



Likkutei Sichos

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Constant Repentance

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1.

PARSHAS PARAH AND PARSHAS HACHODESH

In the *Jerusalem Talmud*, it says:¹

Logically, the reading of² *parshas HaChodesh*³ should precede that of *parshas Parah*,⁴ since the *Mishkan* was erected on the first of Nisan and the heifer was burned on the second.⁵ Why does *parshas Parah* come first? Because it concerns the purification of all of Israel.

Meaning, first, we read *parshas Parah*, “to enjoin the Jews to purify themselves, in order to offer the *pesach* sacrifice in purity,”⁶ and afterward, we read *parshas HaChodesh*, “which contains the laws of the *pesach* sacrifice.”⁶

From the wording in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, “because it is the purification of **all** of Israel,” it is clear that the purification of the red heifer is important to all Jews. It is also understood from the **context** there that since “it (the heifer) concerns the purification of all of Israel,” our Sages instituted that *parshas Parah* be read — and this enactment applies to **all** Jews — before *parshas HaChodesh* (although “**logically**, the reading of *parshas HaChodesh* should precede that of *parshas Parah*”).

¹ *Megillah* ch.3, *halachah* 5; quoted in the *Rif* and Rashi to *Megillah* 29a.

² {Our Sages instituted, that beginning from the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Adar, an additional Torah reading be read after the weekly Torah portion: On the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Adar (or on Rosh Chodesh, if Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbos), we read *parshas Shekalim*, which details the laws of half-shekel donation that all Jews had to give toward the communal sacrifices. On the Shabbos before Purim, we read *parshas Zachor*, which relates the account of the nation of Amalek’s attack on the Jews as they traveled through the desert. On the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Nisan (or on Rosh Chodesh if it falls on Shabbos), we read *parshas HaChodesh*, which details the laws of the *pesach* sacrifice. On the Shabbos preceding the reading of *parshas HaChodesh*, we read *parshas Parah*, which details the laws of ritual impurity that results from contact with a corpse, and the process of purification, which involves mixing the ashes of a red heifer with spring water, and then sprinkling this admixture on the impure individual.}

³ {*Shemos* 12:1-20.}

⁴ {*Bamidbar*, ch. 19.} alternatively, we could just write “ch. 19” since it spans the entire chapter

⁵ {*Parshas HaChodesh* is read on the Shabbos preceding (or of) Rosh Chodesh Nisan. Therefore, it would be logical to read *parshas Parah* the following week — on the first Shabbos of Nissan, which is when the heifer would be burnt.}

⁶Rashi, *Megillah* 29a s.v. “*parah*” and “*berevi’is*.” See *Sefer Hapardes LeRashi*, “*Seder Parshiyos*.”

We need {however} to better understand and shed light on this subject: The requirement to purify oneself from corpse impurity before bringing the *pesach* sacrifice only applies to those who contracted corpse impurity, but not to “**all** of Israel.”⁷ On the contrary — if **the majority** of Jews had contracted corpse impurity, they don’t need to use the ashes of the red heifer (and the Jewish people don’t need to be pure) to be able to bring the *pesach* sacrifice, since a community⁸ may (also)⁹ bring the *pesach* sacrifice while they are impure. Accordingly, why must all Jews (who comprise the majority, and not the minority) fulfill the mandate of (reading *parshas*) “*Parah*” before *parshas* “*HaChodesh*” since it concerns “the purification of all of Israel,” rather than reading *parshas HaChodesh* before *parshas Parah* (as is should be “**logically**”)?

We must therefore say (based on the deeper ideas in Torah) that *parshas Parah* concerning “the purification of all of Israel” does not relate only to purity **in the simple sense** (from actual corpse impurity), but a type of purity that “all of Israel” require, regardless of their status. It is this specifically that prepares them for *parshas HaChodesh* (and {the} *pesach* {sacrifice}).

2.

