



S. FLORIDA ZMANIM
CANDLE LIGHTING
 5:57PM
S"Z KRIAT SHEMA
 9:43AM
SUNSET
 6:15PM
MOTZEI SHABBAT
 6:51PM

“Written by a Multifaceted Student Body, Whose Ambition is to Enrich and Enhance Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion”

PARSHAT KI-TISA

~ ט"ו אדר א' תשע"א ~

RABBI MOSHE SCHOCHET	1
ARIE HIZKIYA ('11)	2
MOSHE LEVENSON ('14)	2-3
SHALVA GINSARG ('11)	3
ANOSH ZAGHI ('08)	4

IT AIN'T OVER TIL IT'S OVER

RABBI MOSHE SCHOCHET

Many grapple with the difficult episode that takes place during this week's parsha. מצרים בני ישראל had the unbelievable privilege of witnessing awesome miracles in מכות. Then they leave Egypt and experience the great supernatural phenomenon of קריעת ים סוף - the splitting of the sea. Just a short while after that, they are standing at הר סיני hearing ה' speak to them. After all that, how could it be? How could it be that only a few weeks later the Jews are dancing around the עגל? What went wrong?

The גמרא records a fascinating dialogue between בני ישראל and the "שטן" which may help explain what happened to כלל. משה goes up to שמים for forty days to learn the entire תורה with ה'. On the morning of the fortieth day (according to the calculation of בני ישראל which was mistaken), משה didn't arrive. The שטן confronts the Jewish people and inquires about the whereabouts of their leader. They didn't even dignify the שטן with a response. A few hours later, משה still hadn't arrived and once again the שטן asks where he is. Once again, בני ישראל paid no attention to the שטן's attempt of making them nervous. Finally, the שטן gets desperate and showed an image of משה in a coffin to the Jewish people. At this point, the Jewish people approached אהרן about collecting gold in order to make a god.

R' Chaim Shmuelevitz explains in שיחות מוסר that we see from this story that if one feels despair and hopelessness, the results can be horrifying. When the Jewish people saw their leader in a coffin, they had no one to count on or to look to for guidance and support. It was at this moment of desperation and lack of hope that their errors in judgment were brought forth. יאוש, which means to give up hope, can cause someone who is on the highest spiritual level to fall very quickly into the deepest states of depression. This is how כלל ישראל were able to fall from the heights of prophecy at הר סיני to the lows of dancing around the golden calf in a matter of a few short weeks.

The lesson that one can glean from here is very simple. While life has its highs and lows on all fronts, knowing with confidence that ה' has a plan for each of us should help us steer clear of hopelessness. Being aware that ה' will never desert us and will stay with us through thick and thin, will serve as a perpetual confidence booster throughout our lives and help us avoid any feelings of despair.

IS IT IN YOU?

ARIE HIZKIYA ('11)

In this week's *parsha*, *Ki Tisa*, we are introduced to the architect of the *mishkan* – Betzalel. The Torah tells us that Hashem gave him the wisdom and knowledge, as well as the ability "*lachshov machashavot*," to weave designs. The simple question is: what does this phrase mean? Rashi says that this means Hashem gave Betzalel the ability to weave things like a "*Choshev*."

In order to understand what a "*choshev*" is and what is so special about a "*choshev*," sufficient background is needed. When the Torah describes the building of different parts of the *mishkan*, it uses two words: "*rokem*" and "*choshev*." "*Rokem*" means that the design is placed on top of the already finished object; *Choshev* means that the design was intrinsically part of the object, and removing the design would destroy the object itself.

This concept is very similar to another idea expressed by the Gemara in Shabbat. It discusses a piece of jewelry called the *ir shel zahav*, literally translated as "city of gold." There is a three-way argument as to whether this accessory can be worn on Shabbat. One opinion firmly states that wearing this piece of jewelry is prohibited because it is a burden and may ultimately cause someone to take it off (outside an *eruv*) and carry it, which violates the prohibition of carrying on Shabbat. The second opinion says that you may wear it because although the jewelry is a burden, you will not take it off since it looks good in public. The final opinion claims that wearing this *ir shel zahav* on Shabbat does not pose any question because it is such a beautiful piece of jewelry; that the wearer will be so proud of it and will never consider taking it off.

These three opinions allude to three different types of Jews. There are those who wear their Judaism, but at the first sign of a burden or difficulty, they take it off and look like everyone else. Then there are Jews who would never stop being Jewish, but, nevertheless, they merely view Judaism as a necessary burden – something that must be done and fulfilled, but not necessarily loved. The final group is so proud of their Judaism that they never consider any prohibition or *mitzvah* a burden, because they considered them things that are to be cherished. These two concepts seem to be teaching us a vital lesson. First of all, we need to view Judaism as something to be cherished and observed with great happiness and pride, like the wearer of the *ir shel zahav*. Additionally, just like the items in the *mishkan* have particular designs as part of their structures, we must see Judaism as a fundamental part of the structure of our day.

