

A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

This weekly sheet is brought to you by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman of Northwood United Synagogue in conjunction with Shapell's/Darché Noam

PARSHAT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

DVAR TORAH: BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR MARRIAGE

“Go out and see, daughters of Zion, King Solomon, and the crown that his mother crowned him with on his wedding day and on the day of the joy of his heart” (Shir Hashirim 3:11).

Chazal understood that the name King Solomon, **המלך שלמה**, here alludes to Hashem, **מלך שהשלווה שלו**, the King to whom harmony and peace is His. How, then, do we read the rest of the verse? When was His wedding day and when was the Day of the joy of His heart?

Rashi on that verse says that His wedding day was the day of the giving of the Torah, when Israel crowned God the King as their Chatan, and the day of the joy of His heart was the day the Mishkan was dedicated, the first of Nisan.

Why the great joy? Why is there such great joy at every wedding?

The Nesivos Shalom (Volume I, p. 266) answers: Joy comes from the **עולם הבנין**, the “World of Building” and sadness from the “World of Destruction.” There must be great joy at a wedding to propel the chatan and kallah into that world of building, creating a strong foundation for their married life. That is also the source of the great joy of the dedication of the Mishkan, the culmination of the great joint building project of God and the people of Israel. That day was an intense revelation of the joy of the world of building.

This explains why one who brings joy to the chatan and kallah is likened to one who rebuilds one of the ruins of Jerusalem (Berachot 6b). Jerusalem was called **משוש כל הארץ**, the joy of the world. The Midrash tells us that in order to preserve the joy of Jerusalem they even set up a special place outside the city for people to calculate their finances. One who brings joy to the newlyweds restores that joy of the great building.

Why is marriage called a building? A passage by the Rambam in Hilchot Shabbat gives us an insight. The Gemara tells us (Shabbat 74b) that it is forbidden to make cheese on Shabbat because making cheese is tantamount to building, so it is classified under the prohibited work category called “boneh”, building. The Rambam explains: “Anyone who connects one piece to another, and it all clings together to make one whole has done something similar to building” (Hilchot Shabbat 7:6). Marriage involves creating one unit out of disparate parts; marriage is building.

Why is building connected with joy? There is joy where there is connectedness. Fragmentation brings sadness. At a marriage, when building a home, like the building and dedication of the Mishkan, there is a great celebration of connectedness. That celebration creates a strong foundation for the marriage. The home built by each chatan and kallah, like the Mishkan and Beit Hamikdash, becomes a place of connectedness with God. Like the Mishkan, it becomes a dwelling place for the Divine Presence. We pray that all of our chatanim and kallot, husbands and wives, should build joyous homes for their families and the Shechinah.

SOURCE GUIDE: PARSHAT PARAH: BIBLICAL OBLIGATION?

Halachic Puzzle: 4 Solutions

The Beit Yosef, based on a comment by Tosafot in Berachot, says that we are biblically obligated to read Parshat Parah, the passage in the Torah about the Red Heifer and the purification process done with it to someone who came in contact with the dead. This comment is extremely hard to understand, because there doesn't seem to be any biblical verse to back this up – as there is with regards to Parshat Zachor: “Remember that which Amalek did to you” (Devarim 25:17).

This week's source guide presents four ways great commentators dealt with this halachic puzzle. We will see, b'ezrat Hashem, the responses of the Gra, the Malbim, the Meshech Chochmah, and the Aruch Hashulchan. [Our focus here is on how their answers enrich our understanding of Parshat Parah, less on the halachic ramifications.]

Tosafot, Quoted by the Beit Yosef

Tosafot's comment, as quoted in the Beit Yosef, original appears in a discussion of biblically obligated readings that can be said in languages other than Hebrew.

