



PARSHAS TAZRIA – NISSAN AND THE BLESSING ON THE TREES – R' SHOLOM SEGAL

וּבָבֹא עִם הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי ד' בַּמּוֹעֲדִים הָבָא דֶּרֶךְ שַׁעַר צִפּוֹן לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת יֵצֵא דֶּרֶךְ שַׁעַר נֶגֶב וְהָבָא דֶּרֶךְ שַׁעַר נֶגֶב יֵצֵא דֶּרֶךְ שַׁעַר צִפּוֹן לֹא יָשׁוּב דֶּרֶךְ הַשַּׁעַר אֲשֶׁר בָּא בּוֹ כִּי נָכְחוּ (יֵצֵאוּ) יֵצֵא. (יחזקאל מ"ו:ט')

But when the populace comes before Hashem on the appointed days, whoever comes in by way of the northern gate to prostrate himself shall go out by way of the southern gate, and whoever comes in by way of the southern gate shall go out by way of the northern gate. He shall not return by way of the gate through which he came in; rather he shall go out opposite it.

I once heard a beautiful idea from Rav Dovid Sulzbacher שליט"א on the above פסוק that we read in this week's הפטרה. He wondered why it is that the תנ"ך repeats and stresses the need for one to enter and leave the Sanctuary through two different gates. The answer, he posited, is that it is impossible for one to leave the המקדש the same person as the one which entered.

It would seem that we could lend some support to this most beautiful explanation, based on an examination of the grammar in the above verse. When coming in, the singular form, 'בא', is used, but when exiting, although we read, 'יצא', in the singular, it is written in the plural, 'יצאו', the message being, that when it comes time to depart, there are now two people; the old me and the new one.

Taking this idea one step further, we learn from this פסוק that one who enters a shul to daven has a מצוה [according to the version of some ראשונים] to use the הכנסת as a short-cut. [See Megillah 29a] Based on the above said, we may well explain that תפלה provides a person with the opportunity to skip many rungs in his ascent towards G-D. One good מצוה in the מקדש can transform the worshipper and propel him skywards.

פרשת החודש is a שבת on which we learn of the power of התחדשות, an opportunity to change oneself, family, community and the world for the better. This is the first מצוה given to ישראל collectively, for, as I believe I once heard from Harav Osher Zelig Rubinstein זצוק"ל, the power of the Jew is the power of renewal.

Seder Night is all about the reconstruction of the אדם. In brief, our Sages write that there are three partners in the creation of man; the father, the mother and G-D. Whilst the male provides the white ingredients, such as the bones, the mother is the source for the red pigments, such as the blood, and G-D then breathes into the man the spiritual soul. [See Nidah 31a]

On Seder Night, we have the three Matzos, a mixture of white flour and water; this is otherwise termed the נהמא דהימנותא, the bread of faith. The white skeleton of our makeup is the power of אמונה, the gene we gained from our three illustrious forefathers, the אבות הקדושים. Building around the white foundations, we have the blood-network of the red wine we drink. Yes, the four cups of wine, representing the התלהבות, the drive and joy, for Judaism, comes from our four beloved Matriarchs. Finally, we have the הגדה, the power of speech that draws from the soul that Hashem gave us. [This idea is based on and extrapolated from that of Harav Shimshon Pincus זצוק"ל.]

Taking this a little further, there is a process found in the גמרא in which one switches an 'א' for a 'ת', a 'ב' for a 'ש' and so on; in this fashion, one can gain deeper appreciation for the hidden essence of a word. [See Shabbos 104a] The word עצם, the white bones of the skeleton, when transformed under the above process, spells זוהי; the numerical value of this is 22. The 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet are the bones and skeleton of our תורה, the תורה that the man is to learn and impart to his progeny. The woman, his other half, will add her 22, together reaching the דם, the 44. However, at this stage, man would be nothing more than a super animal, equal to the טלה, the 44 of the sheep of Egypt, the most powerful מזל in the Zodiac. However, where there is perfect harmony between man and his wife, Hashem adds His Oneness. The 'א' of Hashem completes the אדם, raising man one above even the most powerful מזל.

As explained in the introduction of חידושי הגדות of the רשב"א, the 15th of ניסן is the night on which the moon is complete, the time when the מזל of the טלה is at its zenith. It was precisely on this night, when the most powerful of the מזלות was as its epoch, that Hashem chose to redeem His dear children, to reveal to the world the true אדם, the man who is more than just a super-animal, the one who cleaves to G-D and houses a part of G-D inside him.

In the words of חז"ל, 'אתם קרויין אדם ואין העובדי כוכבים קרויין אדם'; you, the Jew who serves G-D is called an אדם, but the ones who serve the stars are not labelled an אדם. [See Yevamos 61a] It is only when a person recognises that there is a G-D who is above all stars and other celestial beings that he can imitate the potential of אברהם אבינו, to rise above the stars and act as a guiding light to the Nations.

ניסן denotes a month in which we can act as a 'banner' to promulgate Honour of Heaven. ניסן is the month in which the trees blossom. ניסן is the month in which we have the opportunity for the human-being, a tree in his own right, to blossom and formulate the first seeds of germination of the final redemption, may we merit to see it speedily in our days.