



שבת פרשת ויקרא/פרשת זכור
SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYIKRA
PARSHAT ZACHOR
9 ADAR II/MARCH 16

Maftir is from Ki Seitzei (Deut. 25:17-19). It is a Mitzvah דאורייתא to read Parshat Zachor. Haftorah is Samuel I 15:2-34. We do not say אב הרוחמים. Say צדקתך צדק at Mincha.

FRIDAY NIGHT
CANDLE LIGHTING - 6:45 PM
MINCHA - 6:50 PM
TZAIT - 7:48 PM

SATURDAY
HASHKAMA - 8:15 AM
SHACHARIT MAIN - 9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA - 10:06 AM
GEMARA SHIUR - 5:45 PM
MINCHA - 6:30 PM
SHKIA - 7:04 PM
MAARIV/HAVDALAH - 7:49 PM

פורים/פורים

14 ADAR - FEBRUARY 28/MARCH 1

WEDNESDAY NIGHT
MINCHA/MAARIV - 6:35 PM
MEGILLAH - 7:50 PM/9:30 PM

THURSDAY
SHACHARIT - 6:00/8:00 AM
MEGILLAH - 6:30 AM/8:30 AM
MINCHA/MAARIV - 6:50 PM

CONGREGATION AHAVAT ACHIM
18-25 SADDLE RIVER ROAD
FAIR LAWN, NJ 07410-5909
201-797-0502
WWW.AHAVATACHIM.ORG

BULLETIN INFORMATION
TO REQUEST A BULLETIN
ANNOUNCEMENT OR TO DEDICATE A
BULLETIN FOR \$36 (\$54 W/PHOTO),
EMAIL SEPLOTNICK@GMAIL.COM

WEEKDAY DAVENING INFORMATION

	Sunday (3/17)	Monday (3/18)	Tuesday (3/19)	Wednesday (3/20)	Thursday (3/21)	Friday (3/22)
Fast Begins				5:48 AM		
Earliest Talit	6:11 AM	6:09 AM	6:08 AM	6:06 AM	6:05 AM	6:03 AM
Shacharit	8:15 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM	6:00 AM	6:00 AM & 8:00 AM	6:25 AM
Gedolah	1:35 PM	1:35 PM	1:35 PM	1:35 PM	1:34 PM	1:34 PM
Mincha - Maariv	6:50 PM	6:50 PM	6:50 PM	6:35 PM	6:50 PM	6:55 PM
Shkia	7:05 PM	7:06 PM	7:07 PM	7:08 PM	7:09 PM	
Tzait	7:50 PM	7:51 PM	7:52 PM	7:53 PM	7:54 PM	
2nd Megillah Reading				9:30 PM		

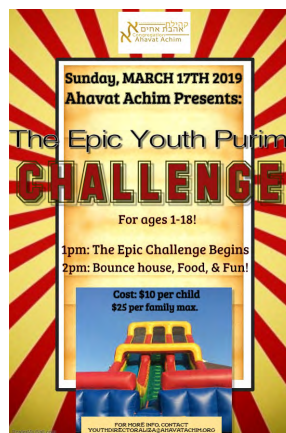


Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by Barbara & Ziv Farajun to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Ziv's father, משה בן חיה ואהרן פרג'ון ז"ל (נפטר י' אדר ב' ת.נ.צ.ב.ה).

Purim Suedah, Thursday, 3:00 - 6:00 PM, at the Rabbi & Chana's home (then going directly to Mincha). There will be food, music, singing, and fun for the whole family.



Mazal Tov to Dina & Elliot Greene who are this year's Ahavat Achim Journal Dinner Honorees. Ad blanks and other info coming soon!



We regret to inform you of the passing of Orit Zefon's beloved mother, Rina Bat Channa (רינה מפציר בת חנה). המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



Kiddush Information



- ☆ To sponsor a Kiddush (\$1000/\$613/\$318, plus scotch) email Gail at gplotnick@aol.com.
- ☆ If you are around when the Rabbi says “על המחיה”, your assistance in clean up would be appreciated.

