

פרשת בחוקותי

Often we discuss P'sukim that seem out of place or inappropriate in their particular context.

We certainly will not say that regarding the final verse of Sefer Vayikro (Perek 27/Posuk 34) that we read this week. It states:

אלה המצוות אשר צוה ה' את משה אל בני ישראל בהר סיני:

These are the Mitzvos that Hashem commanded Moshe to [give to] B'nei Yisroel at Mt. Sinai.

Historically, this Posuk is a perfect fit because the following Sefer, B'midbar, deals with Israel leaving Sinai as we read there (Perek 10/P'sukim 11-12):

ויהי בשנה השנית בחדש השני בעשרים בחדש נעלה הענן מעל משכן העדות: ויסעו בני ישראל למסעייהם ממדבר סיני וישכן הענן במדבר פארן:

It was in the second year in the second month on the twentieth of the month the cloud arose from above the Tabernacle of the Testimony. B'nei Yisroel travelled to their travels from the Wilderness of Sinai and the cloud settled in the Poron Wilderness.

When I read the first verse of Sefer B'midbar my historical perspective becomes even more fixed:

וידבר ה' אל משה במדבר סיני באהל מועד באחד לחדש השני בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ מצרים לאמר:

Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Sinai Wilderness in the *Ohel Moed* on the first day of the second month of the second year from their Exodus from the Land of Egypt saying.

That is, even though the former verse appears in Parshas B'haalosecha, many chapters later, this latter verse, with which Sefer B'midbar begins, took place only nineteen days earlier.

A perusal of the intervening Perakim and their verses teaches us that, for the most part, the matters with which these first nine or ten chapters of Sefer B'midbar deal are mostly related to concluding the dedication of the Mishkan and the

indispensable preparations that were required for Israel's leaving Sinai and advancing their way to Eretz Yisroel.

Thus, Sefer Vayikro concludes with the pronouncement that the historical period at Mt. Sinai was reaching its conclusion.

However, Chazal saw more to this verse than a declaration of a time-bound era coming to its close. We learn in Masseches Shabbos (104 a):

אלה המצות¹ - שאין הנביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה!

These are the Mitzvos – [This teaches] that from now, no prophet may teach a new Halachah.

This interpretation is similar to our understanding of the verse in Parshas Nitzavim where we read (D'vorim (Perek 30/P'sukim 11-14):

כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם לֹא נִפְלְאת הוּא מִמֶּךָ וְלֹא רָחֲקָה הוּא: לֹא בְשָׁמַיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה לָנוּ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְיִקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: וְלֹא מֵעֵבֶר

¹ In fact, there is another verse that begins with the words אלה המצוות. That is the Posuk that concludes Sefer B'midbar. It reads (Perek 36/Posuk 13):

אֵלֶּה הַמִּצְוֹת וְהַמְשֻׁפְּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל יַרְדֵּן יְרֵחוֹ:
These are the Mitzvos and the laws that Hashem commanded in the hand of Moshe to B'nei Yisroel in the plains of Moav near Jordan and Yericho.

Maharsha to Masseches Shabbos says that it is this verse at the end of B'midbar to which the Gemara is referring in its interpretation of אלה המצוות - *These are the Mitzvos*.

However, the Midrash Toras Kohanim associates the interpretation of Chazal with the final verse in Vayikro as we have written here.

Similarly, Targum Yonoson writes on that final verse in Sefer Vayikro:

אֵילִין פְּקוּדֵיָא דְפְקִיד ה' ית משה וְלִית אֶפְשֶׁר לְחַדְתָּא בְּהוֹן מְדַעַם וּפְקִידוֹן מְטוּל לְאַחֲוּאָתְהוֹן לֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטוֹרָא דְסִינֵי:

These are the commandments that Hashem commanded Moshe and it is impossible to initiate anything new in them and they were commanded in order to show them to B'nei Yisroel at Mt. Sinai.

Targum Yonoson's rendition of the final Posuk in Sefer B'midbar is verbatim.

לַיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲבֹר לָנוּ אֶל עֵבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָהּ: כִּי קָרוֹב
אֵלֶיךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ:

Because this Mitzvah that I am commanding you today is not wondrous or separate from you and is not distant from you. It is not in heaven to say, 'who will go up to heaven for us and take it for us and let us hear it and we will do it?' It is not on the other side of the sea to say, 'who will cross over the sea for us and take it for us and let us hear it and we will do it?' Rather, this word is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart to do it.

