



# MESILOT

## *Pathways to the Soul*

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha  
of Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l

From the weekly lessons of his son  
**Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita**

Dedicated to the hatzlacha of  
Michal Baruch and her Family

# ...*~*PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL*~*...

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# Parshat Vayikra

## The Living Phonograph of Belz

About a hundred years ago, they told the holy Rabbi Yissachar Dov of Belz about a revolutionary, astonishing invention: the phonograph. A person speaks or sings, and a needle etches grooves onto a rotating wax-coated disc; later on, even many years later, you set a needle on the disc and spin it, and it reproduces the speech and plays back the sounds. Incredible!

Rabbi Yissachar Dov dismissed it, saying, "There is nothing new under the sun. I have known of this invention for decades already!" They were astonished to hear that.

He explained: "In his old age, my grandfather, the holy Rabbi Shalom of Belz, was blind, his eyesight had faded, and he would immerse himself in his lofty thoughts. The noise of children frolicking outside disturbed him,

so he asked the gabbai (assistant) to see who was playing in the yard. The gabbai went out and returned:

'It is the Rebbe's grandson.'

'Call him in,' he was instructed. So I was summoned into the holy chamber. He sat me on his knees and asked, 'What did you learn in *cheder* today?'

I answered, 'We were taught about the vision of the burning bush—Moses being sent to redeem the Jewish people.'

'And did you understand it all?' he asked.

I said, 'In truth, I found it difficult.'

He asked, 'What did you find difficult?'

I replied, 'Moses was the most humble of all men, and in his humility, he refused to be the redeemer. He said, "*Please, O L-rd, make someone else Your*

## Parshat Vayikra - Seeing G-d's Hand in Life

*agent*" (Exodus 4:13). Humility is in fact a very fine and exalted trait. If so, why did the Holy One, blessed be He, become angry with his response, as it is written: "*G-d's anger burned against Moses*" (ibid., v. 14)?"

My grandfather stroked my cheek and said, 'I will tell you the answer. When one is called upon to save Jews, one must not adorn oneself with humility. Perhaps you do not understand this now, but the time will come when you will understand.'

I left the room and met my father.<sup>1</sup> He asked me, 'What did Grandfather say to you?' But I could not recall—it had escaped from my mind!

Years passed. My grandfather passed away, and my father succeeded him in leading the

community. In time, my father also passed on, and the Chassidim turned their eyes to me to lead them.

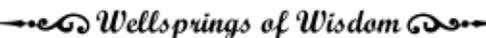
I shrank back—who was I and what was I, that I should sit upon the lofty throne of my grandfather and father? I was on the verge of firmly answering in the negative, when suddenly my grandfather's words resurfaced from the depths of oblivion of my memory: '*When one is called upon to save Jews, one must not adorn oneself with humility... the day will come when you will understand.*' And so I accepted the mantle of leadership.

Now tell me, was that not in fact a 'phonograph'?! My grandfather engraved a record and set it aside, and decades later it played back his voice..."<sup>2</sup>

## Seeing G-d's Hand in Life

There was once an eminent Torah scholar who had a pious,

modest daughter of marriageable age. Match offers were coming



1. holy Rabbi Yehoshua Rokeach, *may his merit protect us.*

2. Related by Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky, *of blessed memory* ('Vehigadeta,' *Vayikra* p. 13).

in for her from all sides. One day, a phenomenal proposal arrived: a young man, an exceptional Torah scholar, outstanding in Torah knowledge and fear of Heaven, and additionally, he possessed fine character traits.

The father looked at the young man and was overjoyed. He was truly exceptional—upright before G-d and beloved by people. But he had one flaw: as a child, he had suffered an accident that left one leg slightly impaired. The father paid it no mind, but his wife flatly refused. “Such a perfect daughter,” she insisted, “deserves a husband perfect in both soul and body.”

The father pleaded, begged, and reasoned with her—but it was all in vain. The rare gem slipped away, and the marriage offer was rescinded.

Not long after, the father's health weakened, and he needed to drink tea each morning before prayer—as permitted by halacha (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 89:3). Here too, his wife objected, urging him to be stricter and to

do so only after the prayers. He explained patiently that his weakness forced him to rely on this leniency, and she gave in, and each morning she brought him his tea.

One morning, as she carried the cup, she suddenly slipped and fell—shattering her leg.

Instead of reflecting that perhaps Heaven was sending her a message—reprimanding her for having rejected a Torah scholar for her daughter because of his injured leg—she turned to her husband in anger: “You see? It's your fault! If not for your tea before the morning prayers, I never would have broken my leg!”

Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, who shared this story, concluded:

“Note the distortion! She sensed that there was a reason for her suffering, but instead of realizing that this was a Heavenly response to her refusal of the Torah scholar, she blamed it on an act of kindness that she had done for her husband.”

Thus, the voice of Heaven speaks through every event of our lives. Sometimes it comes through joy and celebration, sometimes through pain and loss. But whether in dancing or in

sorrow, one must hear the word of G-d calling—each moment is part of His message, a summons from our Father in Heaven.<sup>3</sup>

And it is specifically this matter that our parasha addresses.

### G-d's Command of Love to Moses

Our parasha begins with the verses: *“He called to Moses, and G-d spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying: Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: A person among you who brings an offering to G-d—from the animal, from the cattle and from the flock you shall bring your offering.”*

(Leviticus 1:1–2).

