The Parah is Ready - Are We? (2024)

(Shmini)

I went to Shiloh this week to see the Parah Aduma that some say inspired the bloodthirsty rampage of the savage Arabs on Oct 7. I looked at those beautiful red cows and they looked back at me like ancient souls waiting to redeem our people. Around Pesach time they will celebrate their two-year-old birthday and be eligible for the Parah Aduma ceremony; a prerequisite to rebuilding the 3rd Temple. Is it really possible that at our low level we could even consider uprooting the Arab dome to rebuild our Temple? With the whole world against us it does not seem likely that we will even consider this and certainly Esav who daily threatens us, would not volunteer to help us build it, as one Midrash suggests.

> Rabbeinu b'Chayei writes three versions of a Midrash that explains why this animal is called חזיר. One is because Hakadosh Baruch Hu will return [Yachzir] onto the [Edomites] Hashem's judgment." A second version in the Midrash states, “She will return [Yachzir] the crown onto its head." This means that the Edomite nation will build the third Beis HaMikdash. The first two Batei Mikdash were built by Am Israel, and Edom, who destroyed the Beis HaMikdash will come and build it.

Rav Elimelech Biderman points out an interesting idea pertaining to Parshat HaChodesh, which gives the Jewish people mastery over time and whose decisions and actions affect the entire world. He compares the power we have like a king who runs the country but does not know he is the king. It is fascinating that this first mitzva of the Torah was given in Mitzrayim, in the lowest place of the 49 levels of tuma. He points out that even there, one had the ability to change.

One might add that roasting the Egyptian god in front of their eyes before our departure was also done at this low level. Today this action would be similar to telling the Arabs that in a week we plan to uproot their dome and rebuild our Temple. Therefore, is it not possible that we who are clearly not at our highest point may indeed be at a level that is sufficient to initiate the Parah Aduma process and put the wheels in motion? It seems so. So, what is preventing it?

The Nation and it’s Leaders

It is clear by now that our heroic soldiers have the courage and motivation to destroy our enemies and reconquer and resettle Gaza. It is the upper echelons of command however that discipline them for painting stars of David in Gaza and chanting Shma Israel through mosque loudspeakers and whose woke theology frustrates their unity and prevents our complete victory. It seems that even from the time of the Torah the ‘people’ of Israel and the ‘leadership’ are often at odds. From Korach and his band of followers to the Egel worshippers, to the spiritual rock hitters the leadership can uplift or put a wedge between the people depending on the circumstance. Parshat Hachodesh is the ‘Rosh’ of the year of the ‘Nation of Israel’ and like the head, it determines where the body will follow.

It appears that along with spiritual revival and revelation there is often a physical and detrimental rebound. The most extreme example is the Golden Calf that occurred only forty days after Mattan Torah. We are starting to experience rebound today as well from our former unity of purpose. The greatest threat to our existence is a vocal minority within that has learned nothing from Oct 7, and seeks to divide us once again which will lead us to disaster. The fact that they are largely responsible for this tragedy is completely lost on them.

Is this the ancient fight of the Erev Rav against the spiritual leadership? Is there a foreign body inside of us like a fifth column? If every Jewish soul comes from the Kisse HaKavod then how could that be? For example, can a Jewish family have three Jewish children and one that is born Erev Rav? Or are there Jewish people that have a disposition to tune into the Erev Rav frequency? It seems to me that it is both. In the same way the Shem, Yefet and Cham came from the same father, as well as Yacov and Esav, it is possible that two brothers can take dramatically different directions.

We wrote last week about the origins of the Erev Rav and how these sparks from Adam Rishon were redeemed from Egypt after being circumcised by Yoseph. The Arizal claims these ancient sparks who had been sufficiently rectified and purified reincarnated into Bnei Yisrael, the Children of Israel. The ones who had not been sufficiently rectified became the 'mixed multitude', or millions of Egyptian converts who came out of Egypt with the Children of Yisrael, despite G-d advising Moses against accepting them. If the Erev Rav is part of our collective DNA then maybe this explains a question of mine.

There is an interesting apparent contradiction in Rashi concerning the Erev Rav and the spiritual leadership. Regarding Parshat Mishpatim (24:11) Rashi bring down:

> and they perceived the God of Israel: They gazed and peered and [because of this] were doomed to die, but the Holy One, blessed is He, did not want to disturb the rejoicing of [this moment of the giving of] the Torah. So He waited for Nadab and Abihu [i.e., to kill them,] until the day of the dedication of the Mishkan, and for [destroying] the elders until [the following incident:] "And the people were as if seeking complaints… and a fire of the Lord broke out against them and devoured at the edge (בִּקְצֵה) of the camp" (Num. 11:1). **בִּקְצֵה denotes] the officers (בִּקְצִינִים) of the camp [i.e., the elders]. -[From Midrash Tanchuma Beha'alothecha 16]**

However, in another place it says that the people that were burned in Taberah were the Erev Rav.

