

## **Ki Tisa - Parah 5766**

- Mordecai Zeitz.

Parshat Para as the preparation for Pesach. One must be on constant guard and be careful so as not to confuse the holy with the profane

Shabbat Shalom - Ki Tisa-Parah 5766

The spirit of Purim lingers on and with it, great memories of celebration and participation in the Shul, on the streets with Mishloach Manot and in our homes with a Seudah. The burning question still remains: Rabbi Willy Wonka-- who does his hair and how do I get an appointment? It was great fun, in the Purim spirit, and I'm glad this year's costume had you stumped for the minute.

The passing of Purim now means we start our preparations for Pesach. It seems a bit premature but not so. Traditionally, thirty days before Pesach we are to start preparing ourselves.

There is no doubt that Pesach preparation can be very demanding. Some place demands upon themselves that are unnecessary so I advise you, where permitted, do things in moderation. There is the technical stuff -cleaning, shopping, etc; there is the Halachic aspect as to Passover law and Seder procedure; there is also psychological and spiritual preparation needed as well. Today's special Shabbat -PARSHAT PARAH - starts us on the road towards Pesach. Three weeks from this Shabbat is Shabbat Hagadol?announcing that Pesach is just about here.

Sounds strange! Our initial introduction to Pesach is the law of Parah Aduma -a red heifer - to be sacrificed in Temple times; its ashes are mixed with water and that mixture sprinkled by the Kohain upon those who became defiled. This procedure enabled all to be ritually pure thereby being able to ascend the Temple Mt. to bring the KARBAN PESACH and celebrate Pesach.

Parshat Parah is normally connected to the reading of the official Shabbat portion of Ki Tisa leading to the obvious connection of the original sin of the Golden Calf and this Parah Aduma. It was to be continuing penance for this terrible transgression. It was to be a lesson in every generation, with a temple or without, that one moment you can be standing at Sinai and hearing the voice of G-d and the next moment you can be dancing in front of a golden idol. One must be on constant guard and be careful so as not to confuse the holy with the profane; the righteous and the evil. Our Torah reading offers some direction towards that goal.

In the beginning of Parshat KI TISAH we are told to build a laver-a water basin-for the Kohanim to wash their hands and feet prior to entering the Temple. Tradition tells that it was constructed out of ordinary hand mirrors. Amazing! Entry into the Temple; Entry into the Pesach experience; Both spiritual and Physical sanctity-it's all a matter of mirrors.

Not a trick nor slight of hand. When looking into a mirror we see a true reflection. We see what we are. If we don't like what we see- it's not the mirror; it's us. Only we can accept or change that image. To gain a Pesach high-it's not the wine. It's the attitude and preparations we bring to the

table. Have we used our gift of freedom to do some good?

Have we resolved

issues- be they family, community or business, so that we may all sit at the same table? Have we made sure that everyone has the means for Pesach with a contribution to Maot Chittim or an invitation for others to join us at our Seder?

Bottom line-can I look myself in the mirror and say: I'm happy with who I am comes Pesach?

There is always room for growth so don't panic.

Plenty of time for questions: Plenty of time for study: Plenty of time for actions of kindness and Consideration - the stuff the real Seder of life consists of. Have a happy and meaningful pre-Pesach.

Shabbat Shalom.

rabbi@bethtikvah.qc.ca