<p>1. Beit Yosef Orach Chaim 685 The Tosafot in the beginning of the second chapter of Berachot wrote that there are passages that we are biblically obligated to read, like Parshat Zachor (“Remember [Amalek]” Devarim 25:17-19) and Parshat Parah Adumah (the Red Heifer Bamidbar 19:1-22).</p>	<p>בית יוסף אורח חיים תרפ"ה וכתבו בתוספות בריש פרק היה קורא (ברכות יג. ד"ה בלשון) דיש פרשיות המחוייבין לקרות דאורייתא כמו פרשת זכור (דברים כה: יז-יט) ופרשת פרה אדומה (במדבר יט: א-כב).</p>
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The Magen Avraham and others ask: Where is the source of that biblical obligation? Where is the biblical verse that commands us to read Parshat Parah? Despite this objection, the Shulchan Aruch quotes this approach:

<p>2. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 685:7 There are those that say that we are biblically obligated to read Parshat Zachor and Parshat Parah. Therefore, village dwellers that don't have a minyan should come to a place where there is a minyan on these Shabbatot to hear these biblically obligated parshiot.</p>	<p>שלחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן תרפה ז: יש אומרים שפרשת זכור ופרשת פרה אדומה חייבים לקרותם מדאורייתא לפיכך בני הישובים שאין להם מנין צריכים לבא למקום שיש מנין בשבתות הללו כדי לשמוע פרשיות אלו שהם מדאורייתא:</p>
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A. The Gra

The Vilna Gaon, the Gra, has a short comment on this law in the Shulchan Aruch:

<p>3. Biur Hagra Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 685:7 In our edition of the Tosafot (Berachot 13a) this doesn't appear, neither in Berachot nor in Megilla 17, and likewise [Parah] doesn't appear in the [Hilchot ha]Rosh, only Zachor – he (the author of the Shulchan Aruch) came across an incorrect version (of the Tosafot).</p>	<p>ביאור הגר"א שלחן ערוך אורח חיים תרפה ז: בתוספות שלפנינו ליתא, לא בברכות ולא במגילה ז, וכן באשר"י פרק ו דברכות ליתא, אלא זכור – ונסחא משבשת נודמנה לו.</p>
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Present editions of Tosafot, in line with a comment of the Maharshal, also don't list Parshat Parah as a biblical level reading. However, later commentators still strive to figure out the puzzle, for the following sources **do** write that Parshat Parah is a biblical level obligation: Tosafot Harosh, Tosafot Rabbi Yehudah Hachasid, and the Rashba on Berachot 13a, the Ritva on Megilla 17a, the Levush and the Terumat Hadeshen. Assuming there is a legitimate opinion in the Rishonim that Parshat Parah is Deoraita – we continue to search for the solution to the puzzle.

B. The Malbim: Remembering the Golden Calf

The Malbim (in his Artzot Hachaim on the Shulchan Aruch, p. 6, Eretz Yehudah note 4) has a novel suggestion. The Torah does command us to remember the sin of the **Golden Calf**:

<p>4. Devarim 9:7 Remember, do not forget, how you angered Hashem your God in the desert ...</p>	<p>דברים ט:ז זָכֹר אֶל תְּשׁוּבַת אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִקְצַפְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּמִדְבָּר ...</p>
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And, says Rashi, the Parah Adumah, the Red Heifer, atones for the sin of the Golden Calf. He quotes Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan who connects every detail of the Parah Adumah with the sin of the Golden Calf. Here is one line of that long aggadta:

<p>5. Rashi on Bamidbar 19:22 A red heifer – this is likened to the son of a maidservant that dirtied the palace of the king. They said, “Let the mother come and clean up the filth.” Similarly, let the cow come and atone for the calf ...</p>	<p>רש"י על במדבר יט:כב פרה אדמה - משל לבן שפחה שטינף פלטין של מלך אמרו תבא אמו ותקנח הצואה כך תבא פרה ותכפר על העגל ...</p>
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Why, according to the Beit Yosef and his predecessors, is reading Parshat Parah a biblical obligation? Answers the Malbim, because it fulfills the biblical command to remember the sin of the Golden Calf. **Instead of reading about the sin of the Golden Calf – which highlights Israel’s shame (see the Magen Avraham Orach Chaim 60:2) – we read about how to repair it.**

C. The Meshech Chochmah: Reading Before Preparing

Based on a Gemara in Yoma, the Meshech Chochmah (in his comments on Bamidbar 19:20) suggests that the biblical obligation was to read the parshah of the Parah Adumah **immediately before preparing the Parah Adumah itself!** This is a striking obligation, to read the command from the Torah before performing a mitzvah.