A NOVELTY IN THE MITZVAH OF *PARAH ADUMAH*

We will understand this by prefacing with a discussion of a novelty that we find regarding the *mitzvah* of *parah adumah*:¹⁰

⁷ {Jerusalem Talmud, loc cit.}

⁸ *Pesachim* 66b ff; 79a ff; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Korban Pesach*,” beginning of ch. 7. {In the original Hebrew, “*tzibbur*.” Although literally, this term means a “community”, in this context, the term denotes a majority of the population.}

⁹ Although, even then they must try to offer it in purity (as in our case where *parshas Parah* is read before Rosh Chodesh {Nisan} which gives sufficient time to become pure). This is especially true according to the opinion that impurity is only **overridden** in a community {and not completely permitted} (*Pesachim* 77a; *Yoma* 6b and the sources quoted there).

¹⁰ {The Red Heifer.}

Rambam says in *Sefer Hamitzvos*¹¹ that the *mitzvah* of *parah adumah* is — “to prepare the red heifer to have **its ashes ready for those who require it** to be purified from corpse impurity.” {Meaning} the complete fulfillment of the *mitzvah* is not (only) to use the ashes when needed — when a Jew contracts **corpse** impurity and needs to use its ashes for purification — but that the ashes of the heifer be **prepared from the outset** for anyone who may need it. Whenever a Jew will require **this** purification, he will immediately be able to be purified with the ashes of the heifer.

{As the prooftext for this *mitzvah*} Rambam cites the verse,¹² “It shall be a keepsake for the congregation of Israel.” The straightforward meaning of this verse is that the heifer’s ashes must be prepared and secured for any member of the “congregation of Israel” — for all Jews — as perhaps someone will need to be purified by the heifer’s ashes.

There is a further novelty in this *mitzvah*: There is no (biblical) requirement for an individual who has contracted corpse impurity to purify himself. Even before a pilgrimage festival, when there is an obligation “{for a person} to purify himself on a festival,”¹³ (in addition to the fact that there is a discussion¹⁴ whether this is a biblical requirement or {only} a rabbinical one) this applies only to someone who is obligated to make the pilgrimage. Others are excluded, e.g., someone who doesn’t own any land in Israel (or who is currently outside of Israel), who are exempt from making the pilgrimage (and from offering the *pesach* sacrifice),¹⁵ and who are consequently also not obligated to purify themselves before a festival.

Accordingly, the requirement for the heifer’s ashes to be “**ready** for those who require it to be purified from corpse impurity” is (not only for a person who is obligated to purify himself from impurity, but also) for a person whose purity is dependant on his choice; **whenever** he desires to purify himself, the heifer’s

¹¹ *Sefer HaMitzvos*, Positive *Mitzvah* 113.

¹² *Bamidbar* 19:9.

¹³ *Rosh Hashanah* 16b; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Tumas Ochlin*” ch. 16, par. 10.

¹⁴ See *Mishneh Lamelech* to *Mishneh Torah* *ibid.* And see *Sdei Chemed* “*Klalim*,” *Maareches Ches*, *Klal* 47 **and the sources cited there.**

¹⁵ See *Pesachim* 8b; *Tosfos* s.v. “*me’eleha*” — *Pesachim* 3b; *Sdei Chemed* *ibid.* Regarding this subject, see Rabbi Yerucham Fishel Perla on Rav Saadia Gaon’s *Sefer Hamitzvos*, *Parshah* 45 (p. 191b).

ashes (also) must be made **ready** for him so that he will be able to purify himself as soon as he wishes.

3.

PURIFYING THE *KOHEN GADOL*

This idea is also emphasized by the words of Rav Saadia Gaon (in his *Sefer Hamitzvos*):¹⁶ He says there that the *mitzvah* of *parah adumah* requires that “the heifer should be a **continual keepsake**” — the heifer’s ashes need to be continually (always) **ready** {for use}.

There are *Achronim*¹⁷ who wish to infer from Rav Saadia Gaon’s wording — “the heifer should be a continual keepsake” — that he is referring (not to the part of the ashes that “was used by the **Jewish people** for sprinkling,”¹⁸ but) to the part of ashes “that was placed in the *chail*,”¹⁹ for the biblical clause,²⁰ “it shall be a keepsake for the congregation of Israel” (similar to the wording of Rav Saadia Gaon, “the heifer should be a {continual} keepsake”) was said specifically regarding **this** part of the ashes (that was placed in the *chail*) — as our Sages²¹ derive from this verse that we must apportion part of the ashes of **every** red heifer as “a keepsake” in the *chail*.

