



OFF-RAMP TORAH

A JUDICIOUS DEPARTURE FROM
THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION

- February 10, 2024 -



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְדָּ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

TO START: Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: Mishpatim/Rosh Chodesh Exodus 21:1-24:18 / Numbers 28:9-15

Sequence in Torah cycle: 18th of 54

Sequence in Exodus: 6th of 11

WHERE WE'RE GOING INSTEAD, and why

Numbers 28:9-15

Context: Last week's Torah portion inaugurated the Sinai Covenant with The Ten Commandments, the fundamental moral platform of demeanor for an individual Israelite. This week's parashah continues the Sinai Covenant with a body of legislation outlining the just conduct of Israelite society.

Content: When Shabbat *also happens to be Rosh Chodesh*, the first day of a new month, we ceremonially read in the synagogue—in addition to the weekly Torah portion—an excerpt from Numbers 28 describing (and, in the process, at least symbolically making) the sacrificial offering assigned to that date.

INTRODUCTION: Overall Chapter Caption, and "Everyday" Offerings

28:2] - Instruct the Israelites, telling them that **they are to be scrupulous about offering up at its due time** each of My communion-offerings— My provisions by fire as a pleasing fragrance

צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם
את קרבני לחמי לאשי ריח ניחחי
תשמרו להקריב לי במועדו

28:3] - Tell them that the fire-offering to be made to The Eternal One is to be unblemished yearling calves— **two each day as the routine burnt-offering.**

ואמרת להם זה האשה אשר
תקריבו ליהוה כבשים בני שנה
תמימים שנים ליום עלה תמיד

28:4] - The one calf they are to do **at sunrise**, and the second calf they are to do **at sunset**, [28:5] - with a tenth-*eifah* [= 2.2 liters] of flour as a grain-offering, drenched in a quarter-*hin* [= .33 liters] of olive oil— [28:6] - **that is to be offered up as a routine burnt-offering** at Mount Sinai, a fire-offering made as a pleasing fragrance for The Eternal One.

את הכבש אחד תעשה בבקר ואת
הכבש השני תעשה בין הערבים
ועשירית האיפה סלת למנחה
בלולה בשמן כתיבת רביעת ההין
עלת תמיד העשיה בהר סיני לריח
ניחח אשה ליהוה

- more over

28:7] - The libation offering [for the morning offering]: **for that one calf** pour out in libation as strong-drink for The Eternal One a quarter-*hin* of wine;

וְנִסְכוֹ רְבִיעֵת הַהֵיּוֹן לִכְבֹּשׁ הָאֶחָד
בְּקֹדֶשׁ הַסֹּדֵךְ נִסְדָּךְ שֶׁכֶר לַיהוָה

28:8] - then, for the second calf, do **at sunset** in accord with the same grain-offering as was made **that morning**— as well as the same libation-offering— for a fire-offering made as a pleasing fragrance for The Eternal One.

וְאֵת הַכֹּבֵשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין
הָעֲרֻבִים כְּמִנְחַת הַבֶּקֶר וַיִּכְנֹסְכוּ
תַעֲשֶׂה אֵשֶׁה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה



A) Joseph Herman Hertz (1872-1946), *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* - The study of the origins of human worship has shown that animal sacrifice is an immemorial institution among virtually all races of men. As Maimonides emphasizes [in *Guide* 3:32], it was therefore essential **to raise this universal method of worship to a purely spiritual plane.**

As promulgated in Leviticus, in Israelite worship anything idolatrous or unholy is rigorously proscribed; in most cases deliberate sins are excluded from the sphere of sacrifice; and, in every case, repentance and restitution of the wrong done must precede the sacrificial act.

Thereby, while there may be resemblances between sacrifice in Israel and sacrifice among other peoples, there are also fundamental differences **that transform sacrifice as ordained in the Pentateuch into a vehicle of lofty religious communion and truth.**

TODAY'S READING: Offerings for Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh

28:9] - And **on the Shabbat** two unblemished yearling calves, each with its two tenth-measures of flour as a grain-offering drenched with oil, and its respective drink-offering.

וּבְיֹום הַשַּׁבָּת שְׁנֵי כֹבְשִׁים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה
תְּמִימִים וְשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֹלֶת מִנְחָה
בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן וְנִסְכוֹ

28:10] - This burnt-offering, **for each and every Shabbat, is in addition to** the routine daily burnt-offering and its libation offering.

עֹלֹת שַׁבַּת בְּשַׁבְּתוֹ **עַל** עֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד
וְנִסְכָּה

verb הוסיף “adding, increasing” cf. “Joseph” [Genesis 30:23-24]	}	noun תוספת “add-on; side-dish”
		active verb הוסיף “proliferate”
		passive verb מוסף “added extra; accessory”

28:11] - **And on your New-Moons** you are to offer up as a burnt-offering to The Eternal One two bulls; one ram; and seven unblemished yearling calves,

וּבְרֵאשֵׁי חֳדָשֵׁיכֶם תִּקְרִיבוּ עֹלָה לַיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי בָקָר שְׁנַיִם וְאַיִל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם

28:12] - with three tenth-measures of flour soaked in oil for each bull; two tenth-measures of flour drenched in oil for the ram; [28:13] - and one tenth-measure of flour drenched in oil for each calf. That is the burnt-offering made as a fire-offering, as a pleasing fragrance for The Eternal One.

וּשְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרִינָיִם סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לַפָּר הָאֶחָד וּשְׁנַיִ עֶשְׂרִינָיִם סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לְאַיִל הָאֶחָד וְעֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לְכַבֵּשׁ הָאֶחָד עֹלָה רִיחַ נִיחַח אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה

28:14a] - Their drink-offering is to be a half-hin for the bull; one third-hin for the ram; and one fourth-hin of wine for each calf.

וְנִסְפֵיהֶם חֲצִי הַהֵינִי יִהְיֶה לַפָּר וּשְׁלִישֵׁת הַהֵינִי לְאַיִל וּרְבִיעֵת הַהֵינִי לְכַבֵּשׁ יָיִן

28:14b] - All that is to be the burnt-offering **for each and every New-Moon, on all the months of the year**, [28:15] - together with one goat as a sin-offering for The Eternal One— **all of which is to be made in addition to the routine daily burnt-offering** and its libation offering.

זֹאת עֹלֹת חֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹדְשׁוֹ לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה וּשְׁעִיר עֲזִים אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת לַיהוָה **עַל עֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד יַעֲשֶׂה וְנִסְכּוֹ**

viz., it is *Musaf* מוסף

“Doubling Down” in Jewish Tradition.

תוספתא דכתובתא <i>Tosefta diK'tubah</i>	נר הבדלה <i>Neir Havdalah</i>	לחם משנה <i>Lechem mishneh</i>	נרות שבת <i>Neirot Shabbat</i>
<p>וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרָיִם וְהָיָה לָהֶם לְחֶמֶת מִשְׁנֵה לֶחֶם וְנֵר שַׁבָּת וְנֵר חַדְשֵׁי חֹדְשֵׁי שָׁנָה וְנֵר חֲדָשׁ בְּחֹדְשׁוֹ לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה וְנֵר עֲזִים לְחַטָּאת וְנֵר אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת לַיהוָה עַל עֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד יַעֲשֶׂה וְנִסְכּוֹ</p> <p>groom's matching-funds commitment</p>	 <p>redoubled wicks</p>	 <p>“the second bread” (ref. Exodus 15:22)</p>	 <p>a second light</p>

הקדוש ברוך הוא אדם עובר עבירה בסתר מתפייס ממנו בדברים שנאמר קח עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה' ולא עוד אלא שמחזיק לו טובה שנאמר וקח טוב

B) Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 86b - With The Holy And Blessed One, should a person commit a sin in secret, **God is pacified by mere words**— even as it is said in Scripture: “Take words with you, and return to The Eternal One” [Hosea 14:3a]. Not only that: God even accounts it to us as for good— even as it is said in Scripture: “And accept that which is good” [Hosea 14:3b].

ולא עוד אלא שמעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו הקריב פרים שנאמר ונשלמה פרים שפתינו

Not only that: **Scripture accounts our prayers to us as if we had offered up sacrificial bulls**— even as it is said in Scripture: “Thereby we will render in place of bullocks [the offerings of] **our lips**” [Hosea 14:3c].

רבי יהושע בן לוי אמר תפלות כנגד תמידין תקנום

C) Babylonian Talmud, Brachot 26b - Rabbi Joshua ben-Leivi [c. 230 CE] said that the *T'fillah* was instituted [by the Great Assembly] **to correspond to the routine daily sacrifices**.

הכנסת הגדולה
hak'neset haG'dolah
“The Great Assembly”
450-290 BCE

ומפני מה אמרו של מוספין כל היום

Then why is it that the *Musaf* prayer may be said at any time during the [worship service of the Shabbat or holiday in question]?

שהרי קרבן של מוספין קרב כל היום

Because the corresponding additional sacrifice [for that sacred occasion] could have been offered at any time during the whole of that [Shabbat or holiday].

- Structure of Shabbat Morning Worship -

<i>Birkot haShachar</i>	- preliminary morning blessings
<i>P'suqei d'Zimra</i>	- Psalms of praise
<i>Sh'ma</i> and its blessings, culminating in <i>Mi Chamochah</i>	
<i>T'fillah</i>	- Seven Benedictions (truncated from Eighteen recited on weekdays)
Torah service	- including <i>Haftarah</i> reading from Prophets
Musaf “addition”	- [only slightly modified] reprise of <i>T'fillah</i>
	- <i>Qaddish</i> “ <i>Titkabeil</i> ”
	- <i>Ein K'eiloheinu</i>
	- Talmud study, reprised from <i>P'suqei d'Zimra</i>
	- <i>Qaddish d'Rabanan</i>
<i>'Aleinu</i>	
Mourners' <i>Qaddish</i>	
Hymn of Glory and Psalm of the Day	

D) Eugene Borowitz (1924-2016), *Explaining Reform Judaism* - In biblical times, in the Temple, the priests offered a special holiday sacrifice on Shabbat and festivals in addition to the daily service. After the destruction of the Temple, the Rabbis ruled that prayer services would substitute for the Temple sacrifices. So the Rabbis added a *musaf*, or “additional” set of prayers, to each Saturday and festival morning service. The *musaf* service primarily repeats the regular morning *tefillah* (prayers), but adds some passages concerning the sacrifices.

