

## Haftarah Weekly

### Haftarah – Parshat Parah

Yechezkel 36:16-38

This week's haftarah talks about the 'Final Redemption.' Hashem asks Yechezkel to explain to the Jewish People that the redemption in the future will come because Hashem will 'take pity on His Holy Name.' He goes on to explain why Hashem needs to 'take pity' on His Name.

Yechezkel says that when the Jewish People sin, Hashem's Name is blemished. The B'nei Yisrael do not have enough of their own merits to cause the end of their exile, so Hashem will redeem them to prevent further 'blemishing' of His name.

This is necessary because, due to the lowered spiritual level of the nation, the very sins that caused them to be exiled in the first place will be committed while in exile.

Therefore it is ultimately Hashem's 'pity' for His name that will bring the redemption.

The connection to this week's Parsha is of course the fact that it is the haftarah for Parshat Parah. The Navi says that Hashem will 'sprinkle pure waters upon you, and cleanse you of your impurities.' This is

similar to the waters of the Parah Adumah – the Red Cow – that Parshat Parah talks about.

This connection from the waters of the Parah Adumah to those described in the haftarah is worth exploring.

There is an interesting fact about the waters of the Parah Adumah – that they, as well as purifying the recipient, actually cause the Kohen who sprinkles them to become impure.

This can be compared to the Jewish People in exile. While they have contributed a large number of the finest scientists, philosophers, Nobel Prize winners etc to the betterment of mankind, they are subject to the pressures of assimilation, which contribute to the spiritual degradation of the Jewish People.

The haftarah ends with a description of the material wealth that will accompany the redemption, and tells the B'nei Yisrael to 'be ashamed' that it will not be able to come about as a result of their own merits, but rather from Hashem's desire to not see His Name blemished even more.

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## Keeping on the Path

In this week's sedrah we have the story of Nadav and Avihu. They were both consumed by fire for bringing into the Mishkan an "alien fire He had not desired". Rashi quotes R' Yishmael saying they were drunk when they came into the Mishkan. Rabbi Twerski explains that R'Yishmael is explaining the words "alien fire"; he says they are literally translated as "alien flame" which can then be understood as "alien passion".

The idea brought across is the following. Nadav and Avihu were great Tzaddikim, they were to be the future leaders of K'lal Yisroel but they made a simple mistake. They believed that wine would make them happy and put them on a higher level, with which they could serve Hashem better. This can be seen in Tehillim 104: "wine makes glad the heart of man".

In truth Nadav and Avihu wanted to attain a higher level but that wasn't the way Hashem wanted them to do it. It is very good to feel close to Hashem and feel spiritually uplifted at certain times, but it is not a substitute for Halochah.

The opposite happens to another Torah personality in this week's sedrah: Aharon HaKohen. Firstly, he is told by Moshe to offer up the Korbonos on the eighth day and Rashi (9:7) tells us that Aharon was embarrassed and scared, so Moshe answered him saying "this is what you were chosen for". I have seen an explanation of these words as follows. We see in the Rashi (9:2) that the Chattos here was an atonement for

the Eigel Hazohov. Aharon was embarrassed as he had partaken in the Eigel in a small way. Then Moshe replies to him saying "this is what you were chosen for" - this is why you had to be part of the Eigel - to do the Chattos today. We also see later on in the sedrah that both Aharon's sons are killed and Aharon doesn't complain, rather he stays silent. As you see, even though it was hard and Aharon felt distant from Hashem, he still did what was right and not what made him feel closer to Hashem.

And this understanding fits very well as Rashi (10:3) says that the reward for Aharon staying silent was that he was told the Halochos of going into the Beis Hamikdash drunk directly from Hashem. Here we see that Aharon was the vessel for the Halochos of not putting your emotions first and of how to truly serve Hashem, since he himself had showed this middah.

