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DAF KESHER

SHAPPELL'S / YESHIVA DARCHE NOAM · MIDRESHET RACHEL V'CHAYA · JACK E. GINDI Z" L PATHWAYS ISRAEL & PATHWAYS PLUS

This week's Daf Kesher is dedicated in memory of
Yona Yoel ben Eliezer, ז"ל, and Yosef ben Yona Yoel ז"ל

DVAR TORAH STOLEN DONATIONS

According to Rashi's chronology, two things happened on the day immediately following the Yom Kippur on which Moshe descended from Mount Sinai with the second Tablets:

1. Moshe gathered the People and spoke to them about Shabbat and the building of the Mishkan (see Rashi's comment on the beginning of Parshat Vayakhel, Shemot 35:1).
2. Moshe judged the People, "ויהי ממחרת וישב משה לשפט את העם" – It was on the morrow (Rashi – the day after Yom Kippur), Moshe sat and judged the Nation" (Shemot 18:13).

Both of these were essential for the Mishkan to get off the ground, says the author of the Kli Yakar (Harav Shlomo Efraim of Luntschitz, זצ"ל, 1550-1619) in his comments on Shemot 35:1.

The Mishkan, he explains, had to be the project of a unified nation, and Moshe saw a unique opportunity for unity at Mount Sinai on the day following Yom Kippur. Israel was profoundly unified at the foot of Mount Sinai. As Rashi says (in his comment on "ויהי שם" on Shemot 19:2): "Even though during all of the rest of the encampments there was complaining and dissent, at Mount Sinai they were as one person with one heart." The power of Yom Kippur, that purified Israel and removed any of the superficial barriers created by sin, further fostered unity. In the Mishkan, whose construction began right after Yom Kippur, the entire Nation of Israel shared a dwelling place with the Divine Presence – for that they must be a totally unified nation.

But there was another prerequisite for the building of the Mishkan. All of the donations needed to build the Mishkan had to come from legitimately owned property. None of the raw materials the Mishkan was made of – gold, silver, and copper, linen and wool, wood and hides, oil and spices – could be stolen. The Mishkan, the center of kedushah in Israel and the world, must be totally clean of any theft.

There are two types of illegitimately owned materials: 1. coarsely stolen property, taken without permission or withheld from its owner; 2. property where some doubt hovers over its ownership. This second type especially worried Moshe Rabbeinu. He asked himself: Were there any unresolved ownership disputes within the People of Israel? If there were, that would cause a lack of clarity about whether any one of the many pieces of silver, gold, copper, or other materials really belonged to the person who donated it. In order to make sure that every iota of Mishkan material was, in this respect, kosher, Moshe announced that anyone with any monetary claim should approach him. Before finishing the donation stage of the building of the Mishkan, Moshe wanted to make sure that Israel was free of legal disputes.

This explains the two activities Moshe scheduled for the People of Israel on the day after Yom Kippur: a national gathering and a call for court cases. Before building the Mishkan the nation had to be deeply unified and totally free of even subtle forms of theft. The resolution of all legal disputes not only ensured the monetary kashrut of all of the materials the Mishkan was built of, but also removed any barriers to national unity and love.

SOURCE GUIDE: CEDAR WOOD, HYSSOP, AND CRIMSON WOOL

What was the significance of casting cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson wool into the fire that burnt the Parah Adumah (Red Heifer)? Harav Gad Eisner, זצ"ל (known as Rav Gudel Eisner, a Gerrer chasid, a Holocaust survivor who was a maggid shiur and mashgiach ruchani at Yeshivas Chidushei Harim in Tel Aviv and passed away in 1985) offers an answer. This source guide is built on an essay that appears in a volume collecting his teachings.

A. Two Places this Threesome Appears

This combination of these three materials – cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson wool – appears in two places in the Chumash, in conjunction with two mysterious and multifaceted purification processes. It appears in the beginning of Chukat, the section read this week as Parshat Parah, as part of the purification process for one who came in contact with the dead:

<p>1. Bamidbar 19:5-6 (5) The cow shall then be burned in his presence; its hide, its flesh, its blood, with its dung he shall burn it. (6) The Kohen shall take a piece of cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson wool, and cast them into the burning of the cow.</p>	<p>במדבר יט:ה-ו (ה) וְשָׂרַף אֶת הַפָּרָה לְעֵינָיו אֶת עֹרָהּ וְאֶת בְּשָׂרָהּ וְאֶת דָּמָהּ עַל פְּרִשָּׁה יִשְׂרָף. (ו) וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן עֵץ אֶרְזוֹ וְאֵזוֹב וְשָׁנִי תוֹלַעַת וְהִשְׁלִיךְ אֵל תוֹךְ שִׂרְפַת הַפָּרָה.</p>
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The other place the threesome appears is in conjunction with the purification of the metzora (a person afflicted with tzara'at, one of the types of plagues listed in Parshat Tazria):

