

על דשע

Alei Deshe - Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on
the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

Ga'avah: A Universal Nisayon

Parshas Vayikra begins (1:1), וַיִּקְרָא אֶל מֹשֶׁה, –And He called to Moshe. Baal Haturim cites a midrash that says the *alef* of וַיִּקְרָא is written small, because in Moshe's great humility he wanted to use the word וַיִּקְרָא instead – as is written regarding Bilam (Bamidbar 23:4) – since it implies a lower level of *nevuah*. However, Hashem instructed Moshe to write וַיִּקְרָא, signifying affection and a high level of prophecy. Moshe, in his humility, replied that he would write it with a small *alef*.

In *Ya'aros Devash*,¹ R. Yonasan Eibeshitz wonders about this. At *ma'amad Har Sinai*,² as well, the term וַיִּקְרָא is used in reference to Moshe. Why isn't Moshe's *anivus* displayed there as well; why is the *alef* minimized only in our parshah? Many answers have been given for this.

R. Shmuel David Walkin³ answered as follows. The Gemara (Nedarim 38a) states that the *Shechinah* rests only upon one who is strong, wealthy, wise, and humble. The Gemara states that all these qualities are derived from Moshe. Maharsha points out that humility is mentioned last of all these character traits. Why is it last? He

explains⁴ that in fact, humility is the main virtue necessary for *nevuah*. The pasuk praises Moshe for his *anivus*; through this quality he merited the highest level of *nevuah*. It is specifically humility that Hashem desires, as the pasuk states (Mishlei 16:5), תוֹעֵבַת ה' כָּל לֵב גְבוּהַ לֵב –Every haughty heart is the abomination of Hashem.

However, a person who lacks greatness in other areas – a poor man, for example – is humble automatically, since he has nothing to be haughty about. His humility is not born of hard work; it is not a hard-won victory over his *yetzer hara*. Only one who is wealthy, wise and strong – and yet, is humble, has achieved the high level of humility desired by Hashem, and will merit the presence of the *Shechinah*. This is why humility is mentioned last; it is only truly remarkable when it follows wealth, wisdom and strength.

This, explains Rav Walkin, is why the *alef* is minimized specifically in Parshas Vayikra. It was only after *Mattan Torah* that Moshe became wealthy, when he was given to keep the shavings of the second *Luchos* (Nedarim *ibid*). Thus, Parshas Vayikra – when Moshe had already become wealthy, and yet remained humble – is the place to stress his humility by minimizing the *alef* of וַיִּקְרָא.

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**Every person believes
that he has a specialty
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everyone else.**
**One can feel haughty
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whether he is poor
or rich, simple or learned**

¹ Vol. 2, 13

² Shemos 19:3, 19:20

³ A son of the Beis Aharon. *Kisvei Abba Mari*, Parshas Vayikra and Nedarim 38a.

⁴ This is explained more clearly by *Ksav Sofer* to our parshah.

לעילוי נשמת
מרת
עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל

The concept that humility is remarkable only when it accompanies greatness is evident in other pesukim as well. There is a special command upon a Jewish king (Devarim 17:20), לְבַלְתִּי רוּם לָבוֹ מֵאַחֵי, –So that his heart does not become haughty over his brethren. In our parshah, as well, it is written (4:22), אֲשֶׁר נָשִׂיא יַחֲטֵא –When a ruler sins. The Gemara (Horiyos 10a) initially understands this to mean that the nasi will certainly sin. Why would this be assumed? It is because he is in a leadership position, so he is likely to feel haughty and ultimately sin.⁵

This being said, in Kotzk they understood the matter of *anavah* and *ga'avah* differently. It is told that R. Shlomo Eiger once sent a messenger to find his son, R. Leibel Eiger. When he arrived at the *beis midrash*, he noticed that a movement had arisen around R. Hersh Ber of Grabovitz – who was known in Kotzk simply as Hersh Ber. R. Shlomo Eiger's messenger inquired of one of the chassidim whether this was a man of distinguished lineage. "No," he was told, "he is of a simple background." Is he wealthy? Again, the answer was, "No; he is destitute." Is he a *talmid chacham*? "No; he barely knows a single *mishnah*."⁶ "Then why," wondered the messenger, "is he worthy of the great honor shown him?" The chassid answered, "He is an *anav*." The messenger laughed. "A person who is neither of distinguished background, wealthy, nor learned – what would he be haughty about? Of course he is humble!" The chassid replied, "He is humble about the same thing that haughty people are haughty about – what they do not have." In Kotzk they understood that the height of *anavah* is when someone who has no special qualities at all – neither Torah, nor money, nor *yichus* – is nonetheless humble.

