



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

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This Shabbat we will read *Parshat Parah*, the third of the four special *parshiot* which surround the days of *Purim* and *Pesach*.

Parshat Parah comprises the opening verses of *Parshat Chukat*, which introduce us to the mystical elixir for impurity, the mysterious inexplicable concept of the *para aduma* - the red heifer.

The Chasidic Masters saw in these *pesukim* not only the *halachic* remedy to purify those who have become ritually impure, but also an eternal message regarding the relationship between the Jewish People and the *Torah Hakedosha*.

One of the perplexing aspects of the *Para Aduma* ritual, is that the *Kohanim* who were involved in preparing the ashes of the *para aduma* became *tamei* - impure through the process. In preparing the mystical compound which would return others to purity, they in turn became *tamei*.

The Avodat Elazar of Koshnitz zy'a, offers a keen and original interpretation to explain the hidden significance of this peculiar phenomenon based on the opening verse- *Zot Chukat HaTorah*- *This is the inexplicable*

principle of the Torah.

This verse, the Rebbe explained, is not only describing the mysterious nature of the *para aduma*, but also teaching us a very fundamental idea about Torah itself. Like any remedy, when channeled appropriately it can transform and cure and bring complete healing, or if *chas v'shalom* it is misused, taken out of context and applied inappropriately then it can bring further deficiency and harm.

The Netivot Shalom, the Admor of Slonim zy'a offers a different interpretation of our verse *Zot Chukat HaTorah*. Our verse, explains the Rebbe, is not only introducing us to the *para aduma* as a vehicle to restore purity, but also an eternal message which applies even now in the absence of the *Beit HaMikdash* and of the *para aduma*. *Zot Chukat HaTorah*- In our current state, without the *Beit HaMikdash* and with no *para aduma* the vehicle for we Jews to experience some form of a return to purity is by immersing ourselves in the study of *Torah- Zot Chukat HaTorah*!

The Bat Ayin, the Rebbe of Avruch zy'a, similarly points out that the *para aduma* is on some level meant to be a *tikkun* (fixing/correction) for the impurity introduced into the world through the *Cheit HaEgel* (The Sin of the Golden Calf). The Rebbe taught:

The Toldot Yaakov Yosef, zy'a, wrote that Cheit HaEgel impacted future generations, and that the word egel is an acronym for the words arayot (illicit behavior), gezel (theft) and lashon hara (inappropriate speech).

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So too, the tikkun for all of these, as represented by the para aduma, also comprises an acronym for the word egel- Avoda, Gemilut chasadim and Limud Torah...

The Bat Ayin taught that the para aduma not only provided a metaphysical healing for those who had come into contact with impurity, but also came to teach us how to overcome the impact that resulted from the Cheit HaEgel.

Yehi Ratzon, as we begin over these next few weeks to prepare ourselves spiritually and emotionally for the incredible yom tov of Pesach, may we merit that our limud Torah, should indeed bring purity to our minds and hearts, and that we soon merit to experience this year to partake of the korban Pesach in purity, to experience the building of the Beit HaMikdash, and the return of all its associated sacred and wondrous rituals. ■

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