

CHAYUS

A Shabbos Stimulus

✧ THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION ✧

In memory of a beautiful sweet soul, Hadassah Lebovic

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

Erev Shabbos Parshas Chukas, 5781 – June 18, 2021

ערב שבת פרשת חקת, ח' תמוז, ה'תשפ"א

✧ כתר שם טוב ✧

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A Perplexing Law

The word *parah*, cow, also means to increase or proliferate. *Adumah*, red, is symbolic of *kelipah*, the forces of evil. Taken together, the term *parah adumah* (red cow) alludes to inappropriate inflation of self-worth that results in the evil trait of arrogance.

A puzzling feature of the laws governing *parah adumah* is that the process purifies the ritually impure but transmits impurity to the pure.¹ In spiritual terms, arrogance can bring purity to those who need spiritual cleansing, but it is destructive to those who are advanced in the service of G-d.

We should not serve G-d for personal gain or con-

siderations, however subtle; we should do what G-d desires simply because that is His will. Studying or doing a mitzvah to earn reward in heaven is considered self-serving for those who are advanced in their service. It is arrogant, disqualifies their service, and introduces spiritual impurity to the pure.

The reverse is true of those unfamiliar with G-d's service. They cannot ignore all enticements, such as heavenly rewards, because they may otherwise be unmotivated to serve G-d. They must invite a measure of haughtiness—a self-serving motivation—to facilitate the move from impurity to purity.

1. The cow is slaughtered and then burned in the precise manner described in the Torah. Its ashes are mixed with water and sprinkled upon a person who is severely impure from contact with a corpse. That individual is thereby restored to purity. However, those preparing the ashes gain a limited degree of impurity in the process.

Focus: Use pride as an umbrella; fold it up once you get inside.

✧ שער הבטחון ✧

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The One Ultimate Cause

A person should clearly see that the completion of all the matters that come to be in this world after its creation, come to be in one of two ways: One of the manners in which they come to be is solely due to the decrees of the Creator, may He be exalted, and due to His desire that these things should immediately come into existence. The second manner in which they come to be is through various means and intermediaries. Some of those intermediaries are immediate, while some of them are remote, some are revealed and some are hidden, but all of them hasten to complete that which G-d has decreed should be—and the way those things should appear—while G-d helps them accomplish this.

An example of an immediate cause would be the drawing of water from the depths of the earth by means of a pulley and a jug tied to it that draws the water out of the well.

The remote cause would be the person who ties the animal to the rope that is attached to the vessel, and his moving of the animal that pulls the rope to draw the water from deep in the well to the surface.

Then there are those causes that are between the person and the vessels (that are being used to draw out the water), which are intermediary causes between the two matters. They are the animal, the wheels that

move each another, and the rope. If any of these aforementioned causes were ruined, the intended goal (of drawing the water) would not come to be.

A person is required to know that while everything comes from G-d, there are some things that G-d decreed should immediately come to be without any further action necessary, while there are other things that G-d decided should come into being through various means

לקוטי שיחות

A SICHA

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Moses and the Impossible Purification

The Context: Our *Parsha* opens with the *mitzvah* of the Red Heifer, used in the process of a person's purification after contracting impurity from a dead body. The Torah calls this "the statute of the Torah" (*Bamidbar* 19:2). A "statute" is a *mitzvah* that defies human comprehension. The Red Heifer, the Torah implies, is "the statute of the Torah," the definitive statute, entirely beyond the pale of human reason.

In truth, however, the unintelligible character of the Red Heifer is representative of the entire Torah. Even those laws that can be understood by human reason are, in essence, "decrees," the deepest expressions of the Divine will that are divorced from reason. Only because G-d desires that these laws be relatable to human beings did He allow some of the *mitzvot* to be garbed in reason.

And yet, G-d did not garb all *mitzvot* in reason, for if all of the *mitzvot* were intelligible, if everything were reduced to human reason, then we could never muster an irrational dedication to G-d's *mitzvot*. Suprarational self-sacrifice would be impossible.

The Red Heifer is an enduring reminder that rationality is limited, and that our relationship with G-d demands suprarational commitment.

The Question: The *Midrash* relates that G-d revealed the "rationale" for the Red Heifer to Moses (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 19:6). If Moses understood even the incomprehensible, how could he attain true self-sacrifice?

The Preface to the Explanation: The *Midrash* also relates that when Moses learned of the acute impurity conveyed by a corpse, he could not fathom how purity was possible. Even when G-d explained the ritual of the Red Heifer's ashes, he wondered, "Is this a purification?" (*Ibid.*, 4)

Seemingly, there are more stringent forms of impurity than that imparted by corpse. A *metzarah*, for example, must remain outside all three Israelite camps, while a corpse can remain in the levite camp. Why was Moses so confused by the corpse-impurity?

The explanation is that all other impurities concern a living person. As long as the Divine soul resides in the

body, it has the potential to cleanse impurity. But what recourse could there be for a type of impurity that is imparted by a body without a soul? With no potential for holiness and Divine life, how could purity ever be achieved? This was Moses' concern.

