

חטא is a פרשה in which every single word, like every word in the תורה, has something to teach us, specifically about the חטא of תפילה. We know that הקדוש ברוך הוא was angry at ישראל because of the חטא, but ultimately, He wanted us to become better. כפרה was davened on our behalf for משה רבינו. Two of the words that R' Chaim קנייבסקי highlights are הקדוש ברוך הוא wants to have רחמנות on us. He wants to be kind, gracious, and generous to us. Therefore, He gives us the opportunity to daven. That is one aspect of the פרשה I want to discuss. There is a fascinating story in R' Chaim's ספר. Rebbetzin Kanievsky's father, was of course, R' Elyashiv זצ"ל. She relates that when she was a little girl, about ten years old, after R' Elyashiv would finish עשרה שמונה, he would take three steps back and stand there davening. One time, she asked him what he was saying. He told her that before finishing the יהי רצון at the end of עשרה שמונה, he would recite פרק קכ"א, which begins אֶשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים. Why did he do this? R' Elyashiv's grandfather was a famous, gigantic גאון and בעל קבלה, known as the לְשֵׁם. He is well known in his own right, and though there is no time to elaborate now, it is certainly worthwhile to read about him. The לְשֵׁם told R' Elyashiv that saying this פרק was a סגולה for certain things. So since R' Elyashiv said that he loved סגולות [which is fascinating to hear from a Litvak, that he believed in סגולות], he said this to פרק, but he didn't know what it was for. He knew that his grandfather did it, did not know what it was for. Many years later, Rebbetzin Kanievsky's son-in-law told her an interesting story. In the חבורה of חבורה, there was a group of twenty בחורים who had been eligible for marriage for years but had not been able to find their שידוך. One day, they came across an obscure ספר. It turned out to be from the רמ"ע - this is where I first heard about it years ago. The ספר stated that reciting פרק קכ"א at the end of עשרה שמונה is a סגולה for finding a שידוך. [This is by the way in the רמ"ע מפאנו, it's called מאמר חקור דין, part 4, חלק י"ז, in case anybody wants to check me and look it up.] These twenty בחורים adopted the מנהג, and within two months, every single one of them had found a שידוך. This is interesting because I also say a few פרקים of תהילים after עשרה שמונה. I don't usually share my מנהגים, as I don't want people to feel obligated to follow them, but it is always fascinating to learn about the מנהגים of earlier generations, which I now have become. Over the years, I have personally adopted the practice of saying three פרקים of תהילים after עשרה שמונה. R' Chaim writes in his ספר that there is a מנהג to say ק"ל as well, so I recite קכ"א, ק"ל, and also מזמור לתודה. I thank Hashem for all His goodness and kindness, even though I already say it in שחרית. But I add it to my עשרה שמונה as well. It makes me daven longer and later, and I have trouble keeping up to get קדושה on time, but I manage to get it done.

Now, on a completely separate topic, since this שבת כי תשא smack dab in the middle of פורים משולש, I want to refer back to a previous דבר תורה I shared and add a קנייטש from R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld that I think you will find interesting. I had not seen this before. As we all know, this week's פרשה discusses two things, שמן המשחה and the קטורת. In the קטורת it says (30:23) וְאַתָּה קַח לָךְ בְּשָׂמִים רֹאשׁ מֶרְדָּךְ - You should take the best, the nicest of the spices, and that is מֶרְדָּךְ - pure מֶרְדָּךְ. מֶרְדָּךְ is supposed to be the number one most beautiful spice that was used in the קטורת, and which is apparently known to those people at that time. As we have mentioned, מֶרְדָּךְ translates אונקלוס as מֶרְדָּךְ דְּכָא, which has almost identical letters as מֶרְדָּךְ. So this is that the צדיקים are compared to the most beautiful spices, which is brought down in the אנשי כנסת. The choicest spice was used to show that מֶרְדָּךְ was ראש וראשון among the אנשי כנסת - הגדולה. Now, here's something fascinating. R' Chaim adds another insight that I have not previously shared. While discussing the קטורת, he asks, "Where do we find המן in all of these items?" And guess what? The word for חלבנה in the קטורת, that's the crummy smelling spice. What is the גימטריה for חלבנה? Look it up. It's 95. Guess what the גימטריה for המן is? 95. So we know that it's a bitter, horrible, terrible spice, which is included in the קטורת to teach us that we have to have רחמנות and everybody in ישראל, but we certainly don't have to have רחמנות for המן. May all of עמלק be destroyed in this זכות of our keeping this טוב of פורים, may we see the immediate and quick downfall of all of the עמלקים in this world, including the עמלק that's within each and every one of us. And in that זכות, we shall see the אמן. Good Shabbos!