Adult Education



- ☆ GEMARA SHIUR - Shabbat afternoon (45 minutes before Mincha), learning Beitzah.
- ☆ DAYTIME TORAH VOYAGES - Thursdays at 1:00 PM.
- ☆ FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT - After Kiddush.
- ☆ PEREK ON THE LAWN, Pirkei Avot Periodic Shiur.

Community Events

- ☆ Mar. 17 – **Pre-Purim Extravaganza**, with moon bounces, etc., and a kids Zumba at noon. Shomrei Torah, Sunday, 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM. \$12 per child.
- ☆ Mar. 17 - **Purim Party & Puppet Show**, with a puppet show by Small Wonder Puppet Theater, making handmade Purim stick puppets. Refreshments served. Darchei Noam, Sun., 3:00 - 5:00 PM. \$10 per kid/\$20 fam. max. RSVP at dno.am/purim.
- ☆ Mar. 21 – **Children’s Megillah Reading and Ice Cream Truck**. YIFL, Thursday, 10:30 AM. \$10 per family. To register click here: [Megillah and Ice Cream](#).
- ☆ Mar. 31 – **Pre-Pesach Boutique**, featuring numerous vendors. Shomrei Torah, Sunday, 6:00 – 9:00 PM.
- ☆ **Women’s Mental Health: Through the Lifespan**, a Yoetzet Halacha of Fair Lawn Program. Sun., Mar 31, 9:30 AM,, 10-14 Charles St., Fair Lawn. Register here: [Women’s Health](#).

Gita Cooperwasser ע"ה

Youth Program

- ☆ Youth groups start at 10:00 AM!
- ☆ Contact our Youth Director Aliza Kaplan to discuss our children’s youth programming at youthdirectoraliza@ahavatachim.org.



Tot Shabbat

- ☆ 10:40 AM, with the Shabbat reading often featuring a surprise story teller.



Stay & Play

- ☆ Next get together will be in the spring on April 6. See you then.



Teen Hashkama

- ☆ Mar. 23
- ☆ May 11
- ☆ June 22



Pirkei Avot

Teen Learning

- ☆ This Shabbat, at 10:40 AM, led by Matthew Levine/ Ethan Steinberg. For details email Ben at Benjamin.greenbaum@frisch.org.



If you can't make it to shul for health reasons or otherwise and need a private Megillah reading, please email thegabbai@aol.com to arrange it.

Ahavat Achim Future Events

- ☆ Apr. 14 - Hagolas Kelim/Pesach Kashering, 9:00 AM - 11 AM, at the shul
- ☆ Apr. 19 - Chometz burning at Elliot Hershkowitz’s home, 37-14 Jasper Rd., time to be determined. No lulav burning
- ☆ May 4 - Dr. Avivah Zornberg Scholar in Residence
- ☆ May 11 - Youth Taking Over Seudat Shelishit in honor of Yom Yerushalayim, sponsored by Kira & Andrew Wigod
- ☆ May 18 - Suedah Shlishit sponsored by Kira & Andrew Wigod in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month
- ☆ June 1 - Emily Wechsler Bat Mitzvah
- ☆ June 10 - 2nd Annual Baruch Crawl
- ☆ June 8 - Suedah Shlishit sponsored by Eli Zezion in memory of Shlomo ע"ה Ben Eliyahu (שלמה בן אליהו - זון נלב"ע זיון תשס"ד)
- ☆ June 22 - Suedah Shlishit sponsored by Eli Zezion in memory of Baroch Mafzir ע"ה Ben Samuel (ברוך מפציר בן שמואל - נלב"ע כ"ד סיון תשנ"ט)

Points To Ponder

- ☆ (1st) What are the stages of a basic korban olah, complete offering?
- ☆ (3rd) What element is the "stuff of covenant" in this aliyah?
- ☆ (5th) What jumps out as the primary distinction between the olah offering and the guilt offering in this aliyah?
- ☆ (6th) What happens first - confession or bring the korban?