> The people were looking to complain, and it was evil in the ears of the Lord. The Lord heard and His anger flared, and a fire from the Lord burned among them, consuming the extremes of the camp. (Bamidbar 11:1) the extremes of the camp: Heb. בִּקְצֵה הַמַּחֲנֶה. **Those untouchable because of their baseness-these were the mixed multitude (See Exod. 12:36).** R. Simeon ben Menassia says, The most distinguished (קְצִינִים) among them and the prominent ones. — [Sifrei Beha'alothecha 1:42:1]

Erev Rav or Elders?

Was it the Erev Rav that was punished at Taberah or the seventy elders? Or was it both? What would they be doing on the same level? Maybe one can define the Erev Rav as those with ulterior motives while a true Israelite accepts the yoke of Heaven.

> The Zohar in Ki Tisa 191A explains that the Erev Rav were false converts, who wanted to be Jews to be 'on the winning team' and to get all the benefits of being the servants of such a powerful 'G-d', as opposed to serving Hashem with their hearts and souls.

When Rashi states that the seventy elders along with Nadav and Avihu lacked reverence, might this lack of reverence from the spiritual head, affect a greater lack of reverence and disconnect from the body of

the Nation? Where is the place where lack of reverence and ulterior motive meet? Or can we say the body affects the head?

> The Talmud teaches that in the times leading up to Mashiach's arrival, "the youth will embarrass the elders… and the generation's face will be like that of a dog" (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 97a). Rashi explains that the faces of people will really look like the dogs. They will similarly not be embarrassed of one another (Rashi, Sanhedrin 97a).

I have heard Rav Elchonon Wasserman citing Rav Yisrael Salanter explain that just like a dog sometimes walks the master, the masses will lead like a dog pulling on the leash. Instead of standing with the Torah which may go against the current (a prerequisite of a kosher fish with scales), they will study the polls to decide on their views. As Groucho Marx once said 'I am a man of principle. And if you don't like it, I have others.'

It is interesting to note that the lack of reverence expressed in this episode at the foot of Har Sinai is followed by a previous passage where the Nation said in a united voice Na'ase V'Nishma (we will do and we will listen). The lack of reverence Nadav and Avihu may have had towards their teachers Moshe and Aaron was preceded by the Nation who had done teshuva and bowed down in unison to receive the Shechina. The complaints of the Erev Rav and/or Seventy Elders was preceded by the incredible unity of Vyehi Binsoah Aharon:

> And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said: 'Rise up, O LORD, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.' (Bamidbar 10:35)

I wonder if one might say in a way Aaron and his supporters gave birth to the Nadav and Avihu generation. Aaron saw how Chur, a man of complete principle and conviction, stood up for Hashem and was killed. Aaron for fear of his life disobeyed what Hashem had commanded and, measure for measure, he gave birth to Nadav and Avihu, who were 'not' afraid to die for that which Hashem had 'not' commanded. Whatever miniscule mistakes and great sacrifices our spiritual leaders made that paid a price for the benefit of Am Israel, there are concepts that result which we should meditate upon.

Reverence

When our Nation from the political level to the spiritual level is not complete in its goals and convictions that indecisive opening is all that is needed for extreme elements within to commit national suicide and to inspire our enemies outside to attack us. When we stall our war effort to attempt to win a public relations campaign that we can only lose, our enemies laugh at us. We are supposed to be laughing at them and treading on their high places. When we lack the spiritual faith to say loudly and clearly that we demand to build our Temple and to throw out our enemies, that lack of reverence for Hashem's commandments, leaves an opening for doubts and for Amalek. Soldiers were not only rebuked by the high command for ridiculing the nazi enemy, but Rabbi Yoseph Itzchak, the Chief Rabbi was also upset that we may have harmed the 'religious feelings' of our enemies or sullied our 'image'.

At the 49th level of tuma where we burned the idols of Egypt and we received the power to change time and alter the world, most of us were not able to change and died in the darkness. Those who made it out encountered the infinite and were engraved with the 'pintele yid' that they cannot erase. From the rubble of decayed and fallen empires and idols, that 'pintele yid' is sprouting among the body of Israel.

The ‘pintele goy’ is also emerging from those we once called our ‘brothers’ and now side with our enemies.

Is the ‘pintele yid’ in the Erev Rav defective? Is the compromise in the Jewish leadership both political and spiritual no less destructive? Is there some connection between the two, of a willingness to commit suicide for political or spiritual ideas that deviate from Hashem’s political and spiritual commands?