G-d's answer was: "This is the **statute** of the Torah." The purification of this impossible scenario defies logic and the rules of the natural world. Even after the soul leaves the body, its effect on the body is eternal. There is residual holiness even in the corpse, and it is this lingering effect of the soul that enables the impurity to be undone. This is a true impossibility — for how can one entity maintain influence on another after they have separated? But this is the "statute of the Torah." Purity is always possible because the soul's influence is eternal.

The Explanation: When the *Midrash* says that G-d revealed the rationale for the Red Heifer to Moses, it does not mean that it became intelligible for him. Rather, because Moses lacked any sense of self and identified completely with G-d, he was able to absorb G-d's paradoxical truth — that the soul persists even after its departure.

Therefore, his "understanding" could not compromise his dedication, because Moses was "dedication personified." His identification with the *mitzvah* of the Red Heifer was an indication that he and G-d were completely one.

The Natural Miracle: Moses' humility and his identification with G-d that allowed him to "understand" the paradox of the Red Heifer is related to the miracle of the 12th of Tammuz — the release of the Previous Rebbe from the Stalinist prison. That miracle was a paradox: It defied the expected course of nature, yet it unfolded through natural channels. Because the Previous Rebbe lived with daily self-sacrifice to spread Torah and *mitzvot*, his salvation also defied the separation between the natural and miraculous. His suprarational dedication was a vessel for G-d's Essence that transcends rational boundaries.

Purification By Torah

Purification from contact with a corpse requires sprinkling with the ashes of the red heifer on the third and seventh day of the process. The third day represents the third millennia of creation, in which the Torah was given to the Jewish people. The Torah is our spiritual purification. The seventh day represents the seventh millennia of creation,

the era of complete redemption, the resurrection, and ultimate spiritual purification. It is by means of the Torah – the third day’s sprinkling – that we prepare ourselves for the sprinkling of the seventh day, the purity of the ultimate redemption.

The Shelah

ילקוט לוי יצחק על התורה

FROM THE REBBE’S FATHER

רבי לוי יצחק שניידער

By Rabbis Dovid Dubov & Yaakov K. Chaiton

In honor of Yaakov Ben Zina & Leah Bas Shlima

A Sign Not To Fear

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אַל תִּירָא אֶל אוֹג כִּי בְיַדְךָ נֹתַתִּי אֹתוֹ

G-d said to Moses, “Do not fear him (Og), for I have delivered him (Og)... his land into your hand. (Bamidbar, 21:34)

Introduction: As the Jewish nation approaches the Promised Land, after wandering in the desert for decades, they are faced with nations who block their access. Although preferring and attempting a peaceful negotiation of passing through the adjacent countries, they are confronted with the inevitability of war. Sichon and Og, the two giant brothers, kings of Emori and Bashan respectively, block their pathway. While the former was easily conquered, it appears from our verse that Moses was fearful of Og - something he did not harbor when it came to Sichon¹. The Talmud² clarifies this:

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָאִי: מִתְּשׁוּבַתוֹ שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ צָדִיק אֵתָּה יוֹדֵעַ מַה הָיָה בְּלִבּוֹ. אָמַר, “שָׂמָּא תַעֲמֹד לוֹ זְכוּת שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ...”

Rabbi Yochanan says that Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai says: From the answer of that righteous one, you know what was in his (Moshe’s) heart, i.e., what gave Moshe cause to fear. Moshe said to himself: Perhaps the merit of our forefather Avraham will stand for Og and save him.

(What merit are we referring to? The Talmud continues:)

As it is stated: “And the refugee came and he told Avram the Ivri, and he was living in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshkol and the brother of Aner, who were Avram’s confederates (Lech Lecha 14:13).” Rabbi Yochanan said that the term “the refugee” is referring to Og, who was spared from the punishment of the generation of the flood.

Driving Questions:

1. What is this Zechus (merit) of Avraham that the Talmud is referring to?

2. Why does the Talmud not simply say “from the answer of Hashem to Moshe...”?

Why the unusual expression of אוֹתוֹ צָדִיק — ‘that Tzaddik’ (righteous one)?³

The Zohar⁴ on this week’s Parsha points out that there are two places in the Torah where the Hebrew word אוֹתוֹ (*Oso*, lit. him) are written מְלֵא (lit. full) i.e. with two Vavs⁵. This alludes to the word אוֹת (*Ois*) which means a sign.

One of these instances is with regard to the laws of returning a lost object. The verse⁶ tells us that when finding an object we are obligated to safeguard it “until your fellow claims it” — “עַד דְּרַשׁ אֶחָיֶךָ אוֹתוֹ”. The word *Oso* also serves as an allusion to teach us the method by which he claims it: by providing an *Ois* – a sign⁷.

Similarly in the narrative with Og, in our Parsha.

When the verse says, “Do not fear him (Og)” — “אַל תִּירָא”

3. The commonly accepted meaning is that this refers to Og’s decision to inform Avraham that Lot, his brother-in-law, had been captured. See Tosafot. (See also Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 8, page 138.)

The difficulty with this is that it is not completely compatible with the words of the Talmud. For if that were the case, it should have stated “In his (Og’s) merit that he informed Avraham”, not “Avraham’s merit”.

