Points to Ponder

Vayikra Master

**וַיִּקְרָ֖א אֶל־משֶׁ֑ה He called to Moshe (1:1)** - In his introduction to Vayikra, **Ramban** identifies the structure of the Sefer from Korban to Tumah to Arayos to Korban to Shabbos and Yom Tov and the flow therein. **Rav Nisson Alpert ztl** noted that this is the beauty of Torah. Namely, one topic flows naturally into the next. The purpose for all of this is that through the Torah there is a constant flow to be close to the Shechina.

**And he called to Moshe (1:1)** – The Midrash comments that whenever we have a Talmid Chacham who lacks Daas, a carcass (Neveila) is better than he. The Midrash proves this point from Moshe who did not enter Ohel Moed until he was called. But why the comparison to Neveilah? **Rav Aharon Kotler ztl.** explained that if one does not act with Derech Eretz in his Torah study, then a Nevailah is better than he because through the process of Korbanos we learn how Hashem loves us. If a person is not consistent internally with the shell of Torah he holds – then he is but an empty vessel – a dead container for what should possess life.

**וַיִּקְרָ֖א אֶל־משֶׁ֑ה** **And he called to Moshe (1:1) – Rashi** notes that prior to all commandments Hashem first called with a Lashon Chibah – a language of love**. Rav Chatzkel Levenstein ztl.** noted that this style – unique to the Jewish Neviim as opposed to the Neveyei HaOlam – involved the love of Hashem as opposed to Mikreh and Tumah. The message was meant to be clear, not only is it important to deliver the message, how we choose to impart it speaks to whether it will be received with Kedusha or in a vacuum of Kedusha creating Tumah.

**VaYikra – And he called to Moshe (1:1)** – The letter Alef in the word Vayikra is written with a small Alef. **The Baal Haturim** explains that Moshe, who was a humble individual and only wanted to say VaYikar – that Hashem “happened upon Moshe.” Hashem compromised with him and allowed him to make the Alef small. The problem is that this is not the first time that Hashem called to Moshe. Didn’t he call him at the Sneh? Why isn’t the Alef small there too? **Rav Yaakov Galinsky ztl**. explained that in that and other instances, Hashem called to Moshe in the latter’s role of leader of the Jewish people. Moshe thus, was not being called for his own standing, rather that of the people. There is no Gaava in that – for that was his job. However, when being called by Hashem out of love, then Moshe was uncomfortable and asked Hashem to minimize the letter.

**וַיִּקְרָ֖א אֶל־משֶׁ֑ה He called to Moshe (1:1) – Rashi** notes that the call was to Moshe and not Aharon. Why would the section  of the Torah most applicable to Aharon need to be given to Moshe first? **Rav Chaim Rosenthal (L’Sitcha Elyon)** explains that just like in the Pesach Seder where Moshe’s name is not mentioned in order to protect one from thinking that Moshe’s involvement in the exodus would cloud the importance of recognizing that it came from Hashem, Aharon is also obscured here lest one think that the Korbanos rules came from a source other than divine.

**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.

**And Hashem spoke to him from the Ohel Moed (1:1) – Rashi** notes that the call was in a voice that never left the Ohel Moed. Citing 2 different episodes – one a Gemara (Berachos 28a) and the other a Midrash (Tanchuma, Bechukosai 3), **Rav Yehuda Amital ztl.** highlighted the fact that while Torah emanates from within, it needs to be outside of the Beis HaMedrash too. The outside voices need to be brought into the Beis HaMedrash discussion while the inside Torah must make it outside. Moshe Rabbeinu indeed experienced a unique phenomenon whereby the Divine voice did not emerge outwards; God spoke to him alone, privately, with no interruptions. But in general, it is vital that the voice also make itself heard outside, and belong to all sectors of society**.**

**And he called to Moshe (1:1)** – The word Vayikra is spelled with a small letter Alef as “VaYikar”. The Baal Haturim explains that Moshe did not want to write Vayikra as it implied a unique relationship higher than that of Bilaam. What type of solution was writing with a small Alef? **Rav Zeidel Epstein ztl.** explained that Moshe wanted to be truthful in his understanding of his relationship with Hashem. He knew that left to his own merits, he was not as great . It was only because of the Chessed of Hashem that he merited the calling from Hashem. Knowing who you are and your spiritual standing is a critical component of being able to fulfill your potential. By Moshe’s settling on the small Alef, he was truthfully accepting his place and recognizing Hashem’s chessed in elevating him from that place.