In Massechet Bava Metzia (59 b) we read:

לא בשמים היא - מאי לא בשמים היא, אמר רב ירמיה, שכבר נתנה תורה מהר סיני
ואין אנו משגיחין בבת קול:

It is not in the heaven – What does 'it is not in the heaven' teach? Rav Yirmiya said, 'The Torah was already given from Mt. Sinai and we do not pay attention to a Heavenly voice.

That is, in matters of Halachah, even a *Bas Kol* – a verifiable heavenly voice is not authoritative!

In a *Teshuva*, Chasam Sofer (Chelek I/Teshuva 208) writes concerning the importance of this interpretation of Chazal. We read there:

הא דלא בשמים היא ושאין הנביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה, הוא יסוד ושורש כל התורה כולה, דאי לאו הכי אין כאן תורה כלל, דהרי כבר היה לעולמים (בשבת קטז ב) דאמר ההוא מינא מיומא דגליתון מארעכון אתנטלית אורייתא דמשה ואתייהיב אורייתא אחריתי עיין שם, ואפשר יעשה אותות ומופתים על ידי תחבולות וכישוף, ונביא הישמעאלים עשה כן, ושבתי צבי תר"ו² אמר שנתהפכו המצות ונעשו מעשיין לאוין ומלאוין עשיין, ואפילו אם לא נאמין כן בכללות התורה, מכל מקום אין שום מצוה שתשאר במתכונתה, כל אחד יאמר חלמתי חלום שחלב זה אסור וזה מותר, וזה יאמר כך וזה כך, ותפוג תורה, על כן כללא כייל הקדוש ברוך הוא הנביא רשאי לחדש שום מצוה מהישנות, יתבאר ויתפרש משמים, כי אם על דעת חכמי ישראל, וזהו צורך גדול.

² This abbreviation stands for:

May his spirit and soul explode.

תפח רוחו ונפשו

That which it says, 'It is not in heaven' and 'a prophet is not allowed to initiate a new Halachah from now' are foundations and roots of the entire Torah. Were it not for these principles, there would be no Torah at all.

This is because already forever [there were those who challenged the eternity of Torah] as we learn in Masseches Shabbos: A sectarian said, "from the day that you were exiled from your land, the Torah of Moshe was taken away and a new 'Torah' was given". See the Gemara there.

It is possible that a person will perform signs and wonders through tricks and magic; the prophet of the Ishmaelites did just that³. And the cursed Shabsai Tzvi said that the Mitzvos all became opposite: that which was obligated became forbidden and that which was forbidden became an obligation.

Even if one doesn't believe that the entire Torah could be replaced, nonetheless no Mitzvah would be left untouched in its proper form and format [if we would accept that Torah could be changed even partially]. Everyone would say, "I had a dream that this *cheilev*⁴ is forbidden and this is allowed." This one would say this and that one would say that and the Torah would dissipate.

³ The reader may be curious as to why the Chasam Sofer mentions the 'prophet of the Ishmaelites' and seems to ignore one who founded another religion many centuries before that prophet who claimed to be a prophet or even a god and performed 'signs and miracles with tricks or sorcery'.

The answer is that Chasam Sofer was concerned that the Church would discover his writings and punish him and his town. Such a concern regarding discussing 'the prophet of the Ishmaelites' in those terms did not exist in Europe, except for the eastern countries that were part of the Russian empire.

We see many places where our Gedolim self-censored and thus many times will write 'idolater' when the correct term is 'non-Jew'.

⁴ Cattle, in contrast of *chayos*, 'wild animals', has two types of bodily fats. One is called *cheilev* – חלב and the other is called *shuman* – שומן.

If one eats *cheilev* deliberately, he is liable for the *koreis* punishment. It is permissible to eat *shuman*.

Therefore Hashem made a great rule: No prophet is authorized to make changes in a Mitzvah, explaining that such was clarified in heaven. The explanations can come from *Chachmei Yisroel* only.

That is the great need for this verse.

