



# הַמִּזְרָחִי

# HAMIZRACHI

## PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT KI TISA – SHABBAT PARAH 5783 • 2023



### ISRAEL Parsha Picture








Top photo: Machatzit Hashekel Coin found in Ophel excavations in Jerusalem  
 Courtesy of the Ophel expedition, The Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Photo: Tal Rogovski

זֶה יִתְּנוּ, כָּל הָעֶבֶר עַל  
 הַפְּקָדִים מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל...  
 עֶשְׂרִים גֵּרָה, הַשֶּׁקֶל מִחֲצִית  
 הַשֶּׁקֶל, תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה:









שמות ל:יג

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Based in Jerusalem and with branches across the globe, Mizrahi – an acronym for *merkaz ruchani* (spiritual center) – was founded in 1902 by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, and is led today by Rabbi Doron Perez. Mizrahi's role was then and remains with vigor today, to be a proactive partner and to take personal responsibility in contributing to the collective destiny of *Klal Yisrael* through a commitment to Torah, the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.

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# Stiff-Necked – Good or Bad?

## When Our Greatest Weakness Is Our Greatest Strength



Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrahi

So often in life our greatest weakness is indeed also our greatest strength.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the remarkable reinterpretation of Moshe Rabbeinu of a term we all know - עם קשי עורר, the accusation of Israel being a stiff-necked people.

Four times in the parasha are the Jewish People called stiff-necked and the first three are terribly damning. Hashem says to Moshe Rabbeinu after the sin of the Golden Calf, "Go down (the mountain) as your people have sinned... I have seen this people and behold they are a stiff-necked people ... I will totally destroy them and create from you a great nation."<sup>1</sup>

Two qualities of being stiff-necked are revealed here for the first time. Hashem tells Moshe that being stiff-necked is Israel's national quality and that it is this particular quality that is the very reason He wants to destroy them. Though Moshe's prayers manage to intercede on the people's behalf and obliteration is avoided, they do not emerge unscathed. Hashem tells Moshe two further consequences. Hashem will no longer directly lead them into the Promised Land but rather from a distance through an angel. If He stays too close, their obstinacy will hasten their demise. Secondly, Moshe must reveal to

the people why Hashem is punishing them and why their relationship with Him cannot be the same - that it is not only a consequence of their actions, but of an ingrained destructive character trait: being stiff-necked, mulish and stubborn. The people are so distraught when they receive this blow that they immediately mourn and struggle to accept the incriminating reality.

It is this disparaging quality which allowed the people to be so obstinate and to rebel so blatantly with idolatry, having personally just witnessed the greatest open miracles in history - the ten plagues, the splitting of the sea and the revelation at Sinai. It seems so clear what a derogatory and damaging attribute being stiff-necked is.

But wait, there is an amazing twist!

Incredibly, everything turns around in the fourth and final time stiff-necked is mentioned in the parasha. Immediately after G-d reveals the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy, Moshe Rabbeinu presents a daring claim. **The reason he maintains that Hashem should forgive the people and indeed bring them into the Land Himself, and not through an angel, is specifically because they are a stiff-necked people.**<sup>2</sup>

How is the very same trait used both to condemn and to defend them? Is it destructive or constructive? How can such a blatant spiritual weakness be suddenly transformed into a strength?

One of the medieval commentators of the Ba'alei HaTosaphot<sup>3</sup> offers an ingenious explanation. The identical quality is indeed at the very same time both a weakness and a strength. **It all depends on the circumstances.** Bowing down to the golden calf after all G-d's open miracles was an almost unforgivable act of defiance, insolence and stubbornness- a glaring weakness. But, says the Maharsha, when faced with persecution, never-ending exile and suffering; when our faith and way of life is so deeply challenged, these are the very qualities needed to overcome adversity and challenge. Tenacity, grit and a stubborn and unswerving determination to hold course are what is needed in such situations. These very qualities of being obstinate and defiant are what are needed to survive and thrive in trying times. This very trait of being stiff-necked



**This very trait of being stiff-necked is what has allowed us in many ways to be the lone surviving people from antiquity until today, against seemingly impossible odds.**

is what has allowed us in many ways to be the lone surviving people from antiquity until today, against seemingly impossible odds.<sup>4</sup> To face head-on the tempestuous waves of anti-Semitic conquests, crusades, inquisitions, pogroms and massacres requires an unusual obstinacy. To found the remarkable State of Israel against regional aggression of multiple wars aimed at the fledgling state's destruction and now to sustain it against outlandish Iranian nuclear ambitions and nonstop systemic delegitimization campaigns requires extraordinary tenaciousness.

Our greatest weaknesses can be our greatest strengths. Whether the same quality is

a weakness or a strength depends on the circumstance. Great wisdom is required to ensure it is expressed predominantly as a strength. May Hashem guide us to be obedient and compliant when needed and defiant and determined when necessary. **We can be headstrong without being hardheaded. We must have a backbone and be strong-minded without being unnecessarily stubborn and stiff-necked.**

1. Shemot 32, 7-10.
2. Shemot 34, 6-9. This is how the Ramban reads the text and this does seem to be the simple and straightforward reading. Rashi interprets it differently.
3. Rabbi Yitzchak ben Yehuda HaLevi, in his book Pa'anayach Raza on this passuk.
4. The Chinese are the only other people who have survived from antiquity but they have never been conquered nor been exiled as the Jewish people had been over for almost two thousand years.



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PIRKEI AVOT

# Be The Man



**Rabbi Reuven Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi  
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

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הוא (הלל) הִזָּה אוֹמֵר... בְּמִקוֹם שְׂאִין אֲנָשִׁים, הַשְּׂתַדֵּל לְהִיּוֹת אִישׁ (אבות ב:ו):

Though surrounded by many people, we often find ourselves in situations where no one else is ready to step up and take responsibility. In these situations — “where there is no other”<sup>1</sup> — Hillel encourages us to be the *ish* — the mature and responsible person.<sup>2</sup>

The *mefarshim* apply Hillel’s words to different types of situations.

## Responsibility for Ourselves

The Rambam<sup>3</sup> focuses on Torah learning and personal growth. Though we should seek rebbeim to teach and guide us, we also need to be ready to teach and guide ourselves when no one else is available. We should view ourselves as capable of<sup>4</sup> and responsible for developing ourselves.<sup>5</sup> Though we learn and are inspired by many others, ultimately, “*im ein ani li, mi li* — if we are not responsible for ourselves, no one else will be.”<sup>6</sup>

The Meiri and Medrash Shmuel<sup>7</sup> add another aspect to this sense of personal responsibility. Hillel teaches us to act properly even when no one else is around to see our actions. Our internal compass and commitment to Hashem should be strong enough to guide us without needing positive reinforcement from others.<sup>8</sup>

## Communal Role

Other *mefarshim* understand Hillel’s words as a call for us to contribute to the broader community. When no one else volunteers for a communal role, we should fill the void. The Bartenura<sup>9</sup> gives the example of teaching Torah: when Torah teaching is needed, we should step up to teach.<sup>10</sup>

Hillel personalized his own words. The gemara<sup>11</sup> tells us that when Hillel arrived in Israel and found no one else proficient in the laws of *kodshim*, he assumed the position of Nasi in order to teach others.

Torah leaders have shown this sense of communal responsibility throughout the ages. The gemara<sup>12</sup> tells us that after passing through Sura and hearing a woman ask her friend how much milk to use when cooking a piece of meat, Rav decided to move there

and open a yeshiva to educate the townspeople. Though Rav already headed a yeshiva in Neharda’a, he felt responsible for Sura as well.

1700 years later, Rav Aharon Kotler took a similar step. During World War 2, Rav Aharon found himself in Shanghai with the Mir Yeshiva, unsure of whether to proceed to Israel or to America. He did a *gorel ha’Gra* (a system that identifies a *pasuk* that is meant to guide our choices) which fell upon Hashem’s instruction to Aharon to meet and “help Moshe in the desert.”<sup>13</sup> Rav Aharon understood that he was being directed to join Rav Moshe Feinstein in America, a country whose desperate need for Torah teachers made it like a desert wasteland. Though Israel was his preferred Torah destination, Rav Aharon accepted the mission to travel to America. When he got there, he opened the Lakewood yeshiva, which has played a central role in spreading Torah across America.

## Leadership

Hillel’s words apply to other forms of leadership as well.<sup>14</sup> We should be the *ish* who volunteers for whatever important mission is not being addressed.

Moshe Rabbeinu was a model of such leadership. When he encountered an Egyptian assaulting a Jew, he “looked both ways and saw *ki ein ish* — there was no man.”<sup>15</sup> Though (presumably) there were many other people at the building site, no one intervened. As opposed to the others, who were afraid to act or did not see taking action as their responsibility, Moshe Rabbeinu stepped up and saved the Jew by killing the Egyptian, even though he realized that his action might force him to have to flee Egypt.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks<sup>16</sup> develops the importance of this type of leadership:

Leadership is where a person takes responsibility where others are not present.... Leadership is born when we become active, not passive, when we do not wait for someone else to act because perhaps there is no one else — at least not here, not now.

When bad things happen, some avert their eyes. Some wait for others to act. Some blame others for failing to act. Some simply complain. But there are some people who say, “If something is wrong, let me try to put it right.” They are the leaders. They are the ones who make a difference in their lifetimes. They are the ones who make ours a better world...A responsible life is a life that responds by taking responsibility.”

Many of our ancestors have exemplified this trait. Nachshon ben Aminadav was an excellent example. The Jews stood at the banks of the Yam Suf, hemmed in by the Egyptians threatening them from behind. Hashem told them to move forward into the sea, but the people were afraid. Nachshon saw that no one else was moving forward and led the way with his leap of faith.

Many fine non-Jews also take such initiatives. An excellent example are the almost thirty thousand “righteous gentiles” who saved Jews during the Holocaust. These fine people, recognized by Israel as “*Chassidei Umot Ha’Olam*,” stepped up to assist their Jewish neighbors who had no one else to turn to. Like Moshe Rabbeinu, these righteous gentiles were willing to risk their own lives to assist those who no one else was willing to assist.

## Being a Builder

Though our first responsibility is to ourselves, Hillel teaches us that we should also feel responsible for the broader community and world.

Rebbi Elazar quotes Rebbi Chanina who inferred this point from the *pasuk* of “*v’chol banayich limudei Hashem, v’rav shalom banayich*.” He read the word *banayich* (sons) as *bonayich* (builders) and explained that talmidei chachamim should aim to build the world. We grow from the status of *banayich* to that of *ish* when we appreciate the role we are meant to play as *bonayich*.

May we be inspired by Hillel’s words to take responsibility — for ourselves and for

Continued on page 7

HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

# PARAH: Soulful Purification & Salvation



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

This Shabbat we read the third of the four special parshiyot approaching the month of Nissan, known as “Parashat Parah.” The *maftir* is read from the beginning of Parashat Chukat, teaching the process of purification from the status of impurity caused by contact with a corpse. Purification from death is achieved through sprinkling special water with the ashes of a burned *parah adumah* (red heifer) “to remind Israel to purify themselves, in order that they may (be ready to) bring the Pesach sacrifice in purity” (Rashi, Megilla 29a). The corresponding haftarah (Yechezkel 36:18-38) reviews aspects of purity and impurity in explicating the reason for exiling the Jewish people from the Land of Israel: “When Bnei Yisrael dwelled in their land, they defiled it with their deeds; like the impurity of a *nidda* (menstruating woman) was their way before Me.” (17) Exile, however, impacts negatively on Hashem’s reputation – it is a “desecration of Hashem’s name” that will be rectified through G-d gathering us from the nations and returning us to our Land, but only through a process of purification: “And I will sprinkle over you waters of purification and you will be purified, from all your impurities and from all your idolatry I will purify you.” (25)

The haftarah presents a different type of impurity than presented in the Torah reading, thereby providing *parshanut* through this distinction! Rav Soloveitchik distinguished between the *tumah* (impurity) described in the parasha, caused by death (contracted through contact with a corpse or remaining under the same roof as a corpse) and all other forms of halachic impurity. Firstly, death requires complete separation of a kohen, even from his own spouse. Yechezkel begins his prophecy by

evoking the imagery of the *nidda* rather than death, to underscore that Hashem continues to dwell with Bnei Yisrael even in their defilement, as a husband, even if he is a *kohen*, remains with his wife throughout the period of separation. Secondly, in all cases, except for death, purification is achieved through self-immersion in a mikveh, not requiring the participation of others in the process. The *tamei met*, who has encountered death, however, may only be purified through the kohen sprinkling the water containing the red heifer’s ashes. This halachic singularity reflects the uniqueness of death as an existential threat and crisis that the human being cannot conquer on his or her own! Yechezkel therefore transitions from the impurity of *nidda* to the process of purification of a *tamei met*; he compares the defilement of the Jewish people caused by their sins to a state of impurity that leaves the people powerless, unable to extricate themselves from exile without the active assistance of Hashem!

