

# **R'iyah: Appearing Before God**

**Understanding a forgotten Torah concept that sits at the heart of the pilgrimage feasts and transforms how we understand covenant relationship.**



## **The Lost Concept**

**R'iyah (רְאִיָּה) is one of those Torah ideas that gets almost completely lost in church teaching**

**Even though it sits at the heart of the pilgrimage feasts.**



# The Pilgrimage Road: Rediscovered After 2,000 Years

Breaking Archaeology — September 2025

On September 15, 2025, Israel officially inaugurated the full length of the ancient Pilgrimage Road — the very street walked by pilgrims fulfilling R'iyah for over a thousand years.

01

## The Route

A 600-meter stone street running from the Pool of Siloam up to the Temple Mount in the City of David

02

## What Was Found

Coins, weights, a marketplace, a drainage channel used during the Great Revolt, oil lamps, and a Roman sword

03

## New Discovery

Research now suggests Pontius Pilate — not Herod — initiated the street's construction

📄 **This is the road. The actual road. The one Disciples, Paul, and every Jewish pilgrim walked to appear before YHWH.**

## **What is the R'iyah offering?**

**R'iyah literally means "appearing" / "being seen."**

**In Torah it refers to the obligation to appear before YHWH at the Temple with an offering during the three pilgrimage feasts.**

**You do not come empty-handed.**



## **The Torah Command**

**The requirement to appear before God with an offering is established in multiple passages throughout the Torah.**



## **Exodus 23:14–17**

***"Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year... None shall appear before me empty."***

## **Exodus 34:20**

***"All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty."***

## **Deuteronomy 16:16–17**

***"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before YHWH... and they shall not appear before YHWH empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of YHWH."***

**This required gift is the Korban R'iyah.**

**When it was brought**

**At the three pilgrimage feasts:**

01

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**Pesach / Unleavened Bread**

02

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**Shavuot**

03

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**Sukkot**

**The purpose was presence +  
gratitude, not atonement.**



## What kind of offering was it?

From later Torah interpretation (Mishnah Ḥagigah 1):

### The R'iyah offering was:

- A burnt offering (‘Olah)
- Usually from livestock
- Entirely given to God (no part eaten)

**It was paired with:**

## **Ḥagigah**

A peace offering eaten in joy

## **Simḥah**

Offerings ensuring rejoicing

## Three dimensions of the feast



### **R'iyah**

Appear before God



### **Hagigah**

Celebrate with God



### **Simḥah**

Make sure everyone rejoices

## **The Foundation of R'iyah**

**You come  
because you are  
already in  
covenant**

**You give because  
you have been  
blessed**

**You are not  
buying  
forgiveness**

**R'iyah is not about sin.**

It's about:

**Loyalty**

**Gratitude**

**Relationship**

**Acknowledging  
God as King**



## **Why this matters (big picture)**

This blows up a lot of later theology:

- The Temple was not only about sin offerings
- Most sacrifices were relational and celebratory
- God required presence, not substitutionary punishment

## **This is why:**

### **Acts 21 makes sense**

(Paul participating in Temple worship)

### **Yeshua going up for feasts makes sense**

**"Worship" in Torah is embodied obedience, not abstract belief**

# The Disciples' Example

Even after the resurrection and the giving of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit), the apostles continued to honor the pilgrimage feasts.



## Yeshua

Yeshua himself faithfully observed the pilgrimage feasts, traveling to Jerusalem multiple times throughout his life (e.g., **Luke 2:41-42** for Passover, **John 7:10** for Sukkot).



## Paul

Paul, despite his mission to the Gentiles, made a point to be in Jerusalem for the feasts, even participating in Temple purification rites (**Acts 20:16, Acts 21:26**).

## Quick contrast with church categories

### Church System frames

- Sacrifice = atonement
- Don't come as you are
- Guilt-driven

### Torah reality

- Offering = drawing near
- Come as you are, but not empty
- Gratitude-driven

## **The Heart of Covenant Relationship**

**R'iyah reveals that covenant with God is fundamentally about presence, gratitude, and relationship—not transactional forgiveness or guilt management.**

**You appear before God because you belong to Him, bringing what you have been blessed with as an act of loyal worship.**