

He called to Moshe. (1:1)

The summons to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, *Vayikra*, is spelled with a diminutive *aleph*, which allows the word to be read as *Vayikar*, which means “and he chanced upon.” *Chazal* give the background for the alternate spelling. When Hashem called Moshe, it was not a subtle sound which only he could hear. The sound of Hashem calling Moshe was resounding, traveling all the way from within the Holy of Holies to the outside of the Tent. Yet, no one else heard – not even Aharon *HaKohen*. It was the same sound that *Klal Yisrael* heard at *Har Sinai* when Hashem gave the Torah. This time, however, no one but Moshe heard. Not wanting to call attention to himself, Moshe asked Hashem to use the word, *Vayikar*, which would indicate subtlety and a chance meeting. Hashem disagreed, since this is the word which the Torah uses to describe His meeting with the evil Bilaam. Moshe begged Hashem to recant, “Please indicate that I found it difficult to write *Vayikra* and that I obeyed solely because it was Your command.” Hashem acquiesced – partially – by having Moshe write *Vayikra* with a miniature *aleph*, to imply a dual meaning.

Is this the only place in the Torah in which Hashem called to Moshe? We find earlier, in *Sefer Shemos* (19:20, 24:116), that Hashem called Moshe during the Revelation at *Har Sinai*, and the *aleph* appears to be unaltered. **Horav Yitzchak, zl, m’Varkah**, explains that, at *Har Sinai*, all of the Jewish People heard Hashem’s voice. When others also heard, and Moshe asked to be humbly diminished – it did not demonstrate humility. On the contrary, when everyone is watching, it reflects subtle arrogance to call attention to one’s desire to be minimized. There is a time and place for humility. Misplaced humility suggests subtle arrogance.

In an alternative exposition concerning the diminution of the *aleph* of *Vayikra* to create *Vayikar*, the **Likutei Basar Likutei** explains that Hashem is constantly calling out to us via the medium of *Vayikar*, incidents, which should catch our attention. At first, Hashem begins with a simple incident. If we are spiritually cognizant that life has purpose and that absolutely nothing “just happens,” we will immediately take the matter to heart and change whatever needs to be corrected in our life. If, however, our spiritual cognition is more on the obtuse level, we will require less subtle and more blatant occurrences to awaken us. The bottom line is that we may not look at any occurrence – regardless of how small – as being a chance incident. A great person takes notes from the most simple *Vayikar*; he understands that this *Vayikar* is actually a *Vayikra*.

The *Yalkut Meam Loez*, quoted by *Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita*, offers a powerful analogy that underscores this idea. A group of hunters were successful in surrounding their intended target: a fox. A cunning animal, the fox understood that it was over. He had essentially been caught. His head would soon adorn someone’s fireplace. He felt that the only way to avoid certain death was to feign death. The hunters might believe that they had succeeded, so that they would continue on about their business and seek out some other hapless animal.

All was going well until one of the hunters declared that he would like the fox’s tail as a souvenir. Hearing this, the fox knew that the process of obtaining his tail would incur excruciating pain, during

which the fox could not reveal that he was alive. He suffered immense pain – in silence – as the hunter separated him from his tail. Better to be a tailless fox than a dead fox. Another hunter wanted the fox's tooth as a good-luck souvenir. Removing the tooth without novocaine was difficult for the fox, but he was not going to let the hunters know that he was still alive. He would suffer in silence. Even this was better than death. Little by little, each hunter wanted a "piece" of the fox. Each time, the broken and torn fox kept his silence and feigned death. Finally, one of the hunters said that he wanted the fox's head for his mantle. This was going too far. This meant death.

The fox decided to jump up and frighten the hunters. During the initial moments of fear, he would escape. His plan worked, and he escaped – a broken, blind, limping, bloodied fox – but he was alive. The fox now realized that had he taken the offensive right from the beginning, he might have circumvented all of the pain.

This is the story of life. Hashem sends us subtle messages in the guise of various incidents, which take their toll on us financially, emotionally and physically. If we would wake up early enough and realize that these are not simply isolated occurrences, but rather, messages from Hashem, we would spare ourselves much pain and anguish.