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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARAH ADUMA
IN OUR TIMES / Page 11



PARASHOT KI TESAH

Once upon a time there was a peddler that went to a wealthy neighborhood to sell his simple wooden spoons. He made sure that the price was nice and cheap as he stood there all day trying to sell his goods. He would scream at the top of his lungs trying to make a sale but he had no luck, no one wanted to buy his products. A kind man observing the situation approached the poor peddler and said to him, "you probably thought it is a good place to sell here because the people have money in a wealthy neighborhood." The merchant nodded. The kind man explained to him rich people don't like simple wooden spoons; they only want expensive gold and silver utensils. He directed him to a poor neighborhood and there the merchant was successful.

In the Parasha due to the sin of the eigel, Hashem expresses three times that He is upset at us and uses the term "Am Kashea Oref". Hashem calls us a very stubborn nation, literally a stiff neck. Then in the tefilla that Moshe prays for Am Yisrael, he requests our forgiveness stating "because we are a stubborn people". Why would Moshe use this defective aspect of the nation in his tefila? The Dubno Magid explains; first Moshe recited the thirteen attributes of mercy and then he asked Hashem where do you need these attributes in the heavens? Why would an angel need mercy? It is clear that all of the attributes are needed for "the people that are stubborn". It is only because we are stubborn that Hashem can express His mercy. Another way to see stubbornness in a positive light is by viewing it in the future. Moshe Rabainu is saying to Hashem, it is true that their stubbornness now is a negative trait but in the future it will be necessary. When the nation will be in galut-exile amongst the nations of the world this trait will be there to maintain us as a nation through all the challenges of the goyim. It is our attribute of stubbornness that

will keep us steadfast in our emuna in Hashem. That will guide us in the time of persecution into holding onto our identity.

A chassid and his wife arrived in New York from Russia, en-route to Eretz Yisroel. The Rav of the shul invited the Russian couple to stay with him until their departure to the holy land. The Russian couple had saved up all their money and would make the lifelong dream of moving to Eretz Yisroel when they had the rest of the funds they needed. One day in shul a man stood up to make an appeal for the local mikvah that was being built. The Russian chassid quickly pledged all his life savings right then and there. The Rav cried out, "Why are you giving away all your money? You dreamed of living in Eretz Yisroel, without your savings you will be stuck here, penniless!" The chassid then shared his sad story that illustrated his incredible dedication to mitzvos. "My wife and I are childless" the chassid explained, "not due to any medical problems but simply because we had no access to a mikva. Each month my wife would count and complete all the required halachos in preparation for the mikvah, but each month passed and there was nowhere that she could go in communist Russia. Now we finally left that G-dless country but we are both too old to have children. I value mikvah so greatly and never would want anyone to be in the predicament we were in. That is why I want to give all my money to this important mission."

May we all have to fortitude to embrace this mida in it proper application.

Shabbat Shalom Rabbi Aaron Lankry

NEW MINYANIM ADDED:

EARLY MINYAN MINCHA FRIDAY 12:37, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30

SHABBOS ZMANIM

Table with 2 columns: Activity and Time. Includes Candle Lighting (5:39 PM), Mincha Alef Tent (5:49 PM), Mincha Bais Chabad (5:49 PM), Shkiya (5:57 PM), Shachris Vaskin-Daf Yomi Shiur (5:35 AM), Shachris Ashkenaz 18 Main (8:00 AM), Shachris Main Minyan 18 Tent (9:15 AM), Shachris 20 Forshay Bais Chabad (10:00 AM), NEW Shachris 18 Forshay (NEW 10:15 AM), Mincha (1:45 PM), Pirchei (2:00 PM), Mincha Shalosh Seudos (5:40 PM), Shkiya (5:58 PM), Marriv (6:38 PM 18 Tent, 6:43 PM)

WEEKDAY ZMANIM

Table with 2 columns: Activity and Time. Includes Shachris (20 minutes before Neitz), Mincha & Mariv (12 minutes before Plag), Mincha & Mariv (12 minutes before Shkia), and March 12 - March 18 schedule for Neitz, Pelag, Shkia, Magen Avraham, Gra-Baal Hatanya.

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbi EPHRAYIM YUROWITZ TZVI BLECH : Gabbai



Mincha Mariv Minyanim advertisement for Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim Community Learning Center. Includes winter 2022/2023 schedule for 18 Main and Mariv minyanim, location at 18 Forshay Road, and contact information.



Rabbi Coren

PARSHAS KI TISA

PARSHAS ZACHOR TO PARSHAS PARAH



RABBI BENTZION SNEH

Last Shabbas was Parshas Zachor and I hope to connect it to this week's Parsha, Parshas Parah with some new insights inspired by Hashem. I will begin with my new approach this year regarding the announcement of the Mitzvos of reading Parshas Zachor. For years I followed the standard of reading twice or even three times the different versions of the word Zecher - with a tzaire or with a segol. I also read using the Sefardi trop and announcements in order to include the special Sefardim that were davening with us. This year, however, I recognized that we have been holding on to the tafel - that which is secondary - and missing out on the Ikar - the main part of the mitzva of Zachor. I received inspiration from two different giants: Reb Chaim of Brisk Z"l who is quoted by Rav Moshe Sternbuch, shlita in Teshuvos Vehanhagos and the Lubavitcher Rebbe Z"l in volume 19 of his Sichos, both of whom share a similar concept. The Rebbe notes that there seems to be somewhat of a contradiction in the Rambam. On the one hand the Rambam writes that there are essentially three mitzvos regarding Parshas Zachor (see also the Chinuch in Mitzva 603). The first mitzva is to read what the nation of Amalek did to the Jewish people when they left Egypt. Reading from the Torah with ten people is a fulfillment of this mitzva. The second mitzva is a negative "Don't forget." This mitzva is what is in our heart. We are commanded not to forget the heinous acts of Amalek. We are commanded to instill and harbor a hatred for the nation of Amalek so we may fulfill the third mitzva which is to annihilate - i.e. totally destroy-- any trace or memory of the Amalek.

Herein lies the problem. The Rambam elucidates and it is clearly expressed in the verses themselves that the act of physically destroying a nation does not apply until the Mashiach comes. How do we then connect to the last two mitzvos when they don't seem relevant or represent our reality? The profound lesson unravelled by the giants mentioned above teach us that the Amalek we are referring to is not only the nation. It is the people whom we have difficulty recognizing today and even if we could, we would not be able to destroy them as

Rav Moshe Feinstein Z"l writes in Drash Moshe. It's the ideology of Amalek that we need to extinguish, along with the people--non-Jews and even Jews--who advocate a way of life made up of leniencies and contradictions to G-d's precepts. It's the people that focus on feeling good and ignoring what Hashem, the creator of the universe, requires of us. These negative beliefs exist within all of us and we are constantly battling against them. Rav Hutner and other Balai Machshava point to the ע"ל - the 'scoffer' within us. I would like to suggest that the scoffer represents the antithesis of Simcha. It's not by accident that when the month of Adar 'comes in' we are expected to increase our simcha. Real simcha stems from appreciating who we are and what we possess and recognizing where it all comes from. As Rabineu Yoma explains in the fourth chapter of Pirkai Avos which discusses happiness, it's not enough to appreciate what we have; it must be part of a greater cause--being a true servant of Hashem.

The ideas above relate beautifully to Parshas Parah. The Malbim provides a new outlook on what Parshas Parah represents. He posits that this is an actual reference to the sin of the golden calf and because Hashem didn't want to embarrass us it was given a different name. In essence, Parshas Parah is resolving the sin of the golden calf and preparing us for the month of Nissan and the Pesach holiday when we are expected to become true servants of Hashem. Some Mefarshim explain the sin of the golden calf as the passuk hints-- איוו אלוהות --the people desired a deity, a replacement for Moshe. And instead of discussing this with Aron Hakohen, they went with what felt right to them and as a result committed terrible sins (including killing Aron Hakohen's nephew.)

