

# BOSTONER TORAH INSIGHTS

## BOSTONER 'CHASSIDUS' IN ENGLISH

PARSHAS KI TISA (PARAH) – 18 ADAR 5783

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Ki Sisa opens with the Mitzvah of Machatzit HaShekel, which we read as Parshas Shekalim a few weeks ago. When Haman offered King Achashveirosh 10,000 Kikar of silver as part of his plan to 'solve the Jewish problem', the Gemara (Megillah 13b) explains, "it was revealed and known before Hashem that in the future Haman would pay Shekalim, therefore, Hashem pre-empted his own Shekalim before those of Haman. As the Mishnah teaches (Shekalim 1:1), "On the first of Adar we make announcements about the Shekalim."

The Gemara (Taanis 11b, Yerushalmi Yoma 1:1) explains that Moshe Rabbeinu also acted as a Kohen Gadol, however instead of wearing Bigdei Kehunah he wore Chaluk Lavan, a white cloak. It is interesting to note that in Parsha Tetzaveh last week, the Baal HaTurim famously comments on the opening Pasuk that Moshe's name is oddly missing from the entire Sedra, something that does not happen from the time he is born in Parshas Shemos until the end of the Chumash. The reason given is that this week in Parshas Ki Sisa, Moshe defends Klal Yisroel before Hashem in the aftermath of the Chet HaAigel, *מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת*, "erase me now from Your book that You have written" (Shemos 32:32).

Even though Hashem did eventually reverse his position after Moshe's ultimatum and spared the Jewish Nation, the words of a Tzaddik have tremendous weight in Heaven (see Makkos 11a) and to some degree the words uttered by Moshe Rabbeinu came true and Moshe's name was 'erased' from Tetzaveh. The Baal HaTurim explains that Tetzaveh was chosen because it talks about the protocols of the Kehunah, which Moshe forfeited to his brother Aharon when he refused to take on the role of leading Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim (Zevachim 102a and Rashi to Shemos 4:14). This says the Baal HaTurim is why Moshe's name is specifically absent from Tetzaveh so as not to cause Moshe additional emotional distress.

However, we know that Moshe did act as Kohen Gadol during the period of Miluim (see Rashi to Vayikra 8:28), and the question is even stronger according to the Pesikta Rabti (Piska 14 - Parah) that Moshe Rabbeinu was not prevented from serving as the Kohen Gadol all 40 years in the desert. Perhaps, it was not that Moshe Rabbeinu never had the opportunity to practice Avodah in the Mikdash, but rather when Moshe Rabbeinu did the Avodah, he did so in a Chaluk Lavan and was never afforded the opportunity to serve Hashem in the Bigdei Kehuna, with all of their sanctity and spiritual characteristics, as described in detail in Parshas Tetzaveh.

This Shabbos we also read Parshas Parah. The Pri Tzaddik quotes Rashi (Megilah 29a) that logically Parshas HaChodesh should precede Parshas Parah since the Mishkan was erected on the first of Nissan and the Parah Adumah was consumed by fire on the second of Nissan. However, Parah comes first since it deals with the purification of all of Yisroel. Just after waging war against Amalek in the Midbar, we needed to purify ourselves before receiving the Torah at Har Sinai, so too, after Parshas Zachor, we need to purify ourselves with Parshas Parah before receiving the Parshas HaChodesh, which contains the laws of Korban Pesach. However, Parah Adumah is only applicable in the times when the Mikdash is extant. So we must understand why today Parshas Parah is read before Parshas HaChodesh.

"Moshe and Aharon were among His Kohanim, and Shmuel among those who invoke his name, they called upon Hashem and He answered them. In a pillar of cloud He spoke to them, they obeyed His testimonies and whatever decree He gave them" (Tehillim 99:6-7). These Pesukim equate Moshe, Aharon and Shmuel. The Midrash (Tanchuma Chukas 22) shows how each of the phrases in these Pesukim applied to all three men. Regarding, 'whatever Chok He gave them', the Midrash gives sources for Moshe and Shmuel, that each was given a 'decree' from Hashem, but asks where do we see that Aharon was given a Chok. The Midrash answers that Aharon was given the decree of Parah Adumah, which is called a Chok, "This is the Chok of the Torah" (Bamidbar 19:2), which will 'never leave Aharon, or his sons...until the end of all generations'.

Note that the Torah writes, "This is the Chok of the Torah", rather than 'This is the Chok of the Parah'. This teaches us that just as one whoever learns the sections of the Korbanos is considered to have offered these Korbanos in times when there is no Mikdash, so too, through the Torah reading of Parah Adumah, it is as if the Kohen had burned the Parah Adumah and purified all of Yisroel. This adds supports those who suggest that the reading of the Parah Adumah is a Torah law (see Shulchan Aruch 685:7).

This explains why the Midrash Tanchuma says 'until the end of all generations', because by reading Parshas Parah the purification of the hearts and souls of Yisroel from Tumah is achieved. The Midrash (Bamidbar Raba 15:6) tells us that Aharon was distraught when his tribe did not present a contribution to the dedication of the Mishkan. Hashem comforted him by saying that there would be a time when the Korbanos would stop, but the lighting of the candles and the blessing of the Kohanim, which would be attributed to Aharon and his descendants would last forever, It would seem we may add to that the purification of Klal Yisroel via the reading of Parshas Parah.

May we merit the ashes of the Parah Adumah and the offering of the Korban Pesach speedily in our days with the coming of the Bi'yas Goel.