

This is an addendum to פרשת חקת. I came across this from Rabbi Frand who always has something worthwhile to share with us, and I thought it would be very nice to share with you. פרשת חקת starts off with the laws of טומאת מת. If a person comes in contact with a dead body, even in the same house as a dead body, he's given the status of an אב הטומאה, טמא מת. The only way he can become טהור is to have the מים of the פרה אדומה sprinkled on him two times, on day three and day seven of the seven-day טהרה procedure.

The פסוק says (19:19), וְהָיָה הַטָּהוֹר עַל הַטָּמֵא - the pure one should sprinkle onto the impure one, and then he goes into the מקוה. The תלמוד ירושלמי brings an interesting drush: רבי יהושע בן קפצאי said, "My whole life I read this פסוק, the pure one will sprinkle on the impure one, I assumed that a single טהור individual needed to sprinkle the פרה אדומה water on a single טמא person." He then says, "This was the case until I learned otherwise from the יבנה של אוצרה - the storehouse, the אוצר of יבנה, that a single individual who's טהור can even sprinkle on many טמא individuals." We paskin that להלכה. The question is, what does he mean to say that when he said, I learned this from the יבנה של אוצרות? What is the גמרא trying to tell us about the אוצרות of יבנה?

R' Meir Shapiro זצ"ל, the לובלינר רב and the founder of the דף יומי, was a powerful דרשן. He gave a חורבן בית דרשה on this פסוק in the ירושלמי. What happened in יבנה? Why is יבנה so vital to us? At the time of חורבן בית זכאי met Vespasian, the general who later became emperor. Vespasian granted him three things. One of the three things he said was to spare יבנה and her חכמים and her זקנים. יבנה was a city far away from ירושלים. It had a ישיבה. רב יוחנן pleaded that this ישיבה be spared from the destruction which was overcoming the בית המקדש and the population in ירושלים, so you would have a few חכמים left over. R' Meir Shapiro suggests that the ירושלמי, when it's talking about the אוצרות של יבנה, was referring to the lesson learned from the ישיבה of זכאי בן זכאי. רב יוחנן בן זכאי. The תורה that we learn today, and the fact that there are still people learning תורה today, is a result of those few חכמים left in יבנה after the חורבן בית, who literally saved the world of תורה. Had they been wiped out תורה ושלום would have been forgotten. So what do we see from the אוצרות של יבנה? קפצאי בן יהושע רבי is saying, I see from יבנה the power of one individual.

One person, even certainly more so a few people, can make a difference, can save the world. I thought that we needed one טהור person to sprinkle on one טמא person. From יבנה I see that one טהור person can affect hundreds of people. We have seen this in our own lifetime.

We've seen individuals who have revolutionized the world. Rav Meir Shapiro himself, Rabbi Frand says it's mind-boggling to think about the זכות of Rav Meir Shapiro, who came up with the idea of דף יומי. Today, thousands upon thousands of people worldwide learn דף יומי every day. And Rav Meir Shapiro didn't live two thousand years ago, or even two hundred years ago. He lived in the 20th century. He came up with an idea that revolutionized the world of התורה. There are others as well, Rav Aharon Kotler, the Vilna Gaon, the רמב"ן, the רמב"ם people that revolutionized the תורה world. Even people like us can make a difference. One person can make a difference.