The goal in life is to try to be a true Eved Hashem, to live with as much joy as possible and be willing to commit to Hashem's will even if it isn't what we would choose. May the purity of the Parah Adumah both physically and spiritually cleanse us and may we be Zoche to see Mashiach Bimhera Beyamenu.

החייט לא יכול היה לוותר על נסיעה נוספת אל אותו רב גדול, על מנת לשאול אותו מה עמד מאחורי עצתו המוזרה לכאורה. "לא היה קשה להבין מהסיפור שלך", אמר הרב בחיור, "שבפעם הראשונה תפרת את החליפה של השר מתוך גאוה ומתוך מחשבות על כבוד וכסף. אבל לגאוה אין חן, וכך גם לחליפה שתפרת לא היה חן בעיני השר. הייתי משוכנע שאם תתפור שוב את אותו בגד בדיוק, הפעם מתוך ענווה וצניעות, הוא יישא חן בעיני כל רואיו וכך אכן היה."

בפרשת השבוע אנחנו קוראים על כך שמשה רבנו יורד מהר סיני ורואה את עם ישראל חוטאים בעגל והוא שובר את הלוחות, לאחר מכן הקב"ה נותן למשה לוחות שניות עבור עם ישראל וחד"ל אומרים שהלוחות השניות היו גדולות מהראשונות שאיתם ניתנה כל התורה שבעל פה, ובמבט ראשון זה לא מובן למה הלוחות שניתנו אחרי שעם ישראל חטאו היו ברמה יותר גבוהה, הרי הלוחות הראשונות היו כשעם ישראל היו טהורים ומזוכים ממעמד הר סיני וההתגלות האלוהית דווקא עכשו אחרי החטא הם מקב"לים משהו גדול יותר?

מסבירה תורת החסידות שבג"ל ל שהתורה היא אין סופית הרי שהאדם המוגבל יכול לקבל אותה דווקא כשהוא במצב של ביטול האגו, כשהוא לא תופס יותר מדי מקום ומפנה את כל מקומו לקב"ה, עם ישראל במתן תורה היו במקום גבוה מאוד כנאמר "ורוממתנו מכל הלשונות" וזה גרם להם ביטול כלפי הקב"ה אבל ממקום של התנשאות וגדולה.

אחרי חטא העגל כשעם ישראל ראו את משה שובר את הלוחות נשבר ליבם וזה הביא אותם לביטול עצמי מוחלט ואז הם נהיו כלים לגילוי האין סופי של התורה והיו ראויים לקבל גם את התורה שבעל פה.

זו הסיבה שבארון הברית היו גם שברי הלוחות מכיוון שללוחות השבורות היה תפקיד חשוב להזכיר לעם ישראל שכדי להשרות את השכינה צריכים לפנות מקום בתוכנו. המסר שנוכל ללמוד זה שגם כשחלי"ל יש מצב של שבירה האור שמיגע אחריו הוא אור הרבה יותר גדול ויהי רצון שנסתפק בלוחות השבורות כדי לזכור את תפקידנו בפנינו מקום לש"כינה ובזכות זה נזכה לגאולה שלימה שתבוא בקרב ממש.

פרשת כי תשא

מעשה בחייט פשוט וצנוע שהיה מתפרנס בקושי מתיקונים ותפירות פשוטות, יום אחד פגש אדם עשיר את החייט ומצא חן בעיניו, הזמין הע"שיר חליפה יוקרתית וכעבור זמן קצר סיפק החייט את המבוקש בהצטיינות יתרה. העשיר התלהב מאוד מכישוריו של החייט, סיפר לחבריו וכך הפך החייט לבעל שם נחשק בתחומו. אחד משירי המדינה ששמע על החייט זימן אותו לאחוזתו, הראה לו גליל בד יקר מאוד שהביא מחו"ל ואמר לו "רכשתי את הברד הזה בסכום מאוד גבוה, אני מצפה שתתפור ממנו חליפה מיוחדת מאוד". החייט הוחמא מאוד ואמר בביטחון מלא "אני חייט מומחה ומקצועי, הסר כל דאגה מלבך!", השר נרגע, החייט חזר לביתו והחל בתפירה, במהלך הכנת הבגד, לא הפסיק החייט לדמיין את המחמאות שיקבל על הבגד היפה, הוא תפר את החליפה, השתדל מאוד להגיע לשלמות, ובסופו של דבר נסע לאחוזת השר עם החליפה היפה בידיו.

השר מדד את החליפה ופניו האדימו מזעם. "איזו חליפה מכוערת זאת!", צעק, "זה מה שעשית בגליל הברד היקר שהבאתי לך? איך אתה לא מתבייש?", השומרים שראו זאת תפסו את החייט וזרקו אותו מהארמון כשהם לא שוכחים להשליך עליו את החליפה האימה שתפר עבור אדונו. החייט חזר לביתו אבל וחפוי ראש, הוא גולל בפני אשתו את המעשה כולו, ובפיה הייתה רק עצה אחת: "לך תתייעץ עם הרב הגדול" הסכים החייט ונסע אל הרב, החייט סיפר לרב את כל הסיפור ואת תחושותיו לפני ואחרי, יעץ לו הרב עצה פשוטה אך מוזרה: "לך לביתך, תפרום את כל הבגד עד היסוד, ומיד לאחר מכן תתפור אותו שוב. קח את הבגד המחוודש לשר ותבקש ממנו למדוד אותו שנית". החייט ניסה לשאול לפשר העצה, אבל הרב אמר לו "אל תחשוב פעמיים - ממילא אין לך מה להפסיד".

חזר החייט לביתו, פרם את החליפה ותפר אותה שוב, ועם התוצרת המ"חודשת הגיע שוב ברגליים כושלות אל האחוזת. להפתעתו, הסכים השר למדוד שוב את החליפה ולתדהמתו התלהבות השר הייתה עצומה. גם אנשיו הרעיפו מחמאות על החייט, ואילו הוא לא הבין מה קרה כאן - הרי מדובר באותו הבגד בדיוק.

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Rabbi Reisman

THE BREAKING OF THE LUCHOS

As you know, the Gemara says that Moshe Rabbeinu did three things on his own and Hashem was Maskim. One of them was the breaking of the Luchos. I once saw (I think) from Rav Isaac Sher he says that the things that Moshe Rabbeinu did on his own, the three items that Chazal bring, he did with one theme. HKB"H said bring the Luchos down to the people. After all, in the Luchos is the Parsha of Teshuva, so bring the first Luchos down.

When Moshe Rabbeinu came down he made a decision. He said, I don't want to give Klal Yisrael the Luchos in such a B'dieved fashion. It is better to do it right even if that means starting all over again rather than having a Luchos that is tainted by the Maiseh Ha'eigl. Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu decided to break the Luchos. Let's get it right. Let's start again and make sure that we do it properly and once we do it properly it will be a proper Luchos. It is a lesson in life. Do it once and do it right.

The same explanation can be given for the other things that Moshe Rabbeinu did on his own. Before Shavuos, Moshe Rabbeinu added one day on his own to the Yemai Hag'bala. It was the same idea. The number of days that they had were certainly adequate for Kabbalas Hatorah. After all, HKB"H said so. However, Moshe Rabbeinu said let's do it right. Let's do it completely right. Better we should delay a day and do it one day later and at that time be Mekabeil the Luchos with some extra preparation. Better that then to do it in a way that is adequate but not perfect.

The same thing with the third thing. Moshe Rabbeinu was Poreish Mai'ishto. He could have lived with his wife and when Hashem wanted to talk to him he would run off to the Mikva. But he said let me do Lechatchila. Of course with his wife's agreement. He was Pirush Mai'ishto so that he should always be ready to be Mekabeil the Nevuos Hashem without any delay at all. Do it once and do it right. What a lesson.

With that I wish everybody an absolutely wonderful post Purim, a healthy Avir of Purim. The spirit of Purim should continue, it should carry us forward to a new Zman of Geulah as we prepare for Pesach.

A Gutten Shabbos to one and all.



Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

ONE DAY WE WILL ALL BE PLACED IN A BOX; LET'S ENRICH OUR LIVES BY NOT PUTTING OURSELVES OR OTHERS IN ONE UNTIL THEN

On the one hand, he sent his children to chareidi schools. On the other, he has proudly taught in progressive women's institutions. He was educated in the right-wing world, but he profoundly values the miracle of the modern state of Israel.

When asked what world he belongs in, how does he see himself, one of my rabbis in Israel answered, "You can put me in a box when I am dead; until then don't try to make me fit neatly into one of your labels."

More and more, we are forcing people into boxes, even as they are alive. Everything from politics to religion is portrayed as simplified and binary. Whether gun control, healthcare, the economy, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, or women's role in Judaism, the extremists have lined up and they want us to believe that we must view these issues and almost any other, as this or that; you are either with me or against me, you either "totally get it" or you are "totally insane." The camps have been set up and the default in our world is that you must fit neatly into one of them.

But what about the camp of those who don't fit neatly or conform nicely to the binary options? What about those who see merit in conflicting views, who live with the tension that creates, who approach complicated issues with nuance and who acknowledge complexity? Is there room for us, do we get a voice, is our approach legitimate too?

In our polarized world, you are either with someone or against them. Either they can do no wrong, or they can do no right. You must love and adore them, or reject and hate them.

While the rest of the world may be dividing up into teams, Republicans vs Democrats, conservative's vs liberals, traditionalist vs progressives, forced to toe the party line, pressured to hold predictable views based on their membership, the Jewish people have a tradition of nuance and diversity.

The Talmud quotes Rav Chisda who teaches: "One who learns how to think from only one Rebbe, one teacher, doesn't ever see blessing" (Avoda Zara 19a). Just as with material investments we get a better return when we diversify, so too our spiritual investments; learning and exposure should be diversified with openness and access to the seventy faces of authentic Torah.

The Midrash tells us: Moses wrote 13 Torahs, one corresponding with each of the 12 tribes, and the 13th was to be put into the Aron

(Ark) so that if someone wants to distort any of the 12 Torahs, it would be checked against the 13th for authenticity. (Devarim Rabba 9:9)

The Holy Temple had 13 gates, one corresponding with each tribe and the 13th for those who didn't know what tribe they descended from. Once there was a 13th gate and a 13th Torah, why the need for the original 12?

Perhaps the message is that each tribe, each camp, each point of view deserves to exist and be heard in isolation. But the diverse points of view also have to recognize and allow for the 13th gate, for those can't easily fit into one of the existing tribes, who aren't natural descendants of a particular point of view but who choose to walk through the entrance that allows for nuance, a multiplicity of views and a complex approach.

People are entitled to not fit into a box, to not line up neatly or conform to the preconceived paradigms of others. But more than that, one needs to be careful not to overly certain of their point of view. When asked what he would eliminate in the world if he had a magic wand, Nobel prize winner Dr. Daniel Kahneman answered with one word: overconfidence.

There is a difference between having convictions, advocating for a particular point of view or towards specific policies, and being overly confident that they are the only way of seeing or doing things.

Be strong in what you believe in, pursue it, represent it, be persuasive in your arguments for it, and in the end, let others see it differently, nonetheless. If we want to see blessing in our thinking, in our judgment, in our relationships and in our lives, we need to have more than one teacher. We need to be exposed to more than one perspective.

The community of those who walk through the 13th gate need to speak up and speak out. We need to not be dragged to overconfident, superficial and binary positions and conclusions just because it makes it more comfortable or convenient for others to have us there with them. Those who maintain a steadfast commitment to nuance and complexity, who can still see the merit in conflicting views, must not be silenced by those screaming over them, both online and offline.

One day we will all be placed in a box; let's enrich our lives by not putting ourselves or others in one until then.

PARSHAS KI SISA

WEALTHY FROM THE CATASTROPHE OF THE BROKEN LUCHOS

34:1 "ויאמר ד' אל משה פסל לך שני לוחות אבנים כראשונים"

"Hakodosh Boruch Hu told Moshe Rabbeinu to carve two stone tablets like the first ones." Rashi – Hakodosh Boruch Hu showed Moshe a Sanpirinon (sapphire), and told Moshe that the chips shall be his. Moshe became very wealthy from these precious stones. What is the significance of Moshe's becoming very wealthy? Why was this a fitting way for Moshe to become wealthy?

The Gemara in Nedarim 38a tells us that we learn from Moshe Rabbeinu that to be a Navi, one must be wealthy like Moshe Rabbeinu was. From "P'sol L'cha" we learn that Moshe Rabbeinu became wealthy. Before the second Luchos, Moshe was not wealthy. We know that Moshe had received Nevuah numerous times before the giving of the second Luchos. How can we learn from Moshe Rabbeinu that one must be wealthy to be a Navi when he himself had Nevuah before he was wealthy? In a perfect world, if a Navi would give a Nevuah to Klal Yisroel, certainly all would heed the Navi's words. When Klal Yisroel received the Torah – Poshtu Zuhamson, the Tumah that was on this world left. However, after Klal Yisroel did the Chet Ha'eigel, the Zuhama came back. After the Zuhama came back, Klal Yisroel would not necessarily listen to the commands of Hashem through a Navi. It was at this juncture that Moshe Rabbeinu became wealthy. By Matan Torah, people listened to Moshe Rabbeinu even though he was not wealthy. However at the second Luchos, when the Zuhama came back, Moshe needed to become wealthy in order to continue to have Nevuah and ensure that he would be listened to by Klal Yisroel. (מהר"ם שיק)

The Medrash tells us that Moshe was a Chacham Lev, wise of heart, for taking the bones of Yosef. Why was Moshe's choice of taking Atzmos Yosef wise, as opposed to Klal Yisroel who were also following the command of Hashem by taking booty from the Mitzriyim? Certain Mitzvos are accompanied by personal physical pleasure or gain, while others are performed purely for the fulfillment of Hashem's will. A Mitzvah performed completely Lishma is greater than one performed only partially Lishma. Moshe Rabbeinu was wise

because he chose to do the Mitzvah which gave him no personal gain. He did the Mitzvah completely L'shem Shomayim, as opposed to the rest of the Klal Yisroel who fulfilled the will of Hashem, but not completely for altruistic reasons. (אבני נזר)

Moshe received the "P'soles", the refuse, the non-important part of the stone, and he became wealthy from it. Why did Moshe need this wealth, and what did he do with it? Chazal are teaching us that the money that Moshe received was "P'soles" compared to the Torah Hakdosha. The main part of the stone was used for the Luchos, the Torah Hakdosha. The unimportant part of the stone had much physical value. We are to learn a lesson for life that the Torah Hakdosha is more valuable than all of the physical riches in this world. (ש"ך על התורה)

There were two Mitzvos that needed to be done. One was to take booty from the Mitzriyim, and the other was to take Atzmos Yosef. Moshe chose Atzmos Yosef, while the rest of Klal Yisroel chose the booty of the Mitzriyim. Moshe Rabbeinu had only one goal in mind, the will of his Creator. Klal Yisroel also wanted to fulfill the will of their Creator; however, they also had some personal benefit and became wealthy from following the command of the Ribbono Shel Olam. Moshe Rabbeinu became wealthy after the Chet Ha'eigel because unfortunately the Zuhama returned, and wealth was needed for people to listen to and respect him. However, there is something much more profound that we can learn from here. Moshe chose to take Atzmos Yosef, and left the Mitzvah of taking the valuables of the Mitzriyim for others. It would seem that Moshe was the poorest person in all of Klal Yisroel. Klal Yisroel had gold, and ended up making an Eigel with some of the gold. The Torah is teaching us that one who Hashem wants to make rich, will become rich. Moshe did not take valuables from Mitzrayim and nonetheless, in one moment, he went from being the poorest in Klal Yisroel to possibly the wealthiest. We need to focus on the will of Hashem and not any ulterior motives. We must always remember to follow the commands of the Ribbono Shel Olam for no other reason than that we want to fulfill the will of the Ribbono Shel Olam.

thoughts can change your Mazal for better. 2, when we focus on the entire picture including and especially the good parts of our life, our perspective on life changes. Now the problem does not get hold of our entire life and is a much smaller part of our life and with Hashem's help we can proceed to concur it. Overcome it.