Rabbenu Bachye, on our Posuk, writes:

מה שנחתם הספר בלשון "אלה המצות" היה להורות כי המצות נצחיות קיימות לדורות, כי כן מלת "אלה" לשון עמידה וקיום לעד, בדברים שקיומם לא ימוט ולא ימעד, כלשון הכתוב: (בראשית ב/ד⁵) "אלה תולדות השמים והארץ", שהם עומדים לנצח מצד בריאתם... והודיענו הכתוב הזה מי צוה בהן, ועל ידי מי ולמי, ובאיזה מקום דבר פנים בפנים עמו, אמר תחלה: "אשר צוה ה'", להעיד על מעלת המצוה יתעלה, אשר כבודו ראו עינינו ואת קולו מתוך האש שמעו אזנינו. וכדי להעיד אמתת נבואת השליח המבוררת במחשבתנו הרשומה בנפשותינו, לא על פי אותותיו ומופתיו רק על פי עדותינו, עינינו ראו ולא זר⁶, ולעד לא עשה, ולכן אמר: "את משה". ולהעיד על העם שקבלו התורה...: "אל בני ישראל". ולהעיד על המקום שבו נתנו ובו חרדו רעיונינו הזכיר: "בהר סיני".

That which this Book [of Vayikro] concludes with the phrase אלה המצוות –these are the Mitzvos –comes to instruct us that the Commandments are eternal, existing for all generations. This is because the word אלה-these- is an expression of something that can remain in existence forever. It refers to things that will not falter or stumble. So we find in the Torah 'אלה—these are the generations of the heavens and the earth'. The heavens and the earth exist forever because that is what they were created for.

⁵ The entire verse reads:

אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם ביום עשות ה' אֵלֶּם... לְקִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם:

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created; it was on the day that Hashem G-d made earth and the heavens.

⁶ These words are paraphrase the verse in Iyov (Perek 19/Posuk 27):

אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי אֶחְזֶה לִי וְעֵינַי רָאוּ וְלֹא זָר כָּלֹו כְלִיתִי בְּחֻקִּי:

That which I am able to see – my eyes did not see and neither a stranger; my kindness have are ended in my bosom.

Our Posuk tells us Who commanded the commandments and through whom were they given and to whom were they given. It tells us where they were given and that Israel stood 'face to face' with Hashem.

It says first 'that which G-d commanded to testify about the greatness of He Who commands, the One Whom we saw His glory and our ears heard His Voice from the midst of the fire;

And, in order to testify regarding the indisputable prophecy of the messenger in our thoughts that are impressed in our souls – that it was not through signs and wonders but we witnessed it. 'Our eyes saw, not a stranger.'

And He never did this again. Thus the Torah writes 'to Moshe' [to give that emphasis.

And to testify regarding the people who received the Torah, it says 'to B'nei Yisroel' and to testify about the place where it was given with our thoughts trembling- it says 'at Mt. Sinai.'

Although we are not surprised when Rabbenu Bachye tells us the principle that each word in the Torah is necessary and indispensable, nonetheless, when he instructs us how to read this culminating verse of Sefer Vayikro and the need to emphasize each and every word, we read the Posuk differently.

And thus, the eternal nature of G-d's law is emphasized by underlining the significance of each of its components: the Lawgiver, the conduit to Israel, Israel itself and the significance of *Har Sinai*.

And now, we wish to examine how the Torah brings us to this crescendo that concludes Sefer Vayikro.

It is likely that many are not familiar with the Halachos with which Sefer Vayikro concludes before proclaiming the eternity of Torah and its immutability. Even in Yeshivos where Torah is learned profoundly, the Massechtos that serve as the home for those Halachos are not part of the regular *Seder HaLimmud*. Thus, for many, a perfunctory knowledge, at best, is sufficient.

But, as we examine the final verse of Sefer Vayikro, we want to see the specific context of that final verse and how the Torah leads up to its proclamation.

Following the *Tochecha* of Parshas Bechukosai we have a number of Mitzvos that are found in Massechtos *Erarchin* and *Temura*. Let us survey what the Torah teaches us.

The many Halachos in this final Perek of Vayikro, Perek 27, begin with the laws of *Erachin*-evaluations (P'sukim 1—8). In these Halachos we are taught a particular type of *neder*-vow. A person wishes to donate money to the Beis HaMikdosh in honor of himself or anyone else.

If he makes a typical *neder* and says, 'I am giving my worth, דמים, to the Beis HaMikdosh, his 'worth' is evaluated by the amount for which he would be purchased as a slave. Obviously, it is most likely that no two people would be evaluated for exact same amount because each one has differences and distinctions, sometimes major and sometimes minor. Those distinctions will inform us of how much the person is 'worth'.

