


**Parashat Tzav/
Parah**

English version

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THE ART OF SEEING THE FINAL REDEMPTION

This week, we read about the Red Heifer purification. The purpose of this reading is to be some sort of preparation for the Passover sacrifice. We read about purification in the Haftarah as well. This is for the sake of being ready to come without impurity to Jerusalem and to learn about the Passover sacrifice. Reading Parashat Parah, and its Haftarah, is also somewhat of a prayer, that we become purified before the Redemption, hurriedly in our days.

The Haftarah is so encouraging, that the end is near. It mentions the prophecies that G-d will do in the End of Days for His Nation. וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֶּן. *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.* A big win over our Yetzer Harah. The Midrash learns the passuk of having a change of heart, is also a yearly thing. Each year, before Yom Kippur, we will do Teshuva, and G-d will give us a new heart, and put in our hearts His Awe. But at the End of Days, this change of heart and spirit will be on a major scale. This new heart, is a heart that is interested in Torah.

The Malbim explains, the concept of the two, the new heart and the new spirit. What brings one to sin, are these two factors. Heart: brings about an inner force for passion, a want. Spirit on the other hand, is the imagination of these materialistic desires that the heart wants, as greater than they actually are, in a more seductive way.

The reading of the Haftarah is exactly this prayer. We ask G-d to purify us, to give us a new heart, so that we will have passion for doing good things. We also ask G-d that He gives us a new spirit, so that we will imagine

the greatness of spirituality. The prophecy tells, that when this will happen, it will be followed by many miracles. Ruach Hakodesh will be given to the entire nation, and we will return to the Holy Land, in such a way, that we will never be exiled.

There will be two purifications, before bringing the Passover sacrifice in the End of Days. A purification of body, through the Red Heifer. And a purification of soul, through Teshuva and prayer.

The prophecy does not end with G-d just giving us a new heart and new spirit, which means we will stop desiring materialistic desires, and start desiring spirituality instead. It does not just end with a new spirit of imagination, of how great spirituality really is and stop imagining falsely the materialistic desires. The passuk adds an additional change in the change of heart. There will be a לב בשר, a heart of flesh, as well. What does that mean, a heart of flesh? Yerushalmi Yoma chapter 4, writes, that this means, each person will be disgusted from what his friend has וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר וְשֵׂהוּא בּוֹשֵׁר בְּחֶלְקוֹ שֶׁל חֲבִירוֹ. We will finally be happy with what G-d gives us, and happy with what He does not give us. We will finally, forever, be grateful, as we will be full of Faith.

These three, are the main elements of Teshuva. To undo the desire, to undo the imagination, and to be content with what you have. Each time one sins, he develops a desire, his imagination becomes brighter and more seductive, and his focus shifts from the good he has, to a f.o.m.o., a fear of missing out. Teshuva means, to get back to how you were before the sin, without the force and pull to the Evil. (Beit Halevi Drush 15)



All this change of heart won't happen alone. It will come in a time that G-d will make the Land beautiful again, and in a time where there will be a lot of Kiddush Hashem to counter the Hillul Hashem, the desecration of G-d's Name that was done. As the passuk in the Haftarah says: לָכֵן אָמַר לְבֵית־יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹיָקִים לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אָנֹכִי עֹשֶׂה בְּיַד יְשֻׁרָאֵל כִּי אִם־לְשֵׁם־קֹדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲלָלְתֶם בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־גָּבַתְתֶּם שָׁם: G-d needs to make a Kiddush Hashem, in the places of the world that we made a Hillul Hashem. How so?

