

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Chukas 5777 year 6 #312

פרקי אבות ה

פרשת חקת תשע"ז

Why is the mitzvah of Para Adumah a "Statute"

זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמור: (יש א)

This is the statute of the Torah which Hashem commanded, saying: (19:2). Rashi comments: זאת חקת התורה This is the statute of the Torah: Because the Satan and the nations of the world taunt Israel, by saying, "What is the rationale behind the statute of this commandment, the Parah Adumah - red heifer, and what purpose does it have?" Therefore, the Torah uses the term חק "statute." I have decreed it; You have no right to challenge it. — [Gemarra Yoma 67b]. The question is why by this specific mitzvah is it that the nations taunt us what is the reason and not by other mitzvos? The answer can be based on what Rashi says ויקחו אליך *and have them take for you: "them"* From their own possessions; just as they removed their own golden earrings for the golden calf, so shall they bring this cow from their own possessions in atonement. — [Midrash Aggadah] Another Rashi states further from his Rebbe Reb Moshe Hadarshan: They must bring a red cow: Why a cow? This can be compared to the son of a maidservant who soiled the king's palace. They said, "Let his mother come and clean up the mess." Similarly, let the cow come and atone for the golden calf. — [Midrash Aggadah and Tanchuma Chukath 8]. Now it is all clear to us. If we will tell the nations the real reason for the red cow and that it is to atone for the golden calf, they would pester us further and cause Hashem to remember the sin and cause punishment to Klal Yisrael. Therefore Hashem states the term "statute." I have decreed it; You have no right to challenge it. (אבני שוהם - ר' משה ליב שחר ז"ל.)

Doing mitzvos because Hashem commanded

זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמור: (יש א)

This is the statute of the Torah which Hashem commanded, saying (19:2) Rashi says: This is the statute of the Torah: Because the Satan and the nations of the world taunt Israel, saying, "What is the rationale behind the statute of this commandment, Parah Adumah - the red heifer, and what purpose does it have?" To explain why would the nations taunt the Yidden to find the reasons for a mitzvah? Another question is: why does the verse state אשר צוה ה' which the Hashem commanded, would it not be suffice to state "This is the statute of the Torah"? The answer is that when we do a mitzvoh whose reason is not comprehended we show a total allegiance and subordination to Hashem's will. The nations know that this brings us great merit and they cannot tolerate this. Therefore they push us to find reasons so that we will fulfill the statute mitzvos on a lower level only. Hence the

Torah states that one should perform the mitzvah solely because Hashem commanded it without any reason, in order to give Hashem the Nachas Ruach -spiritual satisfaction. (Zera Kodesh - Rabbi Naftali of Ropshitz)

The comparison of Torah and Para Adumah

זאת חקת התורה: (יש ב)

"This is the decree of the Torah." (19: 2) The question is why is the Parah Adumah -Red Heifer - singled out as **"the** decree of the Torah". The answer is that the Parah Adumah is emblematic of the Torah as a whole; just as a mixture of ash from the Parah Adumah mixed with the water in its time had the power to cleanse someone who was ritually impure, so does the Torah have the power to cleanse someone who is spiritually impure in our time and to transform them into a pure and refined person. Also just as the Parah Adumah purifies the defiled and defiles the pure, so too, the study of Torah can either be a purifying experience, or its study can lead to misapplication to the point that it brings to defilement. (Bais Yisrael - Reb Yisrael Toisig, Mattersdorfer Rebbe)

Chassidic insight to Perok (5:25)

בן המא הוא אומר, לפום צערא אנגרא: (פרק ה משנה כה)

Ben Hey Hey says: According to the pain is the reward.(5:25)

To understand the meaning of "pain": Our Sages are warning us against weighing the relative values of mitzvos in order to decide which to do and which not to do. Every mitzvah, as we have seen, provides a portion in Olam HaBa, whether "significant" or less so. But since the actual reward will always be dependent upon the quality of one's intellectual involvement in the performance of the mitzvah, it is utterly impossible, and indeed futile, to calculate the merit which will accrue to it. For if one performs a "major" mitzvah with little enthusiasm, little merit will accrue, whereas the performance of even a "minor" precept with tremendous passion and a great measure of love for God will produce a magnificent reward in Olam HaBa. While we know that every mitzvah produces Olam HaBa, the observance of any one may generate a great or small reward. As such, we ought not to consider the relative merits of mitzvos but instead perform every one with gusto and joy. This act of doing the mitzvos with enthusiasm, is the meaning of "According to the pain", the reward is greater.

