

Torah Talk – מאמרי תורה



The Parasha Post of Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School of the Nation's Capital

Parashat Vayikra
March 17, 2018

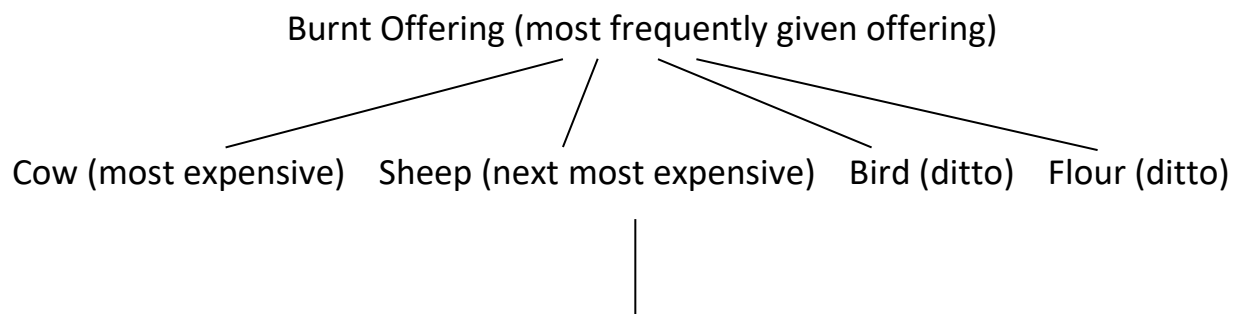
פרשת ויקרא
א' בניסן תשע"ח

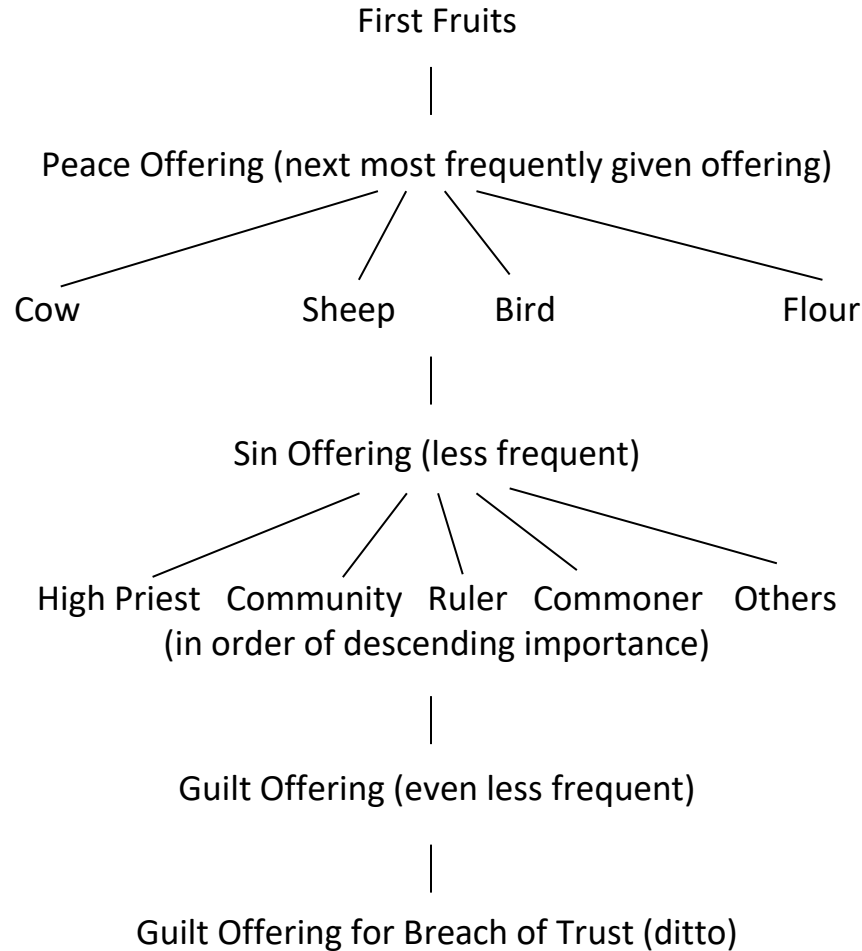
Torah Reading: *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 1:1-5:26
Reading for *Rosh Chodesh: Bemidbar* (Numbers) 28:9-15
Reading for *Parashat HaChodesh: Shemot* (Exodus) 12:1-20

In this *parasha*, God commands Moshe regarding various types of *korbanot* (animal and vegetative offerings): what they should consist of and under what circumstances they should be offered.

This *parasha* illustrates and elucidates an often misunderstood principle in the Torah. Rashi is fond of quoting the Talmud in *Masechet Pesachim* 6b: “אין מוקדם – ומאוחר בתורה – There is no chronological order in the Torah.” This does not mean that the Torah was written in a hodge-podge fashion with no thought given to the order of the topics. The phrase means that chronology is not the determinant of the order of the Torah. Rather, the Torah is written thematically, with one theme leading directly into the next theme within a logical sequence.

Parashat Vayikra demonstrates this principle clearly. It details the types of sacrifices brought during the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) service. The logical order is demonstrated in the diagram below:





For those not so visually inclined, here is the logical flow of ideas. The *parasha* begins with the most frequently given type of offering, listing the possibilities for this particular offering in order from the most expensive to the least expensive. The *parasha* continues with other types of offerings in descending order of frequency, with the subcategories of those offerings listed in descending order of expense and descending order of importance.

An interesting game to play is to figure out how one theme leads into the next in the Torah and how each is logically related to the theme before it and the theme after it. Often, there is not just one explicit explanation but a number of interesting possibilities and ideas; it is rare to find a section which cannot be logically ordered. Try it sometime as your own parlor game. Perhaps you will come up with new ideas that others have not yet thought of.

Shabbat shalom.

For Discussion:

- Why do you think the Torah lists the offerings and the details in descending rather than ascending order?
- Choose your actual or future bar or bat mitzvah *parasha* and see if you can trace the sequence of themes in it.