R' Elyashiv wrote, that G-d needs to purify His world from the wicked. All the wars, G-d allowed them, for the sake of ridding the Evil doers from the world. יְהוָה יִקְרָא: *G-d says, I made all the wars!* (Avodah Zarah 2b) For the meantime, during exile, we turn to Tehillim to find hope. But in the days of Mashiach, we will turn to Tehillim to praise G-d for getting rid of the wicked, and for rewarding the Tzaddikim. As it says, וְתָמוּ חַטָּאִים מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְרִשְׁעִים עוֹד אֵינָם בְּרָרִי גִפְשֵׁי אֶת־קִנְיָן הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה: All this will be the prerequisite to G-d giving us a new heart and spirit. (Kobetz Tshubot R' Elyashiv 5;15) According to this, He made WW2, to get rid of 24 million Russians who died in WW2, 7.7 million Germans, 5.6 million Poland, all for the sake of killing the wicked amongst them. He is making the Ukraine Russia war and October 7th, to get rid of the wicked amongst those who fell.

But what about the righteous who fell? They were given the opportunities to make Kiddush Hashem. There were so many amazing stories of Kiddush Hashem in WW2, in Oct. 7, and in every tragic event in between. This is in lines with the prophecy that G-d will give His people a chance to make a Kiddush Hashem. וְקִדְשֵׁי אֶת־שְׁמִי הַגָּדוֹל הַמְחַלֵּל בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר חֲלָלְתֶם בְּתוֹכָם וְיָדְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: All the Kiddush Hashem will happen, in a time, where there are wars.

The second thing that will happen when G-d will give us a good heart, is G-d bringing His people back to the Land of Israel. וְלָקַחְתִּי אִתְּכֶם מִן־הַגּוֹיִם וְקִבַצְתִּי אִתְּכֶם: And then, we will finally be able to dwell in the Holy Land with a relationship with G-d, וְיִשְׁבְּתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, וְיִשְׁבְּתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: But that will only happen, while something else, the most ironic thing, will happen.

To show you how ironic it is, I have to share first the following with you. Mark Twain wrote in the bestselling book he ever sold in his lifetime, *Innocents Abroad*, about the Holy Land, when he visited it in 1867, with a

number of Christians: *Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince... Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village; the riches of Solomon are no longer there to compel the admiration of visiting Oriental queens; the wonderful temple which was the pride and the glory of Israel, is gone... Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise?... Palestine is no more of this work-day world. It is sacred to poetry and tradition — it is dream-land. It seems to me that all the races and colors and tongues of the earth must be represented among the fourteen thousand souls that dwell in Jerusalem. Rags, wretchedness, poverty and dirt... abound.*

The population of the entire Palestine in the 1860s was only 350,000; compare that to today's 9.5 million. Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are from the most expensive cities in the world to live in. According to Israeli daily business newspaper The Marker, Israel has seventy-one billionaires as of 2021, with one of the highest per capita rates in the world, at 6.7 billionaires for every million people. Israel's modern infrastructure is rivaling many Western countries, and it has a high-technology sector competitively on par with Silicon Valley. It has the second-largest number of startup companies in the world after the United States, and the third-largest number of NASDAQ-listed companies after the U.S. and China. American companies, such as Intel, Microsoft, and Apple, built their first overseas research and development facilities in Israel.

The passuk says, in our Haftarah, prophecies that will come to true that defy all logic and are against all odds, and we are seeing them unravel in front of our eyes, after 2000 years. וְקָרָאתִי אֶל־הַדָּגָן וְהַרְבִּיתִי אֹתוֹ וְלֹא־אֶתֵּן עֲלֵיכֶם רָעָב: *I will call to the grain and will multiply it, and I will not decree famine again over you.* And then, וְהַרְבִּיתִי אֶת־פְּרִי הָעֵץ וְהַתְּנוּבַת הַשָּׂדֶה לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִקְחוּ עוֹד חֶרֶפַת וְרָעָב בְּגוֹיִם: *And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you shall no more have to accept the shame of famine among the nations.* Agriculture in Israel is a highly developed industry. Israel is an exporter of fresh produce and a leader in agricultural technologies.