We must see Torah and *mitzvot* as gifts from G-d and as intrinsic parts of our being – parts of our very essence. If we are able to incorporate this worldview, then we will each become our own "mini *mishkan*", and influence the world. Once we understand that Torah gives us special value we will each be able to serve Hashem in our own unique way. May we all realize our potential and see *mitzvot* for what they truly are – gifts and not, G-d forbid, burdens.

SIMPLY ORDINARY

MOSHE LEVENSON ('14)

Parshat Ki Tisa deals with the preparation for the construction of the *Beit Hamikdash*. One can only attempt to comprehend the enormous amount of effort invested in completing such a multifaceted task. Who would want the responsibility of overseeing this enormous project? Moreover, one would imagine that only a person of great knowledge and spiritual depth is suitable for this holy job.

The person who Hashem chooses to undertake this important task is a young man by the name of Betzalel. *Masechet Sanhedrin* (*Daf* 69b) clarifies that Betzalel was in fact only 13 years of age when Hashem assigned him this job.

At first glance, Betzalel does not possess the experience, maturity or spirituality necessary to be in charge of this monumental task. After all, should a 13 year old boy oversee the construction of one of the most prominent and sacred structures in Jewish history?

Rashi explains that "Betzalel had a Godly spirit, wisdom, and insight" that were intentionally given to him by Hashem in order to teach a very important lesson. Continuing on this stream of thought, Rashi elaborates that Hashem endowed Betzalel with the capacity to serve Him beyond ordinary human potential. Rashi finally concludes that "If everyone [were to] show his or her desire to do His will, He would respond by giving him or her the ability and the human resources to do so."

Moshe Levenson continued

All Jews can internalize this message and apply it to their own lives. Each and every person, irrelevant of age or level of wisdom, has the potential to create a spiritual connection with Hashem and to undertake extremely important tasks. Finally, Rashi's insight highlights the necessity to always try our best, because Hashem will always help those who truly put in the effort.

GOOD TIMING

SHALVA GINSPARG ('11)

MVP champion Aaron Rodgers – quarterback for the Greenbay Packers – and a flunking math student who is dreading to report *yet another* “D minus” to his parents, both understand a fundamental truth: timing is everything. When Moshe descends from *Har Sinai*, he sees his beloved nation worshipping the Golden Calf. Just as Moshe is on the brink of dropping the *luchot*, the Torah “interjects” a description of the uniqueness of the tablets: “*Luchot* inscribed on both of their surfaces; they were inscribed on one side and on the other. The *Luchot* are the work of G-d, and the script was the script of G- d, etched on the *Lu-chot*”

The *Shemen Hatov* by Rav Dovid Weinberger draws attention to the Torah's seemingly strange “timing.” Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to mention the positive qualities of the *luchot* earlier when they were originally presented to Moshe? Why does the Torah decide to describe the *luchot* just as they are about to be shattered?

Rabbi Yissocher Frand's answer in the name of the *Shemen Hatov* reveals a sad axiom of Human Nature 101 – the difficulty of recognizing blessings in our lives while they are present, and the clarity in noticing these blessing once they cease to exist. When the *luchot* were first given to Moshe, the Jewish People took them for granted, and assumed that these tablets would always be around. This lack of appreciation led to a blindness to the intrinsic value that the *luchot* held. Here these two stones bore the writings of G-d, and yet the Jewish people barely noticed anything special about them. Ironically, just as the *luchot* are about to be thrown from Moshe's hands, the Jewish people's foggy vision turns lucid, the *luchot* in all their breathtaking beauty appear, and the Jews taste what could have been theirs the moment they lose it all.

If ingratitude translated into poor eyesight, optometrists would make a killing. True, we find it easy to appreciate the new and the novel, but novelty inevitably wears off. And the greatest gift—the mere fact that we live and breathe in this world—is perhaps the easiest to ignore. How unfortunate for Moshe, who after 120 years finds his 20/20 vision only restored in the world to come. Suddenly, he can perceive the breath-taking magnitude of a human life at the precise moment his potential is erased and his opportunity to do *mitzvot* and learn Torah expires.

The lesson of the *luchot* then is really a lesson in good timing. Aaron Rodgers knows when to let the pigskin fly and when to hold on to it, and the flunking math student knows when to casually mention the math score to his mom (after a good day at work), but the individual who lives with eyes wide-open to the *brachot* in his life *while* he experiences them—well, he benefits from the best timing of all.