The Reformers rejected the *musaf* service for two reasons.

First it was repetitive, since it ultimately involved reciting many of the same prayers— in some cases, without any change— four times in a row.

The second reason was that the Reform movement was against sacrifices. Killing and skinning animals, pouring their blood out on the Altar, and finally burning parts or all of them, seemed to these modern Jews no way to pray to God. It was certainly not anything they ever wanted to do themselves.

Moreover, some prayers of the *musaf* service speak of our longing to “return” from our exile to the Land of Israel to rebuild the ancient Temple, and once again to offer sacrifices to God. Now that Jews were free and equal citizens of the country in which they lived, the Reformers felt that prayers which talk of our “exile” and “return” or our “longing for Zion” were out of place. The leader of the Reform congregation in Charleston, South Carolina, put it this way at the service dedicating the first American Reform congregation (in 1825): “This country is our Palestine; this city, our Jerusalem; this house of God, our Temple.”

E) The Pittsburgh Platform (1885)

Resolutions by eighteen American rabbis articulating the principles of Reform Judaism at a meeting November 16-18, drafted into a position paper later that year by Kaufmann Kohler of Temple Beth-El in New York.

#5 - We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a resumption of sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.

F) The Philadelphia Conference (November 3-6, 1869)

Minutes of deliberations by twelve rabbis from around the United States regarding the establishment of מנהג אמריקה “Minhag Amerika,” a standardized authentic Jewish worship mode for this new country based on Isaac Mayer Wise’s new prayerbook of that name.

#3 - **The Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic sacrificial cult** were preparatory steps to the real priesthood of the whole people, which began with the dispersion of the Jews, and to the sacrifices of sincere devotion and moral sanctification, which alone are pleasing and acceptable to the Most Holy. These institutions, preparatory to higher religiosity, were consigned to the past, once for all, with the destruction of the Second Temple, and only in this sense— as educational influences in the past— are they to be mentioned in our prayers.

#4 - Every distinction between Aaronides and non-Aaronides, as far as religious rites and duties are concerned, is consequently inadmissible, both in the religious cult and in social life.

G) The Frankfort-am-Main Conference (July 15-28, 1845) -

Minutes of deliberations by thirty-six German Progressive rabbis, regarding the report of committee assignments that had been made at the Brunswick Conference during June of the previous year, 1844.

The conference decided that the **prayers for the return to the land of our forefathers**, and for the restoration of the Jewish state, **should be eliminated from the ritual**.

Although **the conference voted for the retention of the *Musaf* prayer**, it was definitely understood that the traditional supplication for the restoration of the sacrifices should be so changed as to be **a mere mention of the sacrifices as historical reminiscences**.

H) Mishnah Sukkah 3:12 -

בראשונה היה לולב נטל במקדש
שבעה ובמדינה יום אחד

Originally the *lulav* was waved within the Jerusalem Temple on all seven days of Sukkot [per the duty in Leviticus 23:40], but in the rest of the country only on the first Festival day of the holiday.

משחרב בית המקדש התקין רבן
יוחנן בן זכאי שיהא לולב נטל
במדינה שבעה **זכר למקדש**

Once the Temple was destroyed, Rabban YoChanan ben-Zakkai decreed that they should wave the *lulav* on all seven days in every venue, **as a memorial of the Temple**.

I) Babylonian Talmud, P'sachim 115a -

מברך על אכילת מצה ואכיל

One recites the blessing for eating *matzah* [which is a duty mandated in the Torah], and then eats it;

והדר מברך על אכילת מרור ואכיל

after that, one recites the blessing for eating bitter herbs [which is a duty extrapolated from the Torah by the rabbis], and then eats it.

והדר אכיל מצה וחסא בהדי הדדי
בלא ברכה **זכר למקדש** כהלל

After that, one eats unleavened bread and greenery wrapped together, without a blessing, **as a memorial of the Temple** according to the practice of [Sanhedrin co-President Hillel the Elder].

J) Ben Zion Wacholder (1924-2011), *Messianism and Mishnah: Time and Place in the Early Halakhah* - The Mishnah's allusions to priestly and Levitical privileges; **the sacrificial cult in the Temple**; and the rules of purity and pollution, refer, unless otherwise indicated, to *Halakhah* of the long-gone idealized First Temple [of Solomon, 960-586 BCE], which **in the messianic future might be reinstated in the rebuilt Third Temple**, but which does not necessarily describe practice in the corrupt Herodian Second Temple.

- How to Deal With *Musaf* (and other vestiges of our sacrificial tradition) -

<u>TRADITIONAL</u>	<u>EARLY REFORM</u>	<u>RADICAL REFORM</u>
Preserve them for posterity, for eventual resumption in the messianic future.	Invoke them as an honorary tribute to our past, and a conceptual framework for our prayer-poetry.	Delete as irrelevant and regressive any association with the sacrificial cult of our early forebears.