



As is well-known, over the generations, the first book of the Chumash that children were taught is Sefer Vayikra, the third of the Five Books, that deals largely with the sacrifices that the people offer to Hashem. At first glance, this is surprising. For how can we expect young children to understand and imbibe the intricacies of the Korbanot? Why not begin with the traditional Bible stories of Sefer B'reishit?

The Midrash Vayikra gives us a clue: "So that the pure souls will be occupied with matters of purity." That is, then, that those young children, as yet not festered with sin, will learn how one "cleanses" the heart and how to approach their Father in Heaven. Moreover, notes Yehuda Muriel, our Sages focused on Vayikra because of their longing for the return of the rule of the House of David and the building of the Beit HaMikdash.

At the beginning of our Parsha, Moshe is awaiting Hashem's call to summon him to the Mishkan. And when it finally comes, G-d tells Moshe, "Speak to the Children of

Israel" about the offerings - to Bnei Yisrael and not just to the Kohanim. Clearly, Hashem is reminding us that the Beit Mikdash and the offerings were not the private domain of a select few, the aristocrats and the kohanim.

Abarbanel reminds us that all of Bnei Yisrael was involved in the building of the Mishkan.

So, it was not just Moshe who awaited G-d's call. As at Sinai, then with the initiation of the offerings, every Jew awaited that call.

And so, in our day, are we (children included) still yearning for that call, so that, "The offerings of Yehuda and Yerushalayim be pleasant to Hashem, as in the days of old and in ancient years" (Malachi 3:4). **MP**