Any person can have the *middos* of *ga'avah* and *anavah*. It is told that R. Chaim Shmuelevitz was once walking to yeshivah, deeply immersed in thought. He passed by two sanitation workers, one of whom was standing on the garbage truck, while the other loaded trash into the back of the truck. As R. Chaim passed the second worker, the worker thought that R. Chaim was looking at him derisively, since he had the lowlier job of collecting the garbage while his colleague rode on the truck. He approached R. Chaim and said importantly, "*Kevod harav*, you may think that I always tend to the

trash while my friend rides the truck. It is not so; we take turns. Some days I ride the truck while he tends to the garbage, and some days it is the reverse." Some time later, R. Chaim delivered a *shmuess* (discourse) to the yeshivah on the topics of *kavod* and *ga'avah*; every person, he said, sees himself as 'unique in his generation,' no matter how lowly his job may be. Everyone sees himself as an important person.⁷

In fact, this is clear from the Gemara. The Gemara⁸ expounds on the pasuk (Divrei Hayamim I 29:11), שְׁוֹמְרוֹתֵי הָאָרֶץ לֹא יִשְׁמְרוּ –and the sovereignty over every leader, that even those tasked with digging irrigation canals have been appointed to that position by Heaven. Since any position in which one finds himself has been assigned to him by Heaven, there is a certain importance attached to it. One may begin thinking that (Devarim 8:17) כַּחַי וְעֶצְמוֹ יְדֵי עֲשָׂה לִי אֶת הַחֵיל הַזֶּה –My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth. Indeed, *sefarim* write that the *nisayon* of *ga'avah* pursues a person until his last day. Every person believes that he has a specialty where he excels over everyone else. One can feel haughty over others regardless of whether he is poor or rich, simple or learned. One must daven until his final breath (Tehillim 36:12) אַל תְּבוֹאֲנֵי רֶגֶל גְּאוֹן –Let not the foot of arrogance come to me. It is known that both the Arizal and the Baal Shem Tov uttered this pasuk before they were *niftar*.⁹

So why is the *alef* of וַיִּקְרָא minimized only in Parshas Vayikra?

The pasuk (1:2) states, אָדָם כִּי יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם קֶרְבָּן לַיהוָה –When a man brings from you a *korban* to Hashem. The main point of a *korban* is the feeling that the *korban* is from you – it is himself that the Yid is bringing as a *korban*. The function of an animal as a *korban* is to take the place of one sacrificing oneself.¹⁰ If one has even the minutest trace of *ga'avah*, he is blemished – as is stated by the Gemara (Megillah 29a) – and unfit to be a *korban*. Thus, it is as an introduction to the laws of *korbanos* that the *alef* of וַיִּקְרָא is minimized, to teach that before one brings a *korban*, he must rid himself entirely of haughtiness, so that he will be fit as a *korban*.

(ויקרא – זכור תשפ"ב, ס"ג מאמר א)

5 See *Torah Sheleimah* 133; *Shulei Hagilyon*, Rosh Hashanah 26a

6 As is known, R. Bunim commanded that his high levels of Torah be taken from him.

7 See *Sefer Hazikaron* on R. Chaim Shmuelevitz; *Mo'ach V'Lev* p. 129

8 Berachos 58a, Bava Basra 91b

9 See *Notzer Chessed*, Avos 5:4

10 See Ramban 1:9

A Heavenly Remembrance

The Torah refers to the fistful (*kemitzah*) of a *korban minchah* as אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ –its memorial portion. Rashi (Vayikra 2:2) explains: “The fistful that ascends heavenward (when it is burned) is the remembrance of the *minchah*, as through it, its owner is remembered for good and for pleasure [to Hashem].” However, this expression is not used regarding other *korbanos* – neither animal nor bird. Why is it exclusive to the *korban minchah*? There are several approaches taken.

