



## VAYIKRA - VAYIKAR-VA'YI'KAAR

Last week's portion ended with the cloud covering OHEL MOED, and God's glory filling the MISHKAN. Moshe was not able to enter OHEL MOED, to meet with God, because the cloud was upon it. (Sh'mot 40:35).

Our portion begins where the book of Sh'mot left off. God calls to Moshe VAYIKRA EL MOSHE - He invites him to come to the sanctuary to meet Him. Rashi says that L'KOL DIBROT, UL'KOL AMIROT UL'KOL TZIVU'IM KADMA KRIYA. Whenever God spoke, said or commanded anything to Moshe it was always preceded by God calling out to Moshe by name. KRIYA is an expression of affection, the same expression used by the ministering angels when they address each other. (V'KARA ZEH EL ZEH). As Rashi says, LASHON CHIBA, this is a sign of God's love.

Rashi points out the difference between how God called out to Moshe VAYIKIRA, getting his attention first, planning to meet him, and not just VAYIKAR, as He meets the prophets of other nations - coincidentally, with impurity, by chance (Bamidbar 23:4).

This is very relevant to the Purim story which could look like it happened by chance - but was orchestrated by God behind the scenes. It took place during one of the darkest times in Jewish history up to that time. The Beit HaMikdash had been destroyed and there were not many Jews left in Israel. Permission was granted to rebuild the Temple, but the work had been stopped by Achashverosh. The nation was demoralized, wondering whether God still wanted them as His nation. Maybe the connection between Israel and God had gone up in smoke with the burning of the Temple?

In the Megila God's name doesn't appear - His presence was hidden throughout the story. This story took nine years to unfold. It was a different kind of miracle. Everything that happened could look like mere coincidences (VAYIKAR). But that is exactly the miracle and the message. We must remember that God hovers near us, even when it seems like He has forsaken us. Nothing is coincidence when it comes to our survival. God is always with us, like the cloud in the desert, protecting us, whether we feel His presence or not. From behind the scenes God makes everything work out so that LAYEHUDIM HAYTA ORA V'SIMCHA, V'SASON VI'KAR - the Jews had light and joy, and gladness and honor" (Esther 8:16)

Purim Same'ach.

I haven't made quinoa in a while. I just remembered this recipe that got



my family to like quinoa, thanks to the sweet potato that is "hidden" inside. So I thought it appropriate for the Hester panim, that G-d's presence is hidden in the Purim story. It's a great recipe to serve at the Purim seuda, or to give as mishlo'ach manot.

## **QUINOA WITH HIDDEN SWEET POTATO**

1 Tbsp oil

1 onion, diced

2 sweet potato, diced

3 cups quinoa, washed to remove bitterness

4½ cups water

salt & pepper to taste

Dash cinnamon (optional)

Sauté onion in oil till golden, add sweet potato and saute a few minutes till soft. Add quinoa, water and spices, and cook covered for about 20 minutes till water is absorbed. Serve warm, but it is also good served cold.

