

Bais Yaacov Bnos Malka Newsletter

לעילוי נשמת יצחק עקיבא בן אהרן ז"ל

February 2024

Parshas Tzav

פרשת צו

אדר ב תשפ"ד



The Daled Parshiyos

This dvar torah is not related directly to the Parsha, but rather to the four parshios that we read until Pesach. This week is parshas Parah

Chazal assigned special sections of the Torah to be read on four Shabbosos just prior to and during the month of Adar. These are the *Daled Parshiyos*, the four special *Parshiyos*: *Shekalim*, *Zachor*, *Parah*, and *HaChodesh*.

Parshas Shekalim describes the *mitzva* of *machatzis hashekel*. Every year, every Jew must donate a half *shekel* to be used for buying the *korbanos tzibbur* in the *Beis HaMikdash*. The new fiscal year in the *Beis HaMikdash* begins on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, so all of the money for the new year had to be collected by then. We therefore announce around Rosh Chodesh Adar that everyone should donate their *machatzis hashekel*. Nowadays, when we no longer have the *Beis HaMikdash* and *korbanos*, we read this *parsha* as a *zecher*, a remembrance of the idea of *machatzis hashekel*.

Next, we have *Parshas Zachor*, which is always read on the Shabbos just before Purim. *Parshas Zachor* talks about the *mitzva* of *mechiyas Amalek*. This fits with Purim because Haman was a descendant of Amalek.

Next, we have *Parshas Parah*, a selection from *Parshas Chukas* about the *mitzva* of *parah aduma*. If a person becomes *tamei meis*, he has to undergo a special seven-day purification process, and the ashes of the *parah aduma* play a major role. Since all Jews are obligated to come to the *Beis HaMikdash* to offer the *Korban Pesach*, everyone must be sure that they are not *tamei meis*. Therefore, before Rosh Chodesh Nissan, we read *Parshas Parah* to remind everyone to become *tahor* before Pesach.

Finally, around Rosh Chodesh Nissan we read *Parshas HaChodesh* (from *Shmos*, *perek* 12). This *parsha* has two themes. First, it is a review of the *halachos* of Pesach that we were given in Mitzrayim on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Second, it discusses the *mitzva* of *kiddush hachodesh*, sanctifying the new month. Since Nissan is considered the first month of the new year, we read *Parshas HaChodesh* around Rosh Chodesh Nissan as a way of showing greater honor to the month of Nissan than to any other month.

What is the overarching theme that binds the *Daled Parshiyos* together? Nothing in *Yahadus* happens by chance; everything Chazal established has a reason. What connects the *Daled Parshiyos*?

Obviously, the simple answer is that all four of them relate to Purim, Nissan, and Pesach. Since they fall out in the same time of the year, they are grouped together as the *Daled Parshiyos*. But that really begs the question. *Hashem* worked it out this way, arranging that we would have these four special Shabbosos at the same time of the year. What is the message we should take from these four *parshiyos* as a whole?

I would like to share what I heard from Rav Ahron Soloveichik *ztz"l* on this topic. In the early 1990's Rav Ahron gave *hashkafa shiurim* at YU, for men and women. As young marrieds, my husband and I would attend. They were very inspirational.

Rav Ahron explains as follows. *Parshas HaChodesh* symbolizes the idea of renewal. We are starting the cycle of the year again with the first month of the year, Nissan. The idea of Rosh Chodesh itself symbolizes renewal; the moon starts getting bigger again. *Parshas HaChodesh* is also about freedom, as it discusses the laws of Pesach, when we re-experience the *cheirus* of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. Thus, the themes of *Parshas HaChodesh* are the freedom and renewal that we re-experience as Pesach is approaching.

Rav Ahron explains that the other three *parshiyos* are supposed to train us how to use the newfound freedom that we re-experience every year. We prepare ourselves for the *cheirus* of Pesach by focusing on three attributes mentioned by Yirmiyahu HaNavi:

כה אמר ה': אל יתהלל החכם בחכמתו, ואל יתהלל הגבור בגבורתו, אל יתהלל עשיר בעשרו. כי אם בזאת יתהלל המתהלל – השכל וידע איתו.

So says *Hashem*: The wise person should not take pride in his wisdom; the strong person should not take pride in his strength; the wealthy person should not take pride in his wealth. Only in this should one take pride in himself – for contemplating and knowing Me.

Yirmiyahu warns us against taking pride in three specific things: wisdom, power, and wealth. Why these three? Because these three attributes represent the three ways a person can change and contribute to the world, and they therefore lead to the potential for improper pride. Therefore, these three attributes are what we need to focus on as we prepare for the *cheirus* of Pesach.

