



Parshas Vayikra 2020, focus on change

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, Leah Menucha Bas Gittel, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. And in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna and Shaul Ben Berta.

The Parsha starts off with the first time G-d speaks to Moshe Rabbienu from within the Mishkan. He relates to Moshe the various types of sacrifices that can be brought on the Mizbe'ach.

The **Olah**, an elective sacrifice that was burnt entirely and solely for G-d.

The **Chatas**, an offering that would atone for sins that were done unintentionally.

The **Shelamim**, a voluntary sacrifice that was brought to thank G-d and eaten by the donor, Kohanim, and Leviim.

A question comes to mind: The first Pasuk of the Parsha is ויקרא אל־משה וידבר ה' אליו - *And He called Moshe, and G-d spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting (the Mishkan).* However, The way this Pasuk is written in the Torah is that the last letter of the word ויקרא is written very small in comparison to the rest of the letters. Why is the Alef of ויקרא small and written differently than the rest of the letters?

The Rosh on this Pasuk explains that the letter Alef is written very small because Alef is also the first letter of the Hebrew word for I - **אני**. As Moshe Rabbienu is considered the most humble person in our history, he is honored with a small Alef.

Since Moshe remained modest despite all the honor and prestige that came along with leading the Jewish nation out of Egypt. The little Alef represents his humility and character as an individual, but more importantly, as a servant of G-d and a leader of the Jewish people.

However, the Kli Yakar takes this explanation a step further. He writes that if the letter Alef is removed from the word “ויקרא,” the word becomes “ויקר- *and He chanced upon.*” The Kli Yakar explains that when the Pasuk writes “ויקרא,” it represents a term of endearment and love towards the person being spoken to.

But the word “ויקר” has no such connotations; it signifies the opposite. For “ויקר - *and He chanced upon*” implies that the person speaking did not want to do so but rather happened to do so.

We see this phrase used when G-d spoke to Balaam, the non-Jewish prophet, as he was trying to curse the Jewish people. As the Pasuk in Bamidbar says (23:16), “ויקר ה' אל-בלעם *And G-d chanced upon Balaam,*” and the Ramban explains that G-d was speaking to Balaam through the attributes of justice and strength.

The Kli Yakar continues that since Moshe was very humble, he wanted to write that G-d only appeared to him by chance. But G-d told him to write the word “ויקרא” with an Alef to show the world His love and affection towards Moshe. But due to Moshe's extreme humility, he wrote the word with a small Alef; therefore, the Alef of Vayikra in every Torah is written small in his merit.

In our daily lives and especially during these unprecedented times, we look at the dichotomy of how G-d affectionately spoke to Moshe Rabbienu as opposed to Balaam and realize that it has practical and insightful meaning for our circumstances today.

We could tell ourselves, “ויקר-*and He chanced upon us,*” that our situation has been thrust upon us for no apparent reason at all. Conversely, we can view our circumstances through the lens of “ויקרא-*and He called to us.*”

Whatever happens is an extreme wake-up call from G-d to arouse us from our Galus slumber, telling us to strengthen our connection to Him.

“When you can not control what’s happening, challenge yourself to control the way you respond to the situation. For that is where true power lies”.

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*