 **When a man brings a Korban from you (1:2)** – The **Sforno** comments that the bringing is accompanied by a sincere Vidui from within the person. **Rav Shach ztl**. noted that the Sforno is teaching us a big Yesod in the bringing of Korbanos – namely that a person brings his very soul at the time that he brings a Korban. The ultimate Zevach for Hashem is a broken spirit. When his spirit is broken, his offering to Hashem is whole.

**Adam (1:2)** – The Midrash likens he who brings a Korban to Adam HaRishon (Vayikra Rabba 2:7). **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah ztl.** questioned why the comparison was to Adam and not to Jewish personalities. He explained that when the Mishkan was established, there was a relevation of Maamad Har Sinai which returned the world to its pre-Sin days at the time of creation. The world of the Korban begins with Adam at the time of the creation of the world and we hope for the return to that status each time we mention V’Arva L’Hashem Minchas Yehuda V’Yirushalayim K’Yimei Olam.

**אָדָ֗ם כִּי־יַקְרִ֥יב מִכֶּ֛ם When a man shall offer a Korban (1:2) – Rashi** comments that the use of the word Adam here reminds us that just as Adam did not bring a Korban from things that were stolen so too, we should not. However, Adam owned everything. Theft was an impossibility for him. What is the comparison in that case? The **Chofetz Chaim** explains that one needs to constantly be on the alert that there is not even a chance at theft within his stuff. Just as Adam was sure whatever he had was not stolen so too, we need to be sure of the same.

**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 Knegged 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.

**You shall bring your Korbanos (1:2)** – the Ramban notes that when many people join together to offer to bring a Korban Olah, it is still merely the korban of Shutfin (partners). **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah ztl.** explains the difference between a partnership Korban and one from the Tzibbur. The concept of Tzibbur is built on the principle of the unity of the people. A similar idea was expressed by the Rogachover who noted that Tzibbur is a concept of uniting into a single entity not a joining for a united cause. This, says Rav Kook, is why the Korban Tzibbur needs to be commanded – as it then is an expression of a united people. The Tziddukim had a different idea of unity. They understood that one person could “donate” the Korban Tamid – for to a Tzidduki as long as the job is done, the benefits of doing it go to those who spend and expend from their own.

**He shall bring it willingly (1:3) –** The Gemara tells us that everyone needs Daas except for the Michusrei Kappara. Thus, a baby can be made Tahor by being in the Mikvah even without Kavana. Similarly, the Korban brought for the Michusar Kappara can be brought without Daas since it is a korban brought to complete the Tahara process. A Nazir when the Milos is up works in a similar way – the korbanos are brought for the purpose of ending the Nezirus (a Matir). Same holds true for a Ger who cannot eat from Korbanos unless he brings the Korban. **Rav Schachter Shlita** explains that this similarity explains the question of the Kessef Mishneh as to why the father who makes his son who is a kattan into a Nazir can bring korbanos on his behalf – without Daas because (as they say in the name of Rav Chaim) these korbanos are not being brought to atone, they are an end of the process and are like a Michusar Kappara.

**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.

**אֲשֶׁר־פֶּ֖תַח אֹ֥הֶל מוֹעֵֽד And they will slaughter at the door to the Ohel Moed (1:5)-** Why was it important to highlight the doors to the Mishkan? What is the relevance? **Rav Betzalel Rudinsky Shlita** opined that the doors symbolize the takeaway of the Korban experience. When one realizes the purpose and power of being close to Hashem and interacting with Him in the Mikdash, the person becomes aware of primary purposes in life and it permeates his entire existence.

**And the Kohein shall offer it all on the Mizbeiach as a pleasant aroma to Hashem (Vayikra 1:9)** - **Rav Wolbe** (Da'as Shlomo) explained the bringing of Korbanos as a means of creating a complete world which allows for the Shechina to rest upon it. They bridge the huge chasm that divides the body and the soul: the division between the physical world and The Creator. When one consecrates an animal he has effected kedusha upon the animal which not only gives it specific laws, it also allows the animal to be brought on the mizbeiach. He has taken the basest creature and transformed it into something appropriate to be offered to the Creator Himself. These korbanos were offered to Hashem in the Mishkan, a veritable spiritual haven in a turbulent world. It was there that the physical was transformed into the spiritual, and therefore, the Mishkan was deemed a "complete world." Consequently, it was there that the Shechina, "the complete Name," resided. Rav Wolbe continues that despite the fact that we lack the ability to offer korbanos, nevertheless, the lesson of the korbanos still rings true. We must make an effort to transform our physical bodies into spiritual beings. A person's body should be part and parcel of his avodas Hashem along with the thoughts and intentions that accompany the mitzvah. When one succeeds in this endeavor, he has created a "complete world" that allows for "the complete Name" to reside therein.

