



# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

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The opening verses of Parshat Chukat introduce us to the mystical elixir for impurity, the mysterious inexplicable remedy of the para aduma - the red heifer.

The Chasidic masters saw in these pesukim not only the halachic remedy to purify those who have become ritually impure, but also an eternal message regarding the relationship between the Jewish People and the Torah Hakedosha.

One of the perplexing aspects of the Para Aduma ritual, is that the Kohanim who were involved in preparing the ashes of the para aduma became tamei- impure through the process. In preparing the mystical compound which would return others to a state of purity, they in turn became tamei- impure. How exactly are we to understand this unusual outcome? How could it possibly be that in preparing this remedy for impurity, the Kohanim themselves are rendered to be tamei?

The Avodat Elazar, the Admor of Kozhnitz

zy'a, explains this peculiar phenomenon based on the opening verse- Zot Chukat HaTorah- This is the inexplicable principle of the Torah.

This verse, the Rebbe explained, is not only describing the mysterious nature of the para aduma, but also teaching us a very fundamental idea about Torah itself. Like any remedy, when channeled appropriately it can transform and cure and bring complete healing, or if chas v'shalom it is misused, taken out of context and applied inappropriately, then it can bring further deficiency and harm.

The Netivot Shalom, the Admor of Slonim zy'a offers a different interpretation of our verse Zot Chukat HaTorah. Our verse, explains the Rebbe, is not only introducing us to the transformative capacity of the para aduma as a vehicle to restore purity, but also communicating a fundamental eternal message which applies even now in the absence of the Beit HaMikdash and of the para aduma.



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Zot Chukat HaTorah- In our current state, in the absence of the Beit HaMikdash and with no para aduma, the vehicle for we as Jews to experience some form of a return to purity is by immersing ourselves in the study of Torah- Zot Chukat HaTorah!

The Bat Ayin, the Rebbe of Avrich zy'a, similarly points out that the para aduma is on some level meant to be a tikkun(fixing, correction) for the impurity introduced into the world through the Cheit HaEgel (The Sin of the Golden Calf). The Rebbe taught:

The Toldot Yaakov Yosef, zy'a, wrote that Cheit HaEgel impacted future generations, and that the word egel is an acronym for the words arayot (illicit behavior), gezel (theft) and lashon hara (inappropriate speech).

So too, the tikkun for all of these, as represented by the para aduma, also comprises an acronym for the word egel- Avoda, Gemilut

chasadim and Limud Torah...

The Bat Ayin taught that the para aduma not only provided a metaphysical healing for those who had come into contact with impurity, but also came to teach us how to overcome the impact that resulted from the Cheit HaEgel.

Yehi Ratzon that our limud haTorah, should indeed bring purity to our minds and hearts, that we should find purity in our avodat Hashem and though acts of chesed, and that we soon merit to experience the building of the Beit HaMikdash, and the return of all its associated sacred rituals and constant miracles. ■

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