However, if the person making the vow says he specifically gives the ערך, literally value, of someone then the picture is very different. The individual worth is not calculated at all. Rather the Torah, in this *g'zeiras ha'Kosuv*, defines the ערך-value by age group and gender. Each age group, by gender has a generalized ערך that does not vary and is not influenced by the actual personal 'worth' of the individual.

The following section (P'sukim 9-13) deals with a different aspect of donations to the Beis HaMikdosh, this time dealing with animals.

Animals that are eligible to be *Korbonos* are given to the Beis HaMikdosh, either as a voluntary donation or because a person has an obligation to bring a *Korban*. In any case and for whatever the reason, the person has to designate the specific animal that will be offered. Only through that designation does the animal become sanctified.

It may occur that a person who is bringing his animal as an offering may decide to get away with the cheapest possible beast, one that barely meets the standards of a *Korban*. Subsequently, the person has a change of heart and regrets bringing a measly animal and wants to do a תמורה, exchange.

At this point the Torah teaches (Posuk 10):

לֹא יִחְלִיפוּנּוּ וְלֹא יִמִּיר אֹתוֹ טוֹב בְּרָע אוֹ רָע בְּטוֹב וְאִם הֵמָּר יִמִּיר בְּהֵמָה בְּבֵהֵמָה וְהָיָה
הוא וְתַמּוּרְתוֹ יִהְיֶה קֹדֶשׁ:

Do not change it and do not exchange it, good for bad or bad for good; if one exchanges one animal for another, it and its exchange are sanctified.

There is a finality in a gift to the Beis HaMikdosh. What was given remains sanctified as long as it was an animal that was eligible to be a *Korban*; its sanctity would only dissipate if it was injured with a defect-מום that disqualifies it from being offered.

The Torah continues with additional cases of offering gifts to the Beis HaMikdosh. However, the gifts that follow are not animals for *Korbonos*, but rather properties that a person gives for the use of the *Hekdesh*.

Now, it is clear, the treasurers of the Beis HaMikdosh did not want to become property managers and certainly were not interested in people giving their unused possessions for their management.

When a person makes such a donation it is distinguished by the fact that it is ineligible to become a *Korban*.

That which is eligible to be a *Korban* and becomes the property of the Beis HaMikdosh has קְדוּשַׁת הַגּוֹף. *Kedushas HaGuf* means it has inherent sanctity that cannot be removed under ordinary circumstances.

That which is ineligible to be brought as a *Korban* and becomes the property of the Beis HaMikdosh has קְדוּשַׁת דְּמִיּוֹם. *Kedushas domim* means the property has value that is sanctified and since it is not inherently holy, that sanctity can be removed by paying its value and redeeming it.

Certainly, in most cases of *Kedushas Domim* the Beis HaMikdosh is interested in the redemption of these properties so that there will be an ongoing strong cash reserve for the upkeep and repairs that the Beis HaMikdosh always needs. That cash is reserved for בְּדֵק הַבַּיִת, which literally means 'checking the House'. Healthy amounts of funds for *bedek ha'bayis* insure the proper maintenance of the Beis HaMikdosh so that in addition to meeting its Halachic standards, it will always be inspiring.

The donations to the Beis HaMikdosh that we learn about in those following P'sukim refer to an animal with a מום that disqualifies it from being a Korban (P'sukim 11-13) as well as a טמא, inherently non-Kosher animal (Posuk 27)⁷. The Torah writes about a house (P'sukim 14-15), a field that was from the land that was bequeathed from the time of our entry into Eretz Yisroel at the time of Yehoshua (P'sukim 16-21) and a field that was purchased, and not a legacy (P'sukim 22-25).

The above are all examples of קדושת דמים and are redeemed whenever possible with the funds accruing to the Beis HaMikdosh. There are specific Halachos that govern each of these Halachos that account for differences among them.