Accordingly, the general *mitzvah* of *parah adumah* (according to Rav Saadia Gaon) pertains to **this** part of the ashes {the portion that is kept in the *chail*}.

¹⁶ Rav Saadia Gaon’s *Sefer Hamitzvos*, *parshah* 45 (p. 191b).

¹⁷ {*Achronim*, lit., “later commentators” refers to outstanding rabbinic scholars who lived from approx. 1600 CE to present.} Rabbi Yerucham Fishel Perla on *Sefer Hamitzvos* *ibid.*, (p. 190d).

¹⁸ *Tosefta Parah* end of ch. 3; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Parah Adumah*,” end of ch. 3 (and see *Tosfos YomTov* to *Parah* end of ch. 3). {The ashes of the red heifer were divided into three parts: One part was hidden in the *chail* for safekeeping; one was kept on the Mount of olives to be used by all the Jewish people for purification; and one was divided among all the guard posts of the *kohanim*, to be used to purify the *kohanim*.}

¹⁹ *Parah*, *ibid.*; *Mishneh Torah*, *ibid.* {The *chail* was a 10 cubit high wall (or, according to many opinions, an empty space, 10 cubits wide), which surrounded the Temple courtyard.}

²⁰ {*Bamidbar* 19:9.}

²¹ *Tosefta Parah* end of ch. 3; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Parah Adumah*,” end of ch. 3; Rashi, *Bamidbar* 19:9.

{This is perplexing:} How can we maintain that {according to Rav Saadia Gaon} the primary aspect and the focus of the *mitzvah* is (not the part of ashes used to purify people from corpse impurity but) the part of the ashes that was concealed as “a keepsake”? Those commentators explain,²² based on several sources, that they would take some of this ash that was kept in the *chail* to sprinkle on the *Kohen Gadol* before Yom Kippur {to purify him} [and similarly when the *Kohen Gadol* would burn a new red heifer].²³

And **this** is the primary *mitzvah* (of *parah adumah*) — since Israelites, and even regular *kohanim*, have no obligation (as individuals) to purify themselves. Only the *Kohen Gadol*, who alone can perform the service of Yom Kippur, is **obligated** to have the ashes sprinkled on him (before Yom Kippur) {to become pure}, so that he can perform the service. Accordingly, the **mandatory** *mitzvah* of the heifer’s ashes is performed with the part of the ashes that is placed in the *chail* — as “a keepsake.”

However, this understanding of Rav Saadia Gaon’s teaching is very difficult to accept:

It is a positive commandment for *kohanim* collectively to perform the service in the Temple every day, and when an individual *kohen* does so, he fulfills this commandment. “*Kohanim* are diligent,”²⁴ and to the point of self-sacrifice, they would run²⁵ to perform the service. Consequently, the purification of the red heifer was something **necessary** for them. So why would the primary *mitzvah* of the *parah adumah* be associated with the part that is placed in the *chail*, from which we (only) sprinkle the *Kohen Gadol*?

Additionally, according to the above interpretation {in the words of Rav Saadia Gaon}, the clause “the heifer should be a continual keepsake” only indicates which part of the ashes comprises a mandatory *mitzvah*. However, it does not express the **essence of the *mitzvah***, since the *mitzvah* (even

²² Rabbi Yerucham Fishel Perla on *Sefer Hamitzvos*, *ibid.* (p. 191a ff), and the sources cited there.

²³ According to the opinion that it could only be done by the *Kohen Gadol* (see Rabbi Perla, *ibid.*, **and the sources cited there**).

²⁴ *Shabbos* 20a.

²⁵ *Tamid* 28a; *Mishnah*, “*Yoma*,” beg. of ch. 2 (and *Yoma* 23a).

concerning **this** part) is (not the ashes designated as “a **continual** keepsake,” but) the sprinkling on the *Kohen Gadol*. [This sprinkling on the *Kohen Gadol* only took place rarely: a few times before Yom Kippur; and whenever a new red heifer was prepared, which has only happened eight times since the time of Moshe].²⁶

4.

