

# Parasha Meditation Vayikra

**Vayikra 1:1-5:26**

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

## “Online” With Hashem

### Introduction:

This week, we begin reading the Book of *Vayikra* – Leviticus. Literally the Hebrew word *vayikra* means “He called.” “He [Hashem] called (*vayikra*) Moshe, and Hashem spoke with him from the Tent of Meeting saying.”<sup>1</sup> The last word “לֵאמֹר – (*l’emor*) – saying” is extra. If Hashem spoke, obviously He would be “saying.” Whenever the extra word “saying” appears, it teaches us about the ongoing continuous prophecy applying to all future generations.<sup>2</sup> Just as Hashem called Moshe, He continuously calls us throughout the times for an ongoing relationship.

### Calling – An Expression of Love

Rashi explains that a “calling” preceded all sayings and commands. It is an expression of love, an expression that the Ministering Angels use, as it states, “One called to the other.”<sup>3</sup> However, to the gentile prophets Hashem revealed Himself with an expression of happenstance and uncleanness,<sup>4</sup> as it says, “G\*d happened upon Bilam.”<sup>5</sup>

### The Small Alef

Rashi learns this from the small *alef* at the end of the word וַיִּקְרָא – *vayikra*, making the *alef* stand out and emphasizing the difference between the word וַיִּקְרָא – *vayikra* – “He called,” and the word וַיִּקְרַח – *vayikar* – “He happened upon.”<sup>6</sup> This **small alef** teaches us a **big** difference between the relationship of the Jewish people with Hashem, and that of the other nations of the world. The Jewish people are supposed to have an ongoing, continuously open relationship with G\*d, whereas His relationship with the gentile nations is more of an on-and-off type.

### Online with Hashem

Rabbi Pinchas Winston makes the following analogy: This can be compared to using cable for internet versus a regular modem. When a person uses a modem to connect to the internet, he has to dial up the server, get in, and wait until all the inter-computer protocol has finished before being able to access everything from e-mail to websites. This takes time, and is not always

<sup>1</sup> *Vayikra* 1:1.

<sup>2</sup> *Mechilta, Parashat Beshalach, parasha 1.*

<sup>3</sup> *Yeshayahu* 6:3.

<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word *Vayikar* can mean both “happened” and “seminal emission.”

<sup>5</sup> *Bamidbar* 23:4 and 23:16.

<sup>6</sup> Rashi, *Vayikra* 1:1.



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successful the first or second time. However, the beauty of cable is that you are always connected. The connection is continuous and therefore getting in is quick as is using the Net. There is never a moment when we are supposed to think we are “off-line” from G\*d. This is why halacha dictates levels of conduct and modesty even in the most private of places and moments. There is still a difference between this analogy and true relationships. Whereas keeping the lines of communication constantly open between two computers takes very little effort on our part, maintaining an ongoing, upbeat and loving relationship with another human being requires a tremendous and continuous act of will; how much more so with Hashem!

### **A Mother's Calling**

The relationship between children and parents is a great practice for having an ongoing relationship with Hashem. A dear friend once came crying to me. Her son had called her while she was at a meeting. When she tried to return his call, no one picked up. She thought that perhaps they don't hear the phone (which had happened in the past), so she continued to call again and again, frustrated that no-one answered the phone. When her son finally called her back, he reproached her, “Why did you continue calling and calling? Didn't you realize that when no-one picked up, it wasn't a good time to call? By calling so much, you were disturbing the children from going to sleep!”

### **Off-line with their Mother**

My friend couldn't believe her ears. “I would never do this to my mother or mother-in-law,” she exclaimed. “First of all, I would never let them call again and again if I was home, even if it wasn't a convenient time for me to talk. I would certainly pick up the phone, and let her know that I'm sorry I can't talk now, but I'll call you back as soon as I can.” She explained, “This way I would save my dear mother or mother-in-law from the frustration of having to repeat calling without anyone picking up the phone. Not only did my children not pick up, they moreover had the nerve to rebuke me for repeatedly calling.” This mother felt hurt because her children chose to be “off-line” from communicating with her. It is painful when we reach out and are not being met, and even rejected. I told my friend to embrace her pain, and just sit with it, trying to connect with the pain of the *Shechina* (Divine Indwelling Presence). When our Divine Mother calls us continuously, do we pick up the receiver? Or do we let Her call and call? Hashem constantly reaches out to us, but we often chose to be “off-line.” We can learn from this incident to be more attentive to the call of the *Shechina*, whether through the difficulties we experience, or through becoming more aware and recognizing the Divine Supervision within our lives. Let us decide right now to respond every time our Divine Mother calls!