The Torah continues with other some specific types of gifts called חרמים. If someone designates their gifts as a *cherem* then the Torah writes (P'sukim 28-29):

אֶךְ כָּל חֶרֶם אֲשֶׁר יִחַרֵם אִישׁ לֵה' מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ מֵאָדָם וּבְהֵמָה וּמִשְׂדֵּה אֲחֻזָּתוֹ לֹא יִמָּכַר
וְלֹא יִגָּאֵל כָּל חֶרֶם קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים הוּא לֵה': כָּל חֶרֶם אֲשֶׁר יִחַרֵם מִן הָאָדָם לֹא יִפְדֶּה מוֹת
יִמָּוֵת:

But any gift designated as a *cherem* that a person gives from whatever that he has a *cherem* to Hashem, whether it be a person, an animal or is legacy field, it cannot be sold and it cannot be redeemed; every *cherem* is a holy of holies for Hashem⁸. A *cherem* that is given for a person sentenced to death is not redeemable because that person has no value – he is surely going to die⁹.

⁷ In Posuk 26, the Torah mentions a specific Halachah regarding a בכור בהמה. This first-born male of a female animal that is eligible to be brought as a *Korban* is sanctified at birth.

The reader will judge if the explanation that we will present shortly deals with the Halachah in this Posuk and 'justifies' its position here. This writer is uncertain and thus its specific placement needs to be understood.

⁸ See Rashi here for a brief discussion of the identity of the recipient of a *cherem*. One opinion says it, like the other gifts in this section, goes to בֵּית דִּין and the other opinion says it is distributed to the Kohanim.

⁹ This rendition is not literally word-for-word; rather it incorporates Rashi's commentary here.

Thus, the *cherem* becomes the most extreme of gifts to the Beis HaMikdosh and those who serve in it. Yet, it remains within the category of נדבות and נדרים, free-will pledges of goods that become sanctified to one of the levels hwe have learned.

The penultimate verses of Sefer Vayikro have the same title, but are really two separate categories. The title that the two categories share is מעשר, tithings, but their Halachos are unrelated.

The first topic of those verses (P'sukim 30-31) deals with מעשר שני. *Maaser Sheni* is the tithing of the produce that grows in the first two years of the Shemitta cycle and again in years four and five¹⁰. The separation of *Bikkurim*, and Teruma is followed by separating מעשר ראשון/לוי, the first tenth that goes to the Levi. Then, a second tithing is separated and that is how it gets its name – *Maaser Sheini*¹¹.

Unlike all of the previous verses that we have cited here, with all of their laws, *Maaser Sheini* is totally unrelated to Kohanim. The produce separated for *Maaser Sheini* does have sanctity and that sanctity is preserved by consuming that produce by people who are tahor and within the sanctified section of Yerushalayim.

The second topic (P'sukim 32-33) also deals with *maaser*, but a very different type. Let us see the verses:

וְכָל מַעֲשֵׂר בְקָר וְצֹאן כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹר תַּחַת הַשֶּׁבֶט הָעֹשִׂירִי יִהְיֶה קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה: לֹא יִבְקָר
בֵּין טוֹב לְרָע וְלֹא יִמְרְנוּ וְאִם הָיָה מִיִּמְרָנוּ יִהְיֶה הוּא וְתַמּוּרְתּוֹ יִהְיֶה קֹדֶשׁ לֹא יִגָּאֵל:

All of the tithing of cattle and sheep, all that will pass under the staff – the tenth will be sanctified for Hashem. Do not distinguish between good and bad and do not change them; if you change them, it and its exchange will be sanctified and irredeemable.

This is what happens with מעשר בהמה. All the cattle and sheep born in the same year, each species separately, are placed in a contained area and a narrow opening is made so that they go out one by one. The order of their exit is random; one does not organize them whatsoever. As they go out, they are counted and the tenth and

¹⁰ In years three and six of the Shemitta cycle, the second tenth is called מעשר עני. *Maaser Oni* is given to the poor. Once it is given there are no restrictions at all on its consumption.

¹¹ 5779 is the fifth year of the Shemitta cycle and thus it is a 'Maaser Sheni year'.

the twentieth and the thirtieth, and so on, are touched by a staff that has some coloring on it which is put upon the tithed animal to identify it and that tithed animal is proclaimed 'קודש לה'. Each is sanctified as a *Korban*.

The second of the two verses indicate the randomness of their exit. It is forbidden for the owner to manipulate them so that the best of animals, or the worst, is the tenth.

We have surveyed the final P'sukim of Sefer Vayikro with an attempt to understand their impact, with a particular emphasis on their being chosen to lead us to the Sefer's concluding verse. That concluding verse, we remember, teaches that when the era of Torah comes to an end, the Written Torah is complete. Not only are the greatest of prophets excluded from adding the smallest bit to the Written Torah, even Heaven is restricted.