<p>2. Vayikra 14:1-7 (1) And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, (2) This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the Kohen. (3) The Kohen shall go outside the camp, and the Kohen shall look, and behold, the plague of tzara'at has healed in the afflicted person. (4) Then the Kohen shall command, and the person to be cleansed shall take two live, clean birds, a cedar stick, a strip of crimson [wool], and hyssop. (5) The Kohen shall order, and one shall slaughter the one bird into an earthenware vessel, over spring water. (6) [As for] the live bird, he shall take it, and then the cedar stick, the strip of crimson [wool], and the hyssop, and, along with the live bird, he shall dip them into the blood of the slaughtered bird, over the spring water. (7) He shall then sprinkle seven times upon the person being purified from tzara'at, and he shall purify him. He shall then send away the live bird into the [open] field.</p>	<p>ויקרא יד:א-ז (א) וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. (ב) זֹאת תְּהִיָּה תוֹרַת הַמְצֻרָע בְּיוֹם טְהֻרָתוֹ יְהוּבָא אֵל הַכֹּהֵן. (ג) וַיִּצָּא הַכֹּהֵן אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וַרְאֵה הַכֹּהֵן יְהִיגֵה נִרְפָּא נִגַע הַצִּרְעָת מִן הַצִּרְוּעַ. (ד) וַיִּצְוֶה הַכֹּהֵן וְלָקַח לַמַּטְהָר שְׁתֵּי צִפְּרִים חַיִּים טְהוֹרוֹת וְעֵץ אֶרְזוֹ וְשָׁנִי תוֹלַעַת וְאֵזוֹב. (ה) וַיִּצְוֶה הַכֹּהֵן וְשָׁחַט אֶת הַצִּפּוֹר הָאֶחָד אֵל כְּלֵי חַרֵּשׁ עַל מַיִם חַיִּים. (ו) אֶת הַצִּפּוֹר הַחַיִּים יִקַּח אֹתָהּ וְאֶת עֵץ הָאֶרְזוֹ וְאֶת שָׁנֵי הַתוֹלַעַת וְאֶת הָאֵזוֹב וְטָבַל אוֹתָם וְאֶת הַצִּפּוֹר הַחַיִּים בְּדָם הַצִּפּוֹר הַשְּׁחֻטָּה עַל הַמַּיִם הַחַיִּים. (ז) וַיְהִי עַל הַמַּטְהָר מִן הַצִּרְעָת שִׁבְעַת פְּעָמִים וְטָהָרוּ וְשָׁלַח אֶת הַצִּפּוֹר הַחַיִּים עַל פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה.</p>
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B. Rashi's Explanation

The Torah, as Divine wisdom, is ultimately beyond human comprehension; but it is also Divine communication to the Jewish People, and we strive to maximize our comprehension of its sometimes mystifying contents. Rashi, in the tradition of the literature of טעמי המצוות – the rationale and messages communicated through the mitzvot – suggests a reason for the details of this seemingly otherworldly halachah, the purification of the metzora:

<p>3. Rashi's Commentary on Vayikra 14:4 "A cedar stick" – [This is] because these plagues come because of arrogance (the cedar is the prototypical tall tree). "A strip of crimson [wool] and hyssop" – What is his remedy to be healed? He should humble himself like a worm (a lowly creature) and like hyssop (a lowly bush).</p>	<p>פירוש רש"י על ויקרא יד:ד "ויעץ ארז" – לפי שהנגעים באין על גסות הרוח. "ושני תולעת ואזוב" – מה תקנתו ויתרפא ישפיל עצמו מגאותו כתולעת וכאזוב.</p>
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Rav Gudel Eisner asks: Why does the penitent, formerly arrogant, metzora bring cedar wood? We can understand why he brings hyssop and crimson thread. Both symbolize humility: the lowly hyssop and the thread, representing the worm (the Hebrew תולעת, used here for thread, is the word for worm), and he has taken on a new direction of humility in his life. But why, after he has repented, does he bring cedar wood, symbolic of his former arrogance and reminiscent of his sin?

He answers that it is precisely meditation on his arrogance that brings him to teshuvah:

<p>4. Moreshet Gad, p. 339 However, it seems that the intent of bringing the cedar, that evokes memory of the sin, is so that the arrogant one should look at his past and make a personal account. He should see and understand where his arrogance was leading. He should understand why he was arrogant and about what – for he is merely like an axe in the hand of the one chopping wood. Have we ever heard of the axe itself aggrandizing itself and being arrogant vis a vis the one chopping with it?</p>	<p>מורשת גד, עמוד של"ט ברם נראה שכוונת הבאת הארז, מזכרת עון, בכדי שיביט המתגאה על עברו ויעשה חשבון נפשו, יראה וגם יבין להיכן הובילה גאוותו, יתבונן מדוע התגאה ועל מה, שהרי הוא כגרזן ביד החוצב, וכי נשמע כדבר הזה שיתהלל ויתגאה הגרזן על החוצב בו?</p>
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Meditation on arrogance leads the proud person to realize its absurdity. How can a creation of G-d, whose every power and talent are G-d-given, ever feel anything more than being a tool in G-d's hands? Meditating on the foolishness of arrogance leads to true humility. The cedar wood is essential to the proud man's purification, for the soul-searching he went through because of his arrogance led to his subsequent humility. Retroactively, the proud man's sin led to his repentance and his sin was repaired.

