

# HEAR THE CALL?

*by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner*

This week we begin the Sefer [Book] of Vayikra by reading parshas Vayikra. "Vayikra el Moshe [And He called to Moshe] vayedabair Hashem [and Hashem spoke] to him from ohel mo'ed [tent of meeting].[1:1]"

Rashi is bothered by the seeming redundancy in the possuk [verse] with Hashem both calling Moshe and speaking to him. He explains that we learn from here that whenever Hashem would speak to Moshe, He would first call out, "Moshe, Moshe," a call of endearment, and only then would He speak to him.

If so, why does the passuk say that "He called to Moshe," it should have simply stated, "He called Moshe!" From the additional word, "to", Rashi learns an additional point. The voice of Hashem is an incredibly powerful voice. Yet, His voice reached only Moshe. The rest of Bnei Yisroel [the Children of Israel] did not hear a thing. "Vayikra el Moshe [And He called to Moshe]." Hashem called, but the words only reached "el Moshe [to Moshe]". No one else heard the call.

What did Hashem tell Moshe to instruct Bnei Yisroel? "Adam ki yakriv mikem korbon la'Hashem [A man when he'll sacrifice from amongst you a sacrifice to Hashem].[1:2]" The Ramban explains that the actual animal that is brought as a sacrifice is meant to take the place of the person who has sinned and rebelled against his Creator. He must realize that it really should be his neck, his blood, his fat... The S'forno writes that this korbon is only meaningful if the "Adam" [person] sacrifices "mikem". The root of the word "korbon" is 'karov', close. The person must draw "mikem", himself, close through confession and a humbling of his will to the will of Hashem. That will transform it from the mundane to a "korbon la'Hashem [a drawing close to Hashem]."

Let's look at some aspects of these korbonos [sacrifices] and see what can be gleaned in regard to our drawing close to Hashem. Two of the main aspects of the korbon are the sprinkling of the blood and the burning of the fat on the altar. How can this be applied to our daily activities!?

The story is told of a diamond merchant who left his house one morning to go study in the Beis Hamedrash [Torah study hall]. While he was out, a prominent diamond dealer came to his house in order to offer a deal. Upon hearing from his wife that he was unavailable, he moved on to another merchant and closed the deal with him. When the man returned home later that morning, his wife mentioned that the dealer had stopped by earlier. Hearing that, he frantically tracked him down, only to find that the deal had already been closed with his competitor.

"Why didn't you call me!?" he shouted to his wife. "I thought you didn't want to be bothered," she explained. "When someone comes for me, please, call me immediately," he instructed her. She dutifully nodded her head.

A few weeks later, while her husband was in the Beis Hamedrash, there was a knock on the door. She opened it to find a man to whom her husband owed a sizable sum of money. Heeding her husband's instructions, she sends him a message that someone has come for him and that he should return home immediately. Her husband receives the message and, in mid-sentence, closes his sefer and runs home.

Upon arrival, he quickly discerns that this was one visitor he wouldn't have minded missing. He pays the money that he owed and ushers the man from the house.

"That's what you called me for?" he incredulously asked his wife. "Well you told me to call you when someone comes for you," she responded. "Listen," he angrily explained, "you did the exact opposite of what you should have. When someone wants to help me get money, that's when you should call me. When someone wants to take money from me, tell him I'm not available!"

We also have times when we are supposed to be zealously eager and times when we are supposed to be lazy and slow. We were commanded with mitzvos a'say [the positive 'do' commandments] and mitzvos lo ta'aseh [the negative 'do not' commandments]. By the positive commandments we are supposed to be ablaze with enthusiasm -- quickly fulfill that commandment before we might lose that golden opportunity to lock in some eternity. By the negative commandments we are supposed to try to sit back inactively until the wave of desire passes over, leaving us looking back wondering what seemed so irresistible in the first place.

Unfortunately, we too, like the wife of the diamond merchant, act in the reverse way. We rush to do the negative commandments and get lazy when it comes to the positive commandments...

The blood represents our getting heated up to do things -- the way we're supposed to be for the positive commandments. The fat represents sitting back lazily -- the way that we're supposed to act when it comes to the negative commandments. We sprinkle the blood and burn the fat on the altar. Recognizing that the reason that we're here offering a sacrifice for atonement is because we confused these two different manners. We rushed to do something we shouldn't have -- we sprinkle the blood. We sat back and didn't perform that which we should have -- we burn the fat.

The truth is that Hashem calls out constantly. The Mishna in Avos states that Rabi Yehoshua Ben Levi said: Each and every day a heavenly voice announces, "Woe to the creations from the disgrace of the Torah." Rabi Yehoshua Ben Levi, who gave tremendous honor to the Torah, heard that voice every day. We go through our every day lives, which might have just a tad less honor for the Torah than Rabi Yehoshua Ben Levi and yet we don't hear a thing...

How does one hear this call? The first passuk in the second parsha [paragraph] of Shema Yisroel

states: "V'hayah im shamoa tish'm'u {And it will be if you'll listen} to my commandments.[Devarim 11:13]" The Ohr HaChaim explains that the word listen is written twice (shamoa tish'm'u) to teach that if we'll put our heart into listening then we'll hear more and more.

A tremendous amount can be heard and seen each day. There are so many miracles that constantly occur around us but we have grown so accustomed to them that we disregard them as nature. There are so many things that are said around us that can have such a profound impact on us. "V'hayah im shamoa tish'm'u..."

The call is there constantly. It's up to us if we want to listen...

Good Shabbos,

Yisroel Ciner

---

Copyright © 1999 by [Rabbi Yisroel Ciner](#) and Project Genesis, Inc.

---

The author teaches at [Neveh Tzion](#) in Telzstone (near Yerushalayim).

---