Another evident difference is that while the parasha speaks of physical death and subsequent impurity of the body, Yechezkel 36 describes a symbolic, metaphoric impurity of the soul caused by sin, most notably idolatry and bloodshed. The common theme lies not in the impurity but rather in the process of purification – “And I will sprinkle over you waters of purification and you will be purified. And I will give you a new heart, and I will place within you a new spirit, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh, and I will place My spirit within you and I will make you walk in My statutes” (25-27). This nurturing of a new heart does not deter one from exercising free will and responsibility (as described in Yechezkel chapter 18); Hashem’s sprinkling of the

purifying waters, enacting the model of *parah adumah*, asserts His absolute sovereignty. The knowledge and acceptance of Hashem as absolute sovereign who acts unilaterally, limits conviction of entitlement and encourages mortification at one’s sinfulness.

Herein lay many parallels with the first national redemption from Egypt. Yechezkel (chapter 20) described Bnei Yisrael as immersed in the idolatry and impurities of Egypt, requiring Hashem to reveal Himself and extricate them from Egypt while still in a state of impurity, and begin the process of purification after their redemption. Additionally, throughout the haftarah Yechezkel iterates Hashem’s motive in miraculously redeeming Bnei Yisrael – “and the nations will know that I am Hashem” (23), “And the nations that are left around you will know that I am Hashem” (36), concluding with the words: “And they will know that I am Hashem” (38), just as mentioned throughout the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim!* Perhaps the underlying connection between the prophecy of the haftarah and the Torah reading read before Pesach is to remind us of the absolute sovereignty of G-d overtly manifest even in exile, requiring humility on our part. Parashat Parah concerns a “chok,” a statute, a law for which no reason is provided: “I have made a statute and decreed a decree” – as if we’re being told, (Bamidbar Rabba, Chukat 19) – “You wish to understand the meaning of exile and its explanation? Look at the (laws of the) red heifer: just as in that instance you are unable to descend to the secret of its meaning, so with regard to the painful exile (you will not understand).”

# Halachic Q&A



## Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council

Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

**Question: A magic mug is a hot cup which transforms in some way when hot water is poured into it. The color can change from black to colorful and/or a picture can form. Can this be used on Shabbat?**

Answer: There are a few reasons why this may be permissible:

Shu"t Avnei Nezer discusses the question of whether one may open/close a book which has letters formed from the sides of the pages. He quotes the Levush who thought this was prohibited under the category of *kotev/mochek* (writing/erasing), potentially even to a biblical degree. Avnei Nezer quotes the Shu"t Rema who brought a few reasons to be lenient, one of them being that the book is intended to be opened and closed, excluding it from any biblical categorization of *kotev/mochek*. Levush understood that because the book could remain closed for a long period of time without the intervention of man, this can be considered biblical in nature. The accepted halachic ruling is that there is no real concern with opening/closing of books with writing on their sides (MB 340:17).

Based on this, because the cup is intended to change color and return back, there is no issue of coloring *mei'kar hadin*. (However, if this was our only indication of *heter*, we may have been stringent *lechatchila*).

Additionally, the poskim discuss the status of a thermometer which changes color based on the degree of heat measured. There is no biblical prohibition because the color that appears is temporary, returning back to its original state after a few minutes. Nevertheless, is this allowed *lechatchila*? Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer allows for this *lechatchila*, because no color

is being added here at all. All of the color already exists, and it appears temporarily when sensing heat and then returns. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach quotes this Tzitz Eliezer, however, he only permitted this for somebody who is sick.

The same logic can be applied in our situation. There is no color being added to the cup, as all the color is already there. The color that appears returns to its original state, and most poskim are lenient under these circumstances (Tzitz Eliezer, Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach when one is sick).

However, there is a much simpler reason why using these cups is permissible *lechatchila*. Magic mugs contain two layers. The external layer has a special black color, and the inner layer has a white base. On the black layer, there are salt crystals that remain black at room temperature. Once they rise above a certain temperature, their molecular form undergoes a change, causing them to appear transparent (spectroscopy). When this happens, the color from the inner layer is revealed, forming a shape/change in color.

Based on this, we can understand that there is no process of dying here, in fact, the hot water causes the exact opposite. Therefore, there is no problem with using this mug on Shabbat, even *lechatchila*.

**Question: I am on the management committee of our building. Over the years, many bicycles have accumulated at the entrance to the building. After returning many of the bicycles to their owners, we are left with a few bicycles without any indicator of the owners. We reached out to all members of the building in the last 10 years. The bicycles take up space and disturb the proper management of the building.**

**The committee wants to announce that these bikes are hefker (ownerless) and clear them out. In order to handle a future case where an owner may come to take his bike, somebody suggested that we take pictures of all of the bikes, and if one can prove that their bike was there, the building will compensate the rightful owner for the bike.**

**Are we allowed to do this halachically? Halacha indicates that there is an assumption that owners prefer to receive their object as opposed to an equivalent sum of money.**

Answer: I think that this is a good, logical solution. We can assume that one who leaves his bike for so long has given up on it. If he comes to claim it later, we can assume that he will prefer some compensation over the bike, as they break down over time. As you mentioned, the status quo cannot remain either, and therefore this solution seems reasonable. Rav Moshe Feinstein writes about a similar teshuva regarding lost items in our times which cannot be identified.

● Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.

# דיון משפחתי: פרשת כי תשא

הרבנית שרון רימון  
Tanach teacher and author



הקודשים, לפני ולפנים - רק שם ניתן להבחין בקשר המהותי הפנימי בין ה' לישראל, אשר איננו תלוי בשום דבר.

השבוע חגגנו את פורים, וידוע שלפי הזוהר יש קשר בין פורים ליום הכיפורים, כפי שאומר ר' שניאור זלמן מלאדי: "פורים ויום הכיפורים הוא בחינה אחת; יום כיפורים פירושו כמו פורים" (תורה אור, מגילת אסתר, צה, ד).

גם יום הכיפורים וגם פורים מגלים את הקשר הפנימי המהותי בין ה' לישראל. אסתר נכנסת אל החצר הפנימית של המלך, כדי להתחנן על עמה, והמלך האמתי אליו היא מתחננת איננו אחשוורוש אלא הקב"ה.

בפורים התגלתה השגחת ה' המיוחדת עם ישראל. אפילו כאשר עם ישראל בגלות, מפוזר ומפורד, "עיקר ויגע ולא ירא אלקים" (פרשת "זכור" - דברים כ"ה, יח). ה' מושיע את עם ישראל ומחולל מהפך היסטורי למענם, כך שעם ישראל לא יושמד.

לכאורה פורים הפוך מיום הכיפורים. בעוד שביום הכיפורים מתענים ומתנתקים מכל הוויית העולם הזה כדי להגיע לקשר המיוחד עם ה', בפורים עושים בדיוק להפך - כל המצוות קשורות לחיי העולם הזה. אולם, מצוות הפורים לא נועדו להנאה גשמית אלא לחיבור עמוק בין העולם הפיזי-גשמי אל הקודש, אל הקב"ה. מצוות הפורים נועדו להסיר את כל המחיצות ולאפשר לאדם להתקרב לה' ולאנשים אחרים, דווקא מתוך חיבור לעולם הזה.

י', "כימים הראשונים", מה הראשונים מרוצין, אף שניים מרוצין, אמור מעתה אמצעיים בכעס. ירד ב' בתשרי והוא היה יום הכיפורים, ובישרם שנתרצה לפני המקום, שנאמר "וסלחת לעוננו ולחטאתנו ונחלתנו" (שמות ל"ד, ט), לפיכך נתקיים יום חוק וזכרון לדורות... (סדר עולם רבה, פרק ו)

יום הכיפורים הוא יום מחילה היסטורי. ביום זה התגלה שהקשר בין עם ישראל לה' הוא קשר נצחי ועמוק, כל ינתק. אפילו כאשר עם ישראל חוטאים בחטא חמור כל כך, מועלים באמון בצורה קשה ביותר, עדיין הברית בין ה' לישראל קיימת. ולמרות שעיקר התיקון נעשה ע"י משה (בהריגת החוטאים ובתפילות), ולא ברור באיזו מידה עם ישראל חזר בתשובה - הברית ממשיכה להתקיים. זוהי ברית מהותית, חזקה מאד, שאיננה תלויה בדבר.

יג המידות ניתנו למשה כחלק מאותו תהליך של תיקון ומחילה, והמידה הראשונה שבהן היא ה' ה", ומסביר המדרש:

"ויעבור ה' על פניו ויקרא א"ר יוחנן אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומרו מלמד שנתעטף הקב"ה כשליח צבור והראה לו למשה סדר תפלה אמר לו כל זמן שישראל חוטאין יעשו לפני כסדר הזה ואני מוחל להם. ה' ה' - אני הוא קודם שיחטא האדם ואני הוא לאחר שיחטא האדם ויעשה תשובה" (ראש השנה דף י"ז ע"ב)

אם כן, יום הכיפורים הוא יום של כפרה ומחילה הנובעים מהקשר המהותי בין ישראל לה', ואינם תלויים בדבר. לשם כך נכנס הכהן הגדול לקודש

פרשת כי תשא מתואר אחד המשברים הגדולים של עם ישראל - מיד לאחר מעמד הר סיני, בעוד משה רבנו נמצא על הר סיני ומקבל את דברי ה', העם חוטא בחטא העגל: "וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסֶּכֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִינוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם... וַיַּעֲלוּ עֵלֶת וַיַּגִּישׁוּ שְׂלֵמִים וַיִּשֶׁב הָעָם לַאֲלֵל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק" חטא כל כך מהותי שנעשה מיד לאחר כריית הברית בין ה' לישראל מערער לכאורה על עצם האפשרות של קיום הברית, ואכן, בתחילה עולה המחשבה למחות את עם ישראל. אולם, משה רבנו מתעקש שוב ושוב לעשות תיקון ולחדש את הברית בין ה' לישראל. התיקון איננו מידי, אלא בתהליך של כמה חודשים, עד שלבסוף - ביום הכיפורים יורד משה מהר סיני ומבשר לעם ישראל שהתכפר להם חטא העגל, כפי שמתאר המדרש:

"ביום השביעי אחר עשרת הדברות עלה משה להר... בי"ז בתמוז ירד ושב את הלוחות... עלה בשמנה עשר בתמוז, וביקש רחמים על ישראל, דכתיב "ואתנפל לפני ה' את ארבעים היום ואת ארבעים הלילה אשר התנפלתי כי אמר ה'..." (דברים ט', כה), באותה שעה נתרצה הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל ואמר למשה לפסול לוחות שניות ולעלות... ירד בעשרים ושמונה באב ופסל שני לוחות, שנאמר "ויפסל שני לוחות אבנים כראשנים וישכם משה בבקר..." (שמות ל"ד, ד), ועלה בעשרים ותשעה באב ונשנית לו תורה פעם שניה, שנאמר "ואנכי עמדתי בהר כימים הראשנים ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה... לא אבה ה' השחיתך" (דברים

Continued from page 4

others — in situations where no one else is willing to.

● Summarized by Rafi Davis.