(Shem MiShmuel Sochotchov)

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STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

**** **Water that turned to wine put a Yid back on his feet** ****

In the city of Skidel, Grodna district in Lithuania, there lived a Slonimer chasid Reb Shmuel Chirig. He was a wealthy man who owned a large leather factory. Reb Moshe Midner, who himself was a Rebbe [his sefer *Kisvei Reb Moshe Midner* is a household name in Chassidic circles the world over], traveled about to collect funds for the Slonimer Rebbe's household, a monthly gift known as "Maamados". When he came to Skidel, Reb Shmuel had the honor of hosting Reb Moshe and he himself circulated around town collecting the Maamodos-gelt instead of Reb Moshe, besides giving a respectable donation of his own.

During one visit, Reb Moshe noticed that Reb Shmuel's behavior was erratic. It crossed over the line when Reb Shmuel showed Reb Moshe to his room, and then proceeded to lock him in! A bit later Reb Shmuel realized what he had done and ran back to open the door and apologize to Reb Moshe. Reb Moshe spoke softly to Reb Shmuel and asked what was happening to him. Reb Shmuel answered "The truth is, I lost my business recently, and I am now penniless. What's more, I just had a son tzu mazel, but my wife is not well and I have to be mother and father to the child. I am in dire straits". Reb Moshe told Reb Shmuel to sit down and had a heart-to-heart talk with him: "Shmuel-leben, you are a Yid with Emunah, and you must believe that that Hashem can do things for you that are beyond your comprehension. Therefore banish all worries from your heart, and listen to this story which I know to be true.

"A Yid ran a very successful inn which many goyim frequented, brought in by his special tasty house wine. The local Poritz also had a yen for the wine and was always kind to his Jewish tenant. One day a goy opened a competing inn right down the road and began to siphon off many of the old customers. The Yid's customer base dwindled to the extent that the Yid couldn't bring bread to his table. His elderly mother tried to help her son by selling apples in the market but so few sold that in a few days the apples rotted and she had to throw them away. This was a sign that their only hope was to turn 100% to Hashem and they began to pray fervently to Him with every fiber of their beings.

"Yeshuas Hashem keheref ayin" – Hashem's salvation comes in the blink of an eye.

"That night, the Poritz's servant came knocking, said that his master was throwing a party and he needed more wine, since the guests had guzzled all that he had laid away. Although he was still officially in business, the Yid had a dilemma: he no longer had any wine to sell and sent the servant back to inform the poritz accordingly. The news was not graciously received; the worker returned with a stern

order from the poritz that if he didn't supply as much wine as the poritz needed, he would be put to death. (A poritz in those days wielded the power of life and death over his unfortunate tenants and underlings.) "Besides," said the servant, "I noticed as I was coming in that your alley is full of barrels. Save yourself needless suffering, and hand over the wine. If not, I have orders to kill you here and now!" The Yid knew full well that the barrels contained only rain water but also remembered that they had some dregs, some residue of wine on the bottom. He prayed fervently to Hashem for salvation -- that the rain water should at least have enough semblance of leftover wine to miraculously satisfy the Poritz. Trembling from fear, the Yid filled up many bottles from the barrels and handed them to the menacing servant.

"The servant brought the bottles to the party and the Poritz began to drink -- and drink, and drink some more. "This is the most delicious wine I've ever had," he babbled from a drunken stupor. The guests echoed the sentiment and kept on drinking until the bottles were drained. The dutiful yet evil-brained servant kept going back for refills until all the rain barrels were empty. The next morning, the servant came with a large sum of money from his boss in payment for the "fabulous wine", which the guests could not praise enough. That day the poritz, now sober, summoned the Yid and announced, "In return for making my party the great success that it was, I'm giving you the exclusive right to sell wine in this entire district. From now on, everyone can buy wine only at your inn." The order went out far and wide. When it reached the ears of the competing innkeeper, he knew that his business was doomed and lost no time in "liquidating" his entire stock of wine to the Yid for a bargain, "fire sale" price. With his business enjoying a new lease on life, and building on the large sum he had taken in from supplying the miracle wine, the Yid was back on his feet in a very short time."

Reb Moshe turned to Reb Shmuel and said, "Hashem will definitely help you in a way that you didn't dream of. I give you a bracha and a specific suggestion to go to the market and accept the first business proposal that comes your way. You will be matzliach, be-ezras Hashem."

Things turned out exactly as the tzaddik Reb Moshe Midner had foretold. The next day Shmuel went to the market and afterwards prospered greatly from the business deal he encountered there. He became again the wealthy Baal Tzedakah, and conducted a seudas hodaah in thanks for his business success – this time with *real* wine.

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