**As a pleasure smell to Hashem (1:9) – Rashi** explains that the Reiach Nichoach comes when Hashem sees that you are following his words. What part is the actual Nachas Ruach? It cannot be the Korbanos because the Novi constantly notes that Hashem does not need the Korbanos. **Rav Nosson Tzvi**  **Wachtfogel ztl.** explains that the Nachas Ruach comes from man’s bending of his own spirit to serve the will of Hashem. In truth, Hashem makes it easier by making the choice of animals those that are more apt to being caught, hence, their mindset is toward Hashem anyway. By offering one of those Korbanos, man learns to bring himself to that level of Hashem awareness too.

**רֵֽיחַ־נִיח֖וֹחַ Reiach nichoach (1:9) - Rashi** explains that the message here is that you have performed Hashem’s will which brought Him pleasure**. Rav Wolbe ztl** notes that there are 4 types of Mitzvos -- some are time based, others apply all the time. A third group are based on opportunity (think Hashavas Aveida). The 4th group are the Mitzvos that man himself realizes that he needs to perform. It is up to him to know that he owes a Korban and when he is willing to understand that he has an obligation to Hashem, Hashem appreciates that.

**Northward ()** – So many of the Korbanos require the sprinkling of the blood in the north. Why? **Rav Zechariah Tubi Shlita** (of Kerem B’Yavneh) explained that the North is the place of strength and Din. We see the strength of Hashem in the North and bringing the Korbanos there is an opportunity for us to appease Hashem there.

**When a soul will offer a Korban Mincha to Hashem (2:1)** – Why does the Torah introduce the concept of the Korban Mincha with the word V’Nefesh? The Gemara (Menachos 104b) derives 2 laws here – Nefesh teaches us that this is the only Korban that is brought without any partnership is the mincha. Also, the word Nefesh teaches us that even if a person is just a soul due to poverty his Korban is desired – in fact especially desired – by Hashem. **Rav Betzalel Rudinsky Shlita** explains that a Korban Mincha is a symbol for the soul of a person (hence it cannot be brought in a partnership) and when the Gemara (Meachos 110a) compares a one who studies Torah to the Korban Mincha because both are not merely about amounts – they are about something beyond the materials – they are about the clarity of the soul.

**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.”

 **וְאִם־מִנְחָ֥ה עַל־הַמַּֽחֲבַ֖ת And if the Mincha shall be on a pan (2:5) – Rashi** comments that the making of the Mincha is hard and because of the narrowness, the fire burns the oil.  In the Shabbos Zemiros we compare keeping Shabbos to this type of a Mincha. Why? **Rav Eliyahu Lopian ztl.** explains that in the same way that there is a depth Mincha and a shallow baked one, and both are accepted by Hashem – Shabbos has a similar feature. Some experience Shabbos with a strong energy and Hislahavus. Others keep Shabbos without any spirit whatsoever. All are accepted by Hashem.

**כִּ֤י כָל־שְׂאֹר֙ וְכָל־דְּבַ֔שׁ לֹֽא־תַקְטִ֧ירוּ מִמֶּ֛נּוּ Because all sourdough and honey you shall not use to serve to Hashem (2:11)** - Why? **Rav Yehuda Tzedaka ztl** explains that sourdough is reminiscent of the sourness of people while honey is reminiscent of the sweetness we show people. A person cannot be either all sour or all sweet when representing himself.

**כִּ֤י כָל־שְׂאֹר֙ וְכָל־דְּבַ֔שׁ לֹֽא־תַקְטִ֧ירוּ All sourdough and honey cannot be offered as a Korban (2:11)** – Why are these forbidden in a Mincha offering? The Gemara notes that these ingredients are similar and symbolic of the Yetzer HaRa. How? Why? **Rav Avraham Rivlin Shlita** explains that sourdough causes things to puff  up in Gaava. When things are puffed up, they are not accepted by Hashem. Honey makes things that are bad for you seem sweet. Similarly, the Yetzer HaRa takes sin and makes it look righteous and sweet.