Will follow up with a letter to someone asking the Rebbe to mention him, his wife and children for



Rabbi Steinfeld

ERASING AMALEK AND BUILDING BAIS HAMIKDOSH

Mesechtes Megilah discusses the inyanim of Purim. Interestingly enough, this Mesechta also speaks about the halachos of building a Shul. Why is this so?

The Gemara in Sanhedrin 20b brings down the three mitzvos the Yiddin were commanded when they entered Eretz Yisroel. They were commanded to appoint a king, to destroy Amalek, and to build the Bais HaMikdosh.

Reb Yoinasan Eibshitz in his sefer Yaaros Devash 1:17 explains the reason why the Yiddin were commanded to destroy Amalek before the building of the Bais HaMikdosh. Hashem's kisei (throne) is not complete until the Yiddin will take revenge and wipe out Amalek. If Hashem's kisei (throne) is not complete, then the building of the Bais HaMikdosh cannot begin.

This is why Shaul and David had to fight Amalek before building the Bais HaMikdosh. Similarly, after the story of Mordechai and Esther wiping out Haman who was a descendant of Amalek, they were then able to build the second Bais HaMikdosh.

Reb Tzadok HaKohen from Lublin explains the above question. When learning Megilah and the laws of Purim we learn about wiping out Amalek. After that is done, we mention the Halachos of building a Bais Hakneses, which is a Mikdash Me'at.

Let's hope that the mitzvos of Purim and building a Mikdash Me'at will be a prelude for the building of the third Bais HaMikdosh. Amen!

In conclusion, now is the time to rededicate our Mikdash Me'at and show respect to Shul by not talking during davening. Let us be mashlim Hashem's name and Kisei (throne) and bring Moshiaich!

Do you have a topic or discussion you want to read about? Please send comments or questions to hymanbsdhevens@gmail.com or berachsteinfeldscorner@gmail.com

SIMCHA 24/7 HOW?

CONTINUED FROM BET P' TERUMA

When we have difficulties in our life that brings us down and drains our positive energy, we should stop for a moment, and focus on the good Hashem gave and continues to give us through our lives. 1, the positive energy brought about from the good

UFARATZTA



blessings, as in his entire life he never experienced good and he has no reason to believe that they will help him from above, as it must have been decreed that my family should poor and miserable.

May Hashem give us all revealed good.



Rabbi YY Jacobson

Addiction Is Not the Problem; It's the Solution

The Golden Calf We Construct In Our Lives

Wisdom of a Child

A child sees the bulletin of the Synagogue announcing that the congregation had just hired a new rabbi, his name is Rabbi Dr. Mark Epstein. The child is so excited that the new rabbi is also a doctor, that the next time he has a stomach ache, he calls the Synagogue.

"I would like to speak to the Rabbi Dr.," the boy says. The rabbi gets on the line and asks how he can be of help. "Well rabbi, the boy says, I have a stomach ache and I was wondering what you suggest I do."

"Sorry son, I'm not a medical doctor," replies the rabbi.

"What type of doctor are you?" asks the boy.

"I am a Dr. of Philosophy," was the response.

The child thought for a moment and then asked, "What type of sickness is that?"

What's the Big Deal?

It is difficult for us to relate to the boundless passion that inspired the Jewish people to create and worship a calf of gold, merely 40 days after they stood at Mt. Sinai and heard the Divine decree "You shall have no other gods before me." Who today would find delight in dancing around a molten calf and declaring, "This is Your G-d, O Israel?"

Even a superficial reading of this week's Torah portion, Ki Sisa, in which the story of the golden calf is related, indicates the cataclysmic effect of this seemingly meaningless event on the eternal destiny of the Jewish people. Why did the creation of a foolish idol by a group of Jews in the Sinai desert become one of the most central episodes in our history?

Abraham's Search

In Maimonides' laws on idolatry, where he describes the first Jew's quest for truth, he says that initially Abraham was "immersed amongst the foolish idol worshippers of Ur Kasdim [a city in Mesopotamia]; his father, mother and the entire population—he amongst them—all worshipped idols."

Asks Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: Why did Maimonides find it important to emphasize in his book of Jewish law (not Jewish history) that the first Jew was steeped in idol worship?

The Soul of Idol Worship

By failing to understand the underpinning virtues of idol worship we are unintentionally engaging in our own pristine and subtle

form of idol worship. We are confusing the external form with the inner substance.

What is the essence of idol worship? What does it look like in the 21st century?

It is a person trying to fill a void, yearning for a need, craving for some form of fulfillment, and then attributing the power of filling that void to a particular substance or person. I then begin to "worship" him, her, or it.

The problem of idol worship lies not in the yearning that leads me to the act of worship; in fact, this yearning is often innocent, perhaps even sacred and noble. It is in accepting the notion that a worthless and lifeless object, or a person outside of me, carries within him/her/it the power to fulfill my true aspirations—that is what turns idol worship into a meaningless and often destructive pursuit.

The Soul of an Impulse

We all experience in our daily lives various impulses and urges directed toward certain people or particular substances, objects, and behaviors. Some of us become addicted.

Are you infatuated with a particular person? Are you starving for attention, compliments, and approval? Do you crave nicotine, alcohol, or drugs? Are you obsessed with an unceasing urge for physical intimacy? Do certain websites and images play a central role in your life? Are you a gambler or a binger? Do you feel the need to control other people's lives?

The great spiritual masters taught that these impulses and many others are not evil in and of themselves. All these cravings may be expressing the purest and most spiritual needs of the soul. At the core of a crush on another human being or an obsession with intimacy, attention, or drug addiction, is the longing of a person to escape loneliness, shame, trauma, inner worthlessness.

Addiction is not the problem; it is the solution. The addiction is coming to assuage fear, to fill an intense, sometimes subconscious, void. Can I identify the core of the problem that is fueling my addiction? Can I identify my sense of shame and worthlessness?

Our coping skills distort our clarity and attribute false symbolisms to essentially hollow pursuits. As a result of this distortion we—just like the Jews in the desert—devote

our time and passion to carefully construct and worship our personal "golden calves" in the mistaken belief that they will fill the void in our hearts and nourish the hunger of our souls.

You can't fill my void, the drugs can't fill my void, because what I am really searching for is inner wholeness. I am searching for G-d.

Behind every addiction, there is a profound yearning to receive or give love. We are searching for true intimacy -- with ourselves, with another person, with G-d. But our minds are often so bruised and wounded that the outlet we target with our addiction to achieve that love is an "idol," a futile target which will only distance us from the true love we are searching for.

Abraham's Passion

This is why it is important that we know that the first Jew once passionately worshipped idols. Had this young man been indifferent to the idols of his native land, he never would have searched for and discovered the true G-d. Since Abraham yearned for truth and craved intimacy with the ultimate core of reality, G-d, he passionately devoted himself to worshiping the idols of his father's home in the erroneous belief that they embodied the ultimate truth of the cosmos.

Underlying Abraham's fiery idol worship was a soul yearning for the one living G-d. So when he matured, he discovered that his sacred craving needed to be redirected toward the true G-d and not to the false substitutes for G-d.

The Torah's war against the creation of the golden calf is central to our mission in life. It symbolizes our daily relentless effort of turning our attention from the false carriers of value to the true carriers of value.

The late Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky, an expert on addiction, told me once that the addicts among us are among the most spiritual souls among us -- those souls whose void due to their lack of experience of genuine spirituality and love caused them to lose their sanity.

We put so much focus on the addictions; in truth, we need to focus much more on the pain behind them. It will make all the difference. Because as we know today, the antithesis of addiction is not sobriety; the antithesis of addiction is connection.

A PURIM RETROSPECTIVE

THE LAST LAUGH

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

When Sir Donald Wolfit, the last of the great English actor managers was lying on his deathbed, one of his young actors said to him, "Sir Donald, after life so filled with success and fame, dying must be hard." To which the Donald replied, "Dying is easy; comedy is hard."

