1st Seder Weekly Divrei Torah
A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

PARSHAS VAYIKRA – THE MESSAGE OF THE SMALL ALEPH

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

"Vayikra el Moshe – [Hashem] called to Moshe" (Vayikra 1:1). The meforshim note the small aleph in the word Vayikra and explore its significance. The Baal Haturim states that the small aleph denotes Moshe's humility. Rav Zev Wolf Frank (Toldos Zev) cites Rashi's comment that the word Vayikra connotes chiba – a special fondness – as we find this term used to refer to the Kedusha recited by the angels: "Vekara zeh el zeh – they called to each other" (Yeshaya 6:3). Rav Frank asserts that Hashem instructed Moshe to put the small aleph in the word Vayikra to imply that the reason for His chiba for Moshe was because of Moshe's humility. Hashem loves those who are humble and self-effacing people and since Moshe was the most humble person, Hashem's love for him was very unique.

Perhaps we could add that this is the reason that Hashem granted Moshe's request that the Shechina would reside exclusively on Bnai Yisrael. Hashem replied, "This too I will do, for you have found favor in my eyes" (Shemos 33:17). This favor was another expression of Hashem's chiba for Moshe.

However, we need to understand why the Torah put the small aleph in this pasuk even though this phrase appears a few times earlier in the Torah. (See Shemos 19:3,20; 24:15). Additionally, why is this chiba stated preceding the laws of korbanos found in this parsha?

Rav Frank explains that the reason that the small aleph was placed in this pasuk which introduces the korbanos can be found in the Gemara (Sotah 5b). "Come and see how great Hakadosh Baruch Hu considers humble people. When the Bais Hamikdash exists, someone who brings an olah is granted the reward of an olah. Someone who brings a mincha is granted the reward of a mincha. However, the pasuk considers one who is humble as having brought all the korbanos as it states, 'The korbanos (plural) of G-d are a humble spirit'" (Tehillim 51:19).

Let us try to understand why humility is greater than sacrifices and why Hashem loves humble people. The purpose of a korban is to bring one closer to Hashem. The word korban derives from karov – to be close. The sacrifice of the animal symbolizes the willingness of a person to sacrifice himself to Hashem – to sublimate his own existence to Hashem's supremacy. It is this gesture which can atone for sins which were actions that ignored Hashem's will.

Humility is a far more effective way to come close to Hashem. What separates us from Hashem is our egos. Moshe Rabbeinu was able to achieve the highest level of prophecy precisely because he was the most humble human being. Hashem could speak to him "panim el panim – face to face," a form of prophecy that was not obstructed or filtered by Moshe's sense of self. The more we are wrapped up in "what I want" and "what I need" the more we separate ourselves from Hashem. Conversely, the more we think beyond ourselves, the closer we come to Hashem. And the more we cultivate the middah of humility the more Hashem loves us.

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

Please contact R' Ungar (Ymungar@gmail.com) with questions or comments

QUESTION: My child took some chicken soup and added cheese thinking it was lokshen. He screamed out, "Ma, why is the lokshen melting in my bowl?" I had a cleaning lady in the house at the time, could I feed it to her, or must throw it out?

ANSWER: The תורה says לא תבשל גדי בחלב אמו three times which teaches us, one may not cook, eat or benefit from בשר בחלב. All three איסורים only apply to בשר בחלב that is מן התורה which is only meat from a kosher animal that was cooked with milk from a kosher animal. Chicken or poultry that is cooked with milk is בשר בחלב מדרבנן and not אסור מן התורה. The rule for בשר בחלב מדרבנן is that it is only אסור to eat but cooking it or benefitting from it is מותר. If one cooked בשר בחלב מדאורייתא by mistake, it must be thrown out and no benefit may be derived from it. Using it as lunch or supper for your cleaning lady is considered benefitting and אסור. However, cheese in hot chicken soup is only בשר בחלב מדרבנן and one may benefit from it. So, it is okay to serve that soup with cheese to your cleaning lady. Of course, you might have to kasher the bowl and spoon if they weren't disposable. (What if one heated up a pizza in a dirty fleishig microwave? Feed to cleaning lady?)

