

Shabbat Shalom, Victory and God's Command is the Tzav Torah



Shabbat Shalom!

Welcome to this week's reading of the Torah portion called **Tzav (Command!)**.

**TZAV (Command!)**

**Leviticus 6:1–8:36; Jeremiah 7:21 - 8:3; 9:22 - 9:23; 1 Corinthians 15:1–58**

“The LORD said to Moses: ‘**Command [Tzav צַו]** Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law of the burnt-offering.’” (*Leviticus 6:8–9*)



A Jewish man prays wearing a tallit (prayer shawl) and tefillin (phylacteries) while holding a Torah scroll covered in a velvet Torah mantle.

Last week, in Parasha Vayikra, God spoke to Moses from the Tent of Meeting, giving him the laws of the offerings (**korbanot** קִרְבָּנוֹת), detailing the circumstances under which they would be offered in order to draw close to God.

This week's Parasha is entitled **Tzav**, which means **to order** or **command**.

### **What was God instructing Moses to command Aaron and his sons?**

He was commanding the Jewish priesthood (lineage of Aaron) to observe their rights and duties as the kohanim (priests), who in Parasha Tzav are commanded to always keep the fire on the altar burning and never to extinguish it. (*Leviticus 6:13*)

For this reason, when we light our Shabbat candles on Friday night to usher in the Sabbath, it is customary not to blow out the flame but to let the candles burn down completely.

And although the fire no longer burns on the Temple altar, and our Shabbat candles burn until they go out, may our hearts always burn brightly with the fire that God Himself lit there, never to be extinguished by the cares of this world.



On Friday night, it is customary to kindle Shabbat candles just before the arrival of the Sabbath. (*Photo by Robert Couse-Baker*)

In Tzav, the priests are given the procedure for offering the obligatory sacrifices on behalf of all the nation of Israel.

As these offerings are read in the synagogue, however, few will connect those offerings to the death of Yeshua (Jesus) for our sins, which will be remembered during the upcoming Passover season.

Nevertheless, those offerings are essential to our understanding of what Yeshua accomplished on the tree. They comprise the following five categories: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass / guilt / restitution offering.

## 1. Korban Olah (קרבן עלה – Burnt Offerings)

“Let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD.” (*Leviticus 1:3*)

**The Korban Olah is a voluntary offering that is to be completely burnt. Nothing is to be eaten.**

To offer it, the worshiper brings a male animal without blemish to the door of the Tabernacle. A male or female dove or pigeon can be offered if a person does not have the means to offer a bullock, ram or goat.

**The Israelite then places his hands upon the head of the animal offering with the knowledge that this innocent animal is about to pay the price for his sin.**

After the worshiper asks Adonai for forgiveness, the animal is slaughtered.



Israeli sheep

## 2. Minchah (מִנְחָה – Meal Offerings)

Tzav also describes the duties for the **Minchah** (present or gift) or the Meal Offering in which the people of Israel also give grain offerings.

The priests burn a **fistful (Kometz)** of this offering on the altar and eat the rest.

**Often the choicest flour is mixed with oil and salt to make a cake, but it cannot contain leaven or honey.**

Leaven is associated with sin, pride, hypocrisy, false teaching, and worldliness (*1 Corinthians 5:6–8, Luke 12:1, Galatians 5:9, Mark 8:15*).

Leaven and salt represent two entirely different actions: salt preserves, while leaven radically changes substances.

Although honey has a pleasant smell when it boils, it smells bitter and unpleasant when it burns. **The offering is to be sweet smelling**, as the incense offered with it.



The priest makes an offering (Source: Internet Archive)

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While this Parasha seems to specify grain, elsewhere we see also vegetables and animals given for a Minchah (*Genesis 4:3–4; 1 Samuel 2:15–17*).

**Both Cain and Abel offered a Minchah and not a Korban Olah.** Cain and his offering were not accepted and Able and his offering were.

