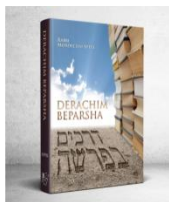


דרכים בפרשה חקת

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וזהו הטהור על הטמא ביום השלישי וביום השביעי (יט:יט)

*"The tahor person shall sprinkle on the tamei person
on the third day and on the seventh day" (19:19)*

Commenting on this *pasuk*, the Yerushalmi in Demai (3:4) states: **אמר רבי יהושע בן קבסאי כל ימי הייתי קורא הפסוק הזה וזהו הטהור על הטמא טהור אחד מזה על טמא אחד עד שלמדתי מעוצרה של יבנה וחכמים אומרים...** *Rav Yehoshua Ben Kivsai said, "I always read this pasuk to say that one tahor person sprinkles on one tamei person, until I learned a different understanding from the "Treatises of Yavneh." The Chachomim taught that one tahor person can sprinkle on many tamei people.* This Midrash requires clarification: firstly, what do we learn from here, and secondly – what does the treasure house of Yavneh refer to?

Rav Meir Shapiro zt"l explains that every Yid *davens* and makes requests from Hashem on a daily basis. One of the requests that Chazal taught us to ask is: **ותן בלבנו בינה להבין ולהשכיל לשמוע ללמוד וללמד** – *May You place in our hearts an understanding, so that we may comprehend and perceive, listen, learn and teach.* This request needs to be understood: it makes perfect sense to request to learn Torah all day – but for the most part, people do not aspire to actually teach Torah. Of course, a boy or girl in Yeshiva or Bais Yaakov may ask Hashem about this possibility in the future, and certainly the Rebbe or Morah that has made it their career, or the *balabus* that says a *shiur* – but this general request is not on the radar for most. In fact, most people are not cut out for it and probably shouldn't be teaching.

The truth is that every Yid is in fact a teacher, and not just for one student – but for many, many students. Every step that we take and every word that we utter is seen by others and is a teaching moment. When a Yid answers *"Yehei shmei rabbah"* fervently, or is seen running to catch a *shiur*, he inspires the next person to do the same. At that moment, he has just taught the greatest *chiddush* of

Rav Chaim Brisker! When a woman cooks supper for a family in need or forgoes a social get-together with friends because she wants her children to know that they are more important to her, she is teaching by example. We may as well call her Rebbetzin Sara Schenirer! Therefore, we ask Hashem that we make the proper choices, not *chas veshalom* losing out on those precious teaching moments.

We can now understand the Yerushalmi and why it mentions Yavneh. During the *churban*, Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai met with אספסיאנוס קיסר (Titus Flavius Vespasian), requesting that the Yeshiva of Yavneh and its wise people be saved. That crucial meeting helped ensure that the Torah would continue to be learned and transmitted. The actions of those individuals enabled the entire world to benefit from the Torah – and of course, as the cliché goes, "the rest is history." The treasure of Yavneh was the idea that an individual can have such an incredible impact on so many that would last an eternity. Coming back to our *pasuk*, Rav Yehoshua Ben Kivsai now understood that it is true that it may only be one kohen doing the sprinkling, but his actions can still effect many more than just one.

If we look at the great Yeshivos and organizations in Klal Yisroel, it was often predominantly the actions of one or two selfless people that changed the landscape of the world. They understood that each and every opportunity to do something can change the world.

Another lesson to take from here is just how powerful and far-reaching the smallest action may be. A small *shpritz* of water on a *tamei* person had the ability to change his life. We should never feel like, "How will my small contribution make a difference in the greater picture?" Sometimes all that is needed is just a drop more. מידה טובה מרובה – Hashem values a good deed much more than a bad one. If we believe that a straw can break a camel's back, shouldn't we also trust that the smallest *mitzvah* can be all the difference in building a positive world?

מרדכי אפפל, Good Shabbos,