CONTINUALLY READY FOR USE

Therefore, it is reasonable to say that — on the contrary — Rav Saadia Gaon’s intention in saying “the heifer should be a continual keepsake” is similar to that of the above-mentioned *Rambam*. Namely, the primary *mitzvah* of the *parah adumah* is that the ashes of the heifer be **constantly** ready “for those who require it to be purified from corpse impurity” — “a continual keepsake.”²⁷

Rav Saadia Gaon’s use of the word “keepsake” (which according to the exposition of the Sages, {this term (as it is used in Scripture)} refers to the part of the ash that was placed in the *chail*, as mentioned above,) poses no difficulty. This is because his use of this term (does **not** accord with the above-mentioned **exposition** of our Sages, but rather) accords with **the straightforward meaning of the verse** that “it shall be a keepsake for the congregation of Israel”: It (also, or primarily) refers to the ashes in general, which need to be kept ready “for those who require it.”

And as is clear from the fact that *Rambam* also brings a proof for this idea — that the *mitzvah* of *parah adumah* is “to have its ashes ready” — from the verse, “it shall be **a keepsake** for the congregation of Israel.”

The part of ashes which “was used by the Jewish people for sprinkling,” is also included in the clause, “it shall be a keepsake” — “ready for those who require it.”

²⁶ *Parah* 3:5; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Parah Adumah*,” end of ch. 3.

²⁷ Accordingly, the fact that the Rav Saadia Gaon doesn’t say “as a keepsake **in the chail**” is well understood.

Moreover, {interpreting “it shall be a keepsake” to mean that its ashes must ready for those} “who require it” {is not inherently contradictory to the exposition of our Sages that the verse refers to the ashes kept in the *chail*, since the clause “who require it”} also includes the *Kohen Gadol* {who used the ashes kept in the *chail*} at the above-mentioned times.

However, we need to clarify: Why indeed are the ashes of the heifer so essential, and to the extent that we emphasize that it does not suffice to have the ashes when needed, but they must be “a continual **keepsake**” — always ready — “for those who require it”?

5.

TESHUVAH CURES SPIRITUAL DEATH

All things physical are drawn and descend from their spiritual counterparts.²⁸ The same is also true (and in fact, to a greater extent) of Torah and *mitzvos*. The details of every *mitzvah* in the physical realm parallel the meaning of the *mitzvah* as it exists in the spiritual realm.

The same is true in our case: The requirement of the *mitzvah* of *parah adumah* that “its ashes are **ready** for those who require it,” is a consequence of the necessity that the *mitzvah* of *parah adumah* in a person’s spiritual service be **constant**. It must be “ready” for each person in their Divine service.

²⁸ We can suggest that this idea is the deeper meaning of our Sages statement (beginning of *Bereishis Rabbah*; *Zohar*, vol. 2, 161a-b) “{Hashem} looked into the Torah, and created the world.” And {not only do the physical *mitzvos* allude to a deeper, spiritual meaning, but} on the contrary — it is known what *Shaloh* says (see his introduction, end of the section entitled “*Bayis Acharon*” 14a) that Torah {primarily} speaks of the upper realms and {only} alludes to {these truths in} the lower realms.

The explanation: The spiritual meaning of *parah adumah* is²⁹ — **teshuvah**.³⁰ In spiritual terms, corpse impurity refers³¹ to the dire consequence of sin {a state of separation from Hashem} — “your sins have **separated** {between you and your G-d}....”³² And when the connection to Hashem — “You **who cleave** to Hashem your G-d...”³³ is impaired, then you lack {the conclusion of the verse:} being “...**alive**...,” Heaven protect us. *Parah adumah* — *teshuvah* — purifies a Jew, plugging him back into his source and root in the living G-d.

[As our Sages say,³⁴ “Let the heifer come and atone for the sin of the calf.” After all, the red heifer purifies the defilement imparted by the **dead** (death being the result of sin), and (all sins) originate from the sin of the Golden Calf, which is the root and source of all sins³⁵ (since *Matan Torah*)].