It is true that sometimes we want to feel close to Hashem, but only He knows what is truly best and He has laid out a path called Halochah to help us. Even though sometimes it may feel worthwhile doing something a bit wrong in order to feel closer to Hashem, in fact it is contradictory to itself and **not** what Hashem desires!

*Contributed Anonymously*

## M'lachah of the Week

### Kosheir – Tying

The Av Melachah is tying a permanent knot. The Gemara explains that this M'lachah and the next (which is untying) were used in the Mishkan with the capturing of the Chilazon fish. This fish was used to make T'chelet dyes. And in the capturing process, sometimes one would take strings from one net to another net, and then it would result in tying and untying these strings. The principle of this M'lachah is permanently fastening two ends together [without using a third item]. A Tof'dah of this is plying rope or twisting fibers of string together to form a new, stronger string. One should, therefore, not twist the entwined ends of Tzitzit to keep them together. A knot is defined if both ends of a string passes through to the other side and stays tightened (by itself or by something else e.g. a bow) and cannot be easily undone. Therefore, a bow, slipknot (by itself) or a loose knot, are all not considered a knot. (Conversely, one is not allowed to tighten any existing permanent knot.) The details are that any knot that is intended (by the person tying it or generally) to remain tied for more than one month is "permanent" and you are forbidden from tying it. The following are forbidden but less severe - 'Pattur Aval Assur': 1) Single knot with a bow that is intended (by the person tying it or generally) to remain tied for more than 24 hours (and less than one month). 2. Double knot using two ends (e.g. a square knot) or single knot in one end (e.g. an overhand knot), that is intended (by the person tying it or generally) to remain tied for any definite length of time. 3. Any other "professional knot" (e.g. sailor's knots) that is intended (by the person tying it or generally) to remain tied for any length of time. A single knot with a bow (e.g. shoelace or necktie), if intended (by the person tying it as well as generally) to remain tied for less than 24 hours, is allowed. For Mitzvot (tying belt around Sefer Torah), or in great need, any knot that is intended (by the person tying it as well as generally) to remain tied for less than one week is allowed (e.g. single knot with a bow, double knot using two strings, single knot in one end).

## Words of the Wise

Rabbi Noach Weinberg, Rosh Yeshiva of Aish Hatorah in Yerushalayim, tells the following story:

In an old age home in America, three of the residents were Jews, and the manager of the home was also a Jew. He was particular to serve them only kosher food.

One day, a government inspector arrived at the home to ensure that all appropriate services were being provided and that all was in order. Whilst he was there, a ninety-five-year-old woman complained to him that she was receiving different food from everyone else. She wanted the normal meal that everyone else got, but the manager persisted in serving her the kosher meal. She was in fact one of the three Jews but she had been non-religious her entire life and cared nothing for kosher food. However, the manager, being an observant Jew, was forbidden to serve her non-kosher food. He assured the inspector that the kosher food was of very high quality and that the woman's complaints were unfounded. The inspector pushed aside his argument by claiming that the woman had the right to eat whatever she chose, and that by the time he returned, she should be receiving the same meals as the other residents.

The manager realised that the only solution to his

problem was to convince the old lady to drop her complaint; otherwise the inspector would never back down. He approached the elderly woman and told her that the kosher food was actually healthier, tastier and more expensive than the regular meal.

"I don't care if it's tastier", replied the woman. "At my age, I can hardly taste anything at all. As for health, I do not have much longer to live anyway. I just want to be like everyone else and eat what they eat!"

Consequently, he took a different approach and told the woman about the beauty of Torah and Mitzvos. The woman was moved and from then on, only ate Kosher, kept Shabbos and davened every day.

Upon hearing the story, R' Noach asked the man how he had convinced the woman to become a Ba'alas Teshuvah. The man explained:

"I don't really remember. All I know is that I begged, pleaded and coaxed her into becoming religious. I had to get the woman to keep kosher, otherwise the inspector would have closed down the home!

From here Rabbi Weinberg extracted the important message, that if we all reached out to the non-religious Jews with the urgency and fervour of this man, then no doubt we would be successful in being m'karev them to keep Torah and Mitzvos.

