



## Vayikra

### What Is Humility?

Is it possible that the most humble person who ever lived actually had a touch of arrogance? I'm referring to Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest of all rabbis and teachers. The Torah declares that Moshe was:

“עָנֹו מִכָּל הָאָדָם”,  
“More humble than any person throughout all time.”

And yet we see that very same Moshe standing before Pharaoh, thundering:

“Let my people go!”

The very same Moshe who, when Korach and his followers challenged him, declared: “Aharon and I are God’s chosen ones.”

At the very beginning of the portion of Vayikra, we have an answer to this question. Vayikra is the first word of our parsha, it is also the first word of the book of Vayikra. And fascinatingly, the last letter of Vayikra, the aleph, is what we call an “אָלֶף זְעִירָא” - it's a tiny aleph.

According to midrashic tradition, it was Moshe who wrote that aleph in small lettering. Hashem dictated the Torah to him, and when Hashem said to him:

“וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה”  
“And he called to Moses”

Moshe thought, “God himself has called out to me. I'm not worthy.” So he wrote a tiny aleph so that the word would now look more like ויקר, which means... Hashem bumped into him. Hashem *happened* to encounter him.

So in this way, Moshe represented his humility. We only have a question relating to that humility if we misunderstand what the concept is all about. Because, it is critically important for us to have self-confidence, to believe in our ability. To thank Hashem for the talents and the gifts of life that he has endowed us with.

So a great, humble person, when complimented, would not think to himself, “They’ve got it spot on - I'm the greatest.” No. On the contrary, they would say “Hashem has given me opportunities. Thank you Hashem for enabling me to maximize those opportunities in my life.”

Therefore, there is no contradiction between self-confidence and high achievement on the one hand, and deep humility on the other.

And the finest example of that all was Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest teacher and rabbi of all time.

Shabbat Shalom.