

BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF אחדות

While we are holding in the קריאה of the פרשיות of ד' we read in the time period of פורים and פסח, I wanted to take a moment to talk about the significance of these special פרשיות. As we usher in the month of אדר, we read פרשת שקלים, in which בני ישראל are commanded to give the מחצית השקל. The תורה specifically goes out of its way to tell us לא ימעט ולא ירבה והדל לא ימעט, everyone must be equal and treated as an equal. Next, shortly before פורים, we have what is probably a דאורייתא מצוה to read פרשת זכור, in which we are commanded to never forget what עמלק did to us. While not quoting directly from פרשת זכור, the פסוק in the מגילה tells us that אהמנ's claim to אחריות that the Jews deserved death was that they were disparate, בין העמים ומפרד. When we are not together, the door is open for someone to come and attack. In fact, I heard quoted from רב אהרן that the turning point in the מגילה is when אסתר commands מרדכי to gather all of the Jews in fast and prayer. It wasn't the fasting or the תפילות per se that saved אסתר, but that it was done together with ALL of בני ישראל. In preparation of פסח, we read about the מצוה of פרה אדומה. One of the more famous דינים of פרה אדומה is that it is מטמא את הטמאים and וזהה הטהר על הטמא. This is learned out from the פסוק of פסוק. Another aspect that can be learned from this פסוק is that someone else has to do the הזאה, meaning your purification is dependent on the interdependency of כלל ישראל. Additionally, the משנה פרה גה tells us that ideally, the ashes that are mixed into the חטאת מי should come from all of the פרות אדומות, i.e. the purification is dependent on the ability of the ashes to "come together as one", again stressing this idea of interdependence. Lastly, before the Jews were זוכה to leave מצרים as a nation, the first of which being חודש ראש. The commandment to give us this מצוה was specifically phrased החדש ראש חדשים. Right after getting this מצוה, we got the מצוה of פסח. The instruction to pass on this commandment starts off דברו אל כל עדת בני ישראל. Based off of these snippets stressing equality, lack of disparity, interdependency, and nationhood, we can suggest that the major underlying theme connecting the פרשיות of ד' פרשיות is אחדות. What does אחדות have to do with the time period around פורים and פסח when the פרשיות of ד' are read?

The גמרא in the beginning of מגילה tells us that פורים and פסח are both referred to as times of גאולה. To prepare for גאולה and bridge the two גאולות of פורים and פסח, we focus on אחדות. This theme follows us throughout our development as a nation, starting with our first מצוות in מצרים, as was already pointed out. Secondly, by מתן תורה, מתן תורה פסוק says שם ישראל נגד ההר as opposed to ויחנו. The מדרש famously understands this to refer to the Jews being אחד בלב אחד. Along these lines, the גמרא quotes the פסוק of מגילת אסתר in פסוק to refer to a second התורה (since the first was done under coercion, but this one was accepted ברצון). Interestingly enough, in the מגילה itself, the פסוק is written קימו וקיבל, which again underlies this theme of אחדות. Lastly, once the Jews enter ארץ ישראל, they again undergo a transformation through אחדות. The גמרא סוטה לז details how at the acceptance of the ברכות and קללות at גריזים and הר עיבל, the concept of ערבות was introduced. This new interdependence of all Jews taking אחריות for each other was the first step in being able to conquer and live in ארץ ישראל.

As we approach the קבלת התורה of פורים, and the הגאולה of פסח which is connected to the ultimate קבלת התורה of שבועות, we should be מתחזק in our אחדות. Just as the עמוד הענן and עמוד האש never left בני ישראל alone (לא ימיש עמוד הענן יומם ועמוד האש לילה), so too our newfound appreciation of אחדות and not leaving our brothers alone should help us to not leave the תורה alone (לא ימוש הספר התורה הזה מפיך והגית בו יומם ולילה).