Answers to Points To Ponder

- ☆ (1st) Lean on the animal (v.4), slaughter it (v.5), remove the skin (v.6), cut it up (v.6), Kohanim make a fire and put the animal parts on the altar, mizbeach (v.7-9)
- ☆ (3rd) Salt
- ☆ (5th) This aliyah features specific instructions with the blood, namely sprinkling.
- ☆ (6th) Confession (v.5)



Shirley Vann has dedicated this week’s Covenant & Conversation (used with permission of the Office of Rabbi Sacks) in memory of her beloved mother Necha bat Yitzchok ע"ה.



The Fast of Esther (13th of Adar) - From OU.ORG

On the 13th of Adar, the Fast of Esther is observed in commemoration of the Fast observed by Mordechai and Esther and all Israel. On that day, the enemies of the Jews planned to subjugate and destroy them. The opposite, however, occurred and the Jews ruled over their enemies.

The practice of fasting was observed by the people of Israel whenever they were faced by war. Thus Moshe Rabenu also fasted when he came to wage war against Amalek. The aim of the fast was to affirm that a man does not prevail by physical or military strength, but only by lifting his eyes heavenward in prayer so that Divine Mercy might give him the strength to prevail in battle.

This then was the purpose of the fast observed by Israel at the time of Haman, when they gathered to defend themselves against those who sought to destroy them. And in memory of that Fast, a yearly Fast was fixed for generations on the same day. We are to recall thereby that God accepts each person's prayer and penitence in the hour of his trouble.

The acceptance of this Fast of the 13th of Adar on the part of Israel for later generations is alluded to in the Scroll of Esther: 'And as they accepted upon themselves and upon their children, the matters of their fastings and their cry' (Esther 9).

The Fast is called by the name of Esther because it was she who first requested the observance of a fast, of Mordechai: 'Go and gather all the Jews who are found in Shushan and fast over me, and do not eat and do not drink three days, night and day; and I and my maidens will also fast thus.' (ibid. 4)

The fast which we observe is nevertheless not observed for a three-day period, as was the case with the original Fast, nor is it observed on the same date. Originally the Fast was observed by Esther and the entire people of Israel on the 14th, 15th and 16th of Nisan, immediately after Mordechai was informed of Haman's decree and of the letter of annihilation which Haman wrote on the 13th of Nisan. Our Fast however, is observed on the 13th of Adar, in memory of the Fast observed by Israel on the day of their mobilization for war against the enemies. The Fast is nevertheless called by the name of Esther since it was she who first proposed its observance.

Others hold that even our Fast is also primarily a commemoration of the original three-day Fast observed by the Jews when the decree was announced. But since the Fast could not be permanently fixed for later years in its proper time (because fasting is not permitted during Nisan), the Sages therefore fixed it for the 13th of Adar – which was also a Fast day for the Jews, who then gathered to wage war against their enemies.

And although the Fast of Esther is therefore a memorial to the original three days of fasting, the Rabbis were nevertheless lenient in fixing it for only one day. In deference to this view, there are some who fast an additional three days; on Monday, Thursday and Monday after Purim. Others voluntarily fast the night as well as the day on the 13th of Adar, since the original three-day Fast was observed night and day.

Some Laws of the Fast of Esther

Since the Fast of Esther is not one of the four Fast days which are specifically mentioned in the Prophetic Writings, it is observed with greater leniency than the other Fast days. Pregnant women, nursing mothers, as well as others of generally weak health, (who would suffer by fasting) do not fast therein. The additional penitential prayers, and the Torah Reading, which are prescribed for the other Fast days are also required for the Fast of Esther.

If the 13th of Adar falls on Shabbat, the Fast is observed the preceding Thursday which is the eleventh of Adar. Because of Purim, the Fast is not postponed to the following day, nor is it observed Erev Shabbat: Since it is no longer observed in any event in its proper time, it was not fixed for Erev Shabbat, in deference to the honor of Shabbat. (A Fast whose prescribed date can fall on Erev Shabbat such as the 10th of Tevet, is neither postponed nor observed earlier, but it is observed on its fixed day). Tachanun is not said during Mincha of the Fast of Esther.