- Hillel mentions specifically a situation where others are not stepping up. The Gra"m Horowitz understands the gemara in Berachot (63a) adds that one should not volunteer when others are. (See Tosafot to Sotah 22b s.v. b'shavin and the Maharsha to Berachot who give other explanations about what the gemara adds). This is an important lesson in today's world, where many speak of leadership and wish to lead. Leadership is necessary when others are not already leading.
- See, for example, King David's words to his son Shlomo: "Vchazakta v'hayeta l'ish — Strengthen yourself and be an ish" (Sefer Melachim I 1:2). See also Sefer Yeshayahu 59:16, where Hashem

- bemoans the lack of an ish who can bring judgment to the world. Noach (Bereishit 6:9), Moshe (Bamidbar 12:3), Iyov (Iyov 1:1), and Mordechai (Esther 2:5) are each called "ish." The Meraglim in Sefer Bamidbar 13:3 are referred to as "anashim."
- Rambam, Avot 2:6.
  - See Devarim 30:11-14, Seforno on pasuk 11, and Yalkut Shimonon Devarim 940.
  - Rabbeinu Yonah (Avot 2:6) adds that when there are no others to emulate, one should imagine himself in other generations where there were. (See also Rabbeinu Yonah to Avot 2:8).
  - Avot 1:14.
  - To Avot 2:6.
  - See Onkelos and Radak to Melachim I 1:2.
  - Bartenura to Avot 2:6.
  - See Sefer Mishlei 5:16-17. Hillel himself taught: "B'sha'at hamachnisin, pazer — When others

- are collecting their Torah and not sharing it, you should be the one to step up and spread it (Masechet Berachot 63a)." In fact, the Gemara there quotes the statement of Bar Kapara, who seems to translate our Mishnah into Aramaic, showing the connection between the two statements.
- Masechet Pesachim 66a.
  - Masechet Chullin 110a. Rav Sherira Gaon (Igeret, pg. 79) fills in details of this story.
  - Sefer Shemot 4:27.
  - See Rashi (Avot 2:6) who explains Hillel this way.
  - Sefer Shemot 2:12. See HaKtav V'hakabbalah who explains the pasuk this way (and quotes Bar Kapara's words from Masechet Berachot 63a). Interestingly, at the end of Perek Bet, Yitro uses the term "ish" as a way of describing Moshe as a respectable person.
  - Taking Responsibility, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

# Pesach is Coming



**Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir**  
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

A woman wrote me that she never learned the weekly Torah portion and therefore did not understand what the golden calf that I mentioned in a post was all about. And so for her sake as well as my own desire to summarize the various aspects of the golden calf episode, I am providing five aspects of the story below.

1. At first glance, the central subject of this week's Torah portion is the sin of the golden calf. After Moshe Rabbeinu ascends Mount Sinai, the nation of Israel waits for him at the foot of the mountain. However, it is written that Moses "was late" in coming down with the tablets of the covenant and that's when the people demanded that Aharon "make us gods that will go before us." So Aharon takes their golden earrings and fashions them into a calf. The people dance around the calf and offer sacrifices to it. When Moses sees the people rejoicing around the calf, he breaks the tablets. We learn from here that impatience, as exemplified by the people's unwillingness to wait for Moshe's return, can have catastrophic consequences.

2. But perhaps the main subject of this Torah portion is actually the reconciliation that comes after the sin of the golden calf. Moshe Rabbeinu ascends Mount Sinai again, prays and pleads for the nation of Israel that G-d wants to destroy, and succeeds in having G-d forgive the nation. Many commentators explain that by Mount Sinai we were given the Torah, and by the golden calf we were given the capacity to make amends and atone for our misdeeds.

3. G-d had pleaded for the nation for 40 days and, after G-d grants His forgiveness, Moshe Rabbeinu stays on the mountain

an additional 40 days and then returns with a new set of tablets. His return happens on Yom Kippur which became a symbol for the fact that it's always possible to be granted forgiveness and begin anew.

4. From that moment on, the nation of Israel journeyed in the desert with both the new set of tablets and the broken pieces of the old. In other words, we would always take with us a souvenir of our sin with the golden calf, a permanent scar that would never allow us to forget what we did.

5. The climax of G-d's forgiveness comes with the appearance of the thirteen attributes of mercy ("Lord, Lord, benevolent G-d, Who is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness and truth..."). We have repeated these words countless times since, especially during Selichot and High Holiday prayers. God gave us these words as a kind of code for opening the safe in which His forgiveness would be found, not only after the sin of the golden calf, but for all time.



The headline this week is not that Purim is behind us, but that Pesach is in front of us.

Our Sages ruled that 30 days before Pesach we are obligated to begin to study and prepare for it. We do not yet know exactly how we will be permitted to celebrate Pesach this year. If only we will be allowed to sit at the Seder table with our entire extended family.

In one more month, we will go forth into freedom. Our Sages call upon us to gear up for this event. Not to fall into it weary from cleaning, cooking, and endless

errands. Not to simply land at the Seder table from a place of unpreparedness. Not to invest the next 30 days in obsessing over politics.

Rather, we are supposed to prepare for the 14th of Nissan, the day of the Exodus from Egypt. To study the holiday, to go through the Haggadah and, mainly, to go forth into freedom ourselves.

There is a famous line in the Haggadah: "In each and every generation a person needs to see himself as if he had personally left Egypt." In the book of Tanya, a fundamental text of the Chassidic movement, this line has been amended significantly as follows "In each and every generation, and on each and every day, a person needs to see himself as if he had personally left Egypt."

Not only in each and every generation, but on each and every day. We need to go forth into freedom a little more each day. To check why we are enslaved, what limits us and gets in our way, and to fight this slavery every day. There's a month until Pesach.



מחשבה מעניינת שכתב הרב עמיצור אריאל, מעמותת "הבית לכלכלה יהודי":

"מה לנו ולעבודה זרה? מה לנו ולעגל הזהב? לכאורה, הסיפור שקראנו בפרשה הוא סיפור היסטורי. אולי פעם אנשים סגדו לפסלים ועבדו את הזהב, אבל אנחנו כבר הרבה יותר מפותחים ומתוחכמים.

ובכן, יש דמיון בין יחס האדם לכסף, לבין יחס האדם אל אלוהים. גם הכסף הוא דבר שאנשים עובדים בשבילו, חושבים עליו וחושקים בו, דבר שהעולם מתנהל בשבילו וחג סביבו.

שימו לב שאם פעם הכסף היה מוחשי, היום גם על הכסף אפשר לומר 'אין לו גוף ולא דמות הגוף'. הבנקים כבר לא צריכים לשמור מטילי זהב

*Continued on next page*



# For the Shabbat Table



**Rabbi Danny Mirvis**

Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi

Rabbi of Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**A**nd Hashem said, 'Behold there is a place near Me and you can stand on the rock. And it shall be when My glory passes and I shall place you in a cleft of the rock, and I shall cover you with My hand until I have passed. And I shall remove My hand and you shall see My back, but my face shall not be seen' (Shemot 33:21-23).

Towards the end of this week's Parsha, Moshe asks to see Hashem. Hashem responds by allowing Moshe to see Him from behind. Of course, Hashem does not have a body or limited physical qualities, so what is meant by seeing Hashem's back?

It is generally accepted that seeing Hashem from behind is a lower form of revelation than seeing Him face to face. However, My Rosh Yeshiva, HaRav Yaakov Medan Shlit"א, suggests that the opposite might also be true.

Rav Medan draws from different styles of leadership in the army. There are officers who display their leadership by facing their soldiers, giving them their instructions and orders. However, there are officers who only need to turn around and start moving and their soldiers follow suit. These soldiers gain confidence seeing their officer from behind, knowing that



**Although it may seem at times as if Hashem has turned His back, we must follow Him confidently with full belief that He is in control of the journey.**

he is leading them and that he is in full control.

Similarly, one who is sitting in the back row of a car does not want to see the driver's face. Seeing the driver from behind instills confidence that the driver is in control of the vehicle and the journey.

By showing Moshe His back, Hashem was sending Moshe the clear message that He is in control. Although it may seem at times as if Hashem has turned His back, we must follow Him confidently with full belief that He is in control of the journey.

Another explanation for seeing "Hashem's back" is that although we may never be able to see or understand Hashem directly, the day will come when we will see what is behind Hashem - i.e. we will be able to look back with retrospect and understand His ways.

A similar message emerges from the verse in Tehillim:

"Lay a table before me, against my foes" (Tehillim 23:5).

At first glance, this prayer is difficult to understand. One interesting explanation is that this plea is a prayer to Hashem at a time of danger, with the metaphor of a saloon-bar or pub-brawl, where a well placed turned over table could protect one from flying objects or other forms of danger.

Another explanation is that we are praying to Hashem that one day we can 'lay a table' - i.e. 'drink a toast' to our troubles. The hope is that one day we can look back on those people and circumstances that caused us trouble and distress and raise a glass to them, saying confidently that we are better, stronger and greater people as a result of overcoming such challenges.

By displaying full faith in Hashem and carefully following His ways, may we reach the day when we can raise a toast with all our troubles behind us.

Shabbat Shalom!

*Continued from previous page*

ולעומת זאת חלופות כמו שיעורים פרטיים וצהרונים - נספרות וממדדות כפעילות במשק.

הדיון הכלכלי חשוב, כל עוד דרכו אנחנו מגשימים את הערכים שלנו. עלינו לבדוק שהמספרים בחיינו לא הופכים לעגל הזהב."

שעות של התנדבות, שמעלות את רמת החיים אבל לא נספרות כמו שירות דומה שניתן בתשלום. עוד דוגמה, השיעור השבועי: אי אפשר לכמת שיעורי תורה בקהילה, שיעורים שמעלים את איכות החיים אבל לא תורמים לתל"ג. גם זמן איכות של הורים עם ילדיהם לא מעלה את הנתונים שאפשר למדוד,

במרתפים. הכסף הפך לוורטואלי, למופשט, והוא עובר בלחיצת כפתור. הסכנה בכסף המודרני היא שאפשר להשתעבד לו, בלי לחוש רתיעה מאותה עבודה זרה שכבר עברה מהעולם.

למשל, כשאנחנו מודדים את ההוצאות והפעילות במשק ושמחים שהכל עולה - אי אפשר למדוד

# The Closeness of G-d



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

**T**he more I study the Torah, the more conscious I become of the immense mystery of Exodus 33. This is the chapter set in the middle of the Golden Calf narrative (between Exodus chapter 32 describing the sin and its consequences, and Exodus chapter 34 with G-d's revelation to Moses of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, the second set of Tablets, and the renewal of the covenant. It is, I believe, this mystery that frames the shape of Jewish spirituality.

What makes chapter 33 perplexing is, first, that it is not clear what it is about. What was Moses doing? In the previous chapter he had already prayed twice for the people to be forgiven. In chapter 34 he prays for forgiveness again. What then was he trying to achieve in chapter 33?

Second, Moses' requests are strange. He says, "Show me now Your ways" (Ex. 33:13) and "Show me now Your glory" (Ex. 33:18). These seem more requests for metaphysical understanding or mystical experience than for forgiveness. They have to do with Moses as an individual, not with the people on whose behalf he was praying. This was a moment of national crisis. G-d was angry. The people were traumatised. The whole nation was in disarray. This was not the time for Moses to ask for a seminar in theology.

Third, more than once the narrative seems to be going backward in time. In verse 4, for example, it says, "No man put on his ornaments," then in the next verse G-d says, "Now, then, remove your ornaments." (Ex. 33:5) In verse 14, G-d says, "My presence will go with you." In verse 15, Moses says, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not make us leave this place." In both cases, time seems to be reversed:

the second sentence is responded to by the one before. The Torah is clearly drawing our attention to something, but what?

Add to this the mystery of the Calf itself – was it or was it not an idol? The text states that the people said, "This, Israel, is your G-d who brought you out of Egypt" (Ex. 32:4).

But it also says that they sought the Calf because they did not know what had happened to *Moses*. Were they seeking a replacement for him or for G-d? What was their sin?

Surrounding it all is the larger mystery of the precise sequence of events involved in the long passages about the *Mishkan*, before and after the Golden Calf. What was the relationship between the Sanctuary and the Calf?

At the heart of the mystery is the odd and troubling detail of verses 7–11. This tells us that Moses took his tent and pitched it *outside the camp*. What has this to do with the subject at hand, namely the relationship between G-d and the people after the Golden Calf? In any case, it was surely the worst possible thing for Moses to do at that time under those circumstances. G-d had just announced that "I will not go in your midst" (Ex. 33:3). At this, the people were deeply distressed. They "went into mourning" (Ex. 33:4). For Moses, then, to leave the camp must have been doubly demoralising. At times of collective distress, a leader has to be close to the people, not distant.

There are many ways of reading this cryptic text, but it seems to me that the most powerful and simple interpretation is this. Moses was making his most audacious prayer, so audacious that the Torah does not state it directly and explicitly. We have

to reconstruct it from anomalies and clues within the text itself.

The previous chapter implied that the people panicked because of the absence of Moses, their leader. G-d Himself implied as much when He said to Moses, "Go down, because *your* people, whom *you* brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt" (Ex. 32:7).

The suggestion is that Moses' absence or distance was the cause of the sin. He should have stayed closer to the people. Moses took the point. He did go down. He did punish the guilty. He did pray for G-d to forgive the people. That was the theme of chapter 32. But in chapter 33, having restored order to the people, Moses now began on an entirely new line of approach. He was, in effect, saying to G-d: What the people need is not for *me* to be close to them. I am just a human, here today, gone tomorrow. But You are eternal. You are their G-d. They need *You* to be close to them.

