

And he called to Moshe (1:1) – The **Baal Haturim** famously notes the small letter alef in the word VaYikra. He explains that Moshe did not want to write VaYikra as he did not want to appear greater than Bilaam to whom Hashem appeared in Mikreh. The compromise was the small letter Alef. **Rav Yehonasan Eybeshutz ztl.** asks why the small alef does not appear at Maamad Har Sinai (Shemos 19:3) at the first instance of Vayikra is used? He answers that the fact that Hashem could have used a Malach to deliver the Nevuah but chose to come himself is really the source of the proof to Moshe's greatness and consequently his humility. Wherever it was evident that Hashem did speak to Moshe (like in Ohel Moed where no one not even a Malach was allowed to be) then the Vayikra humility concept needed to be highlighted.

Adam when he brings a Korban from you (1:2) – There is a well known discussion as to the point of offering Korbanos. On the one hand, **Rambam** (Moreh Nevuchim III:46) understands it as a response to the Avoda Zara of the nations of the world. The nations served the animals and thus, in response the Jew is commanded to offer that deity to Hashem, the real deity. **Ramban (1:9)** disagrees rather vehemently. He notes that if anything, that logic would lead the nations of the world to think that their deities power ours (think of the themes that have fueled blood libels throughout history). Moreover, Noach also offered Korbanos and he had no one to show otherwise to. Ramban therefore suggests that a Korban and its process are really the tools of the Machshava, Dibbur and action (Maaseh) of the human. In truth, man would need to offer himself as the korban but in Hashem's chessed, he offers Nefesh and Dam of the animal Kneqged the person. This, he explains is the Aggada but he adds that there is a deeper Kabbalaistic context too. The **Meshech Chochma** adds that in his opinion, there is no real Machlokes here. When one offers a korban on a Bamah, there is no Reiach Nichoach – it merely removes and distances the Avoda Zara concept from the people. When the korban is offered in the Beis HaMikdash, it has the deeper possibilities that Ramban identified.

And he shall rest his hand (1:4) – **Tosafos** in Bava Kama notes that there is no gender specificity in the Torah unless the Torah says Daber El Bnei Yisrael and there is an understanding to exclude Bnos Yisrael (See **Nekudas HaKessef** at beginning of Yoreh Deah). Here it refers to Semicha and women are not obligated in Semicha. **Rashi** (Meseches Rosh Hashana) learns that it may be Baal Tosif for her to do Semicha. **Tosafos** says it isn't Baal Tosif but when it comes to Semicha it requires full force. If one is not required to do so, one is not allowed to. The Machlokes is if one can do imitation Semicha—floating hands on top. The **Chochmei Provence** (as cited by the Raavad in Toras Kohanim) suggested that we would permit her to do it Bechol Koach is the machlokes. **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that this is true in other Einah Metzuvah V'Osah situations – where in the case of a mitzvah one sets aside an Avaira. This is the Machlokes of the Tananim according to the Chochmei Provence – is a woman who is wearing Tzitzis that are Shaatnez in violation of Shaatnez since she is an eina Mitzuva V'Osah or not.

When a soul brings a Korban Mincha (2:1) – **Rashi** notes that the word "Nefesh" is used here denoting that the one who brings this type of Korban tends to be more impoverished and is offering his soul. The **Netziv** suggests that the term Nefesh applies simply because the person does not have a specific action to atone for, and is atoning for his internal Nefesh in the process. **Rav Baruch Simon Shlita** explained that the outward expression of that Nefesh is in the application of its internal expression and thus, the person is atoning for his or her Middos that were "off" instead. Rav Simon added that the use of the word Nefesh comes up when the person gives of his own (perhaps that which would be gleaned through

Leket Shichicha and Peah) and gives it to Hashem instead. It is to this that we say “it is considered as if he offered his soul.”

If his offering is a feast peace offering (3:1)- The **Steipler ztl.** wonders what the purpose of a Shelamim is? After all, if a Korban is for someone’s wellbeing what is accomplished by having an optional one? Utilizing the writing of the Mesillas Yesharim (Chap 8), the Steipler suggests that when one is not into zerius internally, s/he should express it externally and it can serve to awaken the fervor to help him improve. Similarly, when one does not feel Ahavas Hashem fully, then by donating a voluntary Korban one will be able to awaken inner feelings of love for Hashem and desire to serve him. **Rav Pam ztl.** adds that the lesson is quite strong for us today. Any Jew can improve his Ahavas Hashem by voluntarily taking upon himself some improvement of a Mitzva. The taking on of the voluntary aspect will inspire the continuity.

That a Nasi sins (4:22) – **Rashi** notes that a generation whose leader is open to bringing a Koban on the inadvertent errors he brings is to be praiseworthy. **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** asks that if it is so hard to have an honest leadership, why do we have a Mitzva to have a king? Rav Moshe answers that having bad leadership and no king is worse than having a king who wants to do the right thing but in that regard will be haughty.

And he was a witness or he saw or knows. If he does not tell then he shall bear his sin (5:2) – **Rav Bernard Weinberger Shlita** explains that even though the Possuk speaks to Shevuas Haeidus, there is still some aspect that applies to our generation. The Shoah contained both stories of horror and of incredible miracles. Survivors never wanted to tell these stories for fear of traumatizing their children. However, with the dwindling survivor population, there is an even greater need to tell the story or risk having the world forget that this type of evil can exist in the modern civilization too.

HAFTORAH: SHABBOS ZACHOR – And show them no mercy (Shmuel Alef 15:3) – The concept of showing no Rachmanus – on the children or the sheep is a tough pill to swallow. How are we to understand this command? **Rav Rivlin Shlita** explained that it is not as difficult to understand that by offering us the definition of Rachmanus, Hashem is showing us the ultimate gift of Chessed. How else does one determine who lives and who dies? The Shaul who allowed Aggag and the sheep to live killed the children. The Shaul who was too much of a Tzaddik here – killed out Nov the city of Kohanim later, indiscriminately. Here the Torah wants us to understand the depths of Rachmanus and Achzariyus – it is all determined by Hashem.