

Parshas Ki Sisa in 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."

(continued next column)



"One thing the departed soul can no longer do, and that is, the actual fulfillment of the commandments, which can be carried out only jointly by the soul and body together in this material world. But this, too, can at least partly be overcome when those left behind do a little more commandments and good deeds - in honor of and for the benefit of the dear Neshama." -- *The Rebbe*

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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.

Moses prepares a new set of tablets and once more ascends the mountain, where G-d reinscribes 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. ❖

**Join us
each weekday morning
Mon-Fri
as we delve into
the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am
followed immediately
by Shacharis.**

**Thank You to:
The Baal Korei, and the
Security Volunteers**

Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, March 6, 2021

Eastern Standard Time

Earliest Tallis 5:26 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:13 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:38 PM
Plag Hamincha 4:45 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 6:21 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

Erev Shabbos – Mar 5 / Adar 21

Candle Lighting 5:34 pm

Mincha 5:35 pm

Shabbos Day – Mar 6 / Adar 22

Shacharis 9:30 am*

Torah Reading 10:30 am

Rabbi Drasha 11:05 am

Mincha 5:35 pm

Rabbi's Drasha 5:55 pm

Shabbos Ends 6:34 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:13 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) 1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) 9:15 pm

**Have you started cleaning
for Passover yet?**

Bulletin

*This week's Bulletin
is sponsored by
The Berman Law Office.*

Chassidic Masters

"Keeping in Touch"

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

After the sin of the Golden Calf, G-d told Moses: "Do not try to stop Me, and I will unleash My wrath against them and destroy them. And I will make you a great nation [in their stead]."

Moses refused to allow his people to be destroyed; he told G-d: "Please forgive them. If not, blot me out from the book which You have written."

Here we see the ultimate expression of leadership. Every leader realizes that he must make certain sacrifices for his followers, for in order to receive, you have to give. And most understand that for the captain of a ship to prosper, the crew and all of its passengers must also advance.

But this is no more than enlightened self-interest. The leader cares about himself. He is simply wise enough to appreciate that he will benefit most when the others around him also thrive.

Moses was above this form of barter. His commitment to his people was for their good and welfare, and not his own. He was not interested in the benefits his leadership could bring him; he wanted his people to succeed. Therefore, G-d's promise that his own seed would flourish did not interest him; his only concern was that his people should fulfill their purpose.

And so he told G-d: "If not, blot me out from the book." Some interpret this as referring to the book of life. Moses was telling G-d: "If I can't help my people achieve their purpose, I don't want to continue living." For his life was intertwined with his people's success.

Others explain that "the book" refers to the Torah. Moses cherished the Torah, more than anything else. There was, however, one exception: the Jewish people. For them, Moses was willing to give up his connection to the Torah, G-d's book.

And for this same reason, Moses broke the Tablets of the Ten Commandments. The tablets on which the Ten Commandments were engraved were "the work of G-d, and the writing of G-d," given to Moses by G-d Himself. And yet when the future of the Jewish people was at stake, Moses broke the tablets without hesitation. For there was nothing dearer to him than his people.

And Moses' commitment to his people was non-judgmental. He was willing to make these sacrifices for them, not only when they lived up to the standards that he had set for them, but even when they failed to do so. He did not demand compliance for his commitment. He dedicated himself to his people as they were. For sure, he had his yardsticks, the principles and values which he strove so hard that his people live up to. But his love for them rose above these standards. He did not love them because they conformed to an image or an ideal he had.

He loved them, and his love and commitment help mold them to match the ideals he held. ❖

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A Shining Face

וּמִנְשָׂה לֹא יָדַע בִּי קֶרֶן עוֹר פָּנָיו
(וגו) שְׁמוֹת לִדְבָר:

Moses was not aware that the skin of his face had become radiant. (Exodus 34:29)

G-d Himself chiseled the first set of tablets out of the rocks on Mount Sinai, whereas the second tablets were chiseled by Moses. Nevertheless, it was specifically after receiving the second set of tablets, rather than the first set, that Moses' face shone.

This is because when something is given to us from G-d without our having worked to earn it, it does not penetrate our very being. It is thus no accident that the first tablets were broken, whereas the second set never were. When we work for something, it can remain with us permanently; something that is received unearned can be more easily lost.