It was as if Moses was saying: Until now, they have experienced You as a terrifying, elemental force, delivering plague after plague to the Egyptians, bringing the world's greatest empire to its knees, dividing the sea, overturning the very order of nature itself. At Mount Sinai, merely hearing Your voice, they were so overwhelmed that they said, if we continue to hear the voice, "we will die" (Ex. 20:16). The people needed, said Moses, to experience not the *greatness* of G-d but the *closeness* of G-d, not G-d heard in thunder and lightning at the top of the mountain, but as a perpetual presence in the valley below.

That is why Moses removed his tent and pitched it outside the camp, as if to say to G-d: It is not my presence the people

need in their midst, but Yours. That is why Moses sought to understand the very nature of G-d Himself. Is it possible for G-d to be close to where people are? Can transcendence become immanence? Can the G-d who is vaster than the universe live within the universe in a predictable, comprehensible way, not just in the form of miraculous intervention?

To this, G-d replied in a highly structured way. First, He said: you cannot understand My ways. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy” (Ex. 33:19). There is an element of Divine justice that must always elude human comprehension. We cannot fully enter into the mind of another human being, how much less so the mind of the Creator Himself.

Second, “You cannot see My face, for no one can see Me and live” (Ex. 33:20). Humans can at best “see My back.” Even when G-d intervenes in history, we can see this only in retrospect, looking back. Stephen Hawking was wrong.<sup>1</sup> Even if we decode every scientific mystery, we still will not know the mind of G-d.

However, third, you *can* see My “glory.” That is what Moses asked for once he realized that he could never know G-d’s “ways” or see His “face.” That is what G-d caused to pass by as Moses stood “in a cleft of the rock” (Ex. 33:22). We do not know at this stage exactly what is meant by G-d’s glory, but we discover this at the very end of the book of Exodus. Chapters 35–40 describe how the Israelites built the Mishkan. When it is finished and assembled we read this:

Then the Cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and *the glory of the Lord* filled the Mishkan. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the Cloud had settled on it, and *the glory of the Lord* filled the Mishkan. (Ex. 40:34–35)

We now understand the entire drama set in motion by the making of the Golden Calf. Moses pleaded with G-d to come closer to the people, so that they would encounter Him, not only at unrepeatable moments in the form of miracles, but regularly, on a daily basis, and not only as a force that threatens to obliterate all it touches, but as a presence that can be sensed in the heart of the camp.

*That is why G-d commanded Moses to instruct the people to build the Mishkan.* It is what He meant when He said: “Let them make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell (*vesh-achanti*) among them” (Ex. 25:8). It is from this verb that we get the word *Mishkan*, “Tabernacle,” and the post-biblical word *Shechinah*, meaning the Divine Presence. Applied to G-d, as discussed last week in *parshat Terumah*, it means “the presence that is close.” If this is so – and it is the way Judah Halevi understood the text<sup>2</sup> – then the entire institution of the *Mishkan* was a Divine response to the sin of the Golden Calf, and an acceptance by G-d of Moses’ plea that He come close to the people. We cannot see G-d’s *face*; we cannot understand G-d’s *ways*; but we can encounter G-d’s *glory* whenever we build a home for His presence here on earth.

That is the ongoing miracle of Jewish spirituality. No one before the birth of Judaism ever envisaged G-d in such abstract and awe-inspiring ways: G-d is more distant than the furthest star and more eternal than time itself. Yet no religion has ever felt G-d to be closer. In Tanach the prophets argue with G-d. In the book of Psalms King David speaks to Him in terms of utmost intimacy. In the Talmud G-d listens to the debates between the Sages and accepts their rulings even when they go against a heavenly voice. G-d’s relationship with Israel, said the prophets, is like that between a parent and a child, or between a husband and a wife. In the Song of Songs it is like that between two infatuated lovers. The Zohar, key text of

Jewish mysticism, uses the most daring language of passion, as does *Yedid Nefesh*, the poem attributed to the sixteenth-century Safed kabbalist, Rabbi Elazar Azikri.

That is one of the striking differences between the synagogues and the cathedrals of the Middle Ages. In a cathedral you sense the vastness of G-d and the smallness of humankind. But in the Altneuschul in Prague or the synagogues of the Ari and Rabbi Joseph Karo in Safed, you sense the closeness of G-d and the potential greatness of humankind. Many nations worship G-d, but Jews are the only people to count themselves His close relatives (“My child, My firstborn, Israel” – Ex. 4:22).

Between the lines of Exodus 33, if we listen attentively enough, we sense the emergence of one of the most distinctive and paradoxical features of Jewish spirituality. No religion has ever held G-d higher, but none has ever felt Him closer. That is what Moses sought and achieved in chapter 33, in his most daring conversation with G-d.

#### AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- What do you think of the idea that Moshe had to convince G-d of what the people needed?
- Is your synagogue a big, magnificent house of worship or small and intimate? Which do you think is more conducive to closeness to Hashem?
- When you think of Hashem, do you think of a mighty all-powerful distant G-d, or an intimate and close G-d you can have a direct relationship with?

1. He famously said, at the end of *A Brief History of Time*, that if we were to reach a full scientific understanding of the cosmos, we would “know the mind of G-d.”

2. Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari*, 1:97.

# Kapparas HaTzibbur



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

It is very difficult to fathom how Bnei Yisrael – after having experienced the *esser makos*, with the *giluy Shechinah* at *kri'as Yam Suf* and *Ma'amad Har Sinai* – could proceed to worship the *eigel hazahav*. To make this more comprehensible, the Gemara in *Avodah Zarah* (4b-5a) teaches: Bnei Yisrael were not suited to perform that deed [with the *eigel*] ...If so, why did they act in this manner? To teach you ... that if a *tzibbur* sins, we tell them: “Go to another *tzibbur* [the ones who worshipped the *eigel*, and then did *teshuvah*, and their *teshuvah* was accepted.]”

In other words, Hashem suspended the people's *bechirah chofshis* (free will) on this occasion and forced them to sin. It was a Divine decree arranged in order to teach a most important lesson – that even if an entire *tzibbur* violates a most serious *aveirah*, it is still possible for everyone to be *chozer b'teshuvah*.

The Gemara in *Rosh Hashanah* (17b) elaborates on the idea that Hashem wanted the *teshuvah* of Bnei Yisrael after *chet ha'eigel* to serve as an example to future sinners. Chazal relate the *passuk*, *ויקרא על פניו ויקרא* – “Hashem passed before [Moshe] and proclaimed” (*Shemos* 34:6), to the Mishnaic expression *עובר לפני התיבה* – “he passes before the *aron*.” Based on this, Chazal teach that after *chet ha'eigel*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu appeared in a *nevu'ah* to Moshe wrapped in a *tallis* like a *shli'ach tzibbur* and demonstrated how to recite the *yud gimmel middos* (Thirteen Attributes of Mercy). At that time, He taught Moshe that “any time that Bnei Yisrael sin, let them perform this order of *tefillah* before Me and I shall forgive them.” This is the source of our *minhag* to have the *shli'ach tzibbur* wear a *tallis* during *Selichos*, even when it is recited at night.

The Gemara continues by quoting the *passuk*, “Behold, I am sealing a covenant” (*Shemos* 34:10), to emphasize the efficacy of the *yud gimmel middos*. Although the *passuk* does not clarify the nature of the *bris*, Chazal interpret that “a covenant has been made regarding the *yud gimmel middos* that they never return empty-handed.”

Rashi comments that up to this point, as implied by the *passuk*, *ונתתי את אשר אחון* – “I shall show favor when I choose to show favor” (*Shemos* 33:19), Hashem promised Moshe only that He may possibly accept a person's *teshuvah*. However, at the time of the revelation of the *yud gimmel middos* and the sealing of their *bris*, Hashem guaranteed Bnei Yisrael that their recitation will assuredly cause acceptance of sincere *teshuvah*. That is why we repeatedly refer to the *ברית של עשרה* in the Keil Melech *tefillah* recited during *Selichos*.

It is noteworthy that it was on Yom Kippur that Hashem declared, *סלחתי כדברך* – “I have forgiven because of your word” (*Bamidbar* 14:20), granting Bnei Yisrael forgiveness for the *chet ha'eigel* (*Rashi*, *Devarim* 9:18; *Tosfos*, *Bava Kamma* 82a, s.v. *kedei*). Thus, it stands to reason that the historical background of the *kapparah* granted on this day sheds light on the character of the *kapparah* of Yom Kippur itself.

The Rambam states (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:7): “Yom HaKippurim is the time of *teshuvah* for all, for the individual and for the many, and it is the time for forgiveness and pardoning for Yisrael.” Rav Soloveitchik pointed out that the text of the Rambam implies two distinct elements. The last word of the first phrase, “the time of *teshuvah* for all, for the individual and for the many,” refers to many

individuals. The second phrase, “the time for forgiveness and pardoning for Yisrael,” connotes something different. There is an aspect of Yom Kippur that addresses not the individual, nor many individuals, but rather Klal Yisrael as a single entity.

Thus, there are two categories of *kapparah* on Yom Kippur. One *kapparah* is individual, specific to each and every Jew. Additionally, Klal Yisrael as a whole, as an independent entity, achieves forgiveness through a collective *kapparah*.

It seems that we derive the communal nature of the *kapparah* that the Rambam highlights from the fact that Bnei Yisrael attained *kapparah* for the *chet ha'eigel* on Yom Kippur.

*Avodah zarah* is a unique *aveirah* in that a group of individual violations can be considered a communal *aveirah*. The residents of an *ir hanidachas*, in which the majority of the inhabitants of a city in Eretz Yisrael worship *avodah zarah*, receive a different punishment than individuals who worship *avodah zarah*. The city with all its property must be destroyed, the city may never be rebuilt, and the guilty are executed by the sword.

The Ohr Same'ach (*Hilchos Avodas Kochavim* 4:1) explains that the nature of these *dinim* is that the guilty are not treated as *yechidim*. When the majority of the residents of a city worship *avodah zarah*, the *aveirah* becomes an *aveirah* of the *tzibbur*. Since the original *kapparah* of Yom Kippur addressed an *aveirah* of the *tzibbur*, the Rambam understood that Yom Kippur is an auspicious time not only for a *yachid* to do *teshuvah* for his *aveiros*, but for the *tzibbur* to do *teshuvah* for its *aveiros* as well.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha II.

# The Extra Five Minutes



**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman**  
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

**T**he sin of the Golden Calf takes centre stage in this week's Parsha. Rav Hutner in Pachad Yitzchok on Sukkos explains that within every sin there needs to be a point of good in order for a person to be able to do Teshuva. There has to be some sort of good which is holding the person back from being totally evil, which he can then use to pull himself out and be able to do Teshuva.

What was the point of good in the Cheit Ha'eigel? Rav Hutner writes that Aharon Hakohen told Klal Yisrael, 'Machar', we will build the Eigel tomorrow morning. Klal Yisrael got up early in the morning to do it, but they waited the overnight. That Machar, the fact they waited until the next morning, is the Chesed that Aharon Hakohen did with Klal Yisrael that they should be able to do Teshuva. Within the sin, there was some sort of recognition that what they were doing was wrong, and therefore, although they were carried away and Aharon could not convince them not to make an Eigel, the fact that he could push it off to the next day was the point of good that had redeeming value and from that Klal Yisrael was able to do Teshuva.

Rav Tzaddok writes the same idea regarding regarding Malkus – lashes. The Gemara says that someone who transgresses a sin which is punishable by lashes receives 40 lashes, yet we know that in reality a person only gets 39. Rav Tzaddok explains that the sin itself is deserving of 40 lashes but we assume that when a person does an Aveira there is a little bit of hesitation, there is an opening



**There has to be some sort of good which is holding the person back from being totally evil, which he can then use to pull himself out and be able to do Teshuva.**

of good and he didn't do it totally. The Aveira is one less and we give him 39. The idea being, that within every sin, when there is a redeeming value the sin is less serious.

Rav Hutner is telling us a very big Chiddush. That even if someone would commit an Aveira, but, if he could push it off until later that itself is a redeeming value in his recognition of the sin that makes Teshuva all the more possible.