Rashbam (2:2) writes that אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ is a reference to the fragrance of the *levonah* spice burning together with the *minchah*, as the pasuk (Yeshayah 66:3) states, מִזְכִּיר לְבָנָה –a *levonah* remembrance. However, this explanation seems difficult. Regarding the *Minchas Chotei* (sinner’s *minchah*), the pasuk (5:11) states, לֹא יִשִּׂים עָלֶיהָ, שֶׁמֶן וְלֹא יִתֵּן עָלֶיהָ לְבָנָה –he shall not place oil on it nor shall he put *levonah* on it. Yet, although the *Minchas Chotei* did not have *levonah*, the pasuk (5:12) says about it, וְקִמֵץ הַכֹּהֵן מִמִּנְחָה מְלֹא קִמְצוֹ, אֶת אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ –and the *Kohen* shall scoop from it his fistful as its memorial portion.

Maharil Diskin explains differently. All other types of *korbanos* have prescribed parts that are to be burned on the *mizbe’ach*; for example, specific fats and innards of the animal. However, the *minchah* is not so. Theoretically, any bit of flour could be chosen to be burned; it is up to the *kohen* to determine – by taking a fistful – which flour will be burned. Thus, the *kemitzah* is referred to as אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ, a remembrance, since the *kohen* needs to ‘remember,’ i.e., have intent, to choose this specific flour as his fistful.¹¹

This explanation, too, seems problematic. The *Lechem HaPanim* (bread of the *Shulchan*) was accompanied by two spoonfuls of *levonah*, and the pasuk (24:7) states about this, וְהִיטָה לְלֶחֶם, וְהִיטָה לְלֶחֶם –and it shall be a remembrance for the bread, a fire-offering for Hashem. Yet

that *levonah* was offered in its entirety, without selecting a fistful; so the term אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ, if we interpret it according to Maharil Diskin, should not be applicable.

We may suggest another approach. Whereas for other types of *korbanos*, if the prescribed portion is not burned the *korban* is nonetheless valid,¹² if the *kemitzah* of a *minchah* is not burned, the *minchah* is invalid. Accordingly, the expression אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ isn’t appropriate regarding other *korbanos*, since they do not depend on the offered-up portion; only regarding the *korban*

We may approach the question, as well, as a lesson in *avodas Hashem*. The pasuk (2:1) states, וְנִקְטַשׁ כִּי תִקְרִיב קֶרְבַּן מִנְחָה לֵה' –When a person (literally: a soul) offers a *minchah* to Hashem. Rashi points out that the expression נִקְטַשׁ is only used regarding the *korban minchah*, which is a poor man’s *korban*. Why? Because when a poor person brings a *korban minchah*, Hashem considers it as if he offers up his soul. The Chasam Sofer¹³ explains: In actuality, the flour, oil and *levonah* necessary for a *minchah* are far more expensive than the single bird required for a bird *korban*.¹⁴

It is this form of ‘goods’ that Hashem seeks and that brings Him true pleasure – a *korban* which is considered an offering of one’s own soul

minchah is it applicable.

In yet another approach, there is an important difference between *minchah* offerings and other *korbanos*. Other *korbanos* have multiple *avodos* – *shechitah*, *kabbalah* (catching the blood), *zerikah* (spraying the blood), and *haktarah* (burning) – which need to be done with various parts of the animal and its blood. All of these need to be done *lishmah* – with proper intent. The *avodos* of the *minchah*, in contrast, are all done with one object – the *kemitzah* – and so only the *kemitzah* requires *lishmah*. Thus, only a *minchah*’s *kemitzah* is called אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ, a reference to the requirement to ‘remember’ the relevant intentions; other *korbanos* have no single part that can be characterized this way.

So why does a poor man bring a *minchah* and not a bird offering? It is because the poor man cannot afford even a bird; however, he gets flour and oil from the *leket*, *shikchah* and *pe’ah* of other people’s fields. He separates a portion from his own substance rations and brings it as a *minchah*. This is why Hashem sees it as an offering of his soul – his *korban* comes at the expense of his own fat and blood!