Based on: The Torah Describes The Luchos' Uniqueness When They Are Being Destroyed, Rabbi Yissocher Frand, Torah.org

” מדור לדור “

Torah From Our Alumni

IT'S ALL IN THE PREPARATION

ANOSH ZAGHI ('08)

One of the *mitzvot* that is given special attention in *Parshat Ki Tisa* is the *mitzvah* of Shabbat. Specifically, the *mitzvah* of “*Shemirat* Shabbat,” commonly translated as “*safeguarding* the Shabbat,” is emphasized in this week's Torah portion. Although the *mitzvah* of Shabbat is introduced earlier as one of the Ten Commandments in *Parshat Yitro*, it appears there as “*Zechirat* Shabbat,” or “*remembering* the Sabbath.” Explanations of the distinction between these two aspects of Shabbat observance abound. One well-known interpretation is that “*shemirat* Shabbat” refers to the negative commandments associated with Shabbat (don't make a fire, etc.) while “*zechirat* Shabbat” refers to the positive commandments (to recite *Kiddush*, etc).

Anosh Zaghi continued

The Chizkuni, however, offers a less famous interpretation regarding the *mitzvah* of *Shemirat Shabbat* that is consistent with the Or Hachayim's interpretation of the verb "*shamar*" found in *Bereishit* 37:11. In *Bereishit* 37, Yosef recounts his dreams to his family. While his brothers ridicule and secretly envy Yosef, the verse testifies that "*Aviv shamar et hadavar*"—"His father safeguarded the matter." The Or Hachayim explains that "*shamar*" in this context means that Yosef's father Yaakov anticipated and eagerly waited for the time that Yosef's dream would come true. Similarly, the Chizkuni explains that the *mitzvah* of *shemirat Shabbat* is to anticipate and eagerly wait for the arrival of Shabbat all week long.

In his work "*Al HaRishonim*," Rabbi Aryeh Brueckheimer explains that the Chizkuni's interpretation sheds light on an otherwise ambiguous juxtaposition of clauses in *Parshat Ki Tisa*, and in doing so teaches a fundamental lesson. In *Ki Tisa* 31:16 and in our weekly *Shabbat-Aravit* davening we read: "*Bnei Yisrael* shall safeguard the Shabbat, to make the Shabbat for their generations—an eternal covenant." What is the connection between safeguarding the Shabbat in the present and ensuring continued Shabbat observance for future generations? Rabbi Brueckheimer explains that by anticipating the coming of the Shabbat all week long, we generate an excitement for Shabbat that our children are sure to adopt and bequeath to their children after them. "Since the *halachot* of Shabbat involve many restrictions, it is easy for a child who isn't taught to appreciate Shabbat to become focused on what he can't do" (102), he argues. By eagerly anticipating the coming of Shabbat throughout the week, we can circumvent this indifference and instill excitement in its place.

The Chizkuni's interpretation of "*Shemirat Shabbat*" also complements a possible understanding of the *mitzvah* of "*Zechirat* (Remembering) Shabbat." If *shemirah* refers to the commandment of anticipating the forthcoming Shabbat, then perhaps *zechirah* refers to the commandment of remembering and drawing upon our experiences from the previous Shabbat. Indeed, by carrying the holiness of the preceding Shabbat with us during the week, while simultaneously anticipating the coming of the approaching Shabbat, we can be confident that we will merit living in a world that is "*kulo Shabbat*," "entirely Shabbat" (a reference to *Olam HaBah*).

Former WYHS Student Council President Anosh Zaghi, after spending two years at Yeshivat Torat Sharga, is a junior in the Yeshiva University Honors Program

Ashreinu Staff

Editor-in-Chief

Eram Zaghi ('12)

Editing

Arie Hizkiya ('11)

Leora Litwin ('12)

Adam Poliak ('11)

Hadassah Tirschwell ('11)

Staff

Gila Allswang ('11)

Racheli Mizrahi ('11)

Etan Shachter ('12)

Matthew Silkin ('14)

Yedidyah Weiss ('11)

Sagiv Zehavi ('12)

Proofreader

Joshua Stadlan ('11)

Layout

Eliana Feldan ('13)

Elana Kaminetsky ('12)

Faculty Advisor

Rabbi Avi Hochman

Interested in sponsoring Ashreinu?
Contact Rabbi Hochman at
RAVH@WYHS.NET

This publication contains Torah matter-
Please treat it with respect

7902 Montoya Circle
Boca Raton, FL 33433
Phone: 561-417-7422
Fax: 561-417-7028
www.wyhs.net