This also explains why we find two opposites in {the *mitzvah* of} *parah adumah*: On the one hand, all of the activities involved in preparing the *parah adumah*³⁶ must take place specifically *outside* — outside of all three camps³⁷ — unlike sacrifices which must be specifically offered “inside” {the Temple}. On the other hand, the sprinkling {of the heifer’s blood} must specifically take place {while facing} “toward **the front** of the Tent of Meeting.”³⁸ “While sprinkling the blood, the *kohen* must **focus** on and look at the entrance of the **Sanctuary**”³⁹ — for *teshuvah* carries two corresponding opposites:

The advantage of *teshuvah* is that it atones for and refines the “outside” (that which is outside **all** of the camps {i.e., completely outside of the realm of holiness} — elevating it to a state of holiness). *Teshuvah* atones for and purifies

²⁹ *Or Hatorah*, “*Chukas*,” beg. of p. 762, 774, 787, end of p. 797 ff; *Maamer* entitled *Vayedaber... Zos Chukas* (1) 5629. Et al. See *Likutei Torah Chukas* 61d.

³⁰ {Lit. return. Usually translated as repentance, it is the act of returning and reconnecting to Hashem.}

³¹ See *Or Hatorah*, “*Chukas*,” p. 781; *Likutei Torah*, “*Chukas*,” 61c-d.

³² *Yeshayahu* 59:2.

³³ *Devarim* 4:4; *Avos DeRabbi Nassan*, end of ch. 34.

³⁴ *Tanchuma*, “*Chukas*,” end of sec. 8; Rashi on *Bamidbar* 19:22.

³⁵ See *Shemos* 32:34 and Rashi there. *Zohar* vol. 1, 52b.

³⁶ {E.g., slaughtering it, burning it.}

³⁷ *Bamidbar* 19:3, and Rashi there (based on *Yoma* 68a). {As explained in a number of sources, the three camps refer to the camp of the *Shechinah*; the camp of the Levites; and the camp of the Israelites. These three camps correspond to the Temple, the Temple mount, and the city of Jerusalem.}

³⁸ *Bamidbar* 19:4, and Rashi there (based on *Sifri* on the verse).

³⁹ *Ibid*.

(even) intentional sins, which stem from the three totally impure *kelipos*⁴⁰ (unlike sacrifices which atone only for unintentional sins).⁴¹ And the potency to atone for deliberate sins (that are outside of all the camps {of holiness}) emanates from a very sublime plane (“inside”).⁴²

{This is alluded to in the teaching of our Sages,⁴³ that in response to the celestial question, “What is an effective remediation for a sinner?” } only Hashem (Who is loftier than Torah) gives the response, guidance, and commandment to “repent and be atoned for.” (In contrast, the guidance from the plane of Torah alone is to “bring a sin offering,” which can atone {only} for accidental sins).⁴⁴

6.

TESHUVAH IS RELEVANT FOR ALL

It is possible to think that **this** aspect of *teshuvah* {repentance for actual sin} is {relevant} only for someone who has already sinned, caused a blemish, and left the path; only **he** requires the {purification of the} heifer that is put into effect “outside.” But when a Jew conducts himself in the manner {expressed by the verse}, “Hashem made man **straight**”⁴⁵ — on the straight path, the divine service of *tzaddikim*⁴⁶ — what connection does **he** have to the *parah adumah*?

⁴⁰ {Literally, “shells” or “peels.” The term refers to anything that conceals, and thus opposes, G-dliness, just as a shell or a peel conceals the flesh of the fruit. The *shalosh kelipos hatmeios* — “three wholly impure *kelipos*,” refers to the *kelipos* that are totally impure, and conventionally, their only form of redemption is their destruction. However, through *teshuvah* motivated by great love, even the holy sparks invested in the sins (which come from these *kelipos*) can be elevated, and transformed to good. See *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 7; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 67 and fns.; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 7, p. 22 fn. 20.}

⁴¹ See *Iggeres Hakodesh*, ch. 28; *Derech Mitzvosecha* 111a-b (and see the citations and footnotes in that source {p. 209}).