At first glance, there seems to be redundancy here: initially it says that G-d calls to Moses (“*Vayikra el Moshe*”), and if He called him, it is certainly in order to speak with him. Then the verse goes on to tell that G-d spoke with him. We must understand why this double language is necessary.

We find that Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra addresses this question. He answers that after the sin of the Golden Calf, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to Moses and commanded him regarding the construction of the Mishkan. Moses listened carefully to the instructions, engraving the work plan in his mind and heart, and went out to recruit workers. Even after they began the work, he did not rest; he continued to oversee the manner of work, going about among the stonecutters and carpenters, the weavers and spinners, the smiths and jewelers...

At the end, after 74 days of strenuous work, the construction of the Mishkan was completed.

Parshat Vayikra - G-d's Command of Love to Moses

When all the components of the Mishkan had been made, the overseers attempted to erect it, but they were not successful!

Moses stepped forward and assembled the Mishkan, and then the Shechinah descended and rested within the tent, as it says: *“The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of G-d filled the Mishkan”* (Exodus 40:34).

It is with that—the Mishkan having been erected by Moses—that the Book of Exodus concludes. The Shechinah now abode within the tent, and Moses remained standing outside the Tent. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, turned and called to Moses: “Moses, Moses! Come and enter into the Tent of Meeting.” Moses heard the call and entered into the tent, and there G-d spoke with him and commanded him regarding the various sacrifices...<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the opening verses in Vayikra describe the two stages

that preceded the commands of the sacrificial laws: first the call to Moses, and then the speaking of commandments.

This is the straightforward meaning. However, Rashi offers a different explanation:

*“‘He called to Moses’ – For every dibbur [direct speech] and every amirah [utterance] and every tzivui [command], there preceded a call – an expression of affection, an expression which the ministering angels use; as it says, ‘And one called to the other...’ (Isaiah 6:3). But to the prophets of the nations of the world, He revealed Himself with an expression of happenstance and uncleanness; as it says, ‘And G-d happened upon Balaam’ (Numbers 23:4).”*

There is much to analyze in Rashi's holy words, and we will focus upon just one point. But first, we will preface with a story...

*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*

4. To quote the Ibn Ezra: *“The Glory summoned him from the Tent of*

*Meeting that he should come there, and there He would speak with him.”*

## Rav Yehudah's Fear of Heaven

Rav Yehudah was one of the great Amoraim (sages of the Talmud), and throughout his life he served his Creator with true self-sacrifice, so much so that the Gemara testifies about him that he was among those who gave their lives to sanctify the Name.

One day, Shmuel, who was Rav Yehudah's teacher, passed by the entrance of a house and noticed his disciple Rav Yehudah leaning against the doorframe, weeping bitterly... At his feet a small puddle of clear tears had collected.

Shmuel approached him and asked, "My dear disciple, why are you crying?"

Rav Yehudah explained: "I was studying the words of the Prophet Isaiah, who said, '*Where is the counter? Where is the weigher? Where is the counter of towers?*'" (Isaiah 33:18). I understood that this verse bemoans two of the great ones of the Jewish people, Doeg and Achitophel. Despite the fact that they knew how to count, weigh,

and calculate the teachings of the holy Torah – a wondrous wisdom – nevertheless the Torah they learned did not protect them; they went astray. They sinned so grievously that our holy Sages testified (Sanhedrin 90a) that Doeg and Achitophel have no share in the World to Come!

Therefore, Isaiah laments: '*Where is the counter? Where is the weigher? Where is the counter of towers?*' – Where are they then? Where did they vanish?!

"Realizing this filled me with tremendous dread and great fear. If for those illustrious sages the Torah did not protect them from sinning, how shall we ever escape sin?"

Shmuel comforted Rav Yehudah and said to him: "*Shinana (O sharp one)! Tinah (mud) was in their hearts.*"

In other words: "My sharp student, you have no reason to worry – for you are not like them. Doeg and Achitophel had filth in their hearts from the beginning of

Parshat Vayikra - The Three Calls of “Vayikra”

their days; lustful and sinful thoughts were lodged in their hearts even before they fell into sin. Your heart, however, is pure.”

Because their hearts were full of dirt and mud, they never heard the voice of their soul. There was no internal alarm to wake them. Because of their bad

traits, they did not merit to hear the call of affection. But you, I know you – you constantly work on your character traits; your heart is pure. Therefore, you have nothing to fear – you will certainly merit to hear G-d’s loving call.

Let us return to our parasha...

### The Three Calls of “Vayikra”

The Sages have counted how many times it says in the Torah “*Vayikra el Moshe*” (“He called to Moses”), and they found that it appears three times:

The first time was when G-d revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush. It says there that G-d called to Moses and afterward spoke to him, as it is written: “*G-d called to him from within the bush and said: ‘Moses, Moses!’*” (Exodus 3:4).

The second time was at the Sinai Revelation: G-d called to Moses and then commanded him, as it says: “*G-d called to Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses ascended.*

*G-d said to Moses: ‘Go down, warn the people...’* (Exodus 19:20–21) (this was the divine command that the Jewish people not break through the barriers to gaze toward G-d).”

The third and final time is in our parasha: G-d called to Moses and afterward spoke with him, as it says: “*He called to Moses, and G-d spoke to him...*” (Leviticus 1:1).

