



ב"ה

Parshah Ki Sisa a Nutshell

(Exodus 30:11–34:35)

The people of Israel are told to each contribute exactly half a shekel of silver to the Sanctuary. Instructions are also given regarding the making of the Sanctuary's water basin, anointing oil and incense. "Wise-hearted" artisans Betzalel and Aholiav are placed in charge of the Sanctuary's construction, and the people are once again commanded to keep the Shabbat.

When Moses does not return when expected from Mount Sinai, the people make a golden calf and worship it. G-d proposes to destroy the errant nation, but Moses intercedes on their behalf. Moses descends from the mountain carrying the tablets of the testimony engraved with the Ten Commandments; seeing the people dancing about their idol, he breaks the tablets, destroys the golden calf, and has the primary culprits put to death. He then returns to G-d to say: "If You do not forgive them, blot me out from the book that You have written."

G-d forgives, but says that the effect of their sin will be felt for many generations. At first G-d proposes to send His angel along with them, but Moses insists that G-d Himself accompany His people to the promised land.

Continued in next column

Eruv website:
www.fairlawneruv.com
Eruv Hotline: 201-254-9190.

Thank You to:
Marc Nash and to Micha Shotkin for checking the community Eruv

Upon recommendation of the Dept of Health, local hospitals, and the Rabbinical Council, the shul will be closed until further notice.

Moses prepares a new set of tablets and once more ascends the mountain, where G-d re-inscribes the covenant on these second tablets. On the mountain, Moses is also granted a vision of the divine thirteen attributes of mercy. So radiant is Moses' face upon his return, that he must cover it with a veil, which he removes only to speak with G-d and to teach His laws to the people

In preparation for the upcoming festival of Passover, when every Jew had to be in a state of ritual purity, the section of Parah (Numbers 19) is added to the weekly reading this week. Parah relates the laws of the Red Heifer with which a person contaminated by contact with a dead body was purified. ❖

Bulletin
This week's Bulletin is sponsored by the Shul.

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, March 14
Daylight Savings Time

Earliest Tallis 6:13 AM
Latest Morning Shema .. 10:05 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) ..1:36 PM
Plag Hamincha5:52 PM
Earliest Evening Shema7:31 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule
Shul Temporarily Closed
Please daven at Home

Erev Shabbos – Mar 13 / Adar 17

Candle Lighting.....6:44 pm

Shabbos Day – Mar 14 / Adar 18

Shabbos Ends7:43 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 10:05 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Shul Temporarily Closed
Please daven at home.

Chassidic Masters

The 120-Day Version Of The Human Story

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

*Come see the doings of G-d, His
fearsome plot on the children of
man.*

-- Psalms 66:5

*On 7 Sivan, Moses went up onto the
mountain . . . On 17 Tammuz, the
tablets were broken. On the 18th,
he burned the [Golden] Calf and
judged the transgressors. On the
19th, he went up for forty days and
pleaded for mercy. On 1 Elul, he
went up to receive the second
tablets, and was there for forty
days. On 10 Tishrei, G-d restored His
goodwill with the Jewish people
gladly and wholeheartedly, saying
to Moses, "I have forgiven, as you
ask," and gave him the Second
Tablets.*

-- Rashi, Exodus 32:1 and 33:11

A single drop of seawater, analyzed
in the laboratory, will reveal the
characteristics of billions of her
sisters; indeed, it will tell you much
about every drop in every ocean on
earth.

The same is true of history. On the
one hand, each period is unique,
each year, day and moment distinct
in content and character. And yet,
as we often recognize, the story of
an individual life may tell the story
of a century, and the events of a
single generation may embody
those of an entire era. On the

surface, time may more resemble
the disparate terrain of land than it
does the uniform face of the sea;
but once you strip away the
externalities of background and
circumstance, a drop in the ocean
of time will reflect vast tracts of its
waters and, ultimately, its entire
expanse.

We, who travel the terrestrial
surface of time, know it as a
succession of events and
experiences. We traverse its rises
and slumps, its deserts and
wetlands, its smooth plains and
rocky passes. To us, the universal
nature of the moment lies buried
deep beneath its more immediate
significance; to us, the moment
yields not the totality of life and
history, only those specific
elements and facets thereof which
it embodies.

But there are also vistas of a more
inclusive nature, landscapes of
such diversity and impact that they
are virtual mini-worlds of their
own. There are stretches in the
journey of an individual or a people
in which the all-reflectiveness of
the moment rises to the surface, in
which a series of events offer a
condensed version of the entire
universe of time.