⁴² See *Derech Mitzvosecha*, *ibid.* And see *Likkutei Torah*, “*Chukas*,” 59d ff.

⁴³ *Yalkut Shimoni Tehilim* ch. 25 (*remez* 702); see *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Makkos* 2:6.

⁴⁴ {I.e., the strength to be able to atone for the intentional sins, the things that are “outside” all camps of holiness, comes from the “inside” — the deepest levels of G-dliness that are beyond Torah.}

⁴⁵ *Koheles* 7:29.

⁴⁶ {Pl. of *tzaddik*, lit., a righteous person. The *tzaddik* referred to throughout this *sichah* is someone who has no evil inclination at all, and thus no worldly desires — and certainly, he will never sin. See *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 1.}

Although it is true that he also needs to engage in *teshuvah*, as the Alter Rebbe explains in many places⁴⁷ that *teshuvah* is not intended to address only sins, but even a *tzaddik* needs to do *teshuvah*. This, however, is (not *teshuvah* for transgressions, etc. but rather) the ***avodah***⁴⁸ of *teshuvah*,⁴⁹ {a sublime *return* alluded to by the verse} “and the spirit will **return** to Hashem, Who gave it”⁵⁰ — a person returning to his source and root, to the extent that {he returns} “to G-d, who **gave it.**” What connection, however, does he have to the *teshuvah* of ***parah adumah*** {that is prepared and sprinkled} “outside of the three camps”? After all, he is “inside”!

In response, we tell him that the *mitzvah* of *parah adumah* is — “that its ashes are **ready** for those who require it” — it must remain a “continual keepsake.” We must always carry with us the *teshuvah* impetus symbolized by of *parah adumah* — as a “continual keepsake” — for (in a simple sense) “do not believe in yourself {until the day you die}”;⁵¹ we can never trust ourselves {that we will not be led astray}.

This is especially notable in light of the maxim that “there is no *tzaddik* on earth who does good and does not sin”⁵² — at the very least, sin {אָפֶשֶׁת} as connoting a “deficiency.”⁵³ He is lacking; he didn’t perform his *avodah* as it should have been performed,⁵⁴ or at least not perfectly; and consequently, he must make amends for the deficiency in his *avodah*.

Even had he not sinned at all, and death only has power over him “due to the serpent’s counsel,”⁵⁵ the fact that the sin of the Tree of Knowledge affects

⁴⁷ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Rosh HaShannah*,” 60d ff; “*Shabbos Shuvah*,” 66c; beginning of “*Haazinu*”; **et al.**

⁴⁸ {Divine service.}

⁴⁹ {Although *teshuvah* is usually translated as *repentance*, its literal translation is *return* — for that is the essence of *teshuvah*, to return and to renew one’s connection with Hashem. Therefore, *teshuvah* is also applicable to a *tzaddik* who has never sinned, for there is always room to return and connect to Hashem in a greater, deeper way.}

⁵⁰ *Koheles* 12:7.

⁵¹ *Avos* 2:4

⁵² *Koheles* 7:20

⁵³ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Matos*,” 82a; *Maamar Al Ken Yomru 5691* (printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, vol. 1) ch. 1, and many other sources.

⁵⁴ *Kesubos* 67a.

⁵⁵ *Shabbos* 55b; *Bava Basra* 17a. {The serpent persuaded Chavah to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, and as a result, death was decreed on humanity.}

him, proves that **he** has a connection to the “serpent’s counsel.”⁵⁶ For this, he needs to do *teshuvah*. What more, if he doesn’t neutralize the “serpent’s counsel” residing within him, it is conceivable that he will later fall from his level.

For the explanation of the *Arizal*⁵⁷ on the verse, “you shall hang him on a tree,”⁵⁸ is well-known. Namely, when a person (a *tzaddik*) who has not sinned dies (then **this** {primordial sin of Adam} is the cause of his death). That is, we “hang {ותליה} him {the sin precipitating his demise} on the **tree**.” In other words, we attribute {חוללה} his death to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, which introduced death to mankind.

