

## CHASAM SOFER

### CHUKAS

#### *The Divine Wisdom*

#### זאת חקת התורה

*This is the decree of the Torah (19:2).*

In presenting the laws of *Parah Adumah*, the Red Cow, the Torah describes it as the “decree of the [entire] Torah.” Why doesn’t it say simply “This is the decree of the *Parah Adumah*”?

We can explain this on basis of the verse **אמרתי אחכמה והיא רחוקה ממני**, *I thought I could become wise, but it is beyond Me (Koheles 7:23)*. The Sages (*Yoma 14a*) teach that Shlomo HaMelech said this in reference to *Parah Adumah*. He said that although he had understood the reasons and significance of all the other mitzvos, the meaning of this mitzvah eluded him. It seems, however, that when Shlomo said, “... *but it is beyond me*,” he did not merely mean that this one mitzvah was too deep for him to grasp. He meant, rather, that his failure to fathom this mitzvah proved to him that even his comprehension of the other mitzvos was incomplete. He realized that the depth of Divine wisdom in each of the mitzvos is beyond the capacity of human intellect. Thus, Shlomo said, “*I thought I was wise*,” because I had a comprehension of all the mitzvos and thought that I understood them fully. “But” — in truth — “it is beyond me”; I now recognize that even what I *thought* I understood is actually beyond me. The mitzvos have depths of meaning that even the wisest of men could not fathom.

This is why the *parashah* begins with a statement that reflects on the entire Torah — *This is the decree of the Torah*. As *Rashi* explains, the term **חקה**, *decree*, indicates that the subject defies human comprehension: It is Hashem’s decree, which we must follow even though we cannot understand it. But it is not only the mitzvah of *Parah Adumah* that is Hashem’s decree. This mitzvah shows us that the *entire* Torah is actually His decree, for even if we think we understand something, the depths of Divine wisdom are in truth unfathomable (*Toras Moshe HaShalem*, p. 86 **ד"ה זאת חקת התורה (ג)**).

In Memory of  
R' Yakov ben R' Shmuel Yosef  
and R' Shimon ben R' Moshe **ע"ה**