

ב' דר"ח אדר ב' ה'תשע"ט
TOGETHER FOREVER

**1 כי ענן ה' על המשכן יומם ואש תהיה לילה בו לעיני כל בית ישראל
 בכל מסעיהם**

Since we began שמות ספר, we've read about the formation of the Jewish

People as a nation. We've seen them at their highest points, and their lowest points. Although they may have had low points, they always had one thing in common; they were always together. No people have ever been as unified in their goals. This all stems from their fearless leader, משה רבינו. After the חטא העגל, we see משה הקב"ה offered everything anyone could ever want, to be the head of a nation. However, משה adamantly refused. He said to הקב"ה: "If you don't forgive their sin, remove me from your book!"² משה wanted no part of a new nation. He begged and pleaded for the salvation and forgiveness of the nation, and his request was ultimately heeded. This instilled in us a "brotherly bond". As nice as that is, we learn even before משה and the העגל the lesson of staying together. Whenever the Jews travelled in the desert, they were accompanied by the עמוד הענן by day, and the עמוד האש by night. The פסוק³ first describing these pillars uses the לשון of "לא ימיש", "they did not depart". The גמרא⁴ learns out from here that as one was leaving, there would never be a moment where the Jews had nothing. When it was becoming night, the pillar of fire would come early, so the cloud could leave knowing the Jews won't be alone, and vice-versa in the morning. From these episodes, we learn both a core halachic and hashkafic principle, as well as a reminder of a timeless lesson that we hold dear to us to this very day.

Most of us have probably seen our fathers, or other adult males, make קידוש many times. In fact, we may have seen this happen multiple times in one שבת. This seems a bit interesting. We know that if you shook the לולב one day, you don't have to do it again. Therefore, how can someone repeat קידוש? He already fulfilled his חיוב! The גמרא⁵ answers with the halachic principle of "יצא מוציא". By ברכות, one can fulfill the obligation on behalf of others multiple times. The source for this principle is ערבות, commonly translated as "responsibility".⁶ The source for this "responsibility" is the פסוק of "והנגלת לנו...לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת".⁷ The גמרא⁸ asks: why were the Jews not

¹ שמות מ.לח

² שם ל.ב.לב

³ שם י.ג.כב

⁴ שבת כג:

⁵ ראש השנה כט.

⁶ רש"י שם ד"ה "אע"פ שיצא מוציא"

⁷ דברים כט.כח

⁸ סנהדרין מג:

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punished for the sin of עכן until they were in ארץ ישראל?⁹ When the Jews accepted the and ברכות and קללות at הר גריזים (before the battle of יריחו), they all entered into a covenant of ערבות, responsibility for each other. Therefore, even though עכן sinned even in the מדבר, they weren't responsible until he committed the sin in א"י.¹⁰ What exactly happened at הר גריזים and הר עיבל that the Jews became responsible for each other? The גמרא¹¹ relates that at this point, the Jews all became guarantors (ערבים) for each other. A guarantor is someone who takes upon the responsibility to pay a loan should the debtor default. In our case, if somebody sins, his guarantor bears the brunt of the consequences, and is also deserving of punishment.¹² Therefore, it seems only fitting as to why the punishment for the sin of עכן was delayed until now.

After seeing the massive responsibility brought about through our "brotherhood", this just begs the question of "what if". What happens if there is no brotherhood, if we're not unified? In this situation, we don't do our part in our relationship, so הקב"ה doesn't do His part.¹³ Therefore, the enemies have a טענה, a claim, and are able to strike. There is no better manifestation of this than the מגילה. After מרדכי refuses to obey the המן's demands and bow, המן decides he wants to kill the Jews. When he proposes this idea to אחשוורוש, his first words are "ישנו עם אחד מפזר ומפרד בין העמים"¹⁴, "there are a people scattered and dispersed among the nations". There was no unity; we were not taking responsibility for each other. In order to fix this, we had to band together, and fight for a common cause. Therefore, a big focus of the מגילה is אסתר breaking out from her obedient shell, and taking charge. מרדכי now listens to her command. What were the first words אסתר said after this transformation? "לך כנוס את כל היהודים"¹⁵, "gather all of the Jews". Once the unity and fasting and תשובה started, הקב"ה decided it's time for the next act in the play.¹⁶

We all know the end of the story. As a result of the re-bonding of our people, we were ultimately saved from the evil decree of המן. To understand what exactly unfolded, we have to go back in history to the birth of our nation, מתן תורה. The פסוק famously

⁹ Throughout the wars in the מדבר, we find עכן took from the spoils of war multiple times (מחלוקת in the גמרא as to exactly how many) against G-d's command. He did this again in the war of יריחו, which was the first war after the Jews entered ארץ ישראל. In their second battle, the battle of עי, the Jews lost 36 men (according to one פשט). Realizing there was a sinner amongst them, they drew lots to determine the perpetrator, and they fell on עכן. See **סנהדרין דף מג עמוד ב** and **יהושע פרק ז** for further elaboration.

¹⁰ רש"י סנהדרין מג: ד"ה "עד שעברו"

¹¹ סוטה לז:

¹² There is even an opinion in the גמרא that everyone signed, became a guarantor for every Jew, and additionally became a guarantor on everyone's guarantorship!

¹³ This is a form of השכינה. See last week's piece, entitled "Unmasking the Mystery"

¹⁴ אסתר ג.ח.

¹⁵ שם ד.טז.

¹⁶ הרב אהרן ליכטנשטיין

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states “ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר”¹⁷. Why does the פסוק use the לשון of singular when speaking about the entire nation? When they were camped, they had the attitude of אחד כאיש אחד בלב אחד, as one man with one heart.¹⁸ When the Jews re-accepted the תורה by פורים¹⁹, they had to again do it as one. That’s why the פסוק²⁰ uses the לשון of “וקבל[ו]ן”²¹. We read it in the plural, but it’s written in the singular. Through a firm re-acceptance based on the premise of אחדות, we have an everlasting guarantee of “וימי” הפורים האלה לא יעברו מתוך היהודים וזכרם לא יסוף מזרעם leave from within the Jews, and their memory will never cease from among their descendants.”

We should be זוכה to ultimately be gathered together in the ultimate form of אחדות coming from הארץ by ארבע כנפות הארץ, משיח צדקינו speedily in our days. חזק, חזק, ונתחזק!

¹⁷ שמות יט.ב.

¹⁸ מכילתא שם

¹⁹ שבת פח.

²⁰ אסתר ט.כז.

²¹ שם כח.