C. The Parah Adumah, Death, and Arrogance

But why do the cedar wood, crimson thread, and hyssop play a part in the Parah Adumah process, which is usually seen as a חוק – a mitzvah beyond human understanding?

One possible explanation is that the Parah Adumah, that brings purification from contact with the dead, relates to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge that brought death to humanity. The ability to gain purity after contact with the dead means we can ultimately negate the source of death, the sin of Adam and Chavah.

A key element of that sin was arrogance, as the snake said to Chavah:

<p>5. Bereishit 3:4-5 (4) The snake said to the woman, "You will surely not die. (5) For G-d knows that on the day you eat from it (the Tree of Knowledge) your eyes will open and you will be like gods (Rashi – creators of worlds) that know good and evil.</p>	<p>בראשית ג:ד-ה (ד) ויאמר הנחש אל האשה: "לא מות תקמתין. (ה) כי ידע אלקים כי ביום אכלכם ממנו ונפקחו עיניכם והייתם כאלקים ידעי טוב ורע."</p>
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Rav Eisner adds that there is another connection between humility and the Parah Adumah. Israel merited the mitzvah of the Parah Adumah because of Avraham Avinu's humility. Avraham, when addressing Hashem as he prayed for the people of Sodom, said, humbly, "I am mere dirt and ashes" (Bereishit 18:27):

<p>6. Sotah 17a Rava expounded: In the merit of Avraham Avinu saying, "I am dirt and ashes" (Bereishit 18:27), his descendants merited two mitzvot – the ashes of the Parah and the dirt of the Sotah.</p>	<p>סוטה יז. דריש רבא: בשכר שאמר אברהם אבינו "ואנכי עפר ואפר" זכו בניו לב' מצות אפר פרה ועפר סוטה.</p>
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Every year, as we read in Parshat Parah about the stick of cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson wool, we are inspired to look into ourselves and remove any vestiges of arrogance. We thereby return back to the point before Adam and Chavah's sin and undo the arrogance that brought about death. Death itself is humbling, but the Parah Adumah purification process teaches us that we can reach humility even without death.

THE POWER OF SHABBAT BY RABBI YITZCHAK LERNER

Rashi tells us (Shemot 35:1) that the first verse of Vayakhel took place on the day after the first Yom Kippur, following the sin of the Golden Calf. Moshe gathered together the entire People of Israel, and the first thing he told them after descending from Mount Sinai was the commandment of Shabbat.

The previous Slonimer Rebbe (Harav Shalom Noach Brozofsky, זצ"ל, 1911-2000), in *נתיבות שלום*, tells us that Shabbat has two aspects. The first is the recognition that G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. The second aspect of Shabbat is that the day itself is "an eternal sign between the Jewish People and G-d – *ביני ובין בני ישראל אות היא לעולם*" (Shemot 31:17).

The first aspect of Shabbat is really applicable to the entire world. Every nation in the world must recognize that there is one G-d and that He created the world.

The second aspect of Shabbat is a gift just for the Jewish People. Like the Gemara (Shabbat 10b) tells us, "G-d said to Moshe, 'I have a good gift in My treasury house for the Jewish People and Shabbat is its name.'"

The Slonimer Rebbe notes that that before the point in the Torah when it tells of the Jewish People becoming a nation after leaving Egypt, Shabbat is only referred to as *יום השביעי* – the seventh day. Like we say in the first paragraph of Kiddush, "And G-d finished on the seventh day – *ביום השביעי* – and G-d rested on the seventh day, and He blessed the seventh day."

The word *שבת* is only mentioned in the Torah after the Jewish People became a nation. This word, *שבת*, refers to the aspect of Shabbat that is part of the special relationship between G-d and His nation.

The Gemara in Avodah Zarah (4b) tells us that the sin of the Golden Calf was done so that future generations would not be able to say that G-d will not forgive them for their sins. G-d forgiving the generation of the Golden Calf for their sin shows that He will always be a forgiving G-d. When Moshe came down from the mountain with his face glowing from the Divine Presence, the first message he wanted to announce to the Jewish People is that there is always a way of doing teshuvah, and that is through the power of Shabbat.

The Gemara in Massechet Shabbat 118b tells us that a person who keeps Shabbat and all of its laws will always be forgiven, even if that person transgressed idol worship. The power of Shabbat, the connection between G-d and the Jewish People, has the ability to purify the Jewish People in every situation that we are in.

May the love that we show towards Shabbat help bring the Divine redemption speedily in our days.

שבת שלום ומבורך

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The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet:
DBS – Hataklitor Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, Hebrewbooks.org, and the Tanach section of Chabad.org.

We continue to pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.