From this, our Sages learned (Sifra, Vayikra 1) that before every occasion when the Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to speak with Moses, He would precede it with a call. That is to say, in every place in the Torah

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that we find G-d speaking to Moses, we know that a prior call took place even if not explicitly mentioned (*the “call” means that G-d would call out “Moses, Moses,” and Moses would answer “Here I am”*).

Instead of writing “He called to Moses” before every single divine utterance, the Torah wrote it these three times as a sort of *binyan av* (paradigm), from which it is derived for all other

instances.<sup>5</sup> Rashi here in our parasha writes: “For all communications and statements and commands, a call preceded.”

However, we need to understand why Rashi presents this rule specifically here, the third and last time the divine call is mentioned, rather than writing it earlier (at the bush or at Sinai).

We will raise another question...

### Between Moses and Balaam

In Rashi’s commentary above, he explains that the call which G-d issued to Moses was a call of affection. But Rashi understood that as soon as people study his commentary, the question will immediately arise: we find similarly regarding Balaam where

it says, “*G-d happened upon (vayikar) Balaam*” (Numbers 23:4).

This might lead to the incorrect assumption that Balaam too was called by G-d with affection, but that is puzzling—how could it be that Balaam was addressed as was Moses ?

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### ... Wellsprings of Wisdom ...

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5. A *binyan av* is one of the thirteen principles by which the Torah is interpreted. It denotes a legal ruling stated in a specific context that serves as a “basis” from which the same ruling is derived for analogous situations.

In other words, something explicitly stated in the Torah—revealed in

one place, or in two or three places—becomes the source from which we learn the identical law in every comparable case; hence the term *binyan av*, because the teaching functions as a ‘father’ and the rulings learned from it and applied based on it, are like its offspring.

Parshat Vayikra - Balaam's "Blessings"

To preempt any misinterpretation, Rashi goes on to add: "But to the prophets of the nations G-d revealed Himself with an expression of casualness and impurity, as it says: '*G-d happened upon Balaam*'."

Thus, it is clear that there are two kinds of speech and address: one is a call uttered as an expression of love (such as the call to Moses), and the other is a very different kind of "call" – a

negative one to the likes of the wicked Balaam.

This difference is also expressed in the textual difference. The difference between "*vayikar*" and "*vayikra*" is the presence or absence of the letter aleph. It transforms the divine utterance from one of affection to one of "casualness and defilement."

To understand this better, we must momentarily leap to Parashat Balak...

**Balaam's "Blessings"**

In Parashat Balak it is related how Balak summoned Balaam and said to him:

*"Help! The nation of Israel is approaching, and I ask you to come and cast a curse upon them and wipe them out."*

As it says: *"So now, please come and curse this nation for me, for they are too mighty for me; perhaps I will prevail, that we may strike them and I will drive them out from the land. For I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you*

*curse is accursed"* (Numbers 22:6).

In the holy Zohar it is recorded (Balak, 199a) that when Rabbi Chizkiyah studied this verse, he was perplexed: Balak is afraid of the Jewish people, so he asked Balaam to come and curse them. If his sole aim was curses, why did he also mention Balaam's power of blessing ("whomever you bless is blessed")?

Rabbi Chizkiyah continues: "I pondered this question for a long time, until I met Rabbi Elazar (the son of Rabbi Shimon bar

**Parshat Vayikra - Balaam's "Blessings"**

Yochai), and he explained Balak's words to me as follows:<sup>6</sup>

Balak said to Balaam: "My dear Balaam, you know that Adam was driven out from the Garden of Eden. After him came ten generations who angered G-d exceedingly, and the Holy One, blessed be He, sent Noah's generation into the depths of the sea..."

After the Flood, the Holy One, blessed be He, made a covenant with Noah, as it says: *'And G-d said to Noah: This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth'* (Genesis 9:17).

The memory of the Flood faded, and again humans began to act corruptly. Then – ten generations later – the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to Abraham and said to him: I originally made a covenant with the whole world, but now I wish to make a covenant solely with

you, as it says: *'On that day, G-d made a covenant with Abram'* (Genesis 15:18).

G-d continued and told Abraham: This covenant will also be with the nation of Israel, your descendants. As it says: *'And He said to him: So (koh) shall your offspring be'* (Genesis 15:5). From that moment, from the time of that covenant, the nation of Israel became an immortal nation, eternal. I thought and reflected for a long time to understand why—what is so special about that covenant?

Finally, I understood."

Balaam asked impatiently: *"What? What did you understand?"*

Balak took a sip of the sharp drink that was before him, smacked his lips and continued: "Ever since the covenant was made, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave power to the souls of the Jewish people to channel divine flow to the Sefirah of

...*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

6. We cite his words in the Zohar passage together with the explanation

of the holy Rabbi Yaakov of Izbica (Beit Yaakov, beginning of Parshat Balak).

Parshat Vayikra - Balaam's "Blessings"

Malchut (the Divine attribute of Kingship). And since this is so (that it receives sustenance from them), the divine attribute of Malchut unites with the Jewish people.

As is known, the attribute of Malchut is called 'Koh' (lit. "thus"), and this is what G-d meant when He said to Abraham, '*Koh (so) shall your offspring be*' – your descendants will channel spiritual sustenance to the Malchut that is called *Koh*."