*Adapted from 'Shabbos Stories'*

## Gematria of the Week

At the beginning of this week's parsha, Moshe tells Aharon to take a calf and offer it up as a *Korbon*. The gematria of עֵגֶל בֶּן־בָּקָר – 'a young male of cattle' (a calf) is the same as that of לִכְפֹּר חַטַּאת הַעֵגֶל – 'to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf'. Indeed Rashi explains that this offering was an atonement for Aharon's sin of the Golden Calf. The Gemoro in Rosh Hashonoh (26a) says אֵין קְטִיגוֹר נִעֲשֶׂה כְּגִיגוֹר – 'a prosecutor cannot be made into a defendant'. Surely Aharon sacrificing a calf to atone for his sin involving a calf is in direct contradiction of this rule! However, the Maharal explains that on the contrary, using something with which you sinned to atone for that very same sin is ideal. He brings the analogy of a man who stole some beautiful dining utensils from a King. If the man wanted to give a gift to the King simply to be nice to him and he gives one of these dining utensils, then it is forbidden under this rule. However, if he returned to the king to apologise for stealing and returned an item of a similar form then this would be advisable. This helps clarify why the Kohen Gadol could not wear gold on Yom Kippur – since gold was used in the sin of the Golden Calf and therefore could not be used to help do Teshuva for other Aveiros (the Aveiros for which the Kohen Gadol did Teshuvah on Yom Kippur).

(ויקרא ט:ב) - Based on Ba'al Haturim

## Kashrus

At the end of the Parsha, after being told what we can and can't eat, the Possuk states (11:43),

אל תשקצו את נפשותיכם...ולא תטמאו בהם ונטמתם בהם.

Do not make your souls despicable with them...and do not defile yourselves with them, lest you become defiled with them.

The Gemara (Yoma 39a) on this Possuk notes the lack of an aleph in ונטמתם and relates it to the word מטמתם, to confuse - to say that by eating forbidden foods, it causes a confusion and dimming of a person's heart and mind - and while teshuvah can achieve forgiveness for the act, it takes something more to repair the spiritual damage done.

It's clear that there's more to the laws of kashrus than meets the eye. So much so that Chazal link Yetzias Mitzrayim - referenced two pesukim later - with the fact that the Jewish people didn't contaminate themselves by eating swarming creatures, on which Ksav Sofer explains that although these are things no-one would want to eat anyway, the Jews' intentions were purely because Hashem had commanded not to eat them

- and for this they merited redemption.

The effect we're discussing here is not physical health (although both Rambam and Ramban mention this to some extent) - it goes far deeper than that. We cannot fathom the inner workings of the world, but it's clear that Hashem forbade certain foods because, in the world He created, they have an adverse spiritual effect on one who eats them.

Chazal give a famous moshol of two patients - to one, the doctor prescribed a strict diet, while to the other he allowed him to eat as he pleased. When questioned, he replied that the first patient needed the diet to survive, while the second was going to die anyway so may as well eat what he likes. Us Jews, being on a high spiritual level, need the 'diet' that will sustain us on this level - even if we don't understand how it works, we trust in the Ultimate Doctor that this is what the neshamah needs. And in fact this is the next possuk to the one we quoted originally - והייתם קדושים - And you sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am Holy. By following the 'recipe' we can be sure that not only are we fulfilling a mitzvah in the usual sense, but our neshamah gains holiness from it too!

*Written by Shimon Lyons*

## Riddle of the Week

We have a general rule not to bring forward sad days or events. For example, if Tisha b'Av falls on a Shabbos, we push it off until Sunday as opposed to bringing it forward. However, there are 2 fasts which we do bring forward. What are they and for what reason do we bring them earlier?

**Last week's riddle:**

I am a tefillah but I am not recited in shul. What am I?

**Answer:**

There are a few answers but the most obvious (official answer) is Tefillas Haderech!