The Half-Shekel

On the 13th of Adar during Mincha, it is customary to give three halves of the coin which is the basis of the local currency. The money is given to the poor to do with it as they wish. This contribution is made in memory of the half-shekel given by Israel when the Beit Hamikdash still stood; and whose forthcoming collection was announced on Rosh Chodesh Adar.

This commemorative act is performed before the Reading of the Megillah, because all Israel gathers for the Megillah Reading in the Synagogues. It is proper to give the half-shekel before Minchah, since 'the diligent perform Mitzvot earlier.' Those who live in 'open-cities' give the half-shekel before the Megillah Reading on the night of the 14th, whereas the inhabitants of Yerushalayim give the half-shekel before their Reading of the Megillah – the night of the 15th.

In a place that has no coin that is designated a 'half' coin, it is customary for the gabaim to bring three halves of silver coins which are issued elsewhere, and to give these coins in exchange, to anyone who makes his contribution in the coins available to him. After performing the Mitzvah, he returns the three 'halves' to the gabaim, so that others might also be able to observe the custom properly.

Those who seek to observe Mitzvot with hidur (enhancement) give the half-shekel for each of the members of the household including minors, and in the case of an expectant mother, for the unborn child as well. Once a father has begun to give a half-shekel for a minor child, he is required to continue to do so each year.

The reason for the giving of three 'halves' is that the term *trumah* (contribution) is mentioned three times in the portion of Ki-Tisa, in the account of the Mitzvah of the half-shekel. The established practice is to consider the giving of the half-shekel as not freeing one from the Mitzvah of giving charity to the poor, which is specifically prescribed for Purim.

The Day of Nikanor

The 13th of Adar is also mentioned in the Talmud as the day on which vengeance was executed (during the time of the Hasmoneans) against a tyrant who oppressed the land of Yehudah cruelly and arrogantly blasphemed the city of God. The name of the tyrant was Nikanor and he fell by the hand of Yehudah, the son of Matityahu, on the 13th of Adar, which was hence celebrated as a festive day.

PARSHAT ZACHOR

"Zachor Et Asher Asa Lecha Amalek BaDerech Betzetchem MiMitzrayim"

"Remember what Amalek did to you on your way out of Egypt!" (Dev. 25)

On Shabbat preceding Purim, two Torah scrolls are taken; one for regular parsha and one for Maftir - 'Remember what Amalek did to you' (Dvarim 25). Because of this, it is called, Shabbat Zachor (Remember). Haftorah also deals with Amalek.

It is a Mitzvah D'Orayta to remember Amalek and his descendants and to orally recall their iniquity. We tell our children in each generation what Amalek did to us during our departure from Egypt. This mitzvah will be fulfilled completely only when we have caused Amalek's memory to perish, and their name erased from the world with any remnant of anything that bears their name. As the Torah says: 'Remember what Amalek did to you on the way, upon your departure from Egypt'... 'You shall erase the memory of Amalek from beneath the heavens, you shall not forget.' Upon which the Sages say: 'Remember,' orally - 'You shall not forget,' in your heart.

To properly fulfill this commandment, the Sages have prescribed the public reading of this passage from a Torah scroll, once every year, on the Shabbat which precedes Purim - so that the 'wiping-out' of Amalek might be adjacent to the 'wiping-out' of Haman, the latter being a descendant of Amalek.

Although this passage is read in the parsha of Ki Tetzeh, we still must read this passage separately in its prescribed time before Purim. This is done in fulfillment of the Torah's commandment to remember the cowardly attack of Amalek.

Only a boy of Bar-Mitzvah age should be called to the Torah for Maftir on Parshat Zachor, or read the parshah for others, since he is free of the obligation of mitzvot he cannot enable others to fulfill their obligation through him.