**For all sourdough and all honey shall not appear on a Korban before Hashem (2:11**) – The **Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk** noted that both Se’Or and honey are effective in making things that are otherwise untasty, palatable and desirable. The Torah is teaching us that it may be acceptable to make tastes acceptable in this world but in regard to Torah study, it is undesirable for it waters down the beauty that is Torah.

**Don’t omit the salt of Hashem’s covenant from your Korban Mincha (2:13) – Rashi** explains that there is a Bris of salt from the lower waters – created on the second day of creation – that they would provide the salt that would be used in the Korbanos and the water for Simchas Beis HaShoeiva. **The Imrei Emes** explains that **the Zohar** added to the story. It seems that the lower water wanted to be close to Hashem and felt cheated when separated on the second day of creation. It was consoled by Hashem’s promise about the salt and the water. This was a promise to make Shalom between the upper and lowered waters. The Gerrer Rebbe added that this was the reason why the possuk says Sham Yashavnu Gam Bachinu at the rivers of Bavel. For at that time the waters from the rivers – and the other lower waters also cried with us – for they lost their chance to be close to Hashem when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed.

**On all Korbanos you shall offer Salt (2:13)** – The Torah identifies a Bris Melach (a salt covenant) which, the Talmud (Berachos 5a) compares to the covenant that exists when a person suffers. **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ztl.** notes that based on this, we can understand why Hashem heard the cries of the Jews in Egypt but remembered his “Bris” (See Shemos 6:5). When the Jews thought that it was the Egyptians who were enslaving them, they were in error and that everything that was occurring to them was because this was a natural event. By noting that Hashem remembered his covenant, he was letting the people know that their time was up – like the salt covenant which brings an end to meat spoilage, the Bris here would bring an end to the Galus.

**And if you bring a Mincha of Bikkurim (2:14) –** **Rashi** notes that the Mincha of Bikkurim here refers to the Omer which comes from barley. Why is the Omer brought from barley which is identified as animal food? **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl.** explained that Hashem is teaching us that it is not he who needs the Korban (else he would have needed a higher quality Korban). Rather it is he who wants us to bring certain Korbanos at certain times to reflect our needs as the givers. Hence at this time he insisted on a barley korban to prevent mistaking the need.

**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.

**And the sons of Aharon will sprinkle the blood onto the alter (3:8) – Rav Belsky Shlita** explained why the blood and the fats of a Korban Chatas are offered on the Mizbeiach. He notes that the blood is Maivin and provides the life to the human. Cheilev clogs and blocks the flow of blood. The burning of the Cheilev represents the removal and destruction of material that blocks the life-giving flow of spiritual energy. Kidneys too are burned for they represent bad eitza . Dam is merely elevated so that one’s life forces can be used for Avodas Hashem exclusively.

**The sons of Aharon shall sprinkle the blood on the Alter around. And he shall offer up from the slaughtered peace offering (3:8-9)** – Only the Korban Olah is entirely burnt on the Mizbeiach. A Chatas has the Cheilev and Dam brought on the Mizbeiach. Why? **Rav Belsky ztl.** explained that the Chatas is brought when one’s Yetzer HaRa bests him. The Yetzer HaRa is represented by a person’s fats and blood. The blood atones for the soul. The blood energizes the brain and allows it to function producing our thoughts and feelings and regulating many of the functions of man. Thus, the blood is the electrical current so to speak of the human body. It powers everything. But, every current needs to be filtered hence the role of the kidneys. Sin clogs the human the way that fat clogs the circulatory system. Bringing the fats and the blood onto the Mizbeiach is the representation of the removal of the things that withhold the building blocks that nurture our spiritual existence. The blood is elevated and the fats destroyed – the end result is a slimmer, leaner and more powerful us.

**נֶ֗פֶשׁ כִּי־תֶֽחֱטָ֤א בִשְׁגָגָה֙ When a soul sins unintentionally (4:2)** - If the sin is unintentional, why is there a need to atone? The person didn’t mean to sin**? Rav Moshe Soloveitchik ztl of Zurich** compared the situation to a person who was carrying cheap glass, it is expected that from time to time he might break some by accident. The opposite is true for the person carrying expensive crystal -- there extra care is taken NOT to have slippage and breakage. When a person sees Mitzvos as cheap glass, s/he needs to atone for that alone -- which allowed the sin to happen unintentionally.