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## Meditation:

This meditation is not limited to when you sit down and take some deep breaths.

1. This meditation applies when you walk on the way, work in your kitchen or in the office, when you feed your children, when you clean the house and prepare for Pesach, etc. Whenever you are happy, and whenever you are sad, always remember to stay “online” with Hashem.

2. Try to feel G\*d’s presence before you always. שׁוֹיִתִּי הַשֵּׁם לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד – “*Shiviti Hashem l’negdi tamid*” – “I have set Hashem before me always.”<sup>7</sup> When you are continuously “online” with Hashem, you can learn to experience all your difficulties and hardships as a mirror for improving yourself to get even closer and strengthen your relationship with Hashem.

3. Whenever it is hard, imagine the oneness – the small *alef*, from the word *vayikra* always at your side, always calling you back to be close.

4. Accustom yourself to say: “Thank you, Hashem” whenever something good happens, even the smallest thing such as when the glass bowl fell to the floor without breaking.

5. Stay “online” with Hashem always, and learn acceptance, realizing that everything is a gift, even the challenges. When you are “online” with Hashem, there is never a moment or incident which should make you upset.

## Notes:

Besides emphasizing the difference between the word וַיִּקְרָא – *vayikra* – “He called,” and the word וַיִּקְרַח – *vayikar* – “He happened upon,” the reduced *alef* also hints to the fact that Moshe humbled himself by making himself small. He was reluctant to record the word *vayikra* in the Torah, indicating Hashem’s special relationship with him. In his humility, he did not want to be distinguished from the nations with whom Hashem relates in an on-and-off relationship, indicated by the word *vayikar*.<sup>8</sup>

An additional interpretation of the small *alef* teaches us that in spite of the specialness of Hashem’s call to Moshe, it was still incomplete. Perfect “online” communication can only take place when the *Shechina* will dwell in her permanent home – the *Beith Hamikdash* (Temple) in Yerushalayim. It is impossible to attain the highest kind of communication with Hashem on foreign soil, outside *Eretz Yisrael* – the Holy Land, in a tent-like dwelling-place erected only temporarily for Hashem. Therefore, the small *alef* illustrates that the ultimate goal has yet to be achieved, may it be soon!

<sup>7</sup> Tehillim 16:8.

<sup>8</sup> Vayikra 23:4 and 23:16.

# About Us



## **Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum**

*Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum, a native of Denmark, is Founder and Director of Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin. She holds a Bachelor of Education in Bible and Jewish Philosophy from Michlala Jerusalem College for Women, and a Masters of Art in Jewish History from Touro College. Chana Bracha also began her practice as a spiritual healer through Emuna, tefila and energy work.*

*For more than two decades Chana Bracha has taught Bible studies with special emphasis on women's issues in Israel and the United States. She creates curricula emphasizing women's spiritual empowerment through traditional Torah values. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin located in the Judean Hills of Israel offers a unique program to women of all ages and backgrounds to learn in a holistic Torah study environment that nurtures the mind, body and soul. Intensive textual study of Tanach, Halacha and Chassidut are woven together with creative spiritual expression, and connection with the land of Israel through organic gardening, herbology, Jewish sources of healing and sustainable living. Classes in Jewish mysticism, Chassidism and Jewish meditation are directed at the spiritual thirst so prominent in our times.*

*In 2010 Rebbetzin Chana Bracha published her first book, *Women at the Crossroads: A Woman's Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion*.*

*Chana Bracha has a married son and several granddaughters. She lives with her husband and younger son on the land of the Judean hills, Israel.*

*If you are interested in:*

*Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin contact [info@berotbatayin.org](mailto:info@berotbatayin.org) or in Spiritual Healing with Rebbetzin Chana Bracha, please contact her at [director@berotbatayin.org](mailto:director@berotbatayin.org)*

*or visit her blog: <http://rebbetzinchanabracha.blogspot.com/2010/11/emunah-healing-for-women.html>*

## **Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin – Holistic Torah Study for Women on the Land of Israel**

At Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, we weave together Torah studies with creative spiritual expression, connecting with the Land of Israel, and healthy, organic lifestyles. In the heart of the Judean Hills, with its serene beauty, our students experience an approach to Judaism that bridges mind, body and soul. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin is designed as a micro-community within the Village of Bat Ayin where women of all ages and backgrounds engage in intense Torah learning as part of an integrated, participatory approach to Torah living.

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