And then, וְהָאָרֶץ הַנְּשֻׁמָּה תִעֲבַד וְהַשָּׂדֶה הַנִּתְּהָ שְׂמִמָּה לְעֵינַי: *And the desolate land shall be worked, instead of its lying desolate in the sight of all that pass by.* וְאֶמְרוּ

הָאָרֶץ הַלְלוּ הַנְּשֻׁמָה הַיְתֵמָה כְּגַרְעֵדוֹ וְהָעָרִים הַחֲרוּבוֹת וְהַנְּשֻׁמוֹת הָאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאָרוּ סְבִיבוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי אֲנִי יְקֻנָּה בְּלִילֵי הַהֲחָרָסוֹת נִטְעַמְתִּי הַנְּשֻׁמָה אֲנִי יְקֻנָּה דְּבַרְתִּי וְעָשִׂיתִי: *And they shall say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden, and the cities that were destroyed and desolate and pulled down have become settled as fortified cities.'* וְיִדְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם: *And the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, YKVK, have built up the ruined places and have planted the desolate ones; I, YKVK, have spoken, and I will perform [it].*

What did you say, Mark Twain, that the land was desolate? Look at how fast G-d turned all that around!

The Rambam writes, *תשע פרות אדומות נעשו משנצטוו במצווה, זו עד שחרב הבית בשניה. ראשונה עשה משה רבנו, שנייה עשה עזרא, ושבע מעזרא עד חורבן הבית. והעשירית יעשה המלך המשיח 9 Red Heifers were done from the time of the commandment until the destruction of the Second Temple. The first, by Moshe. The second by Ezra. From Ezra, until the Destruction of the Second Temple, 7 were done. The Tenth Heifer, Mashiach will do, hurriedly in our days.* (Rambam Parah Adumah 3)

STOP OVERTHINKING IT!

Overthinking usually starts from something legitimate, but then it loses boundaries. It is so common for people to overthink in so many areas. Was I guilty? Why did I make such a mistake? Why did others act the way they did, or not even apologize when they realized they were wrong? People overthink what others think about them. Or overthink if something, or someone, or myself, is normal.

In so many problems in life, the real problem is not as great as the problem of overthinking it. Nothing can help us like our own thinking, and nothing can hurt us like our own thinking. Focusing has become a hot topic in self-help. But the main problem is not focusing; it is the lack of tools to stop overthinking.

The Torah tells us about the Mitzvah of the Red Heifer, a cow that is completely red, one that never bore a yoke – to slaughter it, burn it, take its ashes and sprinkle them with water on people who became impure because of their contact with dead. Rashi tells us that this Mitzvah is a Hok, a mitzvah that has no logic to it. Then, ironically, Rashi brings R Moshe Hadarshan to explain that the idea behind the Red Heifer is for it to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf. The Red Cow is the mother

On August 2018, a Red Heifer was born in Israel. On September 2022 there were five Red Heifers flown into Israel from Texas, that are being protected in Bet Shan. Although Mashiach will come in the year after Shemita (Megila 17b), which is the year that we are in now, and although we have the Red Heifer, we still can't do the purification on Har Hamishcah which is Har Hazeitim. We first need Mashiach, the Bet Hamikdash to be built, and we need a Kohen Gadol.

But still, all the seemingly impossible prophecies are coming true, in front of our eyes! Ask anyone who is working in Kiruv. I work in Lev Aharon, and we saw an amazing year, with boys turning around, one of Lev Aharon's best years. Boys are not interested in their past lives, and they have renewed spiritual flames in their hearts.

May Hashem answer our prayers this week, Parashat Parah, and bring us the Final Purification.

that needs to clean up after the mess made by its child, the Golden Calf.