Balaam yawned and interjected: "*Fine! But what does this have to do with the matters that are at hand now with the menacing throngs of Israelites who are passing our land?*"

Balak's eyes gleamed with malice: "Here is where you come into the picture. You see, you have an extraordinary power of blessing – '*for I know that whomever you bless is blessed*'. You too have the power to bless the attribute of *Malchut* and bestow upon it a flow of blessing. Therefore, I propose that you bless the Malchut and grant it a bounty—so that it will no longer need to receive blessings from the Jewish people. Once it no

longer needs them, the bond between them will loosen a bit, and you will be able to curse the Jewish people..."

'You're a genius,' Balaam responded. 'I'll get right to it.'

Balak muttered under his breath: 'Just don't forget whose idea this was...'

Balaam began to focus all his powers, as it says: "*And he said to Balak: Stand here by your burnt offering while I go off on my own – perhaps G-d will happen to appear to me, and whatever He shows me I will tell you*" (Numbers 23:15).

Balaam knew that all of his power stemmed from isolation and distancing himself from others. Therefore, if he wanted to sever the Jewish people's connection with Malchut (called *Koh*) so it would no longer unite with them, he needed to go off alone...

We know how it ended: three times he tried, and he did not succeed.

But why did he fail in his ignoble mission?

## G-d's Unconditional Love

King David testifies about himself: *"I will listen to what the L-rd, G-d, will speak, for He will speak of peace to His people and to His pious ones"* (Psalms 85:9). We need to understand his words.

We find that the holy Rabbi Mordechai Yosef of Izhbitza explained this verse as follows:<sup>7</sup> Moses merited to be the master of all prophets, and King David merited to be the master of all those with *ruach ha-kodesh* (Divine inspiration).

King David was privileged that every time the Holy One, blessed be He, spoke to him – He spoke to him about the good of the Jewish people. Each time, David was newly moved: *"If only the people of Israel knew how much G-d loves them, they would be filled with joy!"* Then a thought arose in David's heart: I wonder what the

Al-mighty occupies Himself with when He is by Himself.

He decided to try to find out, and this is what he meant when he said, *"I will listen to what the L-rd, G-d, will speak"* – (I will listen in on what He says to Himself). King David discovered that even there, when alone, *"He speaks of peace to His people and to His pious ones"!*

According to this holy teaching, we can understand why Balaam did not succeed. Balak and Balaam thought that G-d's love for the people of Israel was a conditional love – dependent on the Jewish people's providing sustenance to the attribute of Malchut. But at the very moment that Balaam sought to curse the Jewish people, G-d shone forth and revealed the immense love He has for the Jewish people – His love for every Jewish man and woman is genuine, sincere,

**Parshat Vayikra - A Call from G-d's Essence**

and pure: a love not dependent on any external factors!

The love of G-d for the Jewish people began at the moment of the covenant with Abraham; from that moment, an eternal covenant was sealed, and the Jewish people's heart would forever be bound to G-d. Once it was revealed that G-d's love for the Jewish people is unconditional, it ruined all of Balaam's plans... He stomped around, fuming: *Argh! The Jews have won yet again!*

As it is written further on in the Torah: "*The L-rd your G-d refused to heed Balaam, and the L-rd your G-d turned the curse into a blessing for you, for the L-rd your G-d loves you*" (Deuteronomy 23:6). The Holy One, blessed be He, loves every Jew with an overwhelming love, and desires that the Jew, in turn, feel the same toward Him.

Now let us return to our parasha...

**A Call from G-d's Essence**

This Shabbat we have the privilege of reading Parshat Vayikra. Parashat Vayikra, in fact, opens the Book of Leviticus. Leviticus is the "heart" of the Torah, in which the holy Torah addresses all the practical elements that express G-d's closeness to the people of Israel, and conversely the people of Israel's closeness to G-d—a closeness between two sides that creates a complete unification, a perfect union, like the union of a married couple, who become one.

This is the reality expressed by this parasha in particular—and in fact by the entire Book of Leviticus—the reality of G-d's closeness and the total, complete union of the people of Israel with the Al-mighty.

In other words, the section about korbanot (offerings) comes to bring the Jewish people near to our Father in Heaven. That is the goal of all the commandments in general, and the mitzvah of sacrifices in particular: to

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generate a closeness—a bond that has no limit and no parallel—between the people of Israel and our Father in Heaven. Sacrifices, as their name in Hebrew indicates (*korban* from the root *karov*, “near”), create a feeling of love and closeness.

Therefore, Leviticus opens with the word “*Vayikra*” (“And He called”), which can be split into two words, *vayikar* – *aleph*, hinting to preciousness (*yakar*) in the eyes of the Al-mighty (Who is alluded to by the first letter, aleph). This extra aleph makes all the difference between the word *vayikar* and *vayikra*, and it is the difference between the call to Moses and the call to Balaam.

Moses, whose sole desire and yearning was to give delight to his Maker and to repair the world under the kingdom of Shaddai, was addressed by G-d with affection (thus, the speech to him is written as *vayikra* with an aleph).

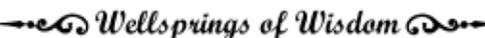
By contrast, Balaam the wicked, who only ever thought of himself—even when he did think of the Creator, it was only to get something from Him—was addressed by G-d in an expression of casualness and defilement (*vayikar*, without the aleph).

