

דרכים בפרשה בהר - בחוקות

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לא יחליפנו ולא ימיר אותו טוב ברע או רע בטוב ואם המר ימיר בהמה בבהמה והיה הוא ותמורתו יהיה קודש

At the end of this week's parshah, the Torah mentions a very unusual halacha called temurah. If someone was מקדיש (consecrated) an animal to be his korban, and subsequently changed his mind and decided to substitute it by being מקדיש a different animal instead, he thus violates the Torah's איסור of *"do not exchange it and do not substitute in its stead."* Even if the intention was to swap out the korban for a much better one, it is still forbidden to do so.

The Torah then teaches us that even if one does go ahead and transfer the kedusha, thus violating the preceding *issur*, the second animal does in fact obtain kedusha, however, the first one retains its kedusha, so that now, both animals are kodosh. This means that the declaration succeeded in creating sanctity on the new animal, but failed to remove the sanctity from the original animal. Now, use of either animal for personal benefit is *assur min hatorah*.

The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 352) explains that the Torah is conveying a critical lesson: Kedusha is not something to be taken lightly or manipulated. Once it enters the world, it must be treated with reverence and permanence. And even when misused, kedusha does not fade—it spreads. The Torah refuses to allow *kedusha* to be diminished; instead, it multiplies it.

This idea reverberates throughout Jewish history. Time and again, our enemies have tried to uproot us, destroy us, erase our kedusha. Yet, time and time again, we've gathered together and rebuilt. Each and every time, the net result was more *kedusha*.

There is a well-known story of the Ponevizher Rav zt"l's (HaRav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman) visit to Rome. One morning the Rav asked his companion, Dr. Rothschild (Mayanei Hayeshua Hospital), to drive him to the famous Arch of Titus. Stepping out of the car the Ponevezher Rav stood opposite the gate eyeing it with contempt and spat at it. "Titus, Titus," he said. "You thought you would destroy the Beis Hamikdash and defeat Am Yisroel! That you would take the holy implements to Rome and leave us, Bnei Yisroel, with nothing. What remains of you, Titus? Not a single remnant. We were victorious. We can be found everywhere, sitting and learning Torah in every corner. Titus, Titus -- we won! Upon reading the inscription "Judaea Capta" – (Judah is captured), he screamed out,

"Titus, mir zenen noch do! Avu bist du? (Titus, we are still here! Where are you?). This, too, is the message of **temurah**: Kedusha is indestructible.

As we are now in the middle of counting the Omer, we are also reminded of the 24,000 talmidim of Rebbe Akiva that perished. Although we lost all of them, we pause in the middle to celebrate Lag B'Omer as an intense time of happiness. The Ari z"l explained that on Lag B'omer, R' Akiva traveled south and ordained five new talmidim – R' Meir (Baal HaNes), R' Yehuda bar Ilai, Rav Yose, R' Shimon bar Yochai, and R' Elazar ben Shamua. If one can imagine the greatness of these five talmidim, one can not help but fall into great depression and mourning when contemplating the magnitude of the loss of the 24,000. However, the Ari z"l tells us that the day was happy, because it was a day of transition. It was a day of high hopes and aspirations for a very bright future. The kedusha may have been missing, but as the Chinuch told us, subsequently there would be an even greater level of kedusha.

The Chumash concludes with the final possuk: אלה *"These are the mitzvos which Hashem commanded Moshe... on Har Sinai."*

What is the connection between the halachos of temurah and Har Sinai? The simple *pshat* is that this final pasuk is a general statement referring back to all the mitzvos (more than 200) appearing in Sefer Vayikra! This includes all the mitzvos of *Karbanos*, all the forbidden relationships, the many different mitzvos that appear in Parshas Kedoshim, all the Mitzvos of Kehuna, the Yomim Tovim in Parshas Emor, and more. "Elu HaMitzvos..." All of these mitzvos of Sefer Vayikra did Hashem command Moshe at Har Sinai.

Perhaps we can offer a different connection as well:

Hashem originally gave Moshe the *Aseres Hadibros* engraved on two *Luchos* of stone. When Moshe came down from shomayim and saw the *eigel hazahav*, he threw them down, completely smashing them. Hashem told Moshe to carve out a second set of *luchos* in exchange and bring them up to Har Sinai. According to the Gemara (Bava Basra 14b), both sets of *luchos* were holy and placed together in the Aron. This too mirrors temurah. The first *luchos*, like the original korban, retained their kedusha. The second set, like the "Temurah" animal, also acquired kedusha. Once again, no kedusha is lost—it is only expanded.

Kedusha- once created, cannot be undone. Perhaps we fall down, but we get back up. We may break, but we do not disappear. Like the korban and its temurah, like the two *luchos*, like the survivors of every generation—**we endure, and the kedusha grows stronger.**

מרדכי אפפעי, Good Shabbos,