Why does Rashi say that this is a Hok, and then, he brings an explanation for it from R Moshe Hadarshan? And, how does the Heifer clean up after the Golden Calf? (See Beit Halevi on Ki Tisa)

The Talmud tells us that in the merit of Avraham having said, humbly, *ואני עפר ואפר*, And I am dust and ashes, he earned for his children the mitzvah of the Red Heifer and its ashes.(Hullin 88b) What is the connection between Avraham's humility and the Red Heifer? Ashes for ashes? Also, the Midrash tells us that because of Avraham's "being simple" *והיה תמים* "when he got water to wash the feet of his guests, he merited the waters of the Red Heifer, ... (Pesikta 14 Parah) What is the connection between being simple, not questioning G-d, and the Mitzvah of the Red Heifer?

Let us first focus on the sin of the Golden Calf. At Har Sinai, when our ancestors said *נעשה ונשמע*, We will do, and then we will listen, we will accept whatever G-d says without asking questions, they went up to the level of Adam before the sin, pre "death" zone. When the

Jews sinned with the Golden Calf, they went back to the level of Adam “after” sin. Adam’s sin was that he wanted to be like G-d, וְהָיִיתֶם כְּאֱלֹהִים, to be in control, to know things he might otherwise not be able to know, so that he can serve G-d on a higher level than what he was on. He had only one mitzvah, the mitzvah of not knowing, and he blew it.

The sin of the Golden Calf came about because the Jews of that time *wanted to know* how they were to serve G-d, without a Moshe. Aharon tried to stop this overthinking by buying time, by pushing things off, but Micha, threw the piece of paper with G-d’s Name on it into the burning gold, which turned the gold into a walking, talking golden calf. Where did Micha come from? He was a product of Moshe’s overthinking! In Egypt, Moshe asked why G-d was allowing Jewish children to be brutally killed, so G-d allowed Moshe to let one of them live. He saved a child who became Micha (See Hadar Zekenim Ki Tisa, Alshich Mishlei 24).

Now, we can understand the Rashi. The Red Heifer, which we merited due to Avraham’s humility, due to his accepting G-d without knowing, is a Tikun for the sin of the Golden Calf. This Red Heifer is a Hok, and therefore, it can rectify the sin of the Golden Calf and clean up the mess of our overthinking.

You see, the reason why we sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe told us on his last day, is not because we had a question that had no answer. “Where is Moshe? How do we serve G-d now?” It is because we had too much gold. וְדִי זָהָב. (Devarim 1;1) When you don’t have to work hard, when you have extra time or money on your plate, you overthink. And when you overthink, even if it is coming from a good source, it can turn into a catastrophe. (This is the danger of Bein Hazmanim. Too much spare time. Too much overthinking.)

People suffer from overthinking on all levels. How will I make enough money to marry off my children? How

will I retire? When you *overthink* these, it can take over your life. It can ruin your life. Because the life you live is made up of three things. Your actions. Your conversations. And your thoughts. מעשה דיבור מחשבה. These three are all that you can actually manage. As nice as time management sounds, it is just wishful thinking. You can never control or manage time. You can only manage your actions, conversations and thoughts, by making them measurable through time. You can decide how long or how short a time you can spend on each of them, and you can decide when and where you want to do any one of the three.

Overthinking is only destructive when you think off the clock. When you do not set aside a time and a place for it. When you don’t limit it. We must decide, in advance, how much time to devote to a subject – when and where to think about it. And leave the rest for G-d. It is amazing how our most effective and creative thinking is done when we give it an allotted time. Because the brain works like a muscle: you can’t make it think the whole day. It will wear out. When we schedule our thinking time, our thinking becomes super productive.

In almost everything in life, we need a healthy balance. Not too much and not too little. And just like we need to eat with a healthy balance, we need to think with a balance. Not too much, and not too little. Some people underthink things, out of laziness. And some people overthink things, because they feel they can control the world outside of their actions, conversations, or thoughts. You need to think hard, but not when it is not helping you live a more functioning or successful life. When you are aware that it is hurting you more than helping you, you need to stop. To have the humility to leave it up to G-d. You need to take the “Simplistic mindset” of Avraham, our Forefather. And when you take this lesson of the Red Heifer, you will be ready for Nissan, for your own, personal redemption.

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF SONNY AND IRENE GINDI A”H