Because Moses chiseled the second tablets himself, their holiness could penetrate his physical body, and therefore his face shone. Similarly, the effort we expend in studying the Torah and fulfilling G-d's commandments refines even our physical bodies. If we exert ourselves to the point that the Torah penetrates us, our faces glow. ❖

About Shabbos Parshas Parah

Following the holiday of Purim, preparations for Passover begin in earnest. On the home front, Operation *Chametz-Free House* kicks into high gear. On the synagogue front, we supplement the weekly Torah readings with two special Pre-Passover readings. On the Shabbat that falls on or before the first of Nissan, we read the special "Hachodesh" reading. The week before that, we read the "Parah" reading.

The Torah reading of Parah (Numbers 19) details the laws of the "Red Heifer" and the process by which a person rendered ritually impure by contact with a dead body was purified.

When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, every Jew had to be in a state of ritual purity in time for the bringing of the Passover offering in the Temple. Today, though we're unable to fulfill the Temple-related rituals in practice, we fulfill them spiritually by studying their laws in the Torah. Thus, we study and read the section of Parah in preparation for the upcoming festival of Passover.

According to some Halachic authorities, there is a Biblical requirement for all men to hear the special Parah reading.

The special Parah haftorah (Ezekiel 36:16-36) discusses G-d's promise to "purify" and cleanse the Jews when He re-gathers them and returns them all to the Land of Israel during the Messianic Era. ❖

The Section of Parah in a Nutshell

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. ❖



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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)

This they shall give (Exodus 30:13)

G-d took a coin of fire from under His throne of glory and showed it to Moses, saying: "Such as this they shall give."

-- (Midrash Tanchuma)

Moses could not understand: How could a mere coin serve a person as "a ransom for his soul to G-d"? G-d answered him by showing him a "coin of fire." G-d was saying: When a person performs even a modest act of charity with the fire of passion and enthusiasm, he is indeed giving a piece of his soul.

-- (The Rebbe of Kotzk)

Money is fire. Like fire it can destroy and annihilate, or illuminate and warm, depending on how it is used.

-- (Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk)

The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less (Exodus 30:15)

People differ in their intellect, character and talents, in the quantity of their material resources and the timbre of their spiritual sensitivities. But all are equal in the very basis of their bond with G-d: the intrinsic commitment to Him that resides at the core of their souls. So while every man contributed to the making of the various components of the Sanctuary in accordance with their individual capacity, all gave equally of the silver of which its foundation was made. As regards the foundation of the relationship between man and G-d, the "rich man" cannot give more, and the "pauper" cannot give less.

-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

See, I have called by name Betzalel . . . of the tribe of Judah . . . and I have appointed with him Aholiav . . . of the tribe of Dan (Exodus 31:2, 6)

No tribe was greater than Judah, and none more lowly than Dan. . . . Said G-d: "Let the one come and be associated with the other, so that no man may despise [his fellow] or be arrogant, for both great and small are equal in G-d's sight."

-- (Midrash Tanchuma)

And on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed (Exodus 31:17)

Resh Lakish said: On Shabbat eve G-d imparts an additional soul to the person, and at Shabbat's end He takes it away.

-- (Talmud, Beitzah 16a)

Haftorah for "Parshas Parah" in a Nutshell

Ezekiel 36:16-36

This week's special haftorah 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].'" ❖

Elevating the Power within Sin

*"... forgive premeditated misdeeds, rebellious misdeeds, and unintentional misdeeds."
(Exodus 34:7)*

The Hebrew word for "forgive" used in this verse literally means "carry" or "lift." Based on this, Rabbi Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Chasidism, taught that G-d elevates the spark of holiness in the misdeed. Nothing, not even a sin, can exist unless it contains a spark of holiness. When a person repents, G-d elevates the Divine spark in his misdeed and returns it to its Divine source.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad branch of Chasidism, explained this idea as follows: It is indeed impossible to elevate a sinful act; such an act is evil, and the only proper treatment for it is to renounce it. In contrast, the power of desire vested in the act is not evil, for it is possible to utilize this power to desire good as well as evil. When we repent properly, we divest our power of desire of its veneer of evil and restore it to its holy source. ❖

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

