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# בְּשֵׁבַע

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
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## Bridging the Divide

When introducing the subject of *Parah Adumah*, the *Pasuk* uses the term, "זאת חקת התורה," "these are the decrees of the Torah." To explain this unusual introduction<sup>1</sup> Rashi<sup>2</sup> says that the nations of the world will ridicule Klal Yisrael, scrutinizing this Mitzvah – what is it, what are the reasons behind it? Therefore, at the outset, Hashem uses the term "חוק" – is it my decree, do not question it.

The *Sifsei Chachamim*<sup>3</sup> explains that the Mitzvah of *Parah Adumah* is the target of derision because it seems to be inherently contradictory. When sprinkled, the ashes are *Metaher* whoever is *Tamei*, but when carried, the ashes are *Metamei* anyone who is *Tahor*.

Though the *Sifsei Chachamim* explains why the Mitzvah of *Parah Adumah* is the target of the world's scorn, this still doesn't seem to add up. It sounds as if our lack of understanding would cause us to feel insecure about our trust in Hashem, and perhaps, *Chas V'Sholom*, question the validity of this Mitzvah. Why would that happen? There are many things we don't understand. We don't understand how Hashem created the world out of nothing, nor do we understand the intricate way Hashem runs the world. Additionally, we recognize that any invention, technological advance or medicine is because of Hashem. Yet, when it comes to one Mitzvah that we don't understand, it's going to shake our *Emunah*? Can't we simply recognize that Hashem is smarter than us, and perhaps the fault lies in us?

Of course we can honestly say we believe in Hashem. We know Hashem is smarter than us, but deep down, we might not feel it emotionally. Knowing something to be true is different than feeling something is true. This manifests itself in many different ways – when we daven for someone who doesn't get better, it can really bother us. Or, we might know Hashem is watching us, but when no person is around, do we rationalize a wrongdoing that we are about to do? Our brain might tell us one thing, but our actions, based on our emotions, do something else. This disconnect between our minds and our hearts can cause us to feel doubtful when challenged by the Mitzvah of *Parah Adumah*. The more we connect our minds to our hearts, and feel what we know, the more we'll be able to rise above our dilemmas and questions.

1 Gur Aryeh Bamidbar 19:2

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.* s.v. ואם תאמר

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### *Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step*

If the distance between our minds and our hearts is so vast, what can we do to create a link, and feel what we know? One method is repetition – day in and day out, focusing and repeating a specific concept.<sup>4</sup> For example, perhaps one wants to have greater *Kavanah* during *Tefillah*. Though we may know how powerful *Tefillah* is, when it comes to daven, we sometimes catch ourselves in a reverie, perhaps as davening ends. By repeatedly spending a time of day studying about the awesome power of *Tefillah* one can fight off the urge to daydream. Another idea is to choose an inspiring sentence from Chazal, and repeat it many times throughout the day. By concentrating on the meaning, the many repetitions will begin to work its way into our hearts.<sup>5</sup>

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4 *Alei Shur, Chelek 1, Sha'ar 2, Perek 12*

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# BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

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Avraham didn't know what to do. His daughter was seriously ill, and he was told by the medical referral office that the only doctor who can help was in the United States. However, he couldn't even get an appointment, the waiting list was too long.

One day, he received a call from the referral office. "The specialist is here, visiting Eretz Yisrael. He's in Tel Aviv, but he's leaving in a half hour. If you meet him here, perhaps he'll be able to give you an opening.

"A half hour?!" said Avraham. "I'm in Meah Shearim right now. How do you expect me to get there in a half hour?"

"I don't know, but just do it. It's your only chance."

Avraham quickly told his wife what was going on, and grabbed all the money in the house – 300 shekels. He ran outside, and flagged down a cab. "I need to be in Tel Aviv in a half hour." The driver started to argue, until Avraham opened up his hand.

The driver looked at the money, looked at Avraham, "Ok, get in."

Using every possible shortcut, including driving off-road, they arrived at the Tel Aviv office in 29 minutes. Avraham gave the money to the driver, and ran out, ran up the stairs, and burst into the office. "You're too late," said the secretary, "I'm sorry, but he just left."

Avraham felt dizzy, as if he were about to faint. Quickly, someone brought him a drink of water.

As Avraham started the *Beracha*, he realized something – *Hashem is with me always, I don't need appointments, need to run places, or meet at a specific time.*

He finished the *Beracha* with exceptional *Kavanah*.

A few weeks later, his daughter went for an examination. "It's one in a million," said the doctor, "it appears that the medication is working!"

Avraham always knew Hashem runs the world, but it took an almost calamitous car ride for him to truly feel it.

*Adapted from a story in Living Emunah by Rabbi David Ashear.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The concept of the need to internalize things that we already know comes from a *Pasuk*.<sup>6</sup>
- Even a Navi may have a small amount of doubt, despite hearing something directly from Hashem.<sup>7</sup>
- Every *Parah Adumah* in history was mixed with some ashes from the first *Parah Adumah*.<sup>8</sup>
- Accepting the Mitzvah of *Parah Adumah*, despite not understanding it, is one of the greatest aspects of the Mitzvah.<sup>9</sup>

6 *Devarim 4:39, Seforno ibid.*

7 *Bereishis 7:7, Rashi ibid.*

8 *Rashi Bamidbar 19:9*

9 *Emes L'Yaakov Bamidbar 19:2*