All of the P'sukim that we have seen, with one exception, have a common theme. That theme is the connection of Am Yisroel with the Mishkan/Beis HaMikdosh and the Kohanim. Am Yisroel seeks sanctity and that sanctity of person and property we are told, time and time again, comes about through the connection of the people to the Mishkan/Beis HaMikdosh and the Kohanim.

It is certainly appropriate to consider this continual theme as most fitting for the conclusion of Sefer Vayikro, *Toras Kohanim*. It would seem most appropriate for the finale of Sefer Vayikro to be similar to its beginning.

The beginning of Sefer Vayikro deals with the various Korbonos, taking us to the dedication of the Mishkan, the Halachos of purity and impurity and Yom HaKippurim.

And then at its end we are again reminded of that unique bond of holiness.

However, Sefer Vayikro is more than *Toras Kohanim*. If Sefer Vayikro was only *Toras Kohanim* then its final Posuk would be a poor fit because the entirety of the Torah, the subject of its final Posuk, encompasses more than the Mishkan and Kohanim.

And that is the purpose, I believe, of the penultimate verses that talk about two Halachos that are different in almost every aspect except for the name that they bear jointly.

Maaser Sheini is not connected to the Mishkan or to the Kohanim. *Maaser Sheini* is a procedure that is self-contained for the individual. The owner of the produce is the one who separates the *maaser sheini* and designates it as such, thereby conferring upon it its Halachos.

He is the one who consumes it and he is the one who raises his personal sanctity when he eats this tithing with the purity that the Halachah requires. He does not need the Mishkan/Beis HaMikdosh and does not need Kohanim, or anyone else for that matter.

Maaser Sheini is the opportunity for the individual to create *Kedushah* for himself.

One may ask, then, - why does the Torah join the Mitzvah of *Maaser B'heima* to *Maaser Sheini*?

The response to that question is that there are multiple routes to holiness and not only are they not mutually exclusive, they exist in tandem and all are interdependent because all together they teach us the Will of G-d.

Think for a moment regarding one of the most famous Parshos in the Torah – Parshas Kedoshim in our Sefer Vayikro. Literally, *Kedoshim* means ‘holy people’. Isn’t that the meaning of the verse there (Perek 19/Posuk 2):

דַּבֵּר אֶל כָּל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Speak to the entire congregation of B'nei Yisroel and you shall say to them, 'You should be holy because I Hashem your G-d am holy.'

The topic of sanctity is not foreign to Sefer Vayikro, of course. But, the *raison d'etre* of that sanctity is not connected to the Mishkan/Beis HaMikdosh or Kohanim. The rationale of that sanctity is Divine Sanctity. 'Be holy because Hashem is holy.'

That is why when we study Parshas Kedoshim we read that some verses do deal with Korbonos and many others are completely unrelated to them.

By placing Parshas Kedoshim within Sefer Vayikro the Torah is making a statement. Holiness has many venues. *All* of those venues are required to reach ultimate holiness but there is not only one venue.

And that message must be revisited and reemphasized when we come to the conclusion of Sefer Vayikro.

Sefer Vayikro ends the era of Sinai where the Torah was given in its entirety¹². And when it proclaims that with the death of Moshe Rabbenu the Torah's writing is completed, then the introduction to that proclamation must not be one-sided. It has to be more inclusive.

Our goal is to serve G-d. True service of G-d means that we seek ways of approaching Him. The 613 ways of that approach all join together to provide us with holiness.

Even when we are bereft of the Beis HaMikdosh, we do not have to be bereft of sanctity and its pursuit.

Yes, the Beis HaMikdosh and the Kohanim serving in it are requisite. But even when they are absent that does not mean that the connection that we wish to forge with HaKodosh Boruch Hu is beyond our reach.

That is the hidden message of the P'sukim that conclude Sefer Vayikro. The message is one of empowerment.

If we sense the power that Hashem has imbued within us as individuals and as a nation, then we will not be deterred; we will not allow ourselves to be pushed away from His service.

Let us remember that empowerment and realize its potential.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Pollock

¹² See Masseches Gittin 60 a where we read:

The Torah was given as individual scrolls.

תורה מגילה מגילה ניתנה

See the discussion revolving around that Gemara if ניתנה refers to how Torah was given by G-d to Moshe Rabbenu or how Torah was given to Israel, one part at a time.