They say a coward dies many times. The same must also be true for comedians. Any actor who stood in front of an audience and watched the line that he's practiced for weeks clang helplessly to the floor to roars of silence will appreciate Sir Donald sentiment. Comedy is hard because we don't really understand what makes people laugh. We know what's funny because we laugh at it. But trying to distill the essence of comedy into a set of principles, that's not so easy.

One of the basic elements of comedy is incongruity. A bank manager wearing a clown's red nose is funny. A clown wearing a red nose is not. Underlying incongruity is a deeper idea of absurdity. We expect the world to have a certain natural order of events, and when these events are suddenly turned upside down, the result is comic.

One of the most notable aspects of the Purim story is hipuch, sudden reversal. Haman has his gallows ready to hang Mordechai. The letters decreeing the final solution of the Jewish people have been sent out in all 127 languages to the far corners of the Persian Empire. Yet in a split second, everything turned upside down. The only difference between tragedy and comedy is the ending.

Jews have always been known for their humor. It's as though the world recognizes that there's something particularly Jewish about humor, and that humor is part of the essence of being a Jew. But behind every Jewish joke, there's a Jewish tear, a wry, bitter-sweet feeling of 2000 years of exile, tears of sadness, tears of hope.

In the song of Shir Ha'maalot we sing after a festive meal, there's a line that yearns for the coming of Mashiach. It says, "Then will our mouths be filled with laughter." The coming of Mashiach is compared to a birth. The tragedies of our era, of our people, are his birth pangs. In birth, great pains suddenly and instantly turn to enormous joy. And similarly, when the Mashiach comes, all the pain of the Jewish peo-

ple will be reversed to joy in an instant. And just as in the Purim story, it will come in crisis, in catastrophic reversal, in hipuch.. He will come in the darkest hour just before the dawn. And only then our mouths will be filled with laughter. A laughter of discovery. A laughter of total realization. And then we'll see how all the pieces in this comedy of the absurd that we call life, they all fit into place. Then we will laugh the last laugh.

SMALL MIRACLES

Rabbi Tzvi Sytner

There is no such thing as a small miracle. A miracle is a miracle, period. Indiscriminate of its magnitude, if something happened beyond the realm of the ordinary, extended above the sphere of the expected, it is miraculous.

Who's to say that you should have woken up today able to see with your eyes, hear with your ears or walk with your feet? No one. If you are, G-d handed you a present. He handed you a miracle. Is it the size of the Splitting of Sea? You might say that it isn't. But think of it differently. A miracle is a miracle, no matter the shape or size.

If you have a family, a job or a home, it's not because that's how life is meant to be. You could have exactly the opposite – no family, no job and no home, and just the same, it can be said, "That's how life is meant to be." It's not nature that's organically running your life. It's a symphony of people and places being set up for you, an orchestrated harmony of parts and pieces being designed for you. By G-d to you and for you.

That's what we call a miracle.

Human tendency is to notice the outliers, to be in awe of the colorful supernatural. But that tendency is born out of desensitization to what we see any day, every day. And we do see people breathing, walking and talking every day. That daily scene grows on us and dulls our sensitivity to the ordinary.

But that doesn't take away from the miracle that we call life.

Big or small, it's the same G-d, giving you the same result – a miracle, a blessing. It's His love, and it knows no bounds.

That's all there is to it. A bona fide miracle.



Stories for Shabbos

A Chance for Forgiveness

By Rabbi David Bibi Based on a story told by Rabbi Paysach Krohn

When Rabbi Yehoshua Heller vacated the position of Rav in Telz in order to become the Maggid of Vilna, it was understood that his replacement would have to be a scholar of the highest caliber and refinement of character. Several candidates were considered. Topping the short list was a resident of Telz, Rabbi Abba Werner, the av bet din, who was considered a shoo-in for the prestigious position. A different candidate, by all means worthy, but not as well known to Telz, was Rabbi Lazer Gordon, one of the great students of Volozhin and a disciple of Reb Yisrael Salanter. For reasons that will forever remain a mystery, Rabbi Gordon was selected. It was this very gaon who would subsequently be revered as the gadol hador. Rabbi Werner was hurt that he had been passed over for what he thought was naturally his. In frustration and humiliation, he left for foreign pastures. After a brief tenure in Copenhagen, he assumed the position of Rabbi in Machzikei Hadass in London's East End. Rabbi Gordon's responsibilities as the new Rav of Telz included inspecting the slaughterhouse. There, he noticed one of the shochemim, Mendel Rappaport, shechting in a way that he felt could stand improvement. Rabbi Gordon suggested to Rappaport to employ a specific technique that would free his work of any shailot. The shochem took the recommendation as a personal affront. He was convinced that the new Rav did not care for him; and, not wishing to continue working under such circumstances, vanished from Telz. Over thirty years later, in 1908, fire destroyed the Telz yeshiva building, thrusting the yeshiva into a financial crisis. Considerably more money was needed to restore operations than had ever been collected before. Faced with such an awesome debt, Rabbi Gordon decided to employ an innovative approach. In those days, the standard collection route included the major cities in the area: Vilna, Kovno, Warsaw. It was a well-beaten path, one meshulachim trod often. Innovatively, Rabbi Gordon sailed to untapped, virgin territory: London. Upon his arrival, as Rabbi Krohn tells it, Rabbi Gordon did not know a soul in town, and he came to the great Machzikei Hadass synagogue in London's East End. Mendel Rappaport who had been the shochem in Telz and who after arriving in London was blessed with extraordinary wealth, recognized the Rabbi as the Rosh Yeshiva of Telz and invited him to his palatial home. Rabbi Gordon was delighted to be escorted by his host to the home of an alter Telzer (former resident of Telz) who had become an affluent Londoner. After the preliminaries at the door, Rabbi Gordon was ushered into the gvir Rappaport's parlor. After enjoying a meal together, Rabbi Gordon asked, "It is a long way from Telz to London; what brought you here?" "You," the former shochem said, pointing a finger of accusation. Rabbi Gordon was an intelligent man, but this was beyond him. "How so?" Mendel Rappaport reminded the Telzer Rav of his arrival in the famed Lithuanian town and his first visit to the slaughterhouse. "I was the one whose work you found sub-standard. I understood that that meant it was time for me to pack my bags." Rabbi Gordon cringed. "Nothing, simply nothing," he exclaimed, "could be further from the truth." He had never had the slightest grudge against

the shochem; he had only sought a more mehudar performance of the mitzvah. Rabbi Gordon apologized profusely for an affront of which he had been totally unaware. With sincere remorse evident in his words, he managed to appease Mendel Rappaport. The former shochem accepted the apology and explained that all was from Heaven as by leaving Hashem blessed him greatly. The wealthy host then suggested they visit the leading Rabbi. That Rabbi was none other than Rabbi Abba Werner. Rabbi Werner was honored to have such a distinguished guest, but he informed his unsuspecting visitor that there were some accounts to be settled – and explained what had brought him to London. He suggested that the least his guest could have done was consult with the Av Bet Din before accepting the position. By not doing so, Rabbi Werner explained that he felt his time was over in Telz and made for the exit. Again, Rabbi Gordon became slack-jawed. He had not known of "the short list," nor that he had competed against his London host. He immediately begged, and received, Rabbi Werner's forgiveness. ALAS, ideas that are theoretically sound are not necessarily practicable. The primary reason London was not a collection hub was that Anglo Jewry had not yet evolved into a community of donors. Several days into the campaign, Rabbi Werner inquired how his guest was faring. The report was far worse than Rabbi Werner could have feared. After knocking on numerous doors and visiting virtually all of the area shuls, all Rabbi Gordon had to show for his efforts were a few pennies. The trip was a disaster for the yeshiva, an embarrassment for the Telzer Rosh Yeshiva, and a fiasco for kavod haTorah. But with the help of Mendel Rappaport, a Melaveh Malka was called for Motzei Shabbat and the wealthy man pushed for others to join. Rabbi Gordon gave a passionate plea and funds were raised to be sent to Telz. Later that night, Rabbi Gordon's lofty soul was summoned to the Heavenly Yeshiva. Rabbi Chanoch Ehrentreu,, when telling over the story suggested that undoubtedly, the two conceivable impediments to immediate access to the Almighty's inner sanctum had just been removed, but they required a trip all the way to the British Isles to be actualized. Rabbi Gordon could not have known this, nor do we know the consequences of what we do. Strangely enough, the eulogy and burial that took place on soil very foreign to Telz, Lithuania. Because of strained relations between the governments of England and Lithuania the body could not be sent back, and was to be buried in London. But if you visit his grave, you will see, that he is buried next to the gvir Mendel Rappaport. Often we discuss gilgulim as a chance to right wrongs from previous lifetimes, but wouldn't it be better to right wrongs while we still can in this world. Rabbi teller closes his story with a beautiful thought: "Perhaps we can derive a modicum of consolation from the fact that Reb Lazer Gordon left this world pure and sinless, having finally resolved any grievance against him. But we should not be too quick to be consoled before we internalize the lesson of how deep and demanding are the consequences of resentment. Rancor is the fire but an eternal grudge is the ash. Let's bury that too, today, and let the Almighty have mercy upon us all." Let's each and every one of us do our best to right any wrongs now! It's truly best for all.

Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.



Who Did the Favor For His Friend?

By Rabbi Yissochar Frand

It is not always easy to lend money, because a person can "make money with money." It is therefore often hard to part with our money. I recently heard the following amazing story: Reuven and Shimon are best friends, as close as brothers. Reuven went to Shimon and said "Shimon, I need to borrow \$250,000. I need this money urgently. Otherwise, my business will collapse." Shimon hesitates. "Where am I supposed to get \$250,000?" Reuven tells Shimon, "But Shimon, you told me just a couple of weeks ago that you finished paying off your house. Take out a new mortgage on your house." Shimon hesitated, but Reuven begged and pressed him for the loan. Shimon went home and consulted with his wife. She advised, "Go ask the Rav." The Rav told him, you are not actually obligated to do this, but if you trust the fellow then it would be a very big misvah to do it. Shimon went back to his friend and said, "Okay. I will do it." He went to the bank and applied to take out a second mortgage on his house. Both these Jews live in Far Rockaway, N.Y. The bank processed the paperwork and agreed to give Shimon a second mortgage, but they warned him that he lived in a flood plain, he would not be eligible for the loan unless he took out flood insurance. Shimon took out flood insurance and received the mortgage. He lent Reuven the \$250,000. Three weeks later, Shimon's house was flooded by Hurricane Sandy... but he was covered because he took out the flood insurance. Who did whom the favor? *Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin*

It's Worthwhile Getting Hashem's Attention

Rav Zecharia Wallerstein, zt"l, once said in a speech, "Let me share with you something very simple that holds the potential of changing your life, & all it takes is five minutes. Come to Davening five minutes early. The Gemara in Brachos (6b) states that Hashem comes to Shul to greet the first ten men who gather to form the Minyan. If one day, one of those ten men who is always there is absent, Hashem inquires where he is. Now, why does Hashem ask this? Doesn't Hashem already know where the absent person is? The answer is that Hashem is rhetorically asking the Malachim (the angels), 'What prevented him from coming to Shul today?' To this, the Malachim may respond, 'He's sick and he needs to get better,' and Hashem expediently issues him a recovery, because He wants him back in Shul. 'He was up very late because he works very hard,' the Malachim say, and Hashem arranges for him to find an easier, better paying job. This man, who is always early and makes the Minyan, matters so much that Hashem will do whatever is needed to get him back to Shul if he doesn't come one day. We're always looking for Segulos, auspicious practices, that will bring Brachah and beneficence into our lives. This is a simple and guaranteed way. Be of the first ten to a Minyan. Be early and show your commitment to Hashem. Demonstrate that you are eager to see Hashem, and that you want to talk to Him and have a relationship with Him. With that dedication, you can be sure that Hashem will reciprocate and be dedicated to you. Just five minutes. That's all it takes!" *Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.*

Rely on Hashem

By Rabbi Yaakov Feitman

A young man who was about to look for a shidduch decided to leave yeshivah, but first approached Rav Elya Lopian for a berachah. "Why are you leaving your Gemara?" the tzaddik inquired gently. "Because I will need to support my wife and children, rebbi," the young man responded eagerly. "And who says you will find a wife?" Rav Elya Lopian followed up. The bachur was shocked. "Rebbi, the Ribbono Shel Olam will help! Why is the rebbi singling me out?" The mashgiach continued his interrogation. "And who says that you will have children?" he demanded. "Oy, I came for a berachah and the rebbi is cursing me. What did I do wrong?" Now Rav Elya took the quivering bachur's hands in his own and explained: "You turn to Hashem for a shidduch and you look to Him to grant you children, but when it comes to the hundred ruble you will need for your parnassah, you feel that this is beyond Him!" Whichever way one resolves the bitachon versus hishtadlus conundrum, it is crucial for us to remember that Hashem is in charge. At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. *Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – Blueprints by Rabbi Yaakov Feitman.*

Rav Isser Zalman's Shidduch

By Rabbi Naftali Weinberger

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer (1870- 1953) was one of the leading gedolei Yisrael before and after the Second World War. He studied at the Volozhiner Yeshivah under the Netziv and Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, where he was recognized as one of the most outstanding talmidim. During his engagement to Baila Hinda Frank, an orphaned daughter of the legendary tomech Torah R' Shraga Feivel Frank, Rav Isser Zalman, who was then learning at the Chofetz Chaim's yeshivah in Radin, contracted tuberculosis and was forced to return to his parents' home in Mir. He informed the kallah's family of his illness and assured them that he fully understood if they chose to break the shidduch. The kallah's family sent money to Rav Isser Zalman to pay for medical treatment and, at the same time, they pressured the kallah to break the shidduch. She refused, despite the doctors' predictions that the patient would probably not live more than another year. As family members continued to pressure her, the kallah, accompanied by her mother, traveled to Radin to seek the Chofetz Chaim's guidance. The Chofetz Chaim told them, "There are people who are healthy, and there are people who are not healthy but who live long." It was clear that the Chofetz Chaim was saying that Rav Isser Zalman would live long despite his health challenges. They married, and although he suffered from a variety of ailments, Rav Isser Zalman lived until age 83. His righteous rebbetzin bore him wonderful children, including Chanah Perel, wife of Rav Aharon Kotler. And his rebbetzin transcribed his difficult-to-read notes to prepare them for publication. And that is how we have the seven-volume classic on Rambam, sefer Even HaAzel. *At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – Rav Chaim Kanievsky on Shidduchim.*

Reaching Beyond

Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis a"h

לתת את תרומת ד'

To give the portion of Hashem (Shemot 30:15)

When I initially started the Hineni Movement over forty years ago and looked to return Jews back to their roots, I had no following. I was looking to make use of the Theater at Madison Square Garden, something for which I needed financial aid, but I didn't know if I could do it. My father and husband however told me, "Go for it and Hashem will help you."

I was then told that there is a gentleman by the name of Joe Wall who would pick up the tab and give me a blank check. "Do you know him?" I asked the person telling me this. "No, I don't." "Who will then introduce me to him?" I asked. "I don't know," came the reply. "Well, how will I ever get an appointment with him?" "I don't know," was the answer again.

Telling this to my parents and husband, they nevertheless encouraged me. "Here is a door of opportunity; give it a try." Eventually obtaining Joe Wall's phone number, I figured that I would call him. I was certain, though, that I would only get as far as the secretary or housekeeper. I would then be told that they could not get me through to him and that would be the end of my hopes.

But Joe Wall answered the phone.

"Mr. Wall, I would like to see you; I have something urgent to discuss." "Come over!" he enthusiastically said. As I heard this reply, I couldn't believe my ears. Just getting in touch with him was beyond my expectation.

