

This Shabbat morning we have the potential for a somewhat unusual occurrence. It is Shabbat VaYikra HaHodesh Rosh Hodesh, which means that if there is a minyan we will be reading from 3 Torah Scrolls.

We will be beginning the third book of the Torah, and we will be beginning the month of Nisan, which has traditionally been the first month of the year for important Jewish events, so it is almost like there are three beginnings as well as three Torah scrolls.

In our study of the Torah on Thursday at noon, we rediscovered that when the text discusses the animals that are to be brought to the Temple, none of them are supposed to be "sacrifices" as we consider the term in English. They are not animals whose loss will be deeply felt; they are animals who would have ensured that the Israelite farmers operated at a loss. Animals must be fed, and you only need a few adult males to maintain a herd. Which animals were brought, for the most part? Yearling males. So you can see how this was a win-win situation, all around. The Kohanim and Levi'im received more food on special days so they could consider it a celebration, and the Israelites were getting rid of financial burdens. God was occasionally feeling that people were thinking about the right way to live, as they kept travelling towards Jerusalem and fed those who had no other source of food.

As we prepare for Passover and the normative spring cleaning, I invite you to look around and see what part of your life can be as easily framed as a "win-win" as it can a "sacrifice" - and I further invite you to try it out and see what happens.