A slave can't use any of his abilities. He's stuck! He may be very smart, but so what? He has no way of applying his wisdom to impact the world. A slave may be very strong, but who cares? He can't use his strength to change the world. We, as individuals and as a nation, become free every year on Pesach. We are no longer slaves; we can utilize our capabilities freely. We have to educate ourselves and train ourselves regarding how to use this newfound freedom in the proper way. *Chazal* therefore want us to focus on wealth, power, and wisdom as we are preparing for Pesach. Each one of the first three *parshiyos* teaches us the right way to use wealth, power, and wisdom.

Parshas Shekalim is about using wealth properly. Haman was very wealthy, but he used his money to bribe Achashverosh to wipe out the Jewish People. That, of course, is the wrong use of wealth. The proper use of wealth is for *ruchniyus*, for a *mitzva* – in particular for a communal *mitzva*, like contributing to the *korbanos* in the *Beis HaMikdash*. A wealthy person should learn from *Parshas Shekalim* how to use his wealth – to support *yeshivos*, shuls, and the poor.

Parshas Zachor is about power and strength. The wrong way to use *gevura*, of course, is what Amalek does. They use their strength to attack an innocent nation for absolutely no reason! Reading about Amalek reminds us about the wrong application of power. *Gevura* is used properly when it is used to destroy evil. When forced, *Am Yisroel* uses its *gevura*, with *Hashem's* help, to defend itself against its enemies. This is the *mitzva* of *mechiyas Amalek*.

Parshas Parah describes the proper use of *chochma*, wisdom. Judaism is fundamentally a rational religion. Things make sense; we're supposed to try and understand things. When a person has a question, we encourage him to ask it. We try to figure out the reasons for *mitzvos* – we have the *Sefer HaChinuch*, the Rambam's *Moreh Nevuchim*, and Rav Hirsch's *Chorev* and commentary on the *Chumash*. However, a Jew has to realize that his wisdom is limited while *Hashem's* wisdom is infinite. There will be times that we are commanded to do things that we don't understand, but we have to do them anyway. *Parah aduma* is the classic *chok*, a *mitzva* that defies rational explanation. The purpose of the *parah aduma* was to be *metaher teme' im*, but most of the *kohanim* involved in the preparation of the *parah aduma* became *tamei* themselves – it is also *metamei tehorim*! How can it be that the same process creates *tuma* and *tahara* at the same time? This defies rational understanding. We read about the *parah aduma* to teach us that our wisdom is limited.

Unfettered use of wisdom can be very dangerous. The Nazis, *yimach shemam*, had professors write scholarly essays explaining why their approach made sense. This shows the danger of applying human wisdom without limits. We read about the *parah aduma* to teach us the proper approach to *chochma*.

Thus, the *parshiyos* of *Shekalim*, *Zachor*, and *Parah* teach us how to use our wealth, power, and wisdom properly in preparation for the *cheirus* described in *Parshas HaChodesh* and re-experienced on Pesach.

Rav Ahron notes there is another theme to *Parshas HaChodesh* as well. *Parshas HaChodesh* describes the beginning of *Matan Torah*, the first time *Hashem* gave *Am Yisroel* a *mitzva* as a nation. The first *mitzva* that we received as a nation was *kiddush hachodesh*. Therefore, Rav Ahron concludes, if a person wants to make sure that he will properly use the talents that *Hashem* has given him, the best way is by learning and rededicating himself to the Torah. *Parshas Hachodesh* teaches us to look into the Torah and *Chazal* to learn about the proper use of *chochma*, *gevura*, and *ashirus*. Torah must be our guide for the best way to positively impact upon the world.

Pesach is a time of renewal, of rededicating ourselves to use our talents – wealth, power, and wisdom – for *avodas Hashem* and *ruchniyus* activities. This is an overarching message of the *Daled Parshiyos*.

Have a peaceful and wonderful Shabbos!

Chana Ginsburg

This dvar torah has been adapted from the sefarim of Rav Beinish Ginsburg



Project 'Levavot' in Omanut. The girls prepared hand made puppets, intricate scenery, and performed plays displaying mitzvot.



Always involved in Chesed! On Shushan Purim Judy Clark distributed treats to refugees at the Kings Hotel. The packages were part of a chesed project arranged by Rakezet Chevratl Bracha Jacobs. The families were so grateful!



Finger Knitting!



In Kebatz the girls have designed their own Tzedakah boxes and are collecting funds to be distributed directly to our Chayalim.





Pre -Purim musical performance and Purim themed cookie baking!