פּוּרִים/PURIM

In Shemonah Esrei and Birkat Hamazon if one forgot to say ועל הנסים, and first recalled his omission only after he had already completed the Bracha that follows it, he does not begin Shemonah Esrei or Birkat Hamazon again. The reader of the Megillah recites the following three Brachot on behalf of the entire congregation: "שעשה נסים", "על מקרא מגילה", and "שהחיינו". In the morning we should intend that the Bracha "שהחיינו" also applies to Mishloach Manot, Matonot LaEvyonim and the Seudat Purim [Mitzvot that must be performed during the daytime]. Extreme care must be taken, because **if one misses hearing even one word of the Megillah**, one does not fulfill his/her obligation.

After the Megillah reading and its rewinding, the Reader makes the Bracha "הרב את ריבנו". A mourner during Shiva without a Minyan in his home should go to Shul for the Megillah Reading.

For Matanot LaEvyonim, give to a minimum of two poor people presents of money or of food and drink. In fulfilling his obligation of "Mishloach Manot," one should do this Mitzvah with food that may be eaten without further preparation, and with portions that reflect well on both the giver and the recipient.

Don't send "Mishloach Manot" to a mourner. If the mourner is a poor man, one may send him money. A mourner must send "Mishloach Manot" to a friend.

Seudat Purim must be begun before sunset. We say ועל הנסים in Birkat Hamazon even if the meal is completed after dark.

We begin to inquire about and expound upon the laws of Pesach thirty days before, beginning on Purim itself.

MISCELLANEOUS

Ahavat Achim Membership/ Hospitality

Contact Arnie at aspier@verizon.net for membership details. For Shabbat hospitality contact Melanie at mkwestel@gmail.com.

Bikkur Cholim/Chesed Committee

If someone needs a visit/assistance, contact Sara at saralevine06@gmail.com or Mary Lisa at kenkatter541@gmail.com.

Personal Announcements

Various life cycle events related to members are announced in the bulletin (e.g., births, bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings and deaths, as well as travel to/from Israel to study). We also welcome new members. Other personal announcements are not appropriate except as part of the bulletin's dedication (a \$36 cost - \$54 with photo).

Numbers & Info

☆ ERUV – To subscribe for updates, email fairlawneruv@groups.io. Check status at <https://groups.io/g/fairlawneruv> or call 201-254-9190.

☆ MIKVAH – 201-796-0350. At Shomrei Torah, 9 PM–10:30 PM, Motzei Shabbat from 1¼ hours after Shabbat ends for 1½ hours. Kaylim Mikvah: Sun. 10 AM–3 PM

☆ TWITTER: [AhavatAchimFL](https://twitter.com/AhavatAchimFL)

☆ FACEBOOK: facebook.com/groups/ahavat.achim/

☆ INSTAGRAM: instagram.com/ahavatachimfl/?hl=en

☆ FLICKR: flickr.com/photos/ahavatachim/albums

Shul Calendar

☆ To add events to the shul calendar email Larry at lardavbern@gmail.com



Sunday, MARCH 17TH 2019
Ahavat Achim Presents:

The Epic Youth Purim **CHALLENGE**

For ages 1-18!

1pm: The Epic Challenge Begins

2pm: Bounce house, Food, & Fun!

Cost: \$10 per child
\$25 per family max.



FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT
YOUTHDIRECTORALIZA@AHAVATACHIM.ORG
18-25 SADDLE RIVER RD. FAIR LAWN, NJ

Ahavat Achim Presents

A Shabbat of Spirit & Song with

Guest
Baal
Tefilla

E.T. Lustiger

MARCH 15-16, 2019

**E.T. will lead Kabbalat
Shabbat, Shacharit & Musaf
on Shabbat, Parshat Vayikra**

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Rabbi and Rebetzin Shestack of Ahavat Achim
invite you to a



OPEN HOUSE SEUDAH & PARTY

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2019 3-6 PM
18-19 SADDLE RIVER RD, FAIR LAWN, NJ



singing, Torah, costumes,
fun, madness and jubilation!