Telling him that we must spiritually awaken the Jewish people and prevent assimilation, I explained how he could help. "I would like to use Madison Square Garden as the forum for people to be given a Torah education. I don't, however, want to charge for others to come and learn. It would therefore be very helpful if you could financially help this cause."

Looking back at me, Joe shouted for his wife, Robbie, to come over.

"Listen to this story," he said. After making me repeat my story, his wife had something to say. "Joe, if you don't go and give her a blank check, I will go to the safe, take out my jewelry and give it to her."

Nothing should ever hold us back from reaching out and striving to achieve that which appears to be unattainable. Who

would have expected a simple phone call to carry such magnanimous repercussions? But then again, when Hashem sees our sincere efforts, nothing is impossible.

A Perfect Job

Rabbi Hanoach Teller

כי מצאת חן בעיני

For you have found favor in My eyes (Shemot 33:17)

Yosel Chapnick, a close friend of mine, once had a non-Jewish painter enter his apartment to begin a paint job. As they together began taking the pictures off the wall, the painter noticed that one of the pictures was a blow up of the Bobover Rebbe. "Is this your rabbi?" asked the painter. "No, he's not," answered Yosel. "Why isn't he your rabbi?" the painter asked again. "He's just isn't my rabbi." "But why isn't he your rabbi?" came the question again. "He just isn't. C'mon, let's get on with the job." Yet the man was looking for an answer. "But why isn't he your rabbi?" "Can we please move on with the job!" Yosel politely said. "There are so many rabbis with beards and peyos."

"He's my rabbi," said the painter. Opening his wallet, he took out a photograph of the Bobover Rebbe. "I'll tell you what happened. One morning while I was painting the Rebbe's house, he came over to me and said, 'Did you have breakfast?' I replied that I hadn't. The Rebbe proceeded to sit me down, give me food and wait on me. 'I want to tell you something,' the Rebbe said.

"I was thinking to myself," the painter continued, "that I knew exactly what he was going to say. I had heard it a million times. 'I pay you good money; I want a perfect job.' But he didn't say that. He told me, 'We once had the Beis Hamikdash and a world of perfection. Everything was the way it was supposed to be. But ever since it was destroyed, we have never had that world of perfection. I therefore cannot ask you to do a perfect job, but I would like you to try your hardest.'

"Let me tell you something," the painter now said as he held the picture of the Bobover Rebbe. "The Rebbe gave me the names of hundreds of other people to work for, but no one else ever offered me breakfast. They all said to me, 'I'm paying you good money; I want a perfect job.' But I say to them, 'You want a perfect job? There's no Temple. How can you want a perfect job?'"

No one in this world is perfect nor is supposed to be perfect. But that itself is the greatest perfection. We are all to be embraced and cared for exactly the way we are. And when such an attitude is adopted, we are on our way to rebuilding the true world of perfection – a world with the Beis Hamikdash.



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Contemporary Lessons from Parshas Parah

Rabbi Yaakov Feitman

Sometimes, the order doesn't matter. In fact, the entire Torah is structured so that we should concentrate on the subject itself, not where it is recorded or placed (Pesachim 6b). Yet, although Parshas Parah is indeed out of order, that fact is so significant that it is life-altering and has infinite ramifications.

The Yerushalmi (cited by Rashi, Megillah 29a) teaches that Parshas Hachodesh chronologically comes earlier, but "Parshas Parah was given precedence because it represents the purification of Klal Yisroel."

Rav Gedaliah Schorr (Ohr Gedalyahu, Moadim, page 114) derives from here the crucial fact that not only did the Parah Adumah effectuate taharah in ancient times, but its reading itself also purifies. Rav Schorr proves this point from the fact that even when the ashes of the Red Heifer were available to physically purify those who were defiled, the parsha itself had to be read (see Yoma 5b and Mogein Avrohom 685:1). Therefore, even today, it is a mitzvah de'Oraisa to read the parsha because we ourselves can derive taharah for the upcoming Yom Tov of Pesach from its immaculate words.

Thus, we can get some idea of the importance of this upcoming Torah reading for ourselves and the entire nation. The Ozherover Rebbe, author of Aish Das and Be'er Moshe, used to relate that when his ancestors wished to bring about a yeshuah for a supplicant, they would tell a similar story of when someone was saved. It seems that the words of the narrative itself brought about the needed salvation. As the Ohr Gedalyahu concludes poetically, "when Parshas Parah is read, a spirit of purification descends from heaven which the listener must accept as his purification process." What exactly does this acceptance entail? He explains that each of us must subjugate ourselves to our Creator, in the spirit of Avrohom Avinu (see Chulin 89a). Let us explore a bit of the power and potential of this incredible opportunity being placed before us this Shabbos.

First of all, let us remember that it is up to us to be the willing receptacle of this taharah. The Sefas Emes (Parshas Parah 5639) teaches that this parsha is read at the end of the year (Adar is the last month before Nissan, the first in order of months) because this is a time when Klal Yisroel is motivated to become pure (see also there 5641, 5647 and Shabbos Hagadol 5642). He goes on to quote from Chazal (Shabbos 104a) that Hashem purifies one who seeks to become pure." Furthermore, he, too, reminds us that according to the Medrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 19:8), our main cleansing comes from the holy words of the Torah themselves. (He stresses this concept also in 5633 and 5659.) In other words, this Shabbos, a treasure trove is placed before us and all we need to do is listen and let the words of the Parah wash away our sins, problems and defilements.

Once we have done so, we should feel tremendously empowered to accomplish great things. The posuk in Parshas Parah says, "The pure person shall sprinkle upon the contaminated person" (19:19). The Yerushalmi (Demai, chapter 3) relates an interesting statement from Rav Yehoshua ben Kevusi: "All my life I thought that this means that it takes one pure person for each contaminated person. However, then I learned from the Torah treasures of Yavneh that one pure person can purify many contaminants."

Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach used to repeat Rav Meir Shapiro's question: "What are the Torah treasures of Yavneh?" The Lubliner Rov answered that this refers to the Rav Yochanan ben Zakai's famous rejoinder to the Emperor of Rome who allowed him one request. "Give me Yavneh and her Torah scholars," he responded, for he knew that each one of the chachomim would save many others and together they would rescue Klal Yisroel.

We, too, can learn from Rav Shach and Rav Shapiro to be uplifted and purified by Parshas Parah and go out and do the same for others as well.

Everyone knows that the Parah Adumah is the antithesis of logic. Those who purify become defiled; those who receive the water and the ashes be-

come tahor. However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh teaches that the essence of this mitzvah is to learn that the entire Torah is beyond human logic. We may think that we understand but in reality we must perform Hashem's commandments because they come from Him.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz (Sichos Mussar 5731, page 82) cites the Rambam's ruling (Hilchos Melachim, chapter 5) that even gentiles who are keeping the Seven Noachide Laws must do so because they were given by Hashem at Har Sinai. Even though most of them are completely logical, the Bnei Noach are not considered to have fulfilled their obligations unless they accept them solely as the will of G-d.

Rav Shmulevitz concludes that this applies all the more so to Am Yisroel, who are enjoined to be avdei Hashem. Being a true servant means doing the will of the master without cheshbonos (Rav Chaim's word), logical considerations. It would seem that we might have already learned this lesson from a year of Covid-19 and its intense curriculum of realizing that there is Higher Power running the world.

Another aspect of this lesson from the Parah Adumah is pointed out by Rav Moshe Feinstein (Dorash Moshe). The most mysterious aspect of the Parah Adumah, as we mentioned, is that it purifies the one who was defiled and defiles the one who is doing the purifying. Rav Moshe explains how we can use this lesson every day. We think that the Torah wants us to be humble and generous, but sometimes one must actually do one thing for ourselves and the opposite for others, just like the Parah Adumah. We must be completely humble when thinking of ourselves but very careful about other people's honor, giving them the maximum of kavod. When it comes to money, we must be frugal for ourselves but totally generous for others. This is both the paradox and the subtle logic of the Parah Adumah, using one criterion for ourselves and its opposite for others. Sadly there are people who also have two sets of criteria but it is hakpadah – demanding in honor – and generosity for themselves, but miserliness and dishonor toward others. Rav Moshe teaches us to extrapolate properly from the Parah Adumah.

