

PARSHAT VAYIKRA  
5 NISAN 5781/18 MARCH 2021



*Clouds of Canopy*  
Painting by Yoram Raanan

LEADERS WHO MAKE THEMSELVES SMALLER

1. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it and the Presence of God filled the Mishkan. (Exodus 40:35)

God called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting... (Leviticus 1:1)

“From the Tent of Meeting.” This teaches us that the sound of the voice would be cut off and would not go outside the Tent. (Rashi, Leviticus 1:1)

Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it to show the Holy One’s love for the people Israel. Then the cloud shifted inward and settled upon the Ark: “There I will meet with you and speak with you from above the cover...” (Exodus 25:22. (Rashbam, Exodus 40:35)

2. Moses wished to write *וַיִּקַּח* (“and God happened upon him”).
3. Moses constantly lessened himself before God and before the people of Israel. (Tosafists)

4. When we place self at the center of our universe, we eventually turn everyone and everything into a means or an ends. That diminishes them, which diminishes us. Humility means living by the light of that-which-is-greater-than-me. When God is at the center of our lives, we open ourselves up to the glory of creation and the beauty of other people. The smaller the self, the wider the radius of our world. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)
  
5. This is the reason that Moses made the aleph of the divine call smaller. Since it belonged to the realm of white fire, the summons required an extra measure of white space over black ink. Superficially, Moses' miniature aleph humbly implies a diminished state of the revealed Torah of black fire, but on a deeper level, it reflects an increase in the esoteric Torah of white fire. (Rav Kook)