**אִ֣ם הַכֹּהֵ֧ן הַמָּשִׁ֛יחַ יֶֽחֱטָ֖א לְאַשְׁמַ֣ת הָעָ֑ם If the annointed Kohein sins to the guilt of the nation (4:3)** - **Rashi** notes that when the Kohein Gadol sins, it is the guilt of the nation because they depend on him to atone on their behalf. **Ksav Sofer** adds that in general it is understood that one who brings Zechus to the masses should not have sin happen through him. Hence, the Kohein Gadol should not be ABLE to sin. The only exception is if the people aren’t letting him represent them -- due to their own level of sin, hence the guilt is to them too.

**Korban Chatas (4:3)** – Conceptually, the idea of a Korban Chatas seems odd. Some have noted that it is an opportunity – almost a gift – for the person who broke the rules. Why does Hashem reward the sinner with an opportunity to bring a Korban – thereby doing a Mitzvah? **Rav Shimshon Dovid Pinkus ztl.** explains that the Korban Chatas demonstrates a special love that Hashem has for us that can only be seen in dire straits. That’s why the Korban Chatas cannot be donated – it needs to come to show a particular Avairah and the love that exists despite it.

**אֶת־פְּנֵ֖י פָּרֹ֥כֶת הַקֹּֽדֶשׁ: He shall sprinkle the blood on the Paroches (4:6)** – When it comes to the sprinkling on the Paroches, the term “Paroches HaKodesh” appears in regard to the Par Kohein  Moshiach but in connection to the Par Helem Davar it does not use the word “Kodesh”. Why? The Talmud (Zevachim 41b) explains that when a Kohein sins but the majority do not, it does not hurt the Kedusha of the Mikdash. When the majority sins, it has bad effects on the Kedusha of the place**.   Rav Yechezkel Levenstein ztl**. points out how seriously we need to preserve the Kodesh within us. For if we contribute to the failings of the masses, we will be guilty of ruining the Kodesh of the nation together and that is something we need to avoid.

**אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָשִׂ֖יא יֶֽחֱטָ֑א That a Nasi shall sin (4:22) – Rashi** comments that the word Asher comes from the word “Ashrei” and is there to teach us that a generation whose leaders admit to their shortcomings is one to be praised. **The Lubavitcher Rebbe ztl.** wondered why the same is not said about the Kohein Moshiach earlier (4:3)? He answers that the ideal praise would be he who leads without any sin whatsoever. That would be most pronounced in the Nasi whose job it was to lead the people and to keep them from sin. When a generation can see the failed leadership of its leaders (as opposed to its Kohanim) and the leader’s willingness to atone for inadvertent sins despite the publicity and humbling that comes along with such awareness, the people pray that they should never come to that situation again. THAT is a praiseworthy generation.

**When a Nasi sins (4:22) – Rashi** notes that the generation is to be praised when it has a leadership that desires to admit its flaw in order to achieve Kappara. **Rav Schachter Shlita** would often add to us that the generation that sets its standards on doing right rather than being seen as flawless is a generation whose leaders are not afraid to admit when they are wrong. The Ben Ish Chai notes that the words Asher Nasi Yechta have as their abbreviation the word “Ani” – if the Nasi is all about “Ani” he runs the risk of sin.

 **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.

**If a single Nefesh shall sin inadvertently (4:27) – Maran HaRav Schachter Shlita** noted the Midrash which identifies the difference between the identification of how Yaakov’s family came down to Egypt (70 NEFESH) versus the way we identify Esav’s descendants (Nafshos Beiso). Rav Schachter commented that in regard to the Jewish people we are always blended together -- always in the same boat. But by the nations of the world, there is Pirud. Everyone worships something else. Rav Schachter added the famous boat moshol – that when everyone is in the same boat no one has a right to drill a hole in the floor under him because “its his.” That action will sink the whole boat. The same is true with Am Yisroel. We need to hold one another up – or we sink as well.

