

This week is פרשת צו and also פרשת פרה. For those of you who know, this is almost always the week of my birthday. It always comes out right after פורים. This year is no exception, despite the fact that it is an עיבור אחריו כל year. פרשת פרה and my birthday are inextricably bound together. We are learning today as a זכות for בית ישראל, particularly the members of the IDF, whose lives are put on the line and in harm's way as they strive to help כלל ישראל and rid us of our enemies. We are also celebrating the newest member of our family, the honorable R' Chaim Mandel. We embrace and welcome him with open arms into our ever-growing and ever-improving family. Additionally, the יארצייט of my טהרה מאמא תמר רייזל בת יארצייט of my מדרכי צבי is approaching in the next week or two, and בעזרת השם, this learning should be an עליה for her נשמה.

פרשת ויקרא, which discusses many more details of the קרבנות than פרשת פרה, is connected to פרשת פרה, which deals with the אדומה פרה. Although the אדומה פרה is not a קרבן, many of its הלכות are similar to those of the קרבנות פרה. פרשת פרה, which we read at the end of our regular leining, has a fascinating רש"י on the words פָּרָה אֲדָמָה. Rabbi Oelbaum, in his חומש שייעור a few weeks ago, pointed out this רש"י. I'll read it to you from חקת חקת - מִשָּׁל לְבֹן שִׁפְחָה שִׁטְטָף פִּלְטִין שָׁל מֶלֶךְ - A servant woman brought her baby to the king's palace and the baby made a mess; אֶמְרֵי תָבֵא אִמּוֹ וְתִקְנֶנָּה הַצֹּאֵה - Let his mother come and clean up the mess; כֹּה תָבֵא פָּרָה וְתִכְפֹּר עַל הָעֵגֶל - so too the אדומה פרה comes to be מכפר the חטא of the עגל, the greatest חטא in history, which we had in תשא כי פרשת just a few weeks ago.

If my memory serves me correctly - and I certainly hope it does, as I'm getting older - I recall a מדרש that describes דוד המלך asking הקדוש ברוך הוא about the purpose of certain things in the world. One of them, as we all know, is insanity. We are reminded of this every time we say שבת on ל"ד פרק ז' שבט: על מה נאמרה? אף על גב דאין לה פסוקא וכו'. At first, דוד המלך could not understand what purpose insanity could possibly serve. But הקדוש ברוך הוא showed him that it was what saved him from being killed by the מלך שליש.

Another item which Rabbi Oelbaum alluded to is the seemingly insignificant and unpleasant experience of a child's dirty diaper. What purpose could there possibly be for such an occurrence? The answer he gives is both profound and relevant, providing insight into the פרק אדומה.

He cites the טעם ודעת from R' Moshe Sternbuch, who quotes Rav Itzele Peterburger. What is the connection between the פרה אדומה and the משל that רש"י brings about the baby who soils the king's palace, requiring his mother to come clean it up? He brings a beautiful explanation, based on a פסוק in שעי' (ד':) (ד':). אַם רָחַץ ה' אֶת צִאֵת בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן. What does this mean? When a baby soils himself, most people are repulsed. They step away, wrinkle their noses, and say, "Ugh, that stinks! Take him away!" The entire world finds the situation disgusting and unpleasant. But there is one person who rushes to take care of the baby, who embraces the responsibility with love and care - his mother. The mother does not recoil; instead, she runs to clean him up, comfort him, and make him feel better. She does this out of pure love, knowing that her care will help him. This, says the נביא, is our relationship with הקדוש ברוך הוא. The חטא was a horrifying עבירה - an act of spiritual defilement committed right there at סיני. Who could possibly cleanse such a stain? Only הקדוש ברוך הוא Himself. And how does He do it? Through the פרה אדומה. Just as a mother lovingly cleans her child despite the mess, הקדוש ברוך הוא, in His infinite love for ישראל, provides us with the means to cleanse ourselves. The פרה אדומה represents this divine compassion and the constant opportunity for כפרה, no matter how severe the חטא.

This concept also teaches us a profound lesson about the great endeavor known as family. We live in a time when family values are under attack from all directions, across all societies and cultures. The world seeks to undermine the very foundation of the family unit. But we in כלל ישראל cherish and revere the concept of family. We uphold it as one of the greatest gifts that הקדוש ברוך הוא has given us. We recognize how wrong the world is and how right הקדוש ברוך הוא is in granting us the privilege of building families, raising children, and experiencing true נחת. It is in this spirit of joy and gratitude that we welcome the



newest member of our family. We are thrilled to embrace him and look forward to his vibrant role in our ever-growing family.

Im Yirtzeh Hashem, may our family continue to grow both in **איכות** and **כמות**, ever stronger in our **עבודת** **השם** and our dedication to **כלל ישראל**. Good Shabbos!