Rabbi Shlomo Fisher, shlita (Beit Yishai Drashot, p. 259), explains the reason for this unique rule. The mitzvah of the Parah Adumah was to be done in a way that emphasizes that we follow God’s directions. We therefore read His command before we do the mitzvah to demonstrate that our actions are fulfilling the Divine command. This mitzvah is a display of obedience to Hashem, and love for Him through simply and straightforwardly doing His Will. This love for God counters the “Is God among us or not?” (Shemot 17:7) doubtfulness that brought on the attack by Amalek.

D. Aruch Hashulchan: Fulfilling through Reading

A fourth solution to the puzzle: The Aruch Hashulchan says that the biblical source for reading Parshat Parah is a seemingly extra line in the Torah’s passage about the Parah Adumah:

<p>6. Bamidbar 19:21 It will be for them (for Israel) an eternal law ...</p>	<p>במדבר יט:כא וְהָיְתָה לָהֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם ...</p>
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Previously, in verse 10, the Torah already told us that the Parah Adumah is an eternal law, חוקת עולם. The Sifrei says that חוקת עולם in verse 10 teaches us that even after Moshe’s generation the nation can prepare a Parah Adumah. But what does the Torah teach us by repeating וְהָיְתָה לָהֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם in verse 21? Says the Aruch Hashulchan, the Torah here teaches us that even when we can no longer have the ashes of the Parah Adumah we are still able to fulfill the Parah Adumah. How is that possible? Through reading Parshat Parah Hashem considers us as having done the service of the Parah Adumah, through speech if not through deed.

THE ORCHESTRA NEEDS CYMBALS & VIOLINS BY RABBI GIDON SHOSHAN

In this week's parshah, the Torah says, "All of the work of the Mishkan Ohel Moed was completed" (Shemot 39:32). It then says, "ויעשו בני ישראל ככל אשר צוה ה' את משה כן עשו" – the children of Israel did everything as God had instructed Moshe. The Or Hachaim recognizes in this verse a fundamental theme of the entire Torah. The Torah records that the children of Israel built the Mishkan; yet this seems inaccurate. The Mishkan was actually built by a small number of artisans led by Betzalel ben Uri. So why does the Torah say that the totality of the children of Israel designed and built the Mishkan?

The Or Hachaim explains that all of Klal Yisrael is spiritually interdependent. While it could be that only some people built the Mishkan, they acted on behalf of the entire Jewish people.

This notion is fundamental to the entire construct of Torah. A Jew is commanded in 613 mitzvos, but on a practical level that is not true. There are many dozens of mitzvos that do not apply to one segment or another of the Jewish people. A man is not commanded in some mitzvos that apply only to women. A Kohen is exempt from certain mitzvos, and there are even mitzvos that apply only to the Kohen Gadol or the king. And yet, we all identify with the notion of being bound by and fulfilling the 613. This only happens when the entire Jewish people collaborate to fulfill the 613 together. Like a team, we complement each other and complete each other.

In an orchestra, there are around a hundred musicians. When they combine to perform a symphony, each of the musicians plays a different melody or harmony. Some play prominent instruments like the violin, and some have less demanding roles, like the percussionists. Each, though, is absolutely necessary to ensure that the symphony indeed reflects the intention of the composer. Though the percussionist may only be featured for a moment's time, if he is not there to bang the cymbals or beat the bass drum at the right moment the entire symphony is ruined. So it is with Klal Yisrael. We each play different instruments in the community and in religious life, but each of us is equally indispensable.

Internalizing this reality not only assists in relating to one another but ultimately in relating to ourselves as well. We are all brothers and sisters in the same family. We are all limbs on the same body and without each other's contribution to building our collective relationship with God we are lost.

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*This publication is compiled by the staff and Rabbonim at **Shapells/Yeshivat Darché Noam** for men and **Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya Seminary** for women in Jerusalem. Find out more about the **married couples' programme** and the **Pathways Israel** and **Pathways Plus** programmes offered at www.darchenoam.org +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

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