Moreover, when the Torah chose to highlight this closeness of G-d to Moses, it does not specify who was calling to Moses. This hints to the fact that the call to Moses issued forth from the very Essence of the Infinite One, blessed be He – from a level that is beyond all divine names and attributes!

And in truth, not only Moses merits this call – every Jewish man and woman does!

As the Lubavitcher Rebbe taught:<sup>8</sup>

The verse “*Vayikra el Moshe*” (“He called to Moses,” Leviticus 1:1), does not specify



**Parshat Vayikra - An Aspect of Moses in Every Jew**

who is calling. This comes to teach us that the call issues from the very Essence of the Infinite One, blessed be He – from a level beyond all names and attributes! This call reached Moses as an expression of love, a call from beyond all measure and limitation – and at the same time it entered internally, penetrating the very

being of the beloved one (Moses).

Through Moses, this call extends to every Jew; and much more so to the “extensions of Moses in every generation” – to those individuals who are like Moses in each generation – who, while souls in a body, are touched by G-d’s very Essence with a call of love.

**An Aspect of Moses in Every Jew**

In the Sichat Hashavuah pamphlet (issue 918), the following is written:

When Moses urges the Children of Israel to fear G-d, he says: “*And now, Israel, what does G-d your G-d ask of you, but only to fear G-d your G-d...*” (Deuteronomy 10:12). These words imply that fear of Heaven is a minor matter, as if Moses were saying: “It’s nothing—just a small, trivial thing I ask of you.” The Gemara asks (Berachot 33b): “Does this imply that fear of Heaven is a small thing?!” The Gemara answers: “Yes – *for Moses* it indeed was a small thing.”

The Talmud even offers a parable: “*This may be compared to a person asking someone for a large vessel, and he has one – it seems to him like a small vessel. But if he is asked for a small vessel and he doesn’t have one – it seems to him like a very large vessel.*” In other words, even if something is objectively significant, if the person has it readily available, he considers it a trivial matter.

The holy Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (the Baal HaTanya) raises the question (Tanya ch. 42): If G-d had said to Moses that He asks nothing of him but fear, the Gemara’s answer would make

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sense—that for Moses it is a small thing. But the verse is addressing all of the Jewish people: “And now, *Israel*, what does G-d your G-d ask of you...”—meaning this demand is made of every Jew. How, then, does it help us that fear of G-d was easy for Moses, when for the rest of us it is not easy?

He answers there: “The explanation is that every single soul of the Jewish people has within it an aspect of Moses, peace be upon him.” In other words, Moses is not only a historical figure; he is an eternal presence that exists within the soul of every Jew, in all generations. In every single Jew there is an aspect of Moses, and by virtue of this “spark” of Moses that is present in the soul of each of us, it can indeed be said to every Jew that fear of Heaven is a small matter for a Jew—because he has that capacity from Moses.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman adds: “Furthermore, in every generation there descend sparks from the soul of Moses and they invest

themselves in the body and soul of the wise sages of the generation, the ‘eyes of the congregation,’ in order to teach knowledge to the people, that they may know the greatness of G-d and serve Him with full heart and soul.”

Thus, even if it is difficult for an individual Jew to arouse the “Moses” within his own soul, he can attach himself to the *tzaddikim*, the sages of the generation—the “eyes of the community” in whom a spark of Moses’s soul is encloded—and they will awaken the fear of Heaven in his heart. In this way, fear of G-d indeed becomes a “small matter,” readily achievable by every Jew.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman emphasizes that this spark of Moses in the sages of each generation is invested in both their body and their soul. From this, Chassidim learned that one should receive the sage’s influence both from his soul and from his body:

From his soul – one receives influence by studying his Torah

**Parshat Vayikra - A Call of Eternal Affection**

teachings and absorbing all his spiritual guidance.

From his body – one receives influence by beholding the Rebbe’s face, for by gazing upon the face of the *tzaddik* one also gains spiritual strength, which flows from that spark of Moses’s soul invested in the *tzaddik*’s physical being.

If this is true for all of the sages in every generation, then certainly this spark of Moses’s soul is present to the greatest extent in the *tzaddik* of the generation, the Nassi HaDor (“leader of the generation”), regarding whom our Sages said: *“There is no generation without someone like Moses.”* (Bereishit Rabbah 56:7). In every

generation there must be a *tzaddik* who is in the category of “Moses,” in whom a spark of Moses’s soul is en clothed.

Therefore, it is so important to be attached to the *tzaddikim* in general, and to the leader of the generation in particular. Only through this attachment can we acquire the strength needed so that for us, too, the fear of Heaven will be “a small thing,” and thus we will be able to serve G-d wholeheartedly.

Since every Jew has an aspect of Moses within, it follows then that every Jew is “called” and addressed by G-d’s Essence with affection... and with this we can answer the question we previously raised.

**A Call of Eternal Affection**

Although the Torah uses the phrase “*Vayikra el Moshe*” three times, Rashi chose to write his comment (that every time G-d spoke to Moses, it was preceded by a loving call) specifically here, at the beginning of the portion of sacrifices.

If Rashi had explained this in the earlier instances (at the burning bush or at Sinai) – that Moses merited a call of affection – we might have thought, “Fortunate and blessed is Moses that he merited for G-d to call him with a loving expression !”

