

This Shabbat we begin reading the third book of the Torah with the words *Vayikra* - and He (Hashem) called to Moshe.

Indeed the entire book is called by the word *Vayikra*- which I suppose could be construed as being coincidental – after all, it is the first word of the reading, it makes sense therefore to call the entire book by that name. In Greek it is called Leviticus meaning “pertaining to the Levites.” Indeed our Rabbis called the book –the law of the Priests, because a large segment of *Vayikra* deals with the sacrifices.

However, the fact that Jewish tradition has called this third book of the Torah by the name *Vayikra* for thousands of years is not just because it happens to be the first word of Book three, but because there is a deep essential lesson which underpins this entire Book.

Concentrate on the cryptic comment from our Sages on this word; “*Vayikra*- and He called- is an expression of love, and of inspiration. However, when G-d is revealed to the pagan prophets He uses the word *Vayikar*- and He met- a language of casualness”.

What are our Rabbis trying to say here?

An interesting observation is that there is a close similarity between two words – *Vayikra* and *vayikar*- and he called – and he met. One is used to describe the very close powerful call of G-d to Moses, the other to depict the meeting of G-d with the heathen prophet Balaam. The difference between these two words is one letter- the *Alef* at the end of the word *Vayikra*.

There are two ways by which we look at the world- either you look at it from an angle of *Vayikra* or *Vayikar*- and the difference between the two is a vast chasm.

*Vayikra* – And He called; means that everything that happens in life is from a religious prism. Nothing is coincidental. Things don’t just happen. There is a reason why we have been put here, and this is reflected in the word *Vayikra*- and He called- a language of love, a language of inspiration. We travel through life responding to the personal call of God to man. It means that our lives are infused and permeated with meaning.

However there is another way of looking at life; *Vayikar*- which means a casual meeting, chance, a happening. It might be the same encounter with G-d as Moses, but to Balaam it was a mere accident – a coincidence. It is the difference between the religious and the irreligious. Whereas the religious person perceives God’s hand in everything that occurs, the irreligious person sees just chance.

Have a great Shabbos.