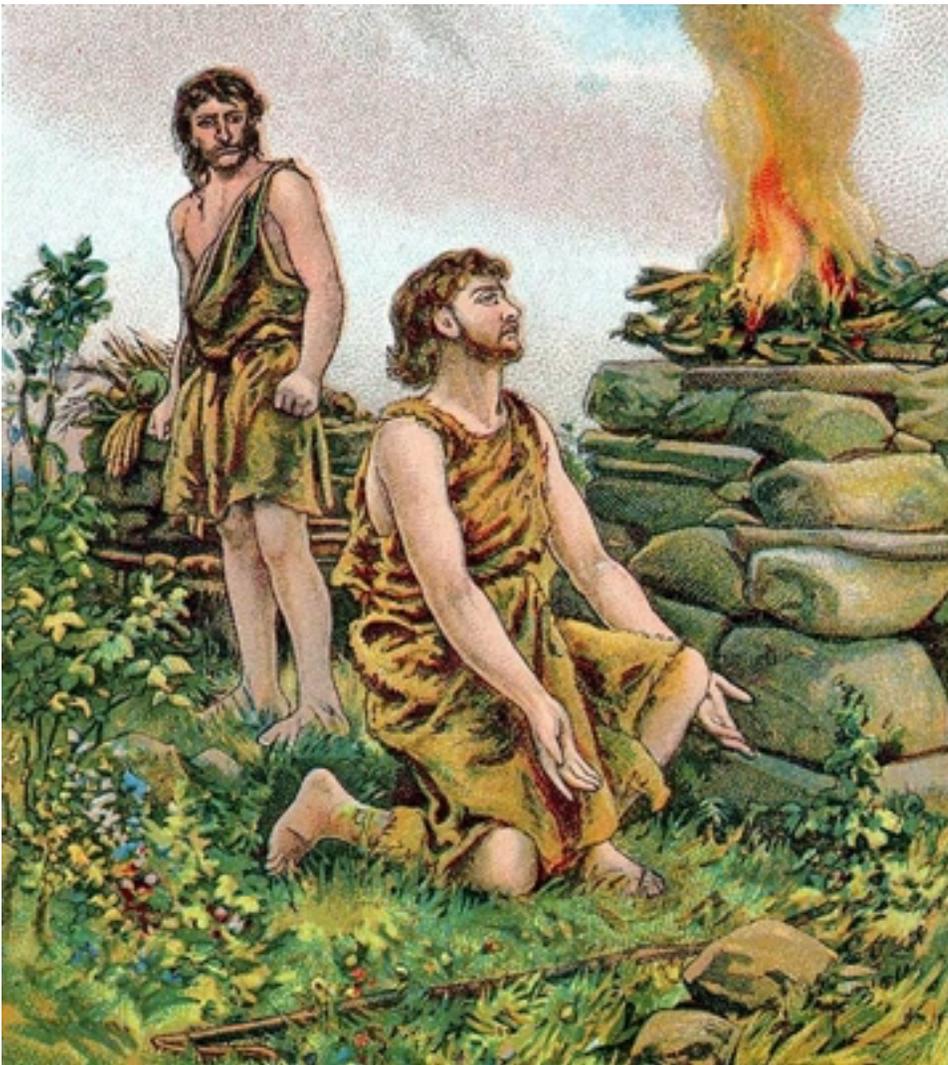
**Abel offered a fat portion of the firstfruit of his flock; however, the Bible does not indicate that Cain brought the firstfruit of his produce.** It just says that he brought the fruit of the ground.

We can infer from this that Cain did not offer the Minchah in faith or with a right attitude (*Hebrews 11:1–2, 4; 1 John 3:12*).

Cain became embittered when God rejected both him and his offering; however, God graciously told him that if he would do well, he would be accepted.

Cain rejected Adonai's advice and things **went from bad to worse**. He did not repent, choosing instead a path of rebellion that resulted in him killing his brother.

"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." (*Genesis 4:7*)



Cain is resentful that Abel's offering is accepted.

### 3. Shelamim (שְׁלָמִים – Peace Offering)

The **Shelamim** (which is related to the word **shalom**) is a **voluntary offering that expresses a sense of wellbeing, praise, and thanksgiving**, such as when Jacob and Laban made a treaty with one another in Genesis 31:54.