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COVENANT & CONVERSATION

THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA
FROM RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

בס"ד



I am deeply touched that Covenant & Conversation has been generously sponsored by THE MAURICE WOHL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl ז"ל. Maurice was a visionary philanthropist on a vast scale, driven throughout his life by a sense of Jewish responsibility. Vivienne was a woman of the deepest humanity and compassion, who had a kind word for everyone. Together, they were a unique partnership of dedication and grace, for whom living was giving. Through their Charitable Foundation, they continue to bring blessings to Jewish communities around the world. — RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

ויקרא תשע"ט
Vayikra 5779

COVENANT & CONVERSATION: FAMILY EDITION

Covenant & Conversation: Family Edition is a new and exciting accompaniment to Rabbi Sacks' weekly *Covenant & Conversation* essay, aimed at connecting older children and teenagers with his ideas and thoughts on the *parsha*. To download the accompanying Family Edition to this *Covenant & Conversation* essay, please visit www.RabbiSacks.org/CCFamilyEdition or subscribe to Rabbi Sacks' free mailing list via www.RabbiSacks.org/Subscribe.

The Pursuit of Meaning

The American Declaration of Independence speaks of the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Recently, following the pioneering work of Martin Seligman, founder of Positive Psychology, there have been hundreds of books published on happiness. Yet there is something more fundamental still to the sense of a life well-lived, namely, *meaning*. The two seem similar. It's easy to suppose that people who find meaning are happy, and people who are happy have found meaning. But the two are not the same, nor do they always overlap.

Happiness is largely a matter of satisfying needs and wants. Meaning, by contrast, is about a sense of purpose in life, especially by making positive contributions to the lives of others. Happiness is largely about how you feel in the present. Meaning is about how you judge your life as a whole: past, present and future.

Happiness is associated with *taking*, meaning with *giving*. Individuals who suffer stress, worry or anxiety are not happy, but they may be living lives rich with meaning. Past misfortunes reduce present happiness, but people often connect such moments with the discovery of meaning. Furthermore, happiness is not unique to humans. Animals also experience contentment when their wants and needs are satisfied. But meaning is a distinctively human phenomenon. It has to do not with *nature* but with *culture*. It is not about what happens to us, but about *how we interpret* what happens to us. There can be happiness without meaning, and there can be meaning in the absence of happiness, even in the midst of darkness and pain.¹

¹ See Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen D. Vohs, Jennifer Aaker, and Emily N. Garbinsky, 'Some Key Differences between a Happy Life and a Meaningful Life', *Journal of Positive Psychology* 2013, Vol. 8, Issue 6, Pages 505-516.

In a fascinating article in *The Atlantic*, ‘There’s more to life than being happy’,² Emily Smith argued that the pursuit of happiness can result in a relatively shallow, self-absorbed, even selfish life. What makes the pursuit of meaning different is that it is about the search for something larger than the self.

No one did more to put the question of meaning into modern discourse than the late Viktor Frankl. In the three years he spent in Auschwitz, Frankl survived and helped others to survive by inspiring them to discover a purpose in life even in the midst of hell on earth. It was there that he formulated the ideas he later turned into a new type of psychotherapy based on what he called “man’s search for meaning”. His book of that title, written in the course of nine days in 1946, has sold more than ten million copies throughout the world, and ranks as one of the most influential works of the twentieth century.

Frankl knew that in the camps, those who lost the will to live died. He tells of how he helped two individuals to find a reason to survive. One, a woman, had a child waiting for her in another country. Another had written the first volumes of a series of travel books, and there were others yet to write. Both therefore had a reason to live.

Frankl used to say that the way to find meaning was not to ask what we want from life. Instead we should ask what life wants from us. We are each, he said, unique: in our gifts, our abilities, our skills and talents, and in the circumstances of our life. For each of us, then, there is a task only we can do. This does not mean that we are better than others. But if we believe we are here for a reason, then there is a *tikkun*, a mending, only we can perform, a fragment of light only we can redeem, an act of kindness or courage, generosity or hospitality, even a word of encouragement or a smile, only we can perform, because we are here, in this place, at this time, facing this person at this moment in their lives.

