

And they shall take a completely red cow which is without blemish. (19:2)

The *Aderes Elyahu* cites a *yalkut* that posits, *Parah zu Yisrael*; “*Parah (Adumah)*, this is *Yisrael*.” Apparently, *Chazal* identify a metaphysical connection between the *Parah Adumah* and the Jewish People. *Horav Mordechai Ilan, zl (Mikdash Mordechai)*, observes that *Klal Yisrael* demonstrated their spiritual mettle when they stood by *Har Sinai* and proclaimed, *Naaseh v’nishma*; “We will do and we will listen.” Hashem offered the Torah, with all of its qualities and demands, to which we committed ourselves without question. Hashem had previously offered this gift to the other nations, who had rejected it. They felt that the Torah’s demands did not coincide with their chosen lifestyles. Theft, adultery and murder were the staples of their cultures. They questioned and did not accept. Our ancestors did not question. They immediately acquiesced with a resounding *naase* – “We will do!” which has become the clarion call of our people.

The *Parah Adumah* is the quintessential *chok, mitzvah*, which defies rationale. We accept its mandate and perform its ritual without question. Hashem commands – we do. Thus, the *Parah Adumah* aptly describes *Klal Yisrael* – a nation of doers – not questioners. The nations of the world are hard-pressed to understand our indefatigable commitment, despite the many challenges, trials and tribulations that we have experienced. They wonder how we have survived throughout the millennia. They ask; we do.

Alternatively, *Parah Adumah*’s symbolic parallel with *Klal Yisrael* is the concept of *yeish mei’ayin*, something from nothing (like the *ex-nihilo* creation of the world). The course of our nation’s miraculous history can be understood through the approach of *mi yitein tahor mi’tamei*, “Who brought forth purity from/to one who is impure?” (*Iyov* 14:4) *Chazal (Bamidbar Rabbah* 19:1) apply this *pasuk* to underscore the birth of spiritual giants from fathers who were their antithesis. *Chazal* cite four examples: Avraham *Avinu* from Terach; Chizkiyahu *ha’Melech* from Achaz; Mordechai from Shimi (ben Geira); Yoshiyahu from Amon. Similarly, *Klal Yisrael* is distinguished from the nations of the world. Who did this? (Who proclaimed that this should be?) Only Hashem! Likewise, the *Parah Adumah*’s laws are beyond human rationale, (such as the fact that the individual who is engaged in purifying the *tamei meis*, one who is ritually defiled due to contact with a corpse, himself becomes *tamei*). Thus, both *Parah Adumah* and *Klal Yisrael* have the commonality that they are both derivatives of “nothing.” Our very existence is Divinely decreed, as are the laws of *Parah Adumah*. Nothing exists beyond Hashem’s ability to create.

Our people’s fortitude in the face of challenge and our resilience following tribulation is legendary. Indeed, these traits define us. One of the most moving moments demonstrating the tenacity to maintain commitment, despite superhuman challenge, took place in Har Nof’s Kehillas Bnei Torah *shul* – two days after the tragic massacre of four *kedoshim* in that very same *shul*. The bullet holes were still visible in the windows, as tens of *bnei Torah* poured in to take *Dirshu* tests for mastery of *Gemorah*. What greater tribute to the verity that *Netzach Yisrael lo yeshakeir*, the

eternal nature of *Klal Yisrael* will never cease.

Visitors were mourners in a state of shock and disbelief, yet proud that Torah was continuing to be studied in the very place in which two days earlier the evil representative of Eisav and Yishmael had attempted to still the *kol Yaakov*. On the day of the test, local *Dirshu* students called in, wondering whether the test would be held at Kehillas Bnei Torah. The *Rav* in charge of administering the exams replied, "Absolutely!" What could be a greater tribute to the *neshamos* of the four *kedoshim*, whose very lives revolved around Torah, than to continue with the *kol Torah*? Otherwise, evil triumphs. Therefore, the tests would be taken in the place where the murders occurred. *Dirshu's* proctor said that he found it difficult to express the mixed emotions of everyone gathered. No one spoke; this was a *makom kadosh*. They went about their business cognizant of what the *shul* had looked like two days earlier. This was their response to Eisav and Yishmael: "You did yours. You live by the sword, and implemented this evil. We live by the Torah, and this is our response to your evil. In the end, we will triumph. We will not be vanquished. *Netzach Yisrael lo yeshakeir*."