עי' יו"ד סי' פ"ז סעי' א' וסעי' ג'

THE FLAT TIRE

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Mordechai lived in a small yishuv in Eretz Yisrael and earned his livelihood by growing flowers in his yard. He had many different kinds of flowers. Every week he would cut them, load them into his truck, and take them to a nearby city. There he would sell them to people who wanted flowers likavod Shabbos. This was his parnassah, and each week he would make approximately 3,000 shekels. One day, he cut all the flowers, placed them into different buckets, and loaded them into the back of his truck. He started the truck but noticed that one of the tires felt strange. He got out and saw that, in fact, one of his tires was completely flat.

It was very early in the morning, and no one else was around. He realized that if he didn't get to the city and sell the flowers on Erev Shabbos, he wouldn't be able to sell them later. By Sunday the flowers would no longer be fresh, and his entire week's earnings would be lost.There was no one he could call that early, and he really needed to leave.

Then an idea struck him. He remembered learning in the Mishnayos (Bava Kama 81b) that our Sages say if a person has a barrel of honey, which is something very valuable, and his barrel cracked and is leaking, he is allowed to take someone else's barrel of wine, pour out the wine, and use the barrel to save his honey, as long as he fully pays for the loss of the wine. So maybe the same idea would apply here.

There was another vehicle nearby that belonged to his neighbor, who he knew would be away for the next two weeks. Mordechai thought that he could jack up the car, remove one of the tires, and use it to replace his flat tire. He would then pay the full price for the tire, even though it was a used tire, and leave the cash at his neighbor's house. This way he would be able to go sell the flowers. He knew that his neighbor wouldn't need the car while he was away, but his neighbor was unavailable to ask.

Was he allowed to take the tire without permission, as long as he paid for it in full? What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 438.

Regarding last week's question about the accident, Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein answered (Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 417) that two things happened at the same time. First, he banged her head, and with that he cured her inability to speak. Second, at the same time, he also broke her bones. Therefore, he does not have to pay for what happened to her head, because that actually helped her, but he does have to pay dmei chavala for the damage to her bones.

"THE BALTIMORE TRIP"

Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz was born in Slutzk in 1867. He was close with the Rav of Slutzk, R' Yosef Ber Soleveitchik, the Beis Halevi. He entered Volozhin at 16 years of age and became one of the main students of R' Yosef Ber's son, R' Chaim Brisker. R' Baruch Ber married the daughter of R' Avraham Zimmerman, whom he succeeded as Rav of Halusk. In 1926 he re-established his yeshivah in Kaminetz, where it continued for 13 years.

In 1929, R' Baruch Ber came to New York for a short time. It was not long before Mayor Jimmy Walker honored him with a ceremony at City Hall. He presented him with a key to the city and announced, "Rabbi Leibowitz is living proof that evolution is false. Only G-d could have created such a person!!"

There are many amazing stories from his time in the U. S. A.

An old man from Baltimore once told an interesting and personal story. He had been a student of Reb Baruch Ber in the Kaminetzer Yeshiva. When R' Baruch Ber was in Baltimore he stayed in his home. They spent all day together. One night they came home late, and the man went upstairs to check if R' Baruch Ber's room was in order. His wife was listening to the radio in their bedroom, and it was very loud.

The man was embarrassed. "What are you doing? How can you blast the radio with my Rebbi downstairs? Turn it off."

Then the man went downstairs to see if R' Baruch Ber needed anything before he retired for the night. R' Baruch Ber didn't understand a word of English, but he did recognize the tone of his student's voice as he spoke to his wife.

"Did you learn to talk like that in my yeshivah? I cannot stay here. I'm not sleeping in this house tonight!" The man pleaded with Rav Baruch Ber to stay. Rav Baruch Ber relented and agreed to stay only after the man went back upstairs and apologized to his wife.

From Experience Greatness, By Rabbi Moshe Hubner. Reprinted With Permission from Table Talk.

***Mazel tov** to the participants of the 1st Seder Bais Medrash Amud Yomi chaburas on being misayeim Pesachim this past week!*

We are now learning Shekalim. You can join us at one of three different options:

6:45 a.m. at Kollel Boker

11:20 a.m. at 1st Seder

9:45 p.m. at Kol Torah

Please join any of the 30+ First Seder weekly shiurim – Mishnayos, Gemara, Halacha, Tefilla, Parsha, Tehillim, Mussar and more! M-F 9:20 AM. - 1:15 PM. If you have any questions, or to register, sponsor or donate, please contact Rosh Bais Medrash Rabbi Uri Greenspan at rabbigreenspan@firstseder.org 732-407-3178

Good Shabbos!