The story is told about the Steipler Rebbe when he was in the Russian army as a young man and he had guard duty in Siberia. There was a heavy coat that the guard would wear because the Siberian winter is freezing. The coat of course in the Russian army had not been checked for Shatnez, and when the Steipler went out to guard duty he realized he would have to wear the coat even though it was possibly Shatnez, because of Pikuach Nefashos. But he said to himself, 'well I could wait five minutes, it is not a life threatening situation for the first five minutes', and he pushed it off five minutes. Then he pushed it off five more minutes and so on. Even if someone has to do something or knows he is going to

do something, saying five minutes later is an extraordinary act of recognition that this is not what I should be doing.

If a person is sitting and learning and the Yeitzer Hora says you have to make a call, you have to call such and such. Or you are thirsty and you need a coffee. If you tell yourself five more minutes, even if you step out later to make the call or get the coffee, there is a redeeming factor in being able to push it off.

I heard a similar behavior regarding Rav Elyashiv. At the end of his life, Rav Elyashiv had a very difficult time walking. The doctor said that if he sits and learns a whole day and doesn't walk a little he will not be able to walk at all. The family really wanted him to go for a walk. They got one of the close Talmidim and they rehearsed with him exactly how to present it to Rav Elyashiv to try to convince him to go for a walk. Rav Elyashiv is sitting with his Sefer and the Talmid sits down next to him and he starts to present the idea to him. Rav Elyashiv listens quietly and when the Talmid finished speaking he says 'yes, but a little later.'

That's the challenge for us all. When you are sitting and learning and there is something distracting you, when you are at Night Seder and you just feel itchy to leave, say 'yes, five more minutes'. Squeeze in the extra five more minutes. That itself is a redeeming value when a person is doing something that he should not be doing.

● Edited by Yehuda Kaufold and Josh Harris.

# קשה עורף: The secret of strength



**Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau**  
Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, Israel

Parashat Ki Tisa brings our attention to the sin of the golden calf; a horrible, incomprehensible sin. Only three months had passed since Hashem brought Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt and suddenly they were making a calf out of golden jewelry! They bowed towards the calf and said:

אֵלֶּה אֲ-לֹהֵינוּ... אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיפוּ מֵאָרֶז מִצְרַיִם:

'This is your G-d, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!'

Hashem then said to Moshe:

וַיֹּאמֶר ה'... רְאִיתִי אֶת-הָעַם הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה עַם-קָשֶׁה-עֹרֶף הוּא

Hashem further said to Moses, "I see that this is a stiffnecked people".

We see here that Hashem is **accusing** Am Yisrael of being a stiff necked people. This makes Moshe's response defending Am Yisrael very interesting:

... וַיֹּאמֶר אֶם-נָא מְצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ ה' יְלֹד-נָא אֲדֹנָי בְּקִרְבְּנוּ כִּי עַם-קָשֶׁה-עֹרֶף הוּא וְסָלַחְתָּ לְעֹבְרָנוּ

"If I have gained Your favor, O my L-rd, pray, let my L-rd go in our midst, because it is a stiffnecked people. Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Your own!"

Have you ever heard a defense lawyer repeat the words of the accuser? It seems then that קשה עורף has both positive and negative connotations and it simply depends on how you channel this trait. Stubbornness in the sense of insisting on something sounds negative like insisting on arguing, insisting on being stubborn, not willing to accept authority or to listen to others, not willing to take on any duties or responsibilities, that's stubborn in the negative context. A stubborn people however, can reflect having a strong spine, having character, strong values, principles

that one insists on having and insisting on fulfilling those values and principles.

That is why Moshe defends Am Yisrael not by saying to Hashem to have mercy on Am Yisrael **despite** fact we are a stiff necked people, rather have mercy on us **because** we are a stiff necked people - כִּי עַם קָשֶׁה עֹרֶף הוּא.

Amon, Moav, Ashur, Persia, Greece, Rome, Cartago, have any of them survived until now? No! Who has survived since ancient times? Only the Jewish people! Specifically the people who have suffered more than others, who have been exiled more than others are the only ones who have survived; and why is that? Because when the Jewish people needed to they were an עם קשה עורף, they had the tough spine and determination when they needed to and stuck to their values.



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# Appreciating Our Gifts - Before It's Too Late



**Rabbi Shalom Rosner**  
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

וְהַלְחֹת מִעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים הִמָּה וְהַמְכָתֵב מְכָתֵב אֱלֹקִים הוּא...

*The Luchot were G-d's work, and the inscription was G-d's inscription, engraved on the tablets. (Shemot 32:15).*

It is interesting to note that the first time the Torah mentions the *Luchot*, there is no detailed description of the *Luchot*. It is only immediately prior to Moshe's destruction of the *Luchot* that they are described as the work of Hashem, inscribed by G-d and divinely engraved. Why are the *Luchot* only described before they are broken and not at their first appearance? We will explore two lessons that can be learned from the placement of the description of the *Luchot* at this juncture.

The Shemen Hatov suggests that the Torah wanted to emphasize right before Moshe breaks the *Luchot*, that despite that they were in fact written by Hashem, Moshe did not hesitate to break the *Luchot* when he felt the nation was not ready or able to receive them.

In fact, the last words of the Torah, "*le'einei kol Yisrael*" – "before the eyes of all Israel", according to Rashi, refers to Moshe's shattering of the *Luchot*. Moshe is credited with having broken the *Luchot*. Despite the fact that he spent 40 days and nights studying its contents with Hashem, he did not hesitate to destroy them. Why did he not just place them in a hidden area and when he felt things quieted down and Bnei Yisrael would be ready to accept the *Luchot*, he could then go and retrieve them. Why did he destroy the *Luchot*? It is like someone destroying a thesis they labored over for months.

The *Meshech Chochma* posits that Moshe feared that Bnei Yisrael would ascribe special power to the *Luchot* as they did with the Golden Calf. They thought Moshe was granted G-dly powers and when he did not return when they anticipated, they needed to replace him with a Golden Calf that they felt had inherent power. Moshe had to clearly indicate to them that there is no inherent *kedusha* in the *Luchot*. The *kedusha* is derived from the fact that its content was directed by Hashem. All holiness flows from Torah, which is ultimately from HaKadosh Baruch Hu. The description of the *Luchot* appears prior to them being broken to highlight Moshe's brave act of destroying the G-d given *Luchot*.

The Shemen Hatov offers an additional explanation. Often, one only realizes the significance of something when he is about to lose it. The description of the *Luchot* appears before they are broken to accentuate that Bnei Yisrael are going to miss this most precious gift.

This is an important lesson for us. Our inability to appreciate what we have before it is too late is one of the saddest aspects of human nature. Rabbi Frand (in his sefer on the Parsha vol 2) relates this thought to our lives. When we are young and spend time in school or Yeshiva, we do not always maximize that time and appreciate the educational experience. It is only in our later years that we become nostalgic and wish we could relive those special years.

When we raise our children, we get caught up in the challenging moments and fail to appreciate the time we spend with them. Years later, when our nests are empty, we wish we could hear their laughter in our living room.

At times one's parents seem to pose difficulty. They may offer unsolicited advice or criticism and it may take a lot of effort to care for them. Yet, when they pass away, children suddenly realize what they lost and yearn for one more conversation and contemplate what advice they would offer when such advice is indeed needed. We may not always appreciate our relationship with our parents until they are no longer with us.

By reserving the description of the *Luchot* until they were about to be broken, the Torah warns us to appreciate our gifts in life – our children, our parents, and the myriad of other gifts that Hashem grants us – before it is too late.

# Parshas Ki Sisa: The Importance of Preparation



**Michal Horowitz**  
Judaic Studies Teacher

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Ki Sisa*, G-d continues to instruct Moshe regarding the construction of the *Mishkan*, the Tabernacle. In this week's *parsha* we learn of the *Kiyyor*, the copper laver that stood outside of the *Mishkan* proper, in the courtyard. The purpose of the *Kiyyor* was for washing.

*And G-d spoke to Moshe saying: And you shall make a copper laver and its pedestal of copper, for washing; place it between the Tent of Meeting and the Altar, and put water there; and Aharon and his sons shall wash from it their hands and their feet; When they come to the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water that they not die... (Shemos 30:17-20).*

Rashi (to v.20) teaches that the washing of the hands and the feet of the *kohanim* prior to conducting the priestly service was so fundamental that failure to do so rendered the *kohen chayav misah* – liable for death.

What was it about the *kiyyor* – the laver constructed from the copper mirrors of the women (Shemos 38:8 with Rashi) – that was so fundamental to the priestly service? Furthermore, what lesson does it contain for us today, in the absence of the *Mishkan* and *Beis Ha'Mikdash*?

Rabbi Shalom Rosner writes, “Interestingly, the placement of the *Kiyyor* is not where we would expect. It was placed out of the way of the *kohanim*, far from where they entered the *Mishkan*. Additionally, the Torah prescribes the death penalty for failing to wash before engaging in the *avoda*. What is the importance of their washing their hands and feet even if they know they were clean?”

Rabbi Rosner explains “that this washing was not about becoming pure, because even *kohanim* who were completely pure had to wash” with water from the *kiyyor* prior to conducting the priestly service. Rather, there is a deeper message. Although we are involved in a life of constant *asi'at ha'mitzvot* and striving to perform good deeds to the best of our abilities, we often forget that the purpose of all that we do is not just about getting things done and performing *mitzvot* by rote. Rather, we need to focus and realize what we are about to do, and that is what sanctifying oneself is about.

If we would take a few moments to prepare for the *mitzvah* before performing the *mitzvah*, and to prepare for the act of kindness before carrying it out, so many of our daily activities would be so much more meaningful. “If we take a moment, so to speak, to wash our hands and feet first, to sanctify ourselves before performing a *mitzvah*, our *mitzvot* would have so much more depth. We have to make sure our external actions and our internal thoughts are aligned” (Shalom Rav, p.445-446).

It is not enough for us to perform the actions of the *mitzvos* as commanded by G-d. We must be thoughtful in their performance, pay attention to the actions we are carrying out, and put our minds, thoughts and hearts into all that we do. And one way to achieve this goal is through preparation for the *mitzvah*.

The *kiyyor*, used for washing prior to the priestly service, teaches us this fundamental lesson. It is not enough to rush into our *avodas Hashem*; we must be

ever-mindful of before Whom we stand and Whom we serve. Taking the (proverbial) time to “wash our hands and feet” reminds us to prepare to serve G-d and fellow man.

In regard to preparation for the *mitzvah* of prayer, the Sages teach: *The early generations of pious men would wait one hour, in order to reach the solemn frame of mind appropriate for prayer, and then pray, so that they would focus their hearts toward their Father in Heaven (Mishnah, Brachos 30b).*

In fact, preparation in *avodas Hashem* is so important, that it is an integral part of our Shabbos observance.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt'l teaches, “*And it shall be on the sixth day that when they prepare what they will bring (Shemos 16:5)...* Shabbos is related to man's preparation during the week. This preparation solidifies its holiness. The essence of Shabbos is based on these verses. It is a day for which we must prepare.

“The prohibition of *muktzeh* is centered on the need for preparation. Among the prohibitions of *muktzeh* is food that was not prepared prior to Shabbos. One does not merit, nor is one worthy of, celebrating Shabbos unless one prepares for it. Rambam states: It is a *mitzvah* to wash one's face, hands and feet in hot water on *erev Shabbos* due to the honor of Shabbos. He wraps himself in a *tallis* and sits with his head covered, anxiously awaiting the reception of Shabbos as if he were going to greet a king (Hilchos Shabbos 30:2). *Proper preparation is a necessary condition for any encounter with holiness*” (Chumash Masores HaRav, Shemos, p.129-131).

*Continued on page 18*



# “L'ma'an Sh'mo”



**Rabbi Menachem Leibtag**

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In contrast to Yirmiyahu who envisions Bnei Yisrael's redemption from the Exile as a process that begins with “teshuva”, Yechezkel foresees a redemption process which begins without “teshuva”: “Say to the House of Israel: ... Not for your sake will I act, but for the sake of My holy Name, which you have profaned among the nations. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord when... I will take you from among the nations and gather you in from all the countries and bring you back to your own land...”

According to Yechezkel, the redemption process will begin even if Bnei Yisrael are not worthy. His reasoning is quite simple. Even though Bnei Yisrael were first sent into Exile as a punishment for their sinful behavior, their existence in Exile itself caused G-d's Name to be profaned, for the nations said of them: “These are the people of G-d, yet they had to leave His Land!” Therefore I am concerned for My holy Name that Bnei Yisrael have caused to be profaned among the nations to which they have come.”