This offering is similar to the burnt offering; however, while male or female animals were acceptable, birds were not. **The animals are not fully burned as are the burnt offerings; only specified portions of fat and internal organs are placed on the altar.**

A portion of the Shelamim, without the blood, is to be eaten by the priests and even by the one offering up the sacrifice.



Men pray at the Western (Wailing) Wall.

#### 4. Chatat (חַטָּאת – Sin Offering)

**Chatat are offered for unintentional sins** (*Leviticus 4:1–4*), sins due to carelessness or inadvertence.

The status of the offender dictates the class of chatat. **If the offender is the high priest or the whole community of Israel, it is considered a more serious transgression because it impacts the welfare of the entire nation.** A young bull is required, and it is burned outside the camp.

If the offender is a leader, such as the king, a male goat is to be brought.

If it is an individual, a female sheep or goat is to be brought. For these latter two, the priests are to eat the sacrifices within the Tabernacle grounds.

The chatat is also required for three sins of omission:

- withholding testimony;
- becoming impure due to an interval of forgetfulness; and
- violating an oath unintentionally.



Reading the Torah scroll with a yod

## 5. Asham (אֲשָׁם – Guilt Offering)

Leviticus 6:5–7 details the guilt offering of a ram for the following:

- unintentionally using sanctuary property for personal use;
- forestalling punishment for one's sin when one is uncertain one has sinned, or for unknown sin; and
- lying under oath or defrauding a person regarding a found article, a deposit, loan, etc.

For an Asham, it does not suffice to simply offer a sacrifice. **The offender has to make restitution plus add an additional fifth of the value.**

In fulfillment of Scripture, Yeshua was not only pierced for our sins, He became our asham, paying the legal penalty of our guilt to God for those sins.

As a result of paying the wages of our sin, Yeshua makes restitution for our souls:

“And the Lord wished to crush him, He made him ill; if his soul makes itself restitution [asham], he shall see children, he shall prolong his days, and God's purpose shall prosper in his hand.” (*Isaiah 53:10, Chabad*)



A shepherd tends his flock at a tourist attraction recreating first century village life in Israel.

Even though Yeshua made restitution back to God for our sinfulness, confession and restitution is still our moral responsibility to one another when we sin against our fellow man.

Yeshua taught that we are to seek out those we have wronged and get right with them before coming to the altar with any offering (*Matthew 5:23–26; Leviticus 5:16*).

Feeling guilty when we sin is healthy; it's a sign that we must make amends. But to keep feeling guilty after restitution has been made and the sacrifice has been paid is not healthy.

**We can receive Yeshua's sacrifice as our own once we acknowledge our guilt and make amends.**

While the guilt offerings on the altar of the Temple only **covered sin**, Yeshua's death and resurrection actually **removed sin for all time**.

As Yochanan (John) said when he saw Yeshua coming to him at the Jordan River, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." (*John 1:29*)

We can say, then, that **Yeshua's offering was both chatat (sin) and asham (restitution)**.

"Messiah was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him." (*Hebrews 9:28*)



Though **Yeshua** endured an agonizing death to atone for the sin of the world, He rose again on the third day. Because He was completely sinless, death could not hold Him. Had He not borne our sins, He wouldn't have died at all.

**Thankfully, Yeshua's death wasn't the final word.**

Just as He promised, death couldn't hold Him (*John 2:18–22; Matthew 26:31–32*).

“He was delivered over to **death for our sins** and was raised to life for our justification.” (*Romans 4:25*)

The sting of death is sin (*1 Corinthians 15:56*), and **in Yeshua, death has lost its sting!**

Therefore, we can live confidently without any fear of death or dying, as we know that when we pass from this life, our lives continue eternally with our loving Father in Heaven just as Yeshua's does even today.

We will have the privilege of remembering His death and celebrating His resurrection during Passover (Pesach) and Firstfruits (Bikkurim) in just a few weeks.



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"Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that openly profess His name." (*Hebrews 13:15*)