Although Rav Moshe left us over three decades ago and we just remembered him on his yahrzeit, the thirteenth of Adar, he seems to be speaking to us directly after this difficult year of Covid-19. As we ease once again into regular weddings and other simchos, let's remember the Parah Adumah lesson. We did without many of the old trappings – smaller chasunos, no fancy vorts, tiny bar mitzvahs. Let's internalize the lesson and downsize for ourselves. However, let's also increase our tzedakos and caring for those less fortunate, as Rav Moshe taught us prophetically almost 40 years ago. Hopefully, we have all learned a bit more humility; we are in charge of nothing and there is a Creator Who is in charge of everything.

I read a short blurb in a scientific paper that begrudgingly acknowledged that the "experts" got everything wrong for a year and they still haven't gotten it all correct. We may not have the red cow we need to help Moshiah bring taharah, but Covid-19 and Parshas Parah are showering us with reasons to practice anivus and a hearty dose of restraint and lack of pretension. Hopefully, between the two, we will not require any more reminders.

The Parah Adumah is indeed a holy cow, but its purpose is to render us holy not to help the bovine world. Covid-19, too, should have purified us somewhat by now as well, through yissurin, various types of suffering which we hope and pray are ending soon. But it is our responsibility and indeed opportunity to now use these hard-won gifts to be the people we can and should be. This special parsha during this special year can be a game-changer if we listen carefully, as we learned from the Ohr Gedalyahu. If we truly have become more humble, as we learned from Rav Moshe Feinstein, and we resolve to be true avdei Hashem, as we learned from Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, we can look back upon this Parshas Parah as a major turning point in our lives.

JOKES

BRISKER CHAZZAN

The chazzan in my shul is such a brisker, on shabbos he doesn't even carry a tune.

BRISKER CHUMRAH

A newly married brisker was seen eating on a taanis, when his wife reminded him it was a taanis he said "In brisk we're machmir to worry about even a very far cheshash of pikuach nefesh so to insure we are covered, we eat on fast days."

When his wife sat down to join him, he said to her "Not so fast in Brisk we hold that the wives don't take on all the chumras of the husband".

SHVIGGER'S VISIT

A shvigger came to her son in laws house to visit and he asked her "how long are you gonna stay for?" she replied "as long you want" so he said "you're not even gonna stay for a cup of coffee?"

QUICK THINKING

A man walked into the produce section of his local supermarket and asked to buy half a head of lettuce. The boy working in that department told him that they only sold whole heads of lettuce. The man was insistent that the boy ask his manager about the matter.

Walking into the back room, the boy said to his manager, "Some loser wants to buy a half a head of lettuce." As he finished his sentence, he turned to find the man standing right behind him, so he added, "and this gentleman kindly offered to buy the other half." The manager approved the deal and the man went on his way.

Later the manager found the boy and said "I was impressed with the way you got yourself out of that situation earlier. We like people who think on their feet here. Where are you from, son?"

"Canada, sir," the boy replied.

"Well, why did you leave Canada?" the manager asked.

The boy said, "Sir, there's nothing but yentas and hockey players up there."

"Really!" said the manager indignantly. "My wife is from Canada!"

The boy replied, "No kidding??? Who did she play for?"

SPEEDING TICKET OR....

The Policeman recently stopped a woman for exceeding the posted speed limit. He asked the driver her name.

She said, "I'm Mrs. Ladislav Abdulkhashim Zybkcicraznovskaya from the Republic of Uzbekistan visiting my daughter in Tallahassee."

The cop put away his summons book and pen, and said, "Well... OK... but don't let me catch you speeding again."

TRUE MOTHER-IN-LAW

Two women came before wise King Solomon, dragging between them a young man in a three-piece suit. "This young lawyer agreed to marry my daughter," said one.

"No! He agreed to marry MY daughter," said the other.

And so they argued before the King until he called for silence.

"Bring me my biggest sword," said Solomon, "and I shall cut the young attorney in half. Each of you shall receive a half." "Sounds good to me," said the first lady.

But the other woman said, "Oh Sire, do not spill innocent blood. Let the other woman's daughter marry him."

The wise king did not hesitate a moment. "The attorney must marry the first lady's daughter," he proclaimed.

"But she was willing to cut him in two!" exclaimed the king's advisor.

"Indeed," said wise King Solomon. "That shows she is the TRUE mother-in-law."

HEROS?

One day The President was out biking-- and accidentally fell from a bridge into a very cold river.

Three boys, playing along the river, saw the accident. Without a second thought, they jumped in the water and dragged the wet president out of the river.

After cleaning up he said, "Boys, you saved the President of the United States today. You deserve a reward. You name it, I'll give it to you."

The first boy said, "Please, I'd like a ticket to Disneyland!" "I'll personally hand it to you," said The President.

"I'd like a pair of Nike Air's latest model," the second boy said. "I'll buy them myself and give them to you," said the grateful defender of the Western Hemisphere.

"I'd like a wheelchair with a wifi tablet in it," said the third boy.

"I'll personally ... wait a second, son, you're not handicapped!"

"No -- but I will be when my father finds out whom I saved from drowning."

WHO'S THE BOSS

I'm at my boss's funeral, kneeling and whispering at the coffin...

"Who's thinking outside the box now, Gary?"

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DRINKING A CHEEKFUL FROM A KOS SHEL BROCHA

As the yom tov of Pesach approaches, and we prepare for the mitzvah of drinking the four cups of wine, I would like to discuss one aspect of the halachos of the four cups of wine.

When drinking the four cups of wine at the seder we need to clarify if the same rules and regulations apply as they do when reciting a brocha on wine.

Let us first discuss the general rules and regulations when we recite a brocha on wine, by a kos shel brocha, and then see how it applies to the four cups of the seder night. The Gemara (Pesachim 107a) tells us that when one recites a brocha over a cup of wine – called a kos shel brocha – such as kiddush, havdalah, or bentching, one must drink a m'lo lugmuv, cheek full of the wine after reciting the brocha. This is also brought by the Mishna Berura (190:14).

Yet, when it comes to drinking the cup of wine at a bris, the Shulchan Aruch (Y"D 265:4) tells us that this is not required. If a bris takes place on a fast day, such as Tisha B'Av or Yom Kippur, where no one can drink the wine, it is sufficient to give a drop of wine to the baby. The Beis Yosef quotes the Rashba, who spells out clearly that although for kiddush one must drink a cheek full for a bris any small amount is enough. This seems to contradict the aforementioned regulation that one must drink a m'lo lugmuv.

The Taz explains that the reason for this is because we are only required to drink a cheek full for the cup of wine which is a requirement mentioned in the Gemara. On the other hand, having a cup of wine at a bris is not mentioned in the Gemara, rather it is to fulfill the concept of praising Hashem over a cup of wine. Therefore, any amount of drinking will suffice.

We find this in regards to the cup of wine used at a chupa, as well, that even drinking a small amount of wine is enough. The Be'er Sheva wonders why the custom is to just drink a little of the wine, and not a cheek full, as the Gemara tells us in regards to kiddush, and therefore recommends drinking a cheek full. The Be'er Heitev, however, quotes other poskim who are fine with just drinking a sip of the wine.

The Maharsham and the Aruch Hashulchan explain this based on the aforementioned words of the Taz, that since a cup of wine at a bris is not mentioned in the Gemara, drinking any small amount is enough, similarly, since the cup of wine at a chupa is not mentioned in the Gemara,

any amount of drinking will suffice. In fact, when it comes to the cup of wine for the kiddushin, the Shulchan Aruch rules that if there is no wine available the kiddushin can take place without any wine.

It is important to note that in all of these cases it is clear that the requirement to drink the wine is only on the one reciting the brocha, and no one else is required to drink the wine of any kos shel brocha..

SUMMARY

For a kos shel brocha which is required by the Gemara one must drink a cheek full. If not mentioned in the Gemara, a small amount will suffice.

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