

D'var Torah by Rabbi M. Jaroslawicz for Parshas Ki Sisa 5775 (2015)

What goes around comes around. What you put out is what comes back. You can't dodge the bullet forever. And better to learn this lesson late than never.

Purim is all about "Venahafoch Hu." Everything is flipped around backwards. Nothing is what it seems -- yet it's all exactly the way it's supposed to be.

On a Passuk in this week's Parsha, Ki Sisa, Harav Ahron of Karlin offers the following interpretation:

"Ki seesa es rosh Bnei Yisroel lifkudayhem, v'nasnu ish kofer nafsho" (When you will take a census of the Children of Israel according to their counts, every man shall give Hashem an atonement for his soul). Says Rav Ahron, "Elevating oneself to the highest level, to the level of having one's sins forgiven, can only be achieved through Meseiras Nefesh, self sacrifice."

In the Purim story we see that everything began to turn for the good just as soon as Esther Hamalka was willing to risk her life on behalf of the Klal by going into the king unannounced and risking her own possible death. It was this act of Meseiras Nefesh -- of "self sacrifice" on behalf of others -- that flipped the heavenly judgments around from "DIN" to "CHESED" and saved all of Klal Yisroel.

We need to refrain from saying, "What can you do for ME?" and we need to start saying, "What can I do for YOU?"

At the end of the day, what we learn from the Megillah is Mishloach Manos and Matanas L'evyonim, giving gifts and giving charity. When your mindset is to "give" and not just to "take" you will have elevated yourself AND your situation.

Is anyone among us brazen enough to believe that they need no help at all -- and that everything in their family and extended families is just perfect? No heavenly assistance needed? No room to flip "Din" to "Chessed"? I think not!

And the solution being offered is not one that requires months of saying Tehillim, Davening, a three-hour Amidah or anything like that. The solution being offered is simple: BE NICE. Give without judgment. Value someone else's opinion and stop believing that you and only you have all the solutions to the universe.

In this week's Parsha, the word "v'nasnu" (which means to "GIVE") is spelled, "Vav, Nun, Taf, Nun, Vav." It can be read backwards and forwards and still reads the same: "v'nasnu." The Ba'al Haturim teaches us that this means that when you "GIVE" Tzedakah you are really "RECEIVING." "Venahafoch Hu," exactly the opposite of what you would think. As a matter of fact, even the word "Tzedakah" itself implies the same thing. Tzedakah is spelled, "Tzadi, Daled, "Kuf" and "Hey." In the numeric system known as "At-Bash" the letters of the Alef Bais align with the letters of the reverse Alef Bais, (Alef/Taf, Bais/Shin, Gimel/Reish, Daled/Kuf and Hey/Tzadi). Want to see something fascinating? Check and you'll see: that the word "Tzedakah" in "At-Bash" ALSO spells "Tzedakah."

Purim teaches us how to behave the correct way: nice, caring, giving. Ki Sisa reinforces it. Deep down we know it's the right thing, now we just have to let it surface and get it done.

Hope you had a freilichen Purim . . . and have a Good Shabbos!