**Parshat Vayikra - The Inner Voice of the Soul**

Rashi did not want us to mistakenly think that this affectionate calling was unique merely to Moses. Therefore, he explained it here, at the opening of the parasha dealing with sacrifices – which epitomize the bringing of the Jewish people close to G-d – in order to reveal and inform every single Jewish man and woman, wherever they may be:

Know that the bond between Me and you is eternal, a relationship of true love! My affection for you is genuine – by virtue of the covenant I established with Abraham!

Now we have yet to clarify: What exactly is this expression and essence of this ‘call’?

**The Inner Voice of the Soul**

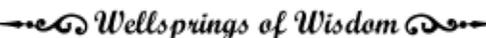
Rabbi Chaim Shaul Kaufman wrote:<sup>9</sup>

In *Pirkei Avot* (6:2), we find the teaching of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, who said: “*Each and every day a bat kol (Heavenly voice) goes forth from Mount Horeb, announcing: ‘Woe to the creatures for the insult to the Torah!’*”

The Baal Shem Tov, of saintly memory, once asked: “Where is this *bat kol*? If people do not hear it, what good is it?”

He explained that a Jew often feels some stirring of the heart each day. A hidden inner point awakens in him, urging him to return to G-d and truly draw close to His service. This daily awakening is powered by that *bat kol* which goes forth each day.

It follows that when a Jew perceives how a desire and yearning for Divine service has arisen in his heart, he must understand that this awakening is coming from that *bat kol* which is directed at him in a truly personal



**9.** *Mishchat Shemen* (Genesis, p. 328).

way. He must seize upon this arousal and make good use of it, rather than – Heaven forbid – turning his back on the voice of G-d calling him to awaken from the slumber of habit and better his ways henceforth.

This awakening comes to a person countless times over the course of his life – indeed, every single day. One senses in his heart some sign from Heaven, hearing an inner voice calling him to stand up and shake off the dust, and renew his service of G-d. One must understand the hint and capitalize on the inspiration, and Heaven forbid that he squander the opportunity being granted to him...

It is also by the power of this *bat kol* that a person merits to recognize his mission and his life's task.

From here we understand that a person can find salvation and the solution for every matter within himself. He doesn't need to run off anywhere else. Within every Jew there is a vault with

precious contents – the light of the Al-mighty Himself!

The Holy One, blessed be He, can be found within each and every one of us, dwelling inside. Within each and every Jew, G-d, blessed is His Name, resides. Therefore, inside every Jew there is what we might call an “inner voice.” Every person has, in his heart, an inner voice – think of it as a miniature prophet. Call it a hunch, call it intuition; it is the point of connection to your soul. Don't seek your redemption in other places; seek it within, inside yourself.

This is what we mean by a call of affection. The Holy One, blessed be He, turns to every Jew in every generation – and specifically out of love and affection. “Beloved is man, for he was created in [G-d's] image; a great love was made known to him...” (Avot 3:18).

Although this is always the case, we do not always hear it. As the continuation of the verse says: “*Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: A person*

**Parshat Vayikra - An Offering Begins with Character**

*among you who brings an offering...*” (Leviticus 1:2) – if you want to hear the call, to pick up the supernal frequencies, you must purify yourself.

This involves two parts:

**An Offering Begins with Character**

In a discourse by Rabbi Reuven Elitzur Karelenstein, of blessed memory, he asked why the Torah begins the laws of korbanot by describing the one who brought the sacrifice “*A person (adam) among you who brings an offering*” (Leviticus 1:2).

We do not find such phrasing with other mitzvot—the Torah does not say “A person who lays tefillin” or “A person who observes Shabbat.” Why the emphasis here ?

Rather, the Torah is teaching that for an offering to be accepted, the one who brings it must first be an *adam*—a true human being, with refined traits. One may rise early, study late into the night, and think himself to be elevated, but if he

1. Being an “Adam” (worthy of the title of ‘a person’...).

2. One must bring an offering of himself.

Let us begin with the first part.

does not work on his character, he is not truly a person, a mentch. Just as an ape or a machine cannot bring a korban, neither can a person without *derech erez*.

From Moses we learn how far true *derech erez* and integrity extend. He risked his life for the Mishkan, ensured every detail was right, and gave the people a full accounting of every single shekel that was donated. Though he was known for his absolute honesty, he still showed the nation exactly how everything was used. When an amount seemed unaccounted for, he prayed to G-d until it was clarified to him that it had gone to the hooks of the Sanctuary curtains, and he was able to account for it.

Parshat Vayikra - An Offering Begins with Character

Even after the Mishkan was erected and the Shechinah descended, Moses did not enter until G-d called him. He who built it and gave his life for Israel would not step inside uninvited.

From here our Sages taught: “*Any Torah scholar who lacks da’at (basic good sense and proper manners) is worse than a dead animal’s carcass*” (Vayikra Rabbah 1:15). A carcass at least

warns people away with its stench, but a learned man lacking *derech erez* may mislead others by his wisdom while his traits internally remain corrupt.

Thus, the Torah teaches: “*A person among you who brings an offering*”—first and foremost, one must be a true *adam*, an upright and decent person, and only then may his divine service be pleasing before G-d.<sup>10</sup>

—*~* Wellsprings of Wisdom *~*—

**10.** Rabbi Reuven Elitzur Karelenstein, *of blessed memory*, continued and shared:

At the funeral of the saintly Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, hundreds of thousands attended. I knew him well; he was a great man.

