

## Parshas Parah and the Eighth Note – R. Sholom Segal

כ"ג אדר ב' תשע"ו – 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 – שבת פ' שמיני / פרה

Following last week's break, this week we will read פרשת פרה. This would suggest that it is more closely connected to פרשת זכור than פרשת החודש. How is this? Furthermore, the ירושלמי notes that in reality, it should follow החודש, since the first heifer was only burnt after the erection of the משכן on the first of ניסן.

Commencing אדר 23rd, Moshe began a daily process of erecting and dismantling the משכן. What was the purpose of this exercise and why did it cease on the first of ניסן? Although Rashi, in פרשת פקודי (מ':כ"ט), would seem to suggest that it only gained the status of a משכן on the final day, this only begs the question as to why that is. And, what was the purpose of the work in the preceding days?

In line with the principal that all מלאכות of שבת must be productive, we find that סותר, the act of demolishing, must be על מנת לבנות for the sake of a subsequent building. שבת (צ"ד.) in תוספות, however, take this requirement to a new level, demanding that the end construction must be better than the one prior to the dismantling. This is particularly surprising and difficult to understand, seeing that all מלאכות are derived from the construction of the משכן. It is true that they would, many a time, through the course of their travels in the מדבר, take down the משכן and reassemble it in their new place of encampment, but, in which sense, was the second building superior to the former? [See מהרש"א.]

From all the above said, it would seem that actually, when the משכן was dismantled for the first time, it did not revert to its original status. It had already been imbued with a layer of קדושה, one which would remain forever, come what may. Hence, when it was erected on the second day, a further level of holiness was added, one that built on the first. This process would continue until ראש חודש ניסן, the first milestone, for today, the eighth level would descend on the משכן, the one which would consecrate its status as a משכן, a place outside of this world, but geographically positioned in our world.

The above idea provides us with a new insight into many areas of our lives. Imagine if one could learn something once and never forget it. How many of us would bother doing חזרה? What would be the point? However, חז"ל say that one cannot compare the one who learns 101 times to the one who is one behind. It becomes apparent from the גמרא that they are worlds apart. Each time one learns, that time is equal to all the previous times. This means that the hundredth time is equivalent to having learnt it 299 times, a number with some 30 digits and the one extra times takes it to a number with 31 digits!

Similarly, although brown marks on an אתרוג definitely detract and can even disqualify an אתרוג, the חתם סופר in סוכה (ל"ו.) ruled that those which emerged on the second day of סוכות, due to the many people who had handled his אתרוג on the previous day, when fulfilling the מצוה, were actually the very הידור of the fruit. What greater beauty could there be than the eternal signs of קדושה on the אתרוג?

If a computer gets a virus, one could wipe the disk entirely ... but, everything will be lost. Surely, where possible, one would opt for the option of having him remove just the bad.

For an earthenware utensil to become טמא, the source of impurity must be suspended inside its airspace. As explained by the Rogatchover זצוק"ל, in the situation where this happens, the טומאה penetrates to the extent that the very fabric of the כלי is the טומאה. Removal of the טומאה, by definition, means destruction of the כלי, losing all the קדושה that had once been there too.

However, in the case of all other כלים, the טומאה attaches itself like a lesion. Sometimes, a ritual rinsing in the מקוה will wash away the טומאה. Other times, it requires the ashes of the אדומה, but one will still be left with the utensil and its former קדושה intact.

When כלל ישראל served the עגל, they repeated the mistake of mankind's matriarch, חוה. Her intentions were pure, but the method she employed took the route of the impure. Ultimately, the כור הברזל of מצרים had burnt away the טומאות and left behind a people holy and pure, ready to enter the wedding canopy with הקב"ה.

Once again, the people had holy intentions, but took the route of the עגל, reigniting the fire of the serpent and its טומאות. The אדומה פרה was not asked to reverse everything that its child had wrought. It was required to clean up only the mess, leaving behind the innate קדושה of the משכן, which was deemed the correct route they should have taken.

עמלק are like the כלי חרס. They and their ideals are one and thus, in order to rid the world of their crooked beliefs, we must smash their physical beings. Next week, as I once heard from Harav Osher Zelig Rubinstein זצוק"ל, we will read of the power of renewal that belongs to us; החדש הזה לכם. Ours, though, is not one of throw away the old and start all over. That was the outlook of פרעה who told יעקב to leave behind his possessions in כנען, for he would be given newer and better ones upon arrival in Egypt. But, יעקב opted to bring everything with him. He had risked his life for a few small cheap jugs, for he appreciated their incredible worth spiritually. One cannot replace the rich past with which they have been imbued.

ראש on משכן is the interlude between the second and fourth פרשה, for the construction of the משכן on ראש חודש ניסן will be anew, but it will build on the purity of the past.