

# Parsha Story

Stories and Parables from  
the famed Maggid of Dubno

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## Shlomo HaMelech and the Para Aduma

### Chukat

"All this I tested with wisdom. I thought I will become wise - but it was far from me" (Kohelet 7:23).

What was too difficult for even wise Shlomo HaMelech to understand? The Midrash explains:

Shlomo said: "I delved and examined the entire Torah, and I found it logical." But when he came to the section of the Para Aduma, he said: "I thought I would be wise, but it is far from me."

Why was the mitzva of Para Aduma beyond Shlomo's wisdom?

### The Extraordinary Restaurant

A traveler once arrived at a distant city, where he came across an elegant restaurant. But this was no ordinary restaurant. There was no menu! At the entrance hung an unusual sign: "In this house you will find whatever you desire. Here we serve every dish!"

Intrigued, the traveler entered the restaurant and ordered the fanciest dish he could think of: roast duck, sauteed

with vintage wine. But when he heard the order, the maitre d' sadly informed the guest that this particular dish is not available.

"What do you mean, it's not available?" cried the disappointed man. "The sign claims that your restaurant provides every dish that a person could want!"

"That is true", replied the maitre d'. "But recently a law was passed prohibiting eating this particular dish. Since no one will ask for it, why should I stock its ingredients?"

### Shlomo's Special Wisdom

It says that "God gave Shlomo wisdom... like the sand on the seashore" (Melachim Alef 4). In what way was his wisdom "like the sand"? The Sages explained that his unique wisdom paralleled the Jewish people, who were blessed to be as numerous as grains of sand. God provided Shlomo with the necessary wisdom so that he would be able to answer the questions of each Jew.

Shlomo HaMelech was granted this gift so that he could answer any question that a person might have regarding any of the Torah's mitzvot. But with regard to the Para Aduma, there was no need for this special wisdom. "This is the law (CHOK) of the Torah." God decreed that this mitzva should be a CHOK, a mitzva that the Jewish people would accept even without understanding it.

Insight into mitzvot is a wonderful thing,

but we also need to recognize our intellectual limits. The mitzva of Para Aduma indicates that our connection to mitzvot is deeper than human logic and reason.

Since no one would ask Shlomo to explain this mitzva, he had no need for special wisdom to understand it. He was like the restaurant in the parable that could serve any dish requested - except for the dish which was prohibited by the king.

Adapted from Mishlei Yaakov, pp. 351-353