But although he was a great man—and precisely because he was a great man—he was exceedingly humble. I met him many times on the bus, sitting with great modesty, taking out a small *Tehillim* and reciting it simply.

He was a towering personality not only in Torah but also in refined character; he was a complete *adam*—a consummate human being.

As he got older, the yeshivah wanted to arrange for a taxi to bring him from Shaarei Chesed, where he lived all his life,

to Yeshivat Kol Torah in Bayit Vagan. The journey was arduous, especially in his advanced age: he had to walk from Shaarei Chesed to Mahane Yehudah, and then wait there—in the scorching heat or in the cold and rain—for a crowded bus, and then ride it up to Bayit Vagan. He would accept neither a ride nor a taxi; his entire life he travelled to the yeshivah by public bus.

Once, having reached the Pisgah Street stop where he needed to alight, the students with him noticed that he remained seated. He rode to the final stop in Bayit Vagan and then walked back to the yeshivah on foot. When they later asked, “Dear rabbi, we must ask—why did you not get off at the stop next to the yeshivah?”

He replied, “I was sitting by the window, and beside me sat an elderly

**Parshat Vayikra - The Offering of One's Self**

Now let us expound on the second part of the verse that

mentions that a person “...brings of you an offering.”

**The Offering of One's Self**

My saintly father and teacher, Rabbi Yoram Abargel, taught the following:

At the beginning of our parasha it says, “A *person among you who brings an offering to G-d—from the animal, from the cattle and*

*from the flock you shall bring your offering*” (Leviticus 1:1–2).

The verse, however, literally reads, “A person who brings an offering from among you,” which our holy chassidic masters understood to hint to us: one who seeks closeness to

—*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*—

Jew with many loaded shopping baskets. I did not wish to trouble him to stand with his baskets to let me pass...”

What refinement of manners! He was prepared to ride farther and then walk back simply to avoid inconveniencing someone.

How many people do we know who would act so? ‘A *person among you brings an offering (adam ki yakriv)*’—first be a mensch!

On another occasion Rabbi Shlomo Zalman was walking on Pisgah Street when a heavy downpour began. A young yeshivah student approached with a tiny children's umbrella and invited the rabbi to enter under it; for the two of them it provided almost no shelter from the downpour.

Suddenly a car stopped and a driver called out, “Honored rabbi, please come in and I will take you to the yeshivah.”

The rabbi answered, “No, no, I am fine walking with this young man under the umbrella.”

The students saw their *rosh yeshivah* arrive drenched and they asked him why he declined the ride. He explained, “I saw that the young man took great pleasure in having me under his umbrella. It was preferable for me to get wet than to diminish his great pleasure...”

That is a *gadol hador*—to think of the feelings and consider the sensitivities of a child, of every person, to seek to gladden the hearts of others.

Parshat Vayikra - The Offering of One's Self

the Creator must be ready to offer and give up something of himself—to sacrifice whatever is required to draw near to G-d.

This is the meaning of the words: “A person who brings an offering from among you.” To approach G-d, a person must bring a sacrifice of himself—he must be willing to let go of part of his own being for G-d's sake.

The Torah then proceeds to explain what this sacrifice entails:

“From the animal,” that is, the essence of a person's service is to subdue the “animal” within—to restrain the animalistic drives that oppose the Creator's will—and to cultivate a desire only for what He desires. This echoes the teaching of our Sages: “Nullify your will before His will” (Avot 2:4).

The verse then adds: “From the cattle and from the flock, you shall bring your offering,” meaning to emphasize that more than all of the sacrifices of cattle and sheep, the most precious

sacrifice of all, is “your offering”—the inner offering of overcoming one's own passions for the sake of Heaven.

As Rabbi Chaim of Tchernovitz writes in *Be'er Mayim Chaim* (Vayikra, 1:2):

“This is the true service of man: to subdue his desire before G-d in private—so that as one side falls, the other rises; as the animal spirit sinks, the spirit of man ascends higher and higher. Therefore it says: ‘A person who brings an offering from among you to G-d...’—meaning, if a person wishes to offer his own body as a korban, he must sacrifice: ‘from the animal.’ He must reduce the animalistic cravings within himself—whether in eating and drinking, the pursuit of honor, envy, hatred, or lust.

This is his personal korban, surpassing all others, for he is offering his very soul. As it is written: ‘To obey is better than sacrifice’ (I Samuel 15:22). Hence: ‘from the cattle and from the flock shall you bring your

**Parshat Vayikra - The Offering of One's Self**

offering’—means, of all offerings of cattle and sheep, the greatest is one’s own offering.”

The saintly Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi explains in *Likkutei Torah* (Vayikra 2b):

Some people’s animal soul is of the category of “cattle”—fiery, hot-tempered, prone to anger, like an ox that gores with its horns. Others have an animal soul of the “flock”—not harsh or aggressive, but driven by appetites and desires, like sheep.

Thus, the Torah teaches: “from the animal, from the cattle and from the flock shall you bring your offering.” Whatever form your inner animal takes, it must be offered up to the Al-mighty.