One such potent stretch of time
was a 120-day period in the years
2448–9 from Creation (1313 BCE).
The events of this period,
experienced by the Jewish people
soon after their birth as a nation,
choreograph the very essence of
the human story—the basis, the
process and the end goal of life on
earth. The hundred and twenty

days from 6 Sivan 2448 to 10
Tishrei 2449 contained it all: the
underpinnings of creation, the
saga of human struggle, and the
ultimate triumph which arises
from the imperfections and
failings of man.

The Events

On 6 Sivan 2448, the entire people
of Israel gathered at Mount Sinai
to receive the Torah from the
Almighty. There they experienced
the revelation of G-d, and heard
the Ten Commandments, which
encapsulate the entire Torah. The
following morning Moses
ascended the mountain, where he
communed with G-d for forty days
and forty nights and received the
Torah proper, the more detailed
rendition of G-d's communication
to humanity.

At the end of Moses' (first) forty
days on Mount Sinai, G-d gave him
two tablets of stone, the
handiwork of G-d, upon which the
Ten Commandments were
engraved by the finger of G-d. But
in the camp below, the Jewish
people were already abandoning
their newly made covenant with
G-d. Reverting to the paganism of
Egypt, they made a calf of gold
and, amidst feasting and
hedonistic disport, proclaimed it
the god of Israel.

*G-d said to Moses: Descend, for
your people, which you have
brought up from the land of Egypt,
have been corrupted; they have
quickly turned from the path that I
have commanded them . . .*

(continued on next page)

Moses turned and went down from the mountain, with the two tablets of testimony in his hand . . . When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing . . . he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

It was the 17th of Tammuz.

Moses destroyed the idol and rehabilitated the errant nation. He then returned to Sinai for a second forty days, to plead before G-d for the forgiveness of Israel. G-d acquiesced, and agreed to provide a second set of tablets to replace those which had been broken in the wake of Israel's sin. These tablets, however, were not to be the handiwork of G-d, but of human construction:

G-d said to Moses: Carve yourself two tablets of stone, like the first; and I shall inscribe upon them the words that were on the first tablets which you have broken . . . Come up in the morning to Mt. Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain.

Moses ascended Sinai, for his third and final forty days atop the mountain, on 1 Elul. G-d had already forgiven Israel's sin, and now a new and invigorated relationship between Him and His people was to be rebuilt on the ruins of the old. On 10 Tishrei we received our second set of the Ten Commandments, inscribed by G-d upon the tablets carved by Moses hand.

Thus, we have three forty-day periods, and three corresponding states of Torah: the first tablets, the broken tablets and the second tablets. These embody the foundation of our existence, the challenge of life and the ultimate achievement of man.

The Plot

Our sages point out that the opening verse of the Torah's account of creation, Bereishit bara Elokim . . . ("In the beginning G-d created the heavens and earth"), begins with the letter beit, the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This is to teach us that there is an alef that comes before the beit of the created existence: that creation is not an end in itself, but comes to serve a principle which precedes it in sequence and substance.

The pre-Genesis alef is the alef of Anochi Hashem Elokecha . . . ("I am the L-rd your G-d . . .")—the first letter of the Ten Commandments. Torah is G-d's preconception of what life on earth should be like; the basis and *raison d'être* of creation is that we develop ourselves and our environment to this ideal.

But G-d wanted more. More than the realization of His original blueprint for existence, more than the falling into place of a preprogrammed perfection. More than a "first tablets" world that is wholly the handiwork of G-d.

A created entity, by definition, has nothing that is truly its own: all the tools, potentials and possibilities it possesses have been given to it by its creator. But G-d desired that the human experience should yield a profit beyond what is projected—or even warranted—by His initial investment in us. So He created us with the vulnerabilities of the human condition.

He created us with the freedom to choose, and thus with the potential for failure. When we act rightly and constructively, we are behaving according to plan, and realizing the potential invested within us by our Creator. But when we choose to act wrongly and destructively, we enter into a state of being that is not part of the plan of Torah—indeed, it is the antithesis of what Torah prescribes. Yet this state of being is the springboard for teshuvah (return)—the power to rise from the ruins of our fall to a new dimension of perfection, a perfection unenvisionable by our untarnished past.

This is how chassidic teaching explains G-d's creation of the possibility of evil. This is "His fearsome plot upon the children of man."