This, then, may be why אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ is only written regarding the *minchah*. It is this form of ‘goods’ that Hashem seeks and that brings Him true pleasure – a *korban* which is considered an offering of one’s own soul.¹⁵

(ויקרא – זכור תשכ"ב, שלום זכר)

11 See there for further discussion on the topic.

12 See Zevachim 5b

13 *Toras Moshe*

14 As stated by *Panim Yafos*; see *Sfas Emes, Likutim*.

15 This approach does not address the pasuk’s reference of the *Minchas Bikkurim* (2:16) as אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ, or its (aforementioned) reference of the *levonah* of the *Lechem HaPanim* as אֶזְכְּרָהּ, since these are not brought by a poor person.

Weeks Of Learning

The Gemara in Pesachim (6a) records a disagreement regarding the halachah of *shoalin v'dorshin*, discussing the halachos of a Yom Tov in the period preceding the Yom Tov. The *Rabbanan* maintain that this period begins thirty days before the Yom Tov, and R. Shimon ben Gamliel holds that it starts two weeks before the Yom Tov.

The *Rabbanan* prove their point from Moshe having taught Bnei Yisrael about *Pesach Sheini* thirty days prior, on Pesach. R. Shimon ben Gamliel answers that since Moshe was in any case teaching about Pesach on Pesach, he taught the entirety of its halachos, including those relevant to *Pesach Sheini*. R. Shimon ben Gamliel proves his opinion from Moshe's instruction to Bnei Yisrael on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, to set aside an animal for the *Korban Pesach*. The Gemara challenges this: how do we know that this occurred on Rosh Chodesh; perhaps it was on the fourth or the fifth of Nissan? The Gemara answers that R. Shimon ben Gamliel derives this from a *gezeirah shavah*.

R. Yaakov Emden wonders about the Gemara's question: why does it say "the fourth or the fifth," and not "the second or the third," the days immediately following Rosh Chodesh? R. Yaakov Emden answers this with difficulty.

I heard another question on this Gemara from Rav Nosson Lubart. The Mishnah (Pesachim 96a) states that the animals for the *Korban Pesach* of Mitzrayim were acquired on the tenth of Nissan. Rosh Chodesh was then only ten days before the halachos of Pesach were to be practiced. If so, what proof is there that the halachos are to be discussed two weeks before a Yom Tov; perhaps they only need to be discussed ten days before? One may answer that Moshe taught the rest of *hilchos Pesach* as well on Rosh Chodesh, even the parts that were only relevant two weeks later. However, R. Shimon ben Gamliel himself replied to the

Rabbanan that once Moshe was teaching *hilchos Pesach*, he taught them in their entirety. Accordingly, the same could be applied to R. Shimon ben Gamliel's opinion: once Moshe taught *hilchos Pesach* on Rosh Chodesh, ten days before Bnei Yisrael were to purchase their animals, he taught all of *hilchos Pesach*, even what was only relevant two weeks later.¹⁶

We may suggest the following, in answer to both questions. It is clear that the *derashos* where *hilchos Yom Tov* were discussed took place on Shabbos.¹⁷ This is why when R. Shimon ben Gamliel states that they are discussed two weeks before Yom Tov, he uses the terminology שתי שבתות, two *Shabbasos*.¹⁸ Thus, if we would assume that the halachos must be discussed any length of time between one and two weeks before Yom Tov, it would be stated that they are discussed two *Shabbasos* prior.

Accordingly, since Moshe taught the halachos of Pesach on Rosh Chodesh, ten days before they were to be practiced by purchasing animals for the *Korban Pesach*, R. Shimon ben Gamliel maintains that *hilchos Yom Tov* must be discussed two *Shabbasos* before the Yom Tov.

And this is why the Gemara questions R. Shimon ben Gamliel's statement by saying that perhaps Moshe taught *hilchos Pesach* on "the fourth or the fifth." Had the Gemara suggested that it was on the second or the third, Moshe's teaching would have in any case taken place more than one week before the tenth. If so, R. Shimon ben Gamliel's opinion – two *Shabbasos* – would stand correct. The Gemara therefore suggests that perhaps Moshe taught the halachos on the fourth or the fifth – which are within one week of the tenth – so that *hilchos Yom Tov* would only need to be discussed one Shabbos before Yom Tov.

(בבואת דשא – ויקרא תשכ"א)

16 See *Chiddushei HaRan* and *Rabbeinu David* to Pesachim 6a; *Turei Even* to Megillah 29b (*Avnei Milu'im*)

17 See beginning of *Perek Kol Kisvei*

18 See *Turei Even*, *ibid*

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