From these words we learn: not all inclinations are alike. What is no temptation for one may be a great trial for another. One may struggle terribly with anger; another, with lust. For this reason our Sages said (Avot 2:4): “Do not judge your fellow until you reach his place.” “His

place” means not only his environment but also his inner makeup—his animal soul and its particular challenges.

As the Baal Shem Tov taught, each person’s trials are uniquely his own. If you see someone failing, you must not judge him harshly. Were you in his place, with his nature and circumstances, you might fare no better. Rabbi Shneur Zalman writes the same in *Tanya* (ch. 30): one who spends his days in the marketplace, exposed constantly to temptation, faces a fiery battle unknown to one who spends his time at home or in the beit midrash.

Therefore, we must look upon other fellow Jews with a favorable eye. The Holy One, blessed be He, loves His people in every state that they may be in, and delights in their good deeds. To dwell on their faults causes Him pain, Heaven forbid. In fact, every Jew is a pure soul—a diamond that remains a diamond, even if it may be externally soiled with mud.

**Parshat Vayikra - The Offering of One's Self**

If someone behaves improperly, it is only because he was never shown another way. We must speak kindly, draw him near with warmth, and this may slowly cause him to return to G-d in repentance, bringing his family together with him as well.

Consequently, the reward is immeasurable, as it is written: "If you extract the precious from the worthless, you shall be as My mouth" (Jeremiah 15:19). Our Sages added: even a decree from Heaven may be annulled for the one who accomplishes this great feat (Bava Metzia 85a).

**Shabbat Shalom!**



### *Summary and Practical Conclusions*

1. Whenever the Holy One, blessed be He, wished to speak with Moses, He would first call him with affection: “*Vayikra el Moshe.*”

This was not reserved for Moses alone. Every Jew can merit that same loving call from G-d, for the bond between Him and His people is eternal, sealed through the covenant with Abraham. Moreover, a spark of Moses’s soul resides within every Jew. By the power of that spark, each of us can experience, in our own way, G-d’s call of love—just as Moses did.

2. How did Moses attain such closeness? He devoted himself to G-d with true *deveikut*—deep attachment and devotion. But he was also refined, upright, and unsurpassed in good character. This teaches us that beyond Torah and mitzvot, beyond prayer and study, one must be a decent human being.

3. The Torah says: “*A person who brings of you a korban.*” To come close to G-d, a person must be ready to sacrifice—especially his own negative impulses. One must “offer from the animal,” meaning to surrender the animalistic drives that oppose the Creator’s will. The truest offering is giving up one’s base

habits and selfish desires for the sake of Heaven.

4. Our Sages teach: “*Each day a bat kol goes forth from Horeb.*” Every day, a Jew feels a stirring within—a quiet voice urging him to return to G-d. This inner call is that *bat kol*, directed to him personally. When such inspiration arises, it must not be ignored. It is Heaven’s invitation to awaken from spiritual sleep and take steps forward.

This awakening comes again and again throughout life. Each time the heart is nudged toward renewal, one must seize it—lest the gift be lost. By heeding this inner call, a person discovers his mission in life and learns to fulfill it.

5. From all this we see: the solution to life’s struggles lies within. A Jew need not seek elsewhere, for within him is a treasure—the Divine Presence itself. Every Jew carries within his soul a small inner prophet, an intuition guiding him back to his Source. The task is to connect with one’s *neshamah*, not to search and seek it somewhere outside.

6. Alongside the spark of Moses within every soul, sparks of his spirit descend in each generation into the bodies and souls of the sages—the

**Parshat Vayikra - Summary and Practical Conclusions**

leaders of the community. They teach and inspire, helping us awaken the Moses that is within ourselves. If one struggles to stir his own soul, he can attach himself to the

tzaddikim, whose sparks of Moses shine more brightly. Through this bond we draw the strength to make fear of Heaven an “easy matter,” and to serve G-d wholeheartedly.



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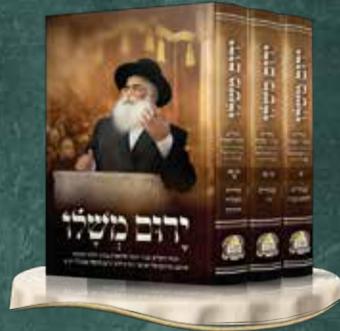


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3th of Nissan ,5786



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	6:50 pm	7:50 pm	8:22 pm
Miami	7:14 pm	8:07 pm	8:44 pm
Los Angeles	6:47 pm	7:43 pm	8:18 pm
Montreal	6:49 pm	7:52 pm	8:20 pm
Toronto	7:12 pm	8:14 pm	8:43 pm
London	5:55 pm	7:05 pm	7:27 pm
Jerusalem	5:35 pm	6:26 pm	7:09 pm
Tel Aviv	5:32 pm	6:24 pm	7:06 pm
Haifa	5:31 pm	6:26 pm	7:08 pm
Be'er Sheva	5:32 pm	6:26 pm	7:08 pm

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*The difficulty in raising children is removed, the difficulty with livelihood, the difficulty with peace in the home, the difficulty in learning, and the difficulty with friends*



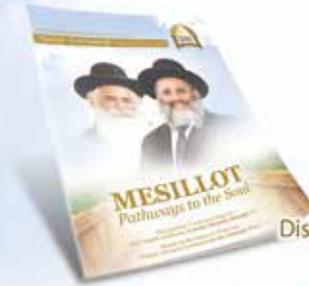
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