**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.

**And it was hidden from him (5:2-3)** – How could one forget that he was in the Beis HaMikdash and defiled it with Tumah (This is what the Talmud <Shavuos 14b>calls He’elam Mikdash)? **Rav Elyashiv Ztl.** explained that when people spend so much time in a place – even a holy one – they tend to forget the proper respect that they need to provide the place. (See also Sanhedrin 52b about being around a Talmid Chacham.) This is why Dovid HaMelech asked not only Shivtee but also L’Vaker B’Heichalo.

**וְאֶת־הַשֵּׁנִ֛י יַֽעֲשֶׂ֥ה עֹלָ֖ה And the second one he should make an Olah according to the law (5:10)** - The Talmud (Chullin 22a) explains that that second bird is brought as an Olah only during the day, as learned from the rules of the Chatas Beheima. The Gemara questions why this lesson needed to be derived from the Chatas Beheima if, as a Korban, the Olah bird needs to be done by day. The **Rashba** even emended the text and removed the lesson. But **Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk** suggested that the comparison is clear: Part of the atonement in the Chatas Beheima is the offering of the Eimurim on the Mizbeiach. This is done at night. By a bird Korban, the Eimurim are replaced by the Olas Ha’Of in this korban. Hence, it was possible for one to think that this could be done at night and for that the Gemara’s question and answer do indeed make sense. **Rav Schachter Shlita** told us that after offering this interpretation, the Or Sameiach dreamed that in Shomayim the Rashba himself came and used this explanation and the Or Sameiach as a proof that people still existed who sought and found truth in Torah.

**כֶּֽסֶף־שְׁקָלִ֥ים בְּשֶֽׁקֶל־הַקֹּ֖דֶשׁ לְאָשָֽׁם: With a value of silver shekels (5:15)** – It is interesting that while a Korban Chatas which is brought by the person who intentionally sins does not have a minimum price tag, the price of an Asham Talui is a minimum of 2 shekels. It could potentially turn out that the one who knows he sins could pay less than the one who is unsure. How does this make sense? The **Rema** in Hil. Yom Kippur explains that when someone knows that he sinned, he needs to merely engage the process of Teshuva to atone. The Torah does not need to restrict him to focus. However, when it come to the Asham Talui, the person is not sure and might not perform the process of Teshuva properly. Hence the Torah gave him more specific guidelines**. Rav Schachter Shlita** would remind us that when it comes to sin, we also tend to whitewash our sins and that disbelief sometimes leads us to be less than thorough in the Teshuva process. Knowing our responsibilities helps our sincerity and our awareness of what is needed from us in the process of Teshuva.

**Asham Talui (5:17)** – Is the Asham brought because of a doubt on Kareis or even on the doubt of having violated a Lav? The Talmud (Kreisus 25b) explains that it is indeed a Machlokes. Problem is that how can a doubt be more strict than having violated the actual prohibition. Had the violator known that he did an Issur Lav he would not bring a Chatas. Why now does he bring an Asham on a doubt? **Rav Genack Shlita** explained that when a person does not know if he did an Avaira, he does not properly try to do Teshuva. Therefore we make him bring a bigger Korban – because of the not knowing! If he HAD done the Avaira and KNOWN about it, his Teshuva would be complete and accepted. Therefore when he does not, he MUST bring the bigger Korban.

**It is an Asham Ashom Asham to Hashem (5:19)**- It says Asham 3 times in the Possuk because it speaks to 3 levels. Some violate an issur inadvertently but enjoy it. This is the violation B’Ones U’bRatzon . There is a deeper level wherein one violate a mitzvah without benefit but without care for protecting the mitzvah (This is Shogeg). Then there is careless aveira performance. **Rav Moshe Wolfson Shlita** explains that if one does not stop the Ones at Ones level one will come to Shogeg and heaven forbid even Meizid. This is hinted to, in the word Asham which contains the first letters of Ones, Shogeg and Meizid.

**When the person denies (5:21)** – **Rashi** cites the Toras Kohanim where Rabbi Akiva notes that when one falsely denies owing anything, he is also a Kofer in Hashem. Why? Because he knows that only 3 know the truth, the borrow, the lender and Hashem. Clearly the Kofer didn’t care for Hashem’s displeasure and thus denies Him in the process. **Rav Gifter ztl.** explained that Torah laws are like a hedge of roses. The hedge serves as a deterrent to people going in but usually only because people accept the message. If one wanted to, s/he could stomp on the hedge and do what s/he wanted. The same is true with Torah law – technically one could do what one wants but when we believe in a Ribbono Shel Olam, that system is Michayev us.

