



Parshas Vayikra 2023, beneath the surface

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the immediate and speedy recovery of Daniel Aaron Moshe Ben Ruth. May he and all those who need a Refuah Shlema experience G-d's mercy and compassion swiftly!

We begin the third book of the Torah, Sefer Vayikra. The book of Vayikra primarily speaks about the work that Kohanim and Leviim would do in the Mishkan or Beis Hamikdash. The Parsha starts with the first time G-d speaks to Moshe Rabbienu from within the Mishkan. He relates to Moshe the various types of sacrifices brought on the Mizbe'ach.

- The Olah, an elective sacrifice, burnt entirely and solely for G-d.
- The Chatas, an offering for sins done unintentionally.
- The Shelamim, a voluntary sacrifice brought to thank G-d and eaten by the donor, Kohanim, and Leviim.
- The Asham was an offering brought by a person unsure if they violated a Torah prohibition.

However, a question comes to mind: The Parsha starts with G-d calling out to Moshe from within the assembled Mishkan. The Pasuk says (1:1), "*Vayikra El Moshe, Vayedaber Hashem Elav Me'Ohel Moed Lemor. - And (G-d) called out to Moshe, and G-d spoke to him from the Tent of meeting.*" But why doesn't the Pasuk write that G-d called Moshe? It should have written, "*Vayikra Hashem El Moshe - And G-d called to Moshe*"?

Furthermore, what did G-d call out to Moshe before speaking with him? Usually, the Pasuk writes that G-d spoke or instructed Moshe without calling out to him first. So why did G-d first call out to Moshe before speaking with him?!

The Chizkuni, Rav Chezekiah ben Manoah, gives a simple answer. He writes that we ended last week's Parsha with G-d's presence resting upon the completed Mishkan. Hence, according to Chizkuni, it is obvious who calls out to Moshe Rabbeinu.

He continues that there's no real separation between the two books of the Torah, Sefer Shemos and Vayikra. Because our Parsha begins immediately after G-d's presence rests upon the Mishkan. Sefer Vayikra continues the narrative and story in sequential and chronological order.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, Rav Chaim Ben Attar, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He answers that there is depth to the order in that G-d spoke to Moshe.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that G-d called out to Moshe twice in the Torah. The first time was by the burning bush when G-d challenged Moshe to lead His people out of Egypt. The second time was Mt Sinai when G-d summoned Moshe up the mountain. In both cases, the Pasuk details that it is G-d calling Moshe (Shemos 3:2 & 19:2) ***"Vayikra Elav Hashem - And G-d called out to him."***

The difference here is that G-d calling out in an obscure manner from a place the Moshe was not allowed inside. Once G-d's presence rested upon the Mishkan, only Aaron and his sons could enter and offer sacrifices.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that G-d will often try to awaken us in an obscure manner before explicitly revealing Himself. He sends subtle hints that require us to look beneath the surface to feel His presence.

Most of the time, G-d utilizes nature to implement and carry out His will. But if we pay close attention to our world's seemingly "natural" occurrences, we will hear the call to unite and serve G-d as one.

Looking beyond ourselves, we can see G-d directing our every move and feel His presence resting upon us. When we get the hint, we pave the way for G-d to reveal Himself with the coming of Moshiach.

This lesson is ever more relevant as we quickly approach Pesach, the holiday of freedom. The story we describe and say in detail during the Seder is intended to

awaken us to the power of our Creator. To the miracles He constantly performs on our behalf without us being aware of His presence.

To the love, passion and desire He has for us ever since our forefather, Avraham, circumcised himself at 99 years old. To the Infinity of His holiness and the eternity of His presence. To the ultimate redemption that will be forever once His oneness is proclaimed throughout the world.

In our daily life, it is imperative to realize that most communication is conveyed and communicated beneath the surface. Our mannerisms and habits often reveal much more about us than we may realize.

How we walk, talk, and interact with others can provide insight into our true feelings and motivations, even if we try to hide them. This is because our subconscious mind often directs these behaviors, and they can reflect the reality hidden in our hearts.

For example, crossing our arms or avoiding eye contact may indicate feeling defensive or uncomfortable. Similarly, fidgeting or tapping our feet may signal nervousness or restlessness. When we present ourselves authentically, we are more likely to build genuine connections with others. Conversely, when we try to hide our true feelings or motivations, we may come across as insincere or untrustworthy.

Aligning our hearts and mouths requires immense self-awareness and self-reflection. We must be willing to acknowledge when we may present ourselves in a way that is inconsistent with our true selves. This can be challenging but essential in finding ourselves and building meaningful relationships with others.

**"Your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become your words.
Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits.
Your habits become your values. Your values become your destiny."**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*