Therefore G-d will redeem his people even though they are not deserving, in order that His Name will no longer be profaned among the nations [=“l'maan sh'mo”].

Clearly, Yechezkel would prefer for the redemption process to begin in the manner described by Yirmiyahu. However, Yechezkel claims that even if this “teshuva” process is not initiated by Bnei Yisrael, G-d will nonetheless redeem His people.

A similar theme is found earlier in Sefer Yechezkel in his description of Bnei Yisrael's redemption from Egypt. G-d's

original hope was for Bnei Yisrael to perform “teshuva” before the plagues began: “On the day that I chose Israel... when I made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt... when I said ‘Ani Hashem Elokeichem’... that same day I swore to take them out of Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey ... And I said to them [at that time]: Each man must rid himself of his detestable ways, and not defile himself with the fetishes of Egypt – [for] ‘Ani Hashem Elokeichem.’ But, they rebelled against Me, ‘v'lo avu lishmo'a ay'lai,’ no one rid himself from his detestable ways, no one gave up the fetishes of Egypt, and I resolved to pour out My fury upon them...”

Yechezkel states explicitly what Sefer Shmot had only alluded to: G-d had called upon Bnei Yisrael to repent prior to the Exodus to be worthy of their redemption. He had instructed them to cleanse themselves of the “tum'ah” of their Egyptian culture in preparation for G-d's revelation “b'shem Havaya.” However, Bnei Yisrael did not listen.

Although Bnei Yisrael deserved destruction instead of redemption, Yechezkel explains that God saved them from Egypt only for the sake of His name: “But I acted for the sake of My Name in order that it not be profaned in the sight of the nations [‘va'as l'maan sh'mi...’]”

Hence, Yechezkel sees Bnei Yisrael's redemption from the Babylonian Exile as taking place in a manner similar to their redemption from Egypt. However, similar to their redemption from Egypt, even though this process did not begin with Bnei Yisrael's “teshuva,” repentance was an integral element of the continuation of that process. Therefore, upon their return to the Land Yechezkel foresees: “And I will

sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall become clean: I will cleanse you from all your tum'ah... And I will give you a new heart and new spirit... in order that you will once again follow My laws and observe My rules. Then you shall dwell in the Land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people and I will be Your G-d...”

This concept of ‘sprinkling of water upon you’ to cleanse you from your sins parallels the procedure of sprinkling the “mei chatat” to cleanse an individual who became “tamey”; this is why this perek was chosen as the Haftara for Parshat Parah.

Therefore, based on Yechezkel, Parshat Parah should remind us not only of our need to cleanse ourselves from tum'at meyt in order to bring the Korban Pesach, but more so to remind ourselves that should we find ourselves in a redemption process from Exile that begins without “teshuva,” it is incumbent upon us to mend our evil ways and repent properly during that process in order that it can continue in a more ideal manner. By doing so, we will be worthy of the final words of this week's Haftara: “When I have cleansed you from all your sins, I will people your SETTLEMENTS] and the ruined places shall be rebuilt. The desolate land, after lying in waste... shall again be tilled. And it will be said: This land that was once desolate has become like the Garden of Eden, and the cities once ruined... are now populated and fortified. And the nation left around you shall know that I the Lord have rebuilt the ravaged places and replanted the desolate land...”

# It's Not Personal



**Rabbi Eli Mansour**

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**P**arashat Ki-Tisa tells the story of Het Ha'egel, the sin of the golden calf, in response to which G-d decided to kill Beneh Yisrael and begin a new nation through Moshe Rabenu. He informed Moshe of His decision, and assured him that his "job" was safe, as a new nation would emerge from his progeny. Moshe, however, selflessly refused the offer. Devoted unconditionally to the people under his charge, he intervened to save them, praying to G-d to annul His decree. In the end, of course, G-d accepted his prayer, and decided against Beneh Yisrael's annihilation.

Moshe's devotion to the people comes into sharper focus when we consider the background to the story of the golden calf. What caused the people to fall so drastically from the level they achieved at the time of Matan Torah, and construct a graven image? Hazal explain that when Moshe did not return from the top of Mount Sinai when the people thought he would, the Satan seized the opportunity to cause them to sin. He made the world appear dark and showed them an image of Moshe lying dead in a coffin. This caused the people to become terribly depressed and anxious, and this allowed them to



**What caused the people to fall so drastically from the level they achieved at the time of Matan Torah, and construct a graven image?**

deteriorate to the point where they constructed a golden calf.

In short, the people made and worshiped the golden calf thinking that Moshe Rabenu had died. And yet, the Torah tells that on the day they committed this sin, "Va'yakumu Le'sahek" – "They arose to make merry." The worship was accompanied by frivolous merriment and festivity. There was song, dance, and all manner of exuberant celebration. Moshe had every reason to feel terribly offended by the people's jubilation. After all he had done for them, leading them out of Egypt and through the sea, caring for them like a faithful shepherd and bringing them the Torah, here they were celebrating what they thought was his death. No mourning, no grief, no eulogies – only celebration and festivity!

But this did not bother Moshe or affect his commitment to the people one iota. He understood that this is not personal. Moshe did not say to himself, "What an ungrateful people!" Rather, he thought, "It's not their fault. They're frail, they were only recently freed from generations of harsh slavery. This is not about me." And therefore he did not give up on them or reject them. He pleaded courageously and passionately on their behalf, effectively saving them from annihilation.

This is a true model of greatness. Moshe here shows us the ability to separate his personal feelings from the people's needs. His mind was focused not on his ego, on the respect and consideration owed to him, but rather on what was best for the people. And this is why he interceded on their behalf despite having been scorned by them. He rose above the concern for his ego and concerned himself solely with the needs of Beneh Yisrael. And Moshe thereby sets an inspiring example for us of responsible and selfless leadership, tending to the needs of the people around us without any concern for personal honor and prestige.

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And so, of all the *keilim* (implements) of the *Mishkan* the copper *kiyyor* reminds us not only to wash before serving G-d, but to take the time to prepare to serve G-d!

Rabbi Rosner's conclusion is most apt. "Perhaps this is why the *kiyyor* was built

from mirrors. Every time the *kohanim* went to wash themselves, they saw their reflection, a reminder to look inside themselves to make sure they were focused on the *avoda* they were about to perform" (Shalom Rav, p.446)."

May all our *mitzvos* be imbued with the holiness of both preparation and action, as we lead meaningful lives of Divine service.

# Divorcing the Torah from the World



**Rabbi Moshe Weinberger**  
Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

The mitzvah of the *parah adumah*, the red heifer, through which one afflicted with impurity due to contact with the dead, is more familiar to us in terms of what we do *not* know about it, rather than what we do know about it. We know it as the quint-essential *chok*, law whose full meaning is hidden from us. Why is this and what does it teach us?

I believe that a deeper understanding of the following *Midrash* will help us understand the answer to these questions. In *Pesikta D'Rav Kahana* (*Chukas*, 7), we find the following encounter:

A certain non-Jew asked Rav Yochanan ben Zakai and said to him, “These things that you do [the ritual of the *parah adumah*] appear like a type of sorcery. They bring a cow, slaughter it, burn it, bring up [its ashes], take its ashes, and one of you who is defiled to a dead body has two or three drops sprinkled on him, and they tell him he is pure!” He answered him... “Have you never seen a person possessed by a spirit in your days?” He answered him, “Yes.” [Rav Yochanan ben Zakai] said to him, “And what do you do [in a case of possession]?” He said to him, “They bring roots, smoke them. They beat it with water and [the spirit] departs.” He said to him, “Do your ears not hear what your mouth is saying? This spirit [removed by the *parah*] too is a spirit of impurity, as the *passuk* says (*Zechariah* 13:2), ‘[I will remove] the [false] prophets and the spirit of impurity [from the earth].’”

The non-Jew in the story ostensibly has a good question. Magic and sorcery means any act or ritual that mysteriously transforms one reality into another. The ritual of the *parah adumah* seems to be similar. One takes an impure person, burns a cow, mixes it with water and ashes, sprinkles a couple of drops into him, and poof! He is now a pure person. The only thing similar to this kind of transformation in this non-Jew’s experience was witchcraft. The text of the Torah, which purportedly forbids sorcery, contradicts this person’s life experience and he wanted to see if Rav Yochanan ben Zakai could reconcile that contradiction by showing how the Torah actually did fit into his life experience.

Rav Yochanan ben Zakai therefore showed him how there was actually something in the inquirer’s own life experience that was already consistent with the *parah adumah*. He pointed out that the ritual does not transform one thing (something impure) into something else (something pure), like witchcraft, as the non-Jewish person previously believed. Rather, it removes a foreign, non-physical occupying force (impurity) out of an otherwise pure person, similar to the type of exorcisms with which the person was familiar in his own experience. He showed the non-Jew how the text of the Torah could actually fit in with his preexisting world view.

But the story does not end there. Satisfied with the rabbi’s answer, the inquirer left. And while he was satisfied with Rav Yochanan ben Zakai’s answer, his students who were listening to the conversation were most certainly not:

When he went out, his students said to him, “Rabi, you dismissed him with a soft reed [a superficial response]. But what will you answer us?” He said to them, “By your lives, the dead do not render impure, nor does the water purify. Rather, it is the decree of G-d. Hashem said, ‘I have decreed a decree. I have established a law. And you are not permitted to transgress My decree. ‘This is the decree of the Torah’ (*Bamidbar* 19:2).”

Rav Yochanan ben Zakai’s students were also bothered by the inquirer’s question. They knew that their rebbe’s answer only addressed how the Torah could fit into the superstitious world of exorcism in which this non-Jew lived. Exorcism too appears to be a form of magic. They requested an explanation satisfactory even to those who live in a Torah world. The problem is that it appears their rebbe pushed them off with a non sequitur as well. It appeared that he answered them by simply saying, “It’s a decree from Heaven. We don’t question such things.” How does this address the students’ legitimate desire to understand how the Torah’s mitzvah of *parah adumah* squares with their non-superstitious understanding of reality.

The truth is Rav Yochanan ben Zakai was turning their entire understanding of reality upside down to show them the fallacy upon which the question was based. He was teaching them and us a fundamental principle upon which our understanding of life and Yiddishkeit stands. They and the non-Jew viewed this world as *one* objective reality and the Torah as *another*, Divinely given, objective

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# Broken

## Why Breaking the Tablets Was Moses' Greatest Accomplishment



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The simple reading of the story goes like this: After the Jews created a Golden Calf, Moses smashed the stone tablets created by G-d, engraved with the Ten Commandments. Moses and G-d then "debated" the appropriate response to this transgression and it was decided that if the people would truly repent, G-d would give them a second chance. Moses hewed a second set of stone tablets; G-d engraved them also with the Ten Commandments, and Moses gave them to the Jewish people.

Yet a few major questions come to mind.

1. Moses, outraged by the sight of a golden calf erected by the Hebrews as a deity, smashed the stone tablets. He apparently felt that the Jews were undeserving of them, and that it would be inappropriate to give them this Divine gift. But why did Moses have to break and shatter the heavenly tablets? Moses could have hidden them or returned them to their heavenly maker?

2. The rabbis teach us that "The whole tablets and the broken tablets nestled inside the Ark of the Covenant." Both sets of tablets were later taken into the Land of Israel and kept side by side in the Ark, situated in the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Why would they place the broken tablets in the Holy of Holies, when these fragments were a constant reminder of the great moral failure of the Jewish people. Why not just disregard them, or deposit them in a safe isolated place?

3. In its eulogy for Moses, the Torah chooses this episode of smashing the

tablets as the highlight and climax of Moses' achievements.

In the closing verses of Deuteronomy we read: "Moses, the servant of G-d, died there in the land of Moab... And there arose not since a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom G-d knew face to face; all the signs and wonders which G-d sent to do in the land of Egypt... that mighty hand, those great fearsome deeds, which Moses did before the eyes of all Israel."

What did Moses do "before the eyes of all Israel?" Rashi, in his commentary on Torah, explains "That his heart emboldened him to break the tablets before their eyes, as it is written, 'and I broke them before your eyes.' G-d's opinion then concurred with his opinion, as it is written, 'which you broke—I affirm your strength for having broken them.'"

Following all of the grand achievements of Moses, the Torah chooses to conclude its tribute to Moses by alluding to this episode of breaking the tablets! Granted that Moses was justified in breaking the tablets, but can this be said to embody his greatest achievement? How about his taking the Jews out of Egypt? Molding them into a people? Splitting the Red Sea? Receiving the Torah from G-d and transmitting it to humanity? Shepherding them for forty years in a wilderness?