4. Zohar (III), Chukas, 184a.

5. As it happens, in our Mesorah, the Sefer Torahs we have today, these two words are not spelled with two vavs. See footnote 10.

6. Ki Seitzei, 22:2.

7. The Mishna (Bava Metzia 2:7) seems to derive the need for the claimant to provide an identifying sign from the word דְּרַשׁ (which can mean to investigate). The Zohar highlights the word אוֹתוֹ as referring to a sign, an אוֹת.

1. There is no reassurance of G-d “Don’t fear Sichon etc.”.

2. Niddah, 61a.

אֹתוֹ, the word *Oso* can be understood to mean *Ois* — sign. Meaning, G-d is telling Moses not to be afraid of the sign (of the covenant), Bris Milah, known as the “Ois Bris Kodesh” that Og had received.

Where do we find that Og was circumcised?

The Zohar says that when Hashem told Avram to circumcise all the members of his household, this included Og.⁸ It was this “sign” (Bris) that Moshe feared⁹ might stand in Og’s merit. Hence, אַל תִּירָא אֹתוֹ, Do not fear his *Ois*.¹⁰

Based on this, R’ Levi Yitzchak offers a novel approach to understanding the Talmud:¹¹

8. ... דא עוג, דאתדבק באבריהם, ומאנשי ביתיה הנה, וכד אתגור אברהם מה קתיב, וכל אנשי ביתו ... וגו' דא עוג דאתגור עמיה, וקביל האי את קדישא.

9. Furthermore, teaches R’ Levi Yitzchak, Moshe was concerned because he himself had been lax in performing Bris Mila on his son, and almost died by the snake as a result (See Shemos 4:24). So, in addition to Og’s merit of having the Bris, he may have lacked its protective power.

10. The reason for Moshe not to fear it, writes the Zohar, is because Og had defiled the Bris, by utilizing his organ inappropriately, thus violating its protective power. This also possibly explains why the word אֹתוֹ is ultimately missing the vav in our Torah, alluding to Og’s corruption of the אֹת (Mosuk Midvash).

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

SHABBOS CHITAS / RAMBAM GUIDE

BOOK	SECTION
Chumash – Rashi*	Chukas, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapter 49 – 54
Tanya*	Igeres Hateshuvah, Ch. 2 פרק ב 182- עמ' אך כל זה... עד עמ' צב- יום רצון
Rambam Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvahs #3, #4, and #9.
Rambam One Chapter*	Sefer Hafila'ah – Hilchos Nezirah, Chapter 8
Rambam Three Chapters**	Sefer HaMada – Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah, Chapters 4 – 6

*Available in the Chayenu Print & App

**Available in the Chayenu App

The Talmud is alluding to the merit of Bris, which is uniquely associated with Avraham and came to Og through Avraham.¹²

This explains the unusual wording when referring to Hashem’s reassurance to Moshe, using the term אֹתוֹ צְדִיק “*Oso Tzaddik*”. As we have seen, the word אֹתוֹ alludes to the הַבְּרִית. And “Tzaddik” too, corresponds to יְסוּד¹³ (Yesod) the reproductive organ,¹⁴ which when preserved for sacred use earns one the title Tzaddik.¹⁵ Thus, אֹתוֹ צְדִיק, a reference to Hashem’s attribute of Yesod, is reassuring Moshe that his Bris is sacred and has protective power, whilst Og’s has been compromised and there is nothing to fear.

This is alluded to in the Talmud’s quoting the story of Og visiting Avram, where he is referred to as part of “בְּעֵלֵי בְרִית” Avram’s circle of Bris participants.¹⁶

This idea is also hinted at in the following Gematrias.

79*	= עוג (3+6+70)
80	= יסוד (4+6+60+10)
617	= הברית (400+10+200+2+5)
617	= אֹתוֹ (6+400+6+1) צְדִיק (100+10+4+90)

Likkutei Levi Yitzchok
Haaros L’Zohar, Chukas, p. 390.¹⁷

11. Although the simple meaning of the Talmud, regarding the merit of Og is as explained in footnote 3, R’ Levi Yitzchok is asserting that the Talmudic language alludes to the Zohar’s approach too. This is enhanced by the fact that the Talmudic teaching is by Rashbi, who is also the Zohar’s author.

12. See footnote 3. This is now resolved perfectly.

13. As in וְצְדִיק יְסוּד עוֹלָם (Mishlei 10:25).

14. See Pasach Eliyahu, introduction to Tikkunei Zohar, where the body is aligned and representative of various Sefiros, and Yesod corresponds to the reproductive organ.

15. Zohar, Parshas Noach. (This is why Yosef HaTzaddik earned this title, after refusing Potiphar’s wife.)

16. See Rashi there, quoting Midrash, that this refers to Mamre encouraging Avram to perform the Bris.

17. See **Yalkut Levi Yitzchak Al HaTorah, vol. 1, chapter 92**, for a full reading of the Zohar and further sources referenced there.

*Og is one short of Yesod, which corresponds to the reproductive organ, because he defiled it, thus it is lacking.

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