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The soul of man is a spark of G-dliness, inherently and utterly good; in and of itself, it is in no way susceptible to corruption. Its human frailties are nothing less than a contrived plot, imposed upon it in total contrast to its essential nature.

If the first tablets are the divine vision of creation, the broken tablets are our all-too-familiar world—a world that tolerates imperfection, failure, even outright evil. It is a world whose first tablets have been shattered—a world gone awry of its foundation and its true self, a world wrenched out of sync with its inherent goodness.

The broken tablets are a plot contrived by the Author of existence to allow the possibility for second tablets. Every failing, every decline can be exploited and redirected as a positive force. Every breakdown of the soul's "first tablets" perfection is an opportunity for man to carve for yourself a second set, in which the divine script is chiseled upon the tablets of human initiative and creation. A second set which includes an entire vista of potentials that were beyond the scope of the first, wholly divine set.

G-d said to Moses: Do not be distressed over the first tablets, which contained only the Ten Commandments. In the second tablets I am giving you also halachah, midrash and aggadah.

Had Israel not sinned with the Golden Calf, our sages conclude, they would have received only the five books of Moses and the book of Joshua. For as the verse says, "Much wisdom comes through much grief."

Remembered and Enacted

These hundred and twenty days have left a lasting imprint on our experience of time. For the Jewish calendar does far more than measure and mark time; in the words of the book of Esther, "These days are remembered and enacted." The festivals and commemorative dates that mark our annual journey through time are opportunities to reenact the events and achievements which they remember.

Every Shavuot, we once again experience the revelation at Sinai and our acquisition of the blueprint and foundation of our lives. Every year on the 17th of Tammuz, we once again deal with the setbacks and breakdowns epitomized by the events of the day. The month of Elul and the first ten days of Tishrei, corresponding to Moses' third 40-day stay on Mount Sinai, are, as they were then, days of goodwill between G-d and man—days in which the Almighty is that much more accessible to all who seek Him.

And Yom Kippur, the holiest and most potent day of the year, marks the climax of the 120-day saga. Ever since the day that G-d gave the second tablets to the people of Israel, this day is a fountainhead of teshuvah: the source of our capacity to reclaim the deficiencies of the past as fuel and momentum for the attainment of new, unprecedented heights; the source of our capacity to exact a profit from G-d's volatile and risky investment in human life. ❖

From Our Sages

This they shall give . . . half a shekel (Exodus 30:13)

The mitzvah of the half-shekel is that each should contribute a coin that [is valued at] half of the dominant coin of that time. If the prevailing coin is a takal, they should give a half-takal; if it is a sela, they should give a half-sela; if it is a darcon, they should give a half-darcon.

-- (Midrash HaGadol)

Why not a complete coin? To teach us that no man is a complete entity unto himself. Only by joining with another can a person become a "whole thing."

-- (The Chassidic Masters)

Haftarah for Parshas Parah in a Nutshell

Ezekiel 36:16-36

This week's special haftarah mentions the "purifying waters" that G-d will sprinkle upon us with the coming of Moshiach. This follows the theme of this week's additional Torah reading — the purifying qualities of the "Red Heifer."

The prophet Ezekiel transmits G-d's message: The Israelites have defiled the Holy Land with their idol-worship and immoral ways. As a result, they will be sent into exile. "And they came to the nations where they came, and they profaned My Holy Name, inasmuch as it was said of them, 'These are the people of G-d, and they have come out of His land.'" So G-d will take them out of their exile — but not by virtue of the Israelites' merits: "Not for your sake do I do this, O house of Israel, but for My Holy Name, which you have profaned among the nations."

G-d will bring the Israelites back to the Holy Land and purify them with the waters of the Red Heifer. The people will feel ashamed of their actions, and after they will have undergone the process of purification and repentance, G-d will rebuild the country and bestow upon it prosperity and bounty.

"I will resettle the cities, and the ruins shall be built up. And the desolate land shall be worked, instead of its lying desolate in the sight of all that pass by. And they shall say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden, and the cities that were destroyed and desolate and pulled down have become settled as fortified [cities].'" ❖

The Talmud teaches that the best vaccine against all illness is a healthy confidence in the Director of the Universe.

From all of us Anshei-Lubavitch, we hope and pray for the safety and health of you and your loved ones. May the Almighty protect us all and send complete healing to those who need healing. And may our world very soon find the ultimate cure to all diseases with the coming of Moshiach, sooner than we can imagine.

Also see:

www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4668191/jewish/Six-Things-You-Can-Do-About-Coronavirus.htm

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