Moses did not break the tablets because he was angry and lost his control. Rather, the breaking of the tablets was the beginning of the healing process. Before the golden calf was created, the Jews could find G-d within the wholesomeness of the tablets, within the spiritual wholesomeness of life. Now, after the people have created the golden calf, hope was not lost.

Now they would find G-d in the shattered pieces of a once beautiful dream.

Moses was teaching the Jewish people the greatest message of Judaism: Truth could be crafted not only from the spiritually perfected life, but also from the broken pieces of the human corrupt and demoralized psyche. The broken tablets, too, possess the light of G-d.

Which is why the sages tell us that not only the whole tablets, but also the broken ones, were situated in the holy of holies. This conveyed the message articulated at the very genesis of Judaism: From the broken pieces of life you can create a holy of holies.

G-d, the sages tell us, affirmed Moses' decision to break the tablets. Because the broken tablets, representing the shattered pieces of human existence, have their own story to tell; they contain a light all their own. Truth is found not only in wholesomeness, but also—sometimes primarily—in the broken fragments of the human spirit. There are moments when G-d desires that we connect to Him as wholesome people, with clarity and a sense of fullness; there are yet deeper moments when He desires that we find Him in the shattered experiences of our lives.

We hope and pray to always enjoy the "whole tablets," but when we encounter the broken ones, we ought not to run from them or become dejected by them; with tenderness we ought to embrace them and bring them into our "holy of holies," recalling the observation of one of the Rebbe's, "there is nothing more whole than a broken heart."

We often believe that G-d can be found in our moments of spiritual wholesomeness. But how about in the conflicts which

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# Parshas Parah: Lev Basar



**Rabbi Judah Mischel**

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**R**av Simcha Wasserman, the renowned *rosh yeshivah* and pioneering educator, was the eldest son of the martyred *gaon*, Reb Elchonon, Hy'd. A 'down to earth' *talmid chacham*, Rav Simcha was beloved for his sensitivity, openness and approachability. Although the Wasserman's were not blessed with children of their own, they dedicated themselves to rebuilding Torah institutions, establishing *yeshivos* in Strasbourg, Detroit, Los Angeles and Yerushalayim. In this way, they raised thousands of students across the world.

Rav Simcha's holy father had been murdered in Kovno, and his entire world was lost. Since then, he would soldier through life, with incredible faith and strength, and seldom speak about or show emotion about his losses in the War. However, one time of year, on Parshas Parah, he would receive the *Maftir aliyah* and recite the Haftarah which contains the End-of-Days prophecy of Yechezkel (11:19):

וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְרוּחַ חַדְשָׁה אֶתּוֹ בְּקִרְבָּנָם  
וְהִסְרֹתִי לֵב הָאֶבֶן מִבְּשָׂרָם וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר

"And I shall give them one heart, and a new spirit I shall place within them, and I shall remove the heart of stone from their flesh, and I shall give them a heart of flesh."

When Rav Simcha came to this line, his voice would choke and he would break down and weep copiously. Every year,

*Continued from previous page*

torment our psyches? How about when we are struggling with depression, addiction or confusion? How about when we feel despair and pain?

What Moses accomplished with breaking the tablets was the demonstration of the

approaching the redemption of Pesach, he allowed himself to soften, open his heart and feel everything that he had gone through.



We usually think that a *lev even*, a 'heart of stone' is undesirable; a hardened, closed heart implies we are not in touch with our feelings, emotions and true desires. However, the Chasam Sofer says, in exile, the heart of stone is really a gift, a coping mechanism we are given in our excruciating exiles, allowing us to survive. The suffering, travails and hardships we experience in *galus* can just be too much to consider fully and feel deeply. If we were to be completely vulnerable and open, we would crumble under the weight of our collective suffering and lack the strength to continue on in our service of Hashem. With the dawn of redemption and the End of Days, we will be granted respite from the travails of *galus* and finally have the opportunity to reflect, take a deep breath, open our hearts and fully process the entire experience of our personal and communal history.



Parshas Ki Tisa details the laws of the Red Heifer, a *tikun* for Am Yisrael following their falling into a state of impurity with the *Eigel haZahav*, the Golden Calf.

When Moshe ascended to the upper worlds to petition Hashem in prayer on behalf of his fallen people, the Midrash teaches that he found the *Ribbono shel*

truth that the stuff we call holiness can be carved out from the very alienation of a person from G-d. From the very turmoil of his or her psychological and spiritual brokenness, a new holiness can be discovered.

*Olam* learning (as it were) the parsha of the Parah Adumah: *Zos chukas haTorah...* Hashem said to Moshe: *Eini osek elah b'taharasan shel Yisrael*, "I busy Myself only with the purity of the Jewish People!" (*Pesikta Rabbasi*, 14)

In the days of Moshiach, Hashem will 'be busy' extricating us from the depth of our exile. He will metaphorically sprinkle us with pure waters like those being cleansed from *tumas meis*, the ritual impurity of coming in contact with death. He will renew within each of us a pure heart and a spirit as befitting His beloved ones. He will replace the emotional armor of our battles with a deep sensitivity, allowing us to feel His healing Presence and giving us all a new beginning in Eretz Yisrael.



"I will give you a heart of flesh, *LeV BaSaR...*" The Midrash suggests reading the word not as *BaSaR* but as *BoSeR*, "glad". Rebbe Nachman says this means everyone will be glad at their friends' good fortune. (*Chayey Moharan* #339)

A heart that hurts, that feels, is a heart that is totally alive. As we approach our redemption, may we open our hearts to hold and relieve the pain of those who are not yet able to feel completely, those who are soldiering through life for Hashem. And may we merit to tearfully rejoice with them on the day that their good fortune is fully revealed.

The greatest achievement of Moses was his ability to show humanity how we can take our brokenness and turn it into a holy of holies. There is light and joy to be found in the fragments of sacredness.

# Purity of Heart

**Mrs. Shira Smiles**

International lecturer and curriculum developer

**T**his Shabbat is known as Parashat Parah wherein we read about the purification process for those who are tamei l'met. Although we do not yet have a parah adumah the message of purity is still relevant as we prepare for Pesach each year.

The Torah describes how anything, vessel or person, that became impure from being in contact with a corpse were sprinkled with water mixed with the ashes of the parah adumah as part of the process to regain purity. Rav Wolfson homiletically explains this as describing Hashem going out to gather His people from near and far on Purim to bring them closer to Him. The Shabbat after Purim, Parashat Parah, is the apex of this experience. It is when Hashem begins the process of purification, inspiring us to come closer to Him. Indeed, the sifrei kabbalah note that each day preceding Pesach Hashem provides each Jewish soul with the ability to begin extricating itself from the clutches of the yetzer hara.

Rav Zev Leff remarks that on Pesach we are obligated to see ourselves as if we left



**Parashat Parah is a reminder that this period is a time to look at the aspects of ourselves that need improvement and work on moving ourselves past our limitations.**

Egypt. It is not just a commemoration of leaving a locale on the map, rather each year we ourselves must leave our metzarim, the constraints that limit us. Parashat Parah is a reminder that this period is a time to look at the aspects of ourselves that need improvement and work on moving ourselves past our limitations.

Rav Biderman in Be'er Hachayim echoes this idea. This Shabbat is an opportunity to focus on purity of the heart. He quotes the Pri Tzadik who finds proof of this in the haftorah itself. Contrary to what would seem logical, the haftorah does not mention the idea of purification for

coming in contact with a corpse. Rather, Chazal chose the selection from Yechezkel (36;25-27) which describes how Hashem will sprinkle Am Yisrael with pure water to purify and infuse them with a new heart and spirit. Here the navi emphasizes a spiritual rejuvenation. The Chatam Sofer adds that the dust and ashes of the parah symbolize the broken hearts in the teshuvah process, our tears of repentance resemble the waters that are sprinkled to achieve purification.

Rav Biderman teaches that reading this Torah portion is akin to undergoing the process of taharah. He points out that in the opening pesukim (Bamidbar 19;1-2) the word 'lemor', to say, is repeated twice. This demonstrates that when there is no Beit Hamikdash, the 'saying' or reading from the Torah must be supplemented in some way. The Beis Aharon thus highlights the importance of having kavanah for the kriot haTorah to effect purification. Moreover, to concretize the desire to better ourselves, we should strengthen ourselves in an area of holiness. A small commitment has the power to bring tremendous purity.

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reality. They knew the Torah was true, but could not live its teachings until they could somehow explain the Torah in a way that was consistent with their understanding of the reality of the world. Rav Yochanan told them, "No! The cow has no independent existence. And impurity or purity have no independent existence either. All there is, is Torah. It defines and determines reality itself!"

Their rebbe was teaching them that there are not two independent worlds to be

reconciled – a world in which we live and a Divinely revealed Torah. Rather, there is only one world – the Torah. And it defines the reality of the physical world we know. The rituals of the Torah do not "change" reality because there is no independent reality to be changed. Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world. It is the source for any reality in the world. Reality is whatever the Torah decrees because it is the blueprint from which the world is created at every moment.

May Hashem help us catch ourselves when we begin asking how we can make the Torah fit into the way we think, rather than the other way around. In this merit, may we soon merit to live to see the time when Hashem will finally say He will remove the false prophets and the spirit of impurity from the earth with the coming of Moshiach and the complete redemption soon in our days!

# I Heard Them Laughing



**Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi**  
Popular Torah teacher and author

I spent the eve of Taanit Esther, Jewish Women's Day, in a shelter for women who have been beaten. I never say “battered women” because it's not an adjective, like “short/blonde.” She was beaten, she will get back up with G-d's help. I have met very strong women. Women who, unlike everything that makes so much noise in the streets today, believe in second plans after a breakup and a betrayal. They did not experience a “day of disruption” but weeks of disruption, years of disruption, days when they got up in the morning to work without sleeping a wink at night, and more than the physical pain, more than the fear, they were pained by the unbearable ease of breaking the first boards. “This can not be true!” They tried to explain to me, “It is impossible that he is so wrong, it is impossible that I am so wrong when I believe in him!”

Then I asked them: “What was there that still saved you, or what would you have wished for when you were suffering so much?” To my amazement, the common answer from all of them was, “Rav.”

Some said that it was only the rabbi they turned to who suddenly enlightened their eyes and told them that a home should not look like this and a relationship should not look like this, and others, too many, said that the rabbi told them over and over again, “Be good, work on your middot, respect him...”

That was the turning point in their broken lives, what the Rabbi said.



**The really strong hand is the one that holds you and does not let you fall.**

And for the first time, I understood the breaking of the luchot differently. Moshe Rabbeinu, the great lover of the Torah, after being in danger of death before angels who did not want to allow him to receive the Torah, of his own accord, without orders, throws out the same Torah itself!

He knows that as a rabbi, as “Moshe Rabbeinu,” he must deliver the very important message, “This is not what a relationship should look like.” When he conveys this groundbreaking idea, he does so in the only way he knows how: Torah study. This is the way of Torah, he told the shocked people, it will be in crisis if a relationship is so unfortunate for one party, man or woman.

Moshe Rabbeinu is not tearing the sea now, he is tearing the Torah itself, just so that we can give a strong hand to a strong and right relationship, “and the strong hand that Moshe made before the eyes of all Israel – that you broke the tablets before their eyes, yashar coach that you broke them!” This is the terrible tearing of the Torah on Shabbat “Ki Tisah.”

Only then can reconciliation begin, only then can trust begin in a new relationship, the second luchot.

At the end of the shiur, when I was talking about the prayer of Esther, a woman asked me in a weak voice: “Can I ask something else about prayer? Am I allowed to pray for revenge on someone who hurt me?”

I took a deep breath and answered her, “That will not make you happier. What you have to ask for is one thing: that he understands how wrong he was, that he understands how much he missed the good woman you are, that he mourns for his life when he misunderstood the term “strong hand.” The really strong hand is the one that holds you and does not let you fall.” At that moment, she stood up in tears and hugged me with such a strong hand!

This is the great lesson of Moshe. He will make the people who have erred mourn. “And they will mourn and remove the witnesses over them,” they understand that they easily betrayed something so precious and now? Atonement. If you believe you can perish, believe you can make amends! There will be punishment, there will be repentance, there will be philosophical questions about right and wrong, and then? Renewed trust in life, renewed trust in love. This last house will be greater than the first.

וזאת התורה אשר שבר משה לפני בני ישראל.

# Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin  
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Parashat Ki Tisa includes the treacherous incident of the Golden Calf. While the story starts at the beginning of Shemot 32, with a report of the people's betrayal and G-d's subsequent anger, only in verse 11 do we see Moshe's initial reaction:

וַיִּחַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־פָּנָיו ה'... וַיֹּאמֶר לְמַה ה' יִחַרְה אַפֶּךָ בְּעַמִּי  
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ...

“But Moshe implored the LORD his G-d, saying, ‘Let not Your anger, O LORD, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand.’”

This verse is familiar to us since it begins the Torah reading on fast days. But what exactly does the first word – וַיִּחַל – mean? It is usually translated as “implored” (or “beseeched.”) It would appear to come from a root related to the two letters חל. Generally, two letter verbs are part of the more common three letter roots – in this case,

perhaps חלה or חלל. And while there are many common words from those roots, the meaning “implore” doesn't seem to be one of them. Let's look at some explanations.

The most popular theory is that a more precise translation of וַיִּחַל would be “to soothe (G-d's face),” or even more specifically, “to soften.” According to this interpretation, it is related to the root חלה meaning “to be weak, sick.” This is also the source of the word מחלה – “disease.”

A different explanation<sup>1</sup> connects וַיִּחַל to a different meaning of חלה – “to be sweet.” In this case, the intention would be that by praying to G-d, Moshe “sweetened” His anger, reducing its severity. While the verb is not commonly found with that meaning, we do have other words that share that origin. For example, the sweet snack halva comes from an Arabic cognate, and one theory states that the traditional bread known as חלה got its name because it was

originally sweet. (Others dispute this and say the root of חלה is חלל, indicating that it was initially either round or hollow.)

Some connect the two – they say that the root חלה originally meant “to soften.” From there it split into the two meanings we've discussed – the negative “to be sick” and the positive “to sweeten.”

There are even more possibilities. One theory says it derives from the root חלל meaning “to begin,” meaning that Moshe began to plead his case. And another claims that וַיִּחַל should be understood as “he asked for mercy.” This finds support in the phrase חס וחסל חלה, since the first word derives from the root חוס, “to have pity.”

All of these are plausible explanations. Perhaps it will give you something to ponder the next time the Torah is read on a fast day.

1. For example, Devarim Rabbah 3:15.

## Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh  
Mizrachi Melbourne

It appears six times in Parshat Ki Tisa. In some of the times, it's a Mitzvah to make it, in other appearances it is an Aveira to make it. What is it ?

### Answer to the Parsha Riddle

Answer = ברית (Covenant)  
To keep the sabbath throughout the ages as a covenant for all time (31:16)  
ברית תהיה לך ואלהים ישראל  
G-d said: I hereby make a covenant. Before all your people I will work such wonders... (34:10)  
ברית אעשה לך ואלהים ישראל  
Beware of making a covenant with the inhabitants of the land (34:12)  
אל תעשה ברית עם תושבי הארץ  
You must not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land (34:15)  
אל תעשה ברית עם תושבי הארץ  
I make a covenant with you and with Israel (34:27)  
אעשה ברית איתך ואלהים ישראל  
And he wrote down on the tablets the terms of the covenant, the Ten Commandments... (34:28)

## DUST AND stars THIS WEEK in Jewish History

- March 11, 1415:** Pope Benedict XIII, enraged by the lack of Jewish conversions, banned the study of Talmud and tried to restrict Jewish life completely (he failed).
- Adar 19 5693 (1932):** Yahrzeit of Rabbi Yosef Sonnenfeld, who led the “Old Yishuv” in Jerusalem during the first part of the 20th century with courage and integrity.
- Adar 20, (1st Century BCE):** In a year of drought, Choni Ha-Me'agal's prayer for rain was answered.
- March 14, 1879:** Birthday of Albert Einstein, the greatest theoretical physicist of the 20th century.
- March 15, 1939:** Nazi troops invaded Czechoslovakia and occupied Prague, in violation of the Munich agreement signed just six months before.
- Adar 23, 2449 (1312 BCE):** The beginning of a seven-day inauguration of the Mishkan in the desert, and the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood.
- March 17, 1992:** Terrorists sent by Iran exploded a car bomb at the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 29 people and injuring 250.

The above is an abridged weekly version of *Dust & Stars*. To receive a free comprehensive post every day about the events and remarkable Jews who have changed the world, please subscribe: <https://dustandstars.substack.com/subscribe>

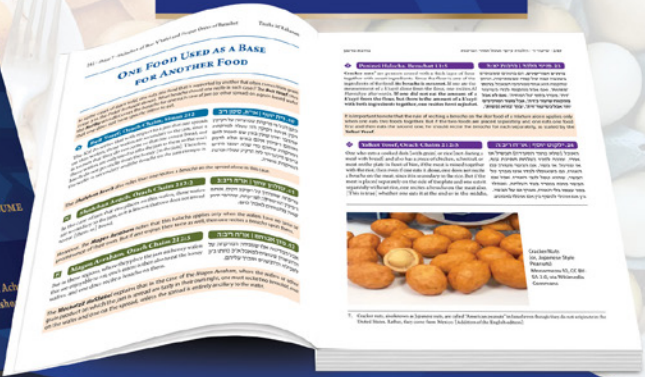


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May a child help form a zimmun?  
What beracha is made on dessert?  
Are we obligated to wash  
mayim acharonim today?

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PARSHA WEEKLY

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### MELBOURNE

Blake Street Hebrew Congregation  
Elsternwick Jewish Community  
Mizrachi Melbourne

### SYDNEY

Mizrachi Bondi

### PERTH

Dianella Shule – Mizrachi Perth

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Mizrachi Österreich

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Menashe Michaeli

### BRASIL

Mizrachi Sao Paulo  
Mizrachi Rio de Janeiro

### BULGARIA

#### SOFIA

Jewish Community

### CANADA

#### MONTREAL

ADATH Congregation  
Hebrew Academy

#### HAMPSTEAD

The ADATH

#### TORONTO

Beit Tzion Congregation  
Bnei Akiva Schools of Toronto  
Shaarei Tefillah Congregation

### CHILE

Mizrachi Chile  
Escuela Maimonides

### CROATIA

#### ZAGREB

Bet Israel Jewish Community of Croatia

### CZECH REPUBLIC

#### PRAGUE

Prague Jewish Community

### ECUADOR

Equador Jewish Community

### FINLAND

#### HELSINKI

Jewish Community of Helsinki

### GERMANY

#### KOLN

Jewish Community

### GUATEMALA

Guatemala City Jewish Community

### HOLLAND

#### AMSTERDAM

AMOS Amsterdam Modern Orthodox Sjoel

### HONG KONG

#### CHABAD HK

Jewish Women's Association (JWA)  
Kehilat Zion – Hechal Ezra  
Ohel Leah Synagogue  
The Jewish Community Centre  
United Jewish Congregation (UJC)

### ISRAEL

#### JERUSALEM

Amudim Beit Midrash for Women  
Baer Miriam  
Hashiveinu  
Jacques Sueke Foundation  
Michelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim (MMY)  
Midreshet Emunah v'Omanut  
Midreshet Eshel  
Midreshet HaRova  
Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya  
Neve Hagiva'a  
Shapell's/Darche Noam  
Torat Reva Yerushalayim  
Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi  
Yeshivat Hakotel

Yeshivat Orayta

#### BEIT SHEMESH

Tiferet Midrasha  
Kehillat Nofei Hashemesh  
Yeshivat Ashreinu  
Yeshivat Hesder Lev HaTorah

#### HERZLIYA

Mizrachi OU-JLIC Herzliya

#### MEVASERET ZION

Yeshivat Mevaseret

#### RAMAT GAN

Israel XP at Bar Ilan University

#### THE NEGEV

Mechinat Ruach HaNegev

### MACEDONIA

#### SCOPIA

Jewish Community

### MALTA

Jewish Community

### PORTUGAL

#### PORTO

Rabbi Daniel Litvak

### SERBIA

#### BELGRADE

Rav Isak Asiel

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### JOHANNESBURG

Mizrachi Glenhazel Shul

### SWEDEN

The Jewish Community of Stockholm  
Kehilat Adat Yeshurun  
Kehiliat Adat Yisrael

### SWITZERLAND

#### BERN

Jüdische Gemeinde Bern

#### ZURICH

Mizrachi

### UNITED KINGDOM

Mizrachi UK

## UNITED STATES

### NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Kol Hatorah Kulah  
National Council of Young Israel  
RZA-Mizrachi USA

### CALIFORNIA

Beth Jacob Congregation  
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy  
West Coast Torah Center  
Young Israel of North Beverly Hills  
YULA High School  
Young Israel of Century City

### COLORADO

DAT Minyan  
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue  
The Denver Kehillah

### CONNECTICUT

Beth David Synagogue  
Congregation Agudath Sholom  
Young Israel of West Hartford

### FLORIDA

Beth Israel Congregation  
Hebrew Academy RASG  
PlayHard PrayHard  
Congregation Torah Ohr  
Sha'arei Bina Torah Academy for Girls  
Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale

### GEORGIA

Congregation Beth Jacob  
Congregation Ohr HaTorah

### HAWAII

Kehilat Olam Ejad Ganim

### ILLINOIS

Mizrachi-Religious Zionists of Chicago

### MARYLAND

Kemp Mill Synagogue  
Pikesville Jewish Congregation  
Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation

### MASSACHUSETTS

Congregation Beth El Atereth Israel  
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe  
Congregation Shaarei Tefillah  
Young Israel of Brookline

### MICHIGAN

Young Israel of Oak Park  
Young Israel of Southfield  
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe

### MINNESOTA

Congregation Darchei Noam

### MISSOURI

Yeshivat Kadimah High School Nusach  
Hari B'nai Zion Congregation  
Young Israel of St. Louis

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Hillel at Dartmouth

### NEW JERSEY

Ahavas Achim  
Volunteer Chaplain Middlesex County  
Congregation AABJ&D  
Congregation Adath Israel of the JEC  
National Council of Young Israel  
Congregation Ahavat Achim  
Congregation Ahavath Torah  
Congregation Brothers of Israel  
Congregation Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn  
Congregation Etz Chaim of Livingston  
Congregation Israel of Springfield  
Congregation Ohr Torah  
Congregation Sons of Israel of Cherry Hill  
Kehilat Kesher  
Ma Tov Day Camp  
Ohav Emeth  
Pal Foundation  
Shomrei Torah of Fair Lawn  
Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center  
Yavneh Academy  
National Council of Young Israel  
Young Israel of Teaneck

### NEW YORK

Beis Community  
Congregation Anshei Shalom  
Congregation B'nai Tzedek  
Congregation Bais Tefillah of Woodmere  
Congregation Beth Sholom  
Ramaz  
Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls  
MTA – Yeshiva University  
High School for Boys  
Young Israel of Merrick  
Congregation Beth Torah  
Congregation Etz Chaim of  
Kew Gardens Hills  
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun  
Congregation Ohab Zedek  
Great Neck Synagogue  
Iranian Jewish Center/Beth  
Hadassah Synagogue  
Irving Place Minyan  
Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach  
Kehilath Jershurun  
Kingsway Jewish Center  
Lincoln Square Synagogue  
Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park

North Shore Hebrew Academy  
Young Israel of Merrick  
NYC Department of Correction  
OU-JLIC at Binghamton University  
OU-JLIC at Cornell University  
Queens Jewish Center  
Stars of Israel Academy  
The Jewish Center  
The Riverdale Minyan  
Vaad of Chevra Kadisha  
West Side institutional Synagogue  
Yeshiva University High School for Girls  
Young Israel of Hillcrest  
Young Israel of Jamaica Estates  
Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst  
Young Israel of New Rochelle  
Young Israel of North Woodmere  
Young Israel of Oceanside  
Young Israel of Scarsdale  
Young Israel of Woodmere

### OHIO

Beachwood Kehilla  
Congregation Sha'arei Torah  
Congregation Torat Emet  
Green Road Synagogue  
Fuchs Mizrachi School  
Heights Jewish Center

### PENNSYLVANIA

Shaare Torah Congregation

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Brith Sholom Beth Israel  
Congregation Dor Tikvah

### TENNESSEE

Baron Hirsch Congregation

### TEXAS

Mayerland Minyan Synagogue  
Robert M. Beren Academy  
United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston

### VIRGINIA

Keneseth Beth Israel

### WASHINGTON

Bikur Cholim-Machzikay Hadath  
Northwest Yeshiva High School  
Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation

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Comunidad Yavne Uruguay

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#### CARACAS

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