Finite and Infinite

As we become increasingly isolated and our reliance on man and political allies’ falters, there is only one direction, and that is forward. The inauguration of the Mishkan on the eight day represents a concept that is beyond the natural order of seven. The brit Milah represents initiation into this Nation that exists beyond the natural order of seven. The first National Mitzva defines our relationship to the one beyond time who gives us authority to create time within our framework. The animals defined as kosher and non-kosher in our chapter, also train us to elevate the natural world for a higher purpose.

> For I am Hashem who elevates you from the land of Egypt to be a God unto you; you shall be holy, for I am holy. (Vayikra 11:45)

As we separate what is kosher and non-kosher, what is pure and impure, we too are being separated as pure and impure, programmed from de-programmed, free from enslaved, standing against our enemies in purity or compromising and being consumed by our many strange fires. The Erev Rav is outside us, within us and part of us. From the lowest of the low to the highest of the high. The battle is between that which benefits from Israel but has an ulterior motive, be it spiritual or political position, and that which truly seeks to give of himself and march forth with the Shechina in front and behind us. The Parah Aduma is burned completely including its dung, which represents the whole body of Israel from the highest places to the lowest.

As the *mei niddah* (water of sprinkling) [read - medina (the state)] is thrown upon us we must ask ourselves where we are in this spiritual refinement.

Taberah

It is interesting to study the gematrias of Taberah which is the place that both the Erev Rav as well as the Seventy Elders apparently were punished. Maybe by analyzing these various gematrias we might find a connection between these seemingly unrelated groups.

He named that place Tab'erah, for the fire of the Lord had burned among them there. (Bamidbar 11:3)

Taberah (Gematria) = 677

כב עִוֵּרֶת אוֹ שָׁבוּר אוֹ-חָרוּץ אוֹ-יַבֶּלֶת, אוֹ גָרָב אוֹ יַלֶּפֶת--לֹא-תַקְרִיבוּ אֵלֶּה, לַיהוָה; וְאִשֶּׁה, לֹא-תִתְּנוּ מֵהֶם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ--לַיהוָה.	22 **Blind**, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scabbed, or scurvy, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD.

Vayikra 22:22)

עִוֵּרֶת = Blind = 676 +1 (kollel) = 677

יט אֶת-חֻקֹּתַי, תִּשְׁמֹרוּ--בְּהֶמְתְּךָ לֹא-תַרְבִּיעַ כִּלְאַיִם, שָׂדְךָ לֹא-**תִזְרַע** כִּלְאָיִם; וּבֶגֶד כִּלְאַיִם שַׁעַטְנֵז, לֹא יַעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ.	19 Ye shall keep My statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind; thou shalt not **sow** thy field with **two kinds of seed**; neither shall there come upon thee a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together.

(Vayikra 22:22)

תִּזְרַע = Sow = 677

כב וַיַּרְא, חָם אֲבִי כְנַעַן, אֵת, **עֶרְוַת** אָבִיו; וַיַּגֶּד לִשְׁנֵי-אֶחָיו, בַּחוּץ.	**22** And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the **nakedness** of his father, and told his two brethren without

(Vayikra 22:22)

עֶרְוַת = Nakedness = 676 +1 (kollel) = 677

טו וְהָיוּ **לִמְאוֹרֹת** בִּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם, לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ; וַיְהִי-כֵן.	**15** and let them be **for lights** in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.' And it was so.

(Vayikra 22:22)

לִמְאוֹרֹת = for Lights = 677

What is the connection between all of these ideas? Let me suggest that if we elevate ourselves from the nakedness (immorality within) and from the mixed seeds that we have sown together (diluting our Jewish identity) and the blindness and disrespect that we offer to Hashem, and manage to leave the furnace of Mitzrayim, it will be good for us. We will enter other challenges of our choosing, that will refine us through our own efforts.

Being isolated is a good thing that will strengthen our identity and bring out the best in us. With new found Emunah we will not only restore Israel but all the holy sparks from Adam Harishon that fell into the world and were uplifted and refined by the body and soul of Israel. Those who cling to darkness will remain in darkness, but those who make it out of Egypt will shine like Great lights.

The Parah Adumah is here and qualified for the ceremony, the Chodesh is here and ready for change, we may not be at our highest level, but we are not at our lowest level, the Erev Rav may be in the highest places of office and the lowest protests on the street. Even at the lowest levels, as a people Hashem helped us to escape and elevated us, and we were able to say Na'ase v'Nishma. Even after the Chet of the Egel we were able to prostate ourselves and welcome the Shechina. Even after all of this we were able to go into battle with our Mishkan and say - *let our enemies scatter*. The Parah Aduma has been found and is ready to be offered. Will we find ourselves, and be ready to continue ascending the mountain? It's time for change. Time to remove the Chametz. And time to liberate ourselves from the top to the bottom at whatever level we find ourselves.

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