“For each of us, there is a task only we can do.”

“Life is a task”, he used to say, and added, “The religious man differs from the apparently irreligious man only by experiencing his existence not simply as a task, but as a mission.” He or she is aware of being summoned, called, by a Source. “For thousands of years that source has been called God.”³

That is the significance of the word that gives our parsha, and the third book of the Torah, its name: *Vayikra*, “And He called.” The precise meaning of this opening verse is difficult to understand. Literally translated it reads: “And He called to Moses, and God spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting,

² Emily Smith, ‘There’s more to life than being happy’, *The Atlantic*, 9 Jan. 2013.

³ Viktor Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: from Psychotherapy to Logotherapy*, New York: A.A. Knopf, 1965, 13.

saying ...” The first phrase seems to be redundant. If we are told that God spoke to Moses, why say in addition, “And He called”? Rashi explains as follows:

And He called to Moses: Every [time God communicated with Moses, whether signalled by the expression] “And He spoke”, or “and He said”, or “and He commanded”, it was always preceded by [God] calling [to Moses by name].⁴ “Calling” is an expression of endearment. It is the expression employed by the ministering angels, as it says, “And one called to the other...” (Isaiah 6:3).

Vayikra, Rashi is telling us, means *to be called to a task in love*. This is the source of one of the key ideas of Western thought, namely the concept of a *vocation* or a *calling*, that is, the choice of a career or way of life not just because you want to do it, or because it offers certain benefits, but because you feel *summoned* to it. You feel this is your meaning and mission in life. This is what you were placed on earth to do.

“The concept of a *vocation* or a *calling* is the choice of a career or way of life because you feel *summoned* to it.”

There are many such calls in Tanach. There was the call Abraham received, telling to leave his land and family. There was the call to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:4). There was the one experienced by Isaiah when he saw in a mystical vision God enthroned and surrounded by angels:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8)

One of the most touching is the story of the young Samuel, dedicated by his mother Hannah to serve in the sanctuary at Shiloh where he acted as an assistant to Eli the priest. In bed at night he heard a voice calling his name. He assumed it was Eli. He ran to see what he wanted but Eli told him he had not called. This happened a second time and then a third, and by then Eli realised that it was God calling the child. He told Samuel that the next time the voice called his name, he should reply, ‘Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.’ It did not occur to the child that it might be God summoning him to a mission, but it was. Thus began his career as a prophet, judge and anointer of Israel’s first two kings, Saul and David (1 Samuel 3).

When we see a wrong to be righted, a sickness to be healed, a need to be met, and we feel it speaking to us, that is when we come as close as we can in a post-prophetic age to hearing *Vayikra*, God’s call. And why does the word appear here, at the beginning of the third and central book of the Torah? Because the book of *Vayikra* is about sacrifices, and a vocation is about sacrifices. *We are willing to make sacrifices when we feel they are part of the task we are called on to do.*

⁴ Rashi to Vayikra 1:1.

From the perspective of eternity we may sometimes be overwhelmed by a sense of our own insignificance. We are no more than a wave in the ocean, a grain of sand on the sea shore, a speck of dust on the surface of infinity. *Yet we are here because God wanted us to be, because there is a task He wants us to perform.* The search for meaning is the quest for this task.

Each of us is unique. Even genetically identical twins are different. There are things only we can do, we who are what we are, in this time, this place and these circumstances. For each of us God has a task: work to perform, a kindness to show, a gift to give, love to share, loneliness to ease, pain to heal, or broken lives to help mend. Discerning that task, hearing *Vayikra*, God's call, is one of the great spiritual challenges for each of us.





How do we know what it is? Some years ago, in *To Heal a Fractured World*, I offered this as a guide, and it still seems to me to make sense: Where what we want to do meets what needs to be done, that is where God wants us to be.

Shabbat shalom

“Where what we want to do meets what needs to be done, that is where God wants us to be.”

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