Certainly, an individual will be impelled to do *teshuvah* when he contemplates the teaching of our Sages⁵⁹ that “any generation in which it (the Temple) is not rebuilt in their days, is considered as if they had destroyed it.” Put positively: There is a *halachic* ruling⁶⁰ that when an individual “performs one *mitzvah*, he can tip his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit and bring deliverance and salvation to himself and to the world. ”

So when a person observes that we are still in *galus*, and especially in the doubled and quadrupled darkness of this *galus*, right before Moshiach’s arrival (an “outside” to which there is nothing more outside {of holiness} than it), and we have still not been redeemed {he holds himself responsible. Because} it is possible that remedying this situation is dependent on **his** *avodah*, as explained above.⁶¹ And reflecting on the teaching mentioned, that as long as the redemption hasn’t arrived, it is, “considered as if they (the generation whose “balance” he is able to “tip”) had destroyed it” — this arouses him to perform *teshuvah* in the simple sense, in the strongest manner.

⁵⁶ See *Torah Or*, end of *parshas Mishpatim*; Section 7 of this *sichah*; and *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 9, p. 209 ff. And see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 24, p. 134.

⁵⁷ *Nachal Kedumim* on the verse (*Devarim* 21:22); *Shaloh* 384b. And see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 7, p. 167 ff, and the sources cited there.

⁵⁸ {*Devarim* 21:22.}

⁵⁹ *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Yoma* 1:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 137:7 (and it concludes there: “What is the reason? Because they did not repent.”).

⁶⁰ *Mishneh Torah* “*Hilchos Teshuvah*,” ch. 3, par. 4; based on *Kiddushin* 40b.

⁶¹ Note *Boneh Yerushalayim*, end of ch. 4 from *Tikunim*, who says that if one *tzakkik* in a generation would return with consummate *teshuvah*, Moshiach would come.

It is still possible to think: It is indeed true that for him, the impetus for *teshuvah* must be at hand — as “a continual keepsake.” However, since he is a person whose conduct is upright, it suffices that this keepsake only be something supplemental to his {primary} *avodah*.

For he has absolutely no connection to things located “outside the three camps.” The fact that he must also have the *teshuvah* of the *parah adumah* is (not because of his deeds, but rather) due to “the serpent’s counsel,” which is not dependent on his will and choice. He will certainly do his part to undo its negative effects by doing *teshuvah* for it — but he won't make this into a foundation of his *avodah*. He is above it!

In response, we tell him that *parshas Parah* is “the purification of **all** of Israel” — every Jew needs the purification of the red heifer. Moreover, it is the foundation of *avodah* as a whole, for he needs to reach {the level implicit in *parshas*} “*HaChodesh*” (and Pesach). As the *Midrash* says,⁶² ({although both are called, “statutes”} the statute of *parah adumah*, however, is greater than the statute of the *pesach* sacrifice, because) “those that eat the *pesach* sacrifice require it {the purification of the *parah adumah*}.” The meaning in *avodah*:⁶³ “Those who eat the *pesach* sacrifice” refers to the *avodah* of *tzaddikim*, and “those who eat the *pesach* sacrifice need the heifer, for even the *tzaddikim* need to do *teshuvah*.”

Even a *tzaddik*⁶⁴ is a “*yesh mi she’ohev*,”⁶⁵ and has the free choice to act contrary to Hashem’s will, G-d forbid. This shows that he is an {independent}

⁶² *Shemos Rabbah* 19:2.

⁶³ End of the *Maamar Vayedaber... Zos chukas* (1) 5629.

⁶⁴ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 9, p. 209 ff.

⁶⁵ See *Tanya*, ch. 35 and 37. {*Yesh mi she’ohev*, lit., “there is someone that loves,” means that love is not selfless, for love is an expression of a person’s own desire and selfhood (i.e., **he** who desires to cleave to Hashem). Thus, even a *tzaddik*’s love for Hashem is not entirely devoid of a feeling of “self.”}

entity, and not completely united with G-dliness; accordingly, even the *avodah* of a *tzaddik* has his {independent} existence mixed in.

