b](#), [110b](#), [115b](#); [Bava Metzia 6a](#), [7a](#), [46a](#), [47a](#), [53b–55a](#), [57a](#), [67b](#), [91a](#), [106a](#), [113b](#); [Bava Batra 71a](#), [72a–b](#), [75a](#), [88b](#), [91b](#), [103a](#), [108b](#), [112a](#), [121b](#); [Sanhedrin 14b–15a](#), [27b](#), [52b](#), [63b](#), [70a](#), [87a](#), [88a](#), [100a](#); [Makkot 13a–b](#), [16a](#), [19a](#), [21b](#), [22b](#), [24a](#); [Shevuot 11b](#), [16b](#), [21a](#), [22a](#), [39a](#); [Avodah Zarah 5a](#), [13a](#), [63a](#); [Zevachim 5b–6a](#), [9a](#), [12a](#), [30a](#), [56b](#), [81b](#); [Menachot 6a](#), [79b](#), [81a](#), [82a](#), [87b](#), [92a](#), [93a](#), [101a](#); [Chullin 2a](#), [25b](#), [30a](#), [41b](#), [69a–b](#), [84a](#), [114a](#), [130a](#), [133b](#), [135a](#), [136b](#), [139a](#); [Bekhorot 4b](#), [10b–11a](#), [12a](#), [13a](#), [14a–b](#), [15b](#), [31b–32b](#), [36b](#), [37b](#), [41b–42a](#), [49a](#), [50a–b](#), [51b](#), [53a–b](#), [54b](#), [57a](#), [58b](#), [59b–60b](#); [Arakhin 2a–34a](#); [Temurah 2a–34a](#); [Keritot 27a](#); [Meilah 10b](#), [13a](#); [Niddah 4b](#), [28b](#), [48a](#). Babylonia, 6th Century. Reprinted in, e.g., *Talmud Bavli*. Edited by Yisroel Simcha Schorr, Chaim Malinowitz, and Mordechai Marcus, 72 vols. Brooklyn: Mesorah Pubs., 2006.

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Hobbes

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