

# תורת אור חיים

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## פרשת שמיני

פרשת פרה  
כב' אדר ב' תשס"ח

### Learn from the Treasures of Yavneh

Rabbi Moshe Goldberg

This week we read פרשת פרה:

"והזה זה הטהור על הטמא"

“And the pure person will sprinkle on the impure person” (חקת יט:ט)

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Cuzbi, in the Yerushalmi, says, “I thought this פסוק was speaking about one pure person sprinkling on *one* impure person, but I learned from the treasures of Yavneh that it means one pure person can sprinkle on *many* impure people.” The question we can ask about this Gemara is: How does he derive this specific lesson from Yavneh?

Rabbi Meir Shapiro, founder of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin and the daf hayomi, provides a homiletic approach to the פסוק based on the request of Rav Yochanan ben Zakai that the Chachamim of Yavneh be saved. Rav Yochanan knew that if he founded a small yeshiva with a few Talmidei Chachamim then he could influence the entire Jewish world. This is the true meaning of the פסוק. Even one dedicated Jew can influence many people!

### Chessed Includes Everybody

Rabbi Moshe Goldberg

In this week's Parsha, the Torah tells us which animals are kosher and which animal are not kosher. The Ramban explains that many of the birds which are not kosher are forbidden because of the characteristics that the birds possess. Since their nature is to trick other animals and to devour their prey, we do not eat them so as not to inherit their traits. One of the birds which are classified as not kosher is the חסידה, the stork. Rashi explains that this bird is called a חסידה because חסד עם חברותיה במזונות – “It displays kindness towards others of its species by sharing its food.” Using the explanation of the Ramban, it is hard to understand why this specific bird would not be

kosher. On the contrary, it should be kosher because of its caring and considerate nature towards other birds of the same species.

The Kotzker Rebbe offered a beautiful insight into the mitzvah of chessed. Rashi explains that the חסידה displays kindness toward others of its species. While at first this would sound like a tremendous attribute, the Kotzker Rebbe explained that it is just the opposite. The חסידה only does chessed עם חברותיה - "With its species." It directs its kindness exclusively towards its own kind, but will not help other species. True chessed requires us to help people even when they are not like us and even when they are not part of our community. The Mishna in פרקי אבות says, "אלו דברים שאין להם שיעור...וגמילות", "חסדים." Chessed is meant to be done with everyone no matter which "group" they belong to.

There is a famous story in the Gemara (גיטין נז) about a man who wanted to invite his friend Kamtza to a party but invited his enemy Bar Kamtza instead. Bar Kamtza was greatly embarrassed after being thrown out of the party by the host and as a result ירושלים was destroyed. The question we can ask on this is: Why does the Gemara refer to the story as The story of **Kamtza** and Bar Kamtza? It is understandable that Bar Kamtza was at fault but what did Kamtza do? He was merely supposed to be invited to a party because he was friends with the host. The Maharal of Prague answers that Kamtza is related to the word "Kamatz" meaning group. Kamtza was invited to the host's party because he was part of the host's clique. He was also at fault for being part of a specific group and for only being friends with certain people. It is imperative that every Jew show love and support for **all** of Klal Yisrael!

## מעשה of the Week

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter zt"l had 3 famous Talmidim, one of whom was Rabbi Naftoli from Amsterdam. One year, on Purim, Rabbi Naftoli approached his rebbe and said, "If only I had the head of the שאגת אריה, the heart of the יסוד ושורש העבודה and the מדות of the Rebbe, then I would be great!"

Rabbi Yisrael answered, "All you need is *your* head, *your* heart and *your* מדות." Rabbi Yisrael meant that we shouldn't worry about being like others, we should focus on fulfilling our own potential. We must be the best we can be and only then will we truly be able to elevate ourselves to a higher level!

**שבת שלום!**

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