**Haftara:**

**וְאֶתְּנָ֚ה לַחֵ֙רֶם֙ יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב וְיִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל לְגִדּוּפִֽים And I give Yaakov over for destruction and Yisrael for revilement (Yeshaya 43:28) - Rav Shimon Schwab ztl** noted that once the aura of Kedusha is removed from the leaders, the enemies of the Jewish people do not hesitate to attack and vilify us. He cited the example of the initiation of the boycott against Jewish businesses that began in Germany on Shabbos April 1, 1933 which was a Shabbos but the Germans thought that this would not matter since Shabbos was the busiest day of the shopping week. Rav Schwab recalled that this Haftara was read that Shabbos and recalled remarking that  if a Jew is willing to be Michallel Shabbos, the greater shame was not the boycott but rather the swift punishment that came about as a result.

**I am the first and I am the last (Yeshayahu 44:6) – Rav Pam ztl.** bemoaned the lowly middah that sometimes afflicts people financially. They state that in regard to their finances that they do not have enough. When that is indeed the case the first thing to change is the lowering of the amounts that they contribute to Tzedaka (Ani Rishon) but when things improve the adjustment to giving does not change as fast (Ani Acharon). Ideally we try to not make this so.

**זָכ֕וֹר**

**Zachor – Rav Belsky ztl.** reminisced about how **Rav Pam ztl**. would remind people to remember ***MAASEH (and not Mechiyas)*** Amalek. The reason for the difference, he explained, is that the Mitzva of Mechiyas Amalek is something that arouses passion and hatred which do not foster the sense of closeness to Hashem that is necessary for the fulfillment of one’s Avodas Hashem. It is just an arousing of hatred which has no release. The Mitzva must be understood differently – it is a mitzvah to remember our own weaknesses – when we are vulnerable due to our weak spots in our nation or due to our weariness and lack of Yiras Shomayim. If we turn the Mitzva on ourselves we will successfully prepare for it and will be ready to handle it.

**Haftarah :Zachor**

 **הֲקִימֹ֖תִי אֶת־דְּבַ֥ר I have fulfilled the will of Hashem (Shmuel I:15:13)** – Did Shaul think he could lie to Shmuel? **Rav Eitan Shandrofi Shlita (of Merkaz HaRav)** explains that Shaul believed he fulfilled Hashem’s will by killing out Amalek and the Chemla he demonstrated was really what he thought Hashem WOULD want from him for a short night. However, he erred because Hashem expects us to fulfill his will each and every day without delay.

**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.

**Parshas Hachodesh**

**Parshas HaChodesh**: The Novi Yechzkel speaks of the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. He refers to the coming of the Nasi to participate in the bringing of the Korbanos of the rededication of the Beis HaMikdash. **Rashi** notes that the Nasi here is a reference to the Kohein Gadol. Why will the Kohein Gadol be needed specifically? **Rav Hershel Schachter Shlita** explained that a more intense experience of the Shechina will exist at that time. Since at other times where there is a more intense experience of the Shechina (Avodas Yom HaKippurim) it is the Kohein Gadol who must perform the Avodah. The same will be true at that time. It is not the Halacha that changes – it is the circumstance.

**This month is the first of the months (Shemos 12:2) – Rashi** explains that Moshe had a hard time figuring out the Molad system. Why in this Mitzva did he have trouble? **Rav Nosson Gestetner ztl.** explained that the Yirushalmi notes that Hashem had given the power over nature to the Beit Din. In other words, nature will change to conform to the Psak of Rosh Chodesh. Moshe could not understand HOW this happens. Rav Gestetner explains that when the people were Moser Nefesh to take a sheep which was also a supernatural effort on their parts, they merited to be able to have supernatural things happen for them.

 **Haftorah: And on the Chagim and Moadim the Mincha shall be… (Yechezkel 46:1)** – Yamim Tovim have 3 names – Chagim, Moadim and Regalim. **Rav Eliezer Melamed Shlita** notes that there are different aspect to each of the names: Chag denotes the joy of going to visit Hashem and bring a korban – in essence to do His will. Moed highlights the fact that the Jews unite together during this time and the Mikra Kodesh of Regel highlights where we are going together – onward and upward spiritually. We need all three aspects to make our Yamim Tovim complete.