Therefore, even a *tzaddik* needs the purification of the *parah adumah*, to purify himself, through the impetus of *teshuvah*, of his self-identity — the {feeling of} bitterness over the fact that he is a discrete existence, and not completely nullified to Hashem. Only through the *avodah* of *teshuvah* to the point that it nullifies his existence, can he afterward be among “those who eat the *pesach* sacrifice,” the *avodah* in a manner of skipping and leaping,⁶⁶ to the extent that he {eats and} “consumes” this {level} and it becomes “blood and flesh of his own flesh.”⁶⁷

8.

THE MONTH OF REDEMPTION

This {*avodah*} applies even to *tzaddikim*. Certainly *beinonim*,⁶⁸ who have thoughts of sin, etc.,⁶⁹ must engage in *teshuvah*, symbolized by the *parah adumah*. For although “immediately upon it {an evil thought} arising, the *beinoni* thrusts it aside with both hands...”⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the fact that these thoughts occur indicate that he has not fulfilled the oath to “be a *tzaddik*.”⁷¹ And for this, he must do *teshuvah*.

And those who haven’t reached the level of a *beinoni* must certainly do *teshuvah*, as they require purification for actual sins, to enable them to serve

⁶⁶ {Pesach can be translated as “leap over.” In *avodah*, Pesach refers to the service of Hashem that is not limited — *avodah* in a manner of leaping, unlike conventional service of Hashem, where one ascends from level to level in an ordered manner. See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Tzav*,” 16a and many other sources.}

⁶⁷ *Tanya* ch. 5.

⁶⁸ {Lit., “an intermediate” person; a *beinoni* is an individual who does not sin, and has completely mastered himself so that all of his thought, speech, and action is directed toward the service of Hashem. However, he still has an animalistic soul, although it may or may not be dormant, and so must constantly monitor and control himself so as not to act on any self-serving impulses. See *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 12-14.}

⁶⁹ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” end of ch. 12.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

⁷¹ See *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 14. {Which explains that even a *beinoni* has an obligation (based on the “oath” that his soul accepted before being born) to use all of his abilities to reach the level of a *tzaddik*. A *tzaddik* has no evil inclination at all, and thus no worldly desires. The fact that he has these thoughts that he must suppress is proof that he has not reached the level of a *tzaddik*, and for this, he must bemoan his situation.}

Hashem properly. True, “the rank of *beinoni* is attainable by every person, and each person should strive for it.”⁷² Nevertheless, the heartfelt wish... of a person, “if only I were a *beinoni*” is well-known. {I.e., to attain the rank of *beinoni* is a great but uncommon accomplishment.}⁷³

And through the *avodah* of *teshuvah* evinced by *parshas Parah*, we **immediately** come to *parshas HaChodesh* — “we do not make a separation between {the reading of *parshas*} *Parah* and *HaChodesh*”⁷⁴ — since the theme of *parshas HaChodesh* is “this month shall be to you” — {the month of Nisan} the month of **redemption**;⁷⁵ and as a result of the *avodah* of *teshuvah* of *parshas Parah*, “**immediately** (without any interruption) they will be redeemed,”⁷⁶ as it says, “in Nisan, they are destined to be redeemed.”⁷⁷ May it transpire speedily in actuality.

— From a talk and *maamar* delivered on *Motza’ei Shabbos, parshas Parah*, 5738 (1978), and a talk delivered on *Shabbos parshas HaChodesh* 5724 (1964).

⁷² *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” beg. of ch. 14.

⁷³ See *Beis Rebbe*, vol. 2, ch. 8, fn. 3.

⁷⁴ {I.e., they are always read on two consecutive Shabbasos.} *Jerusalem Talmud, Megillah* chapter 3, *halachah* 5.

⁷⁵ See *Shemos Rabbah* 15:11; et al.

⁷⁶ *Mishneh Torah “Hilchos Teshuvah”* ch. 7, par. 5.

⁷⁷ According to Rabbi Yehoshua, *Rosh Hashanah* 11a. In *Shemos Rabbah* 15:11, this opinion is mentioned without any dissenting opinion.