

# Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah insights translated and revised by Dovid Pinchas Rose, based on the Yiddish יהודה פארדיס by Yehuda Zvulun Klitnick

פרשת כי תשא  
תשע"ז

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לעילוי נשמת אביו מרדכי בן ראובן ואמו שרה לאה בת אביגדור ע"ה

## Moshe is reassured about his posterity

כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל: (ל יב)

When you take the sum of the children of Israel (30:12)

Let's study our posuk against the background of Medrash Tanchuma (Ki Sisa 3): "Moshe taught the Torah to Klal Yisroel and gave them the Sedras of the Torah and the Parshiyos read every Shabbos, every Rosh Chodesh and every Yomtov, and they mention him in each and every Parsha. But when he came to Parshas Sheqalim, Moshe said to HaKodosh Boruch Hu, "Ribbono shel Olam, when I have passed away from this world, I will not be remembered." HaKodosh Boruch Hu responded: "In the same way that you are standing now and giving them Parshas Sheqalim and you are counting them according to their heads, similarly, each year when they will read it before Me, it will be as if you were standing right there. The posuk does not say "take the count of them" (כי תשא את ראש) but rather "you WILL take the count (ראש את ראש) – in the future."

The question jumps out at us: Why was it in respect of Parshas Sheqalim that Moshe worried about his posterity? There is a dispute in the Mishna (Sheqalim perek 1 mishna 4) as to whether a Kohen is or is not required to contribute the half-sheqel, and if he is or not a sinner as a result. Tosfos (Arachin 4a, כל כהן) supports the view that if he does NOT contribute, then he has sinned, based on 30:13 זך יהיו כל העבר על הפקדים, proving from זך (numerical value=12) that all twelve Tribes (including Levi/Kohanim) are required to donate the half-sheqel. We learn from the Gemara (Avodah Zara 5a, רבי דתניא רבי יוסי) When the Yidden accepted the Torah, the Malach HaMoves was not supposed to have any dominion over them, ובגין, אני אמרת אלקים אתם ובגין, your participation in the Golden Calf has sullied and defiled that prospect so באדם תמותון (תהלים פב ז) you will die like the rest of mankind. Receiving the Torah was supposed to have made Death a thing of the past, but the Golden Calf restored it. Moshe thought that Shevet Levi, since they had not served the idol of the Calf, would be exempt from death. But Moshe discerned that Parshas Sheqalim mandated a half-sheqel offering from ALL tribes, INCLUDING LEVI, to atone for the Calf. That clearly indicated that Leviim had also played a role in that travesty – and that unnerved Moshe—a Levite -- since he wanted to be remembered in perpetuity. Hashem's consolation to him was that throughout Jewish history, the half-sheqel would always be entitled "the half-sheqel which Moshe ordained."

(בית ישראל השלם למוה"ו האדמו"ר ממאטטערסדארף זצוק"ל).

## Shabbos: a heritage for all generations

ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת לעשות את השבת לדרתם ברית עולם: (לא טז)

Thus shall the children of Israel observe the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant. (31:16)

How does one, in the terms of our posuk, "make the Shabbos?" And if the posuk highlights Shabbos observance, why does it mention future generations לדרתם – something conspicuously absent from other positive mitzvos throughout the Torah. We weave the two questions together: the "geshmak"/sweet taste of Shabbos observance must be implanted in one's children. One recalls the at-once tragic and poignant question posed to HaGaon Rav Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל. The early waves of Yidden coming to America were, by and large, pious and devoted Servants of Hashem, who willingly jumped from one job to another, at great personal hardship and sacrifice, in unflinching loyalty to Shabbos. But despite this, their children often abandoned Shabbos ר"ל. Why? Rav Moshe's answer was that the parents who told their children how sweet and precious Shabbos is, even if it is difficult, were the ones who saw Shabbos continued throughout future generations. On the other hand, those parents who

gripped and grumbled "Oy, it's so hard to keep Shabbos" saw their children abandon Shabbos – and often, the rest of frumkeit – in short order. Rav Moshe taught that the complaint "Es is shver tzu zein a Yid" must never be uttered, especially in the presence of children. לעשות את "one shall observe Shabbos" and "שמרו בני ישראל את השבת", "show that Shabbos is precious and treasured", and the outcome will be לדרתם, future generations will also be proud shomrei Shabbos. (שמח זבולון תשע"ז)

Further on the same posuk:

## We know which day is Shabbos

The words לעשות את השבת still remain difficult to account for; ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת לדרתם "The Bnei Yisroel shall observe Shabbos throughout their generations" could have sufficed to convey the essential message. We cite the heretical views of apikorsim/free-thinkers, so that we can refute them. These misguided souls maintain that Hashem wanted people to enjoy one day a week of rest in order to marshall renewed energy after a tiring workweek. According to this, claim the heretics, one should be able to choose any day he wishes to take his respite ה"ו. The Torah responds categorically that the day of Shabbos Kodesh davka is inherently holy, in and of itself. [DPR] Shabbos was ordained in the Desert at Marah, where there was no connection whatever to agricultural labour; providing rest from physical work could not have been the reason for Shabbos. No, Shabbos is intrinsically Holy of Holies, an eternal Covenant between the Creator and his flock. We parse: ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת "Just as Shabbos was kept in the Wilderness, it will be a Covenant for future generations, and when you will be working for a living six days a week, the day of rest will be the authentic Shabbos, with its Holiness built-in at Creation -- and no other day!"

(כתב סופר)

## The origin of Moshe's shining countenance

וראו בני ישראל את פני משה כי קרן עור פני משה: (לד לה)

Then the children of Israel would see Moses' face, that the skin of Moses' face had become radiant (34:35)

The Medrash poses two questions: From where did Moshe obtain the radiant face, the קרני הוד ("horns of glory")? And in what special merit did he receive them? The Medrash answers that there was a drop left over from the Oibershter's "ink" which Moshe used to write the Torah, which he spread onto his forehead, spawning the קרני הוד. But this answer brings another question in its wake. Does it seem plausible that the Creator would give Moshe more than the precise amount of ink that he needed to write out the Torah – to the smallest letter – and that there could be even a single leftover drop? And we still do not know from this answer what Moshe's unique merit was by which he received the unique gift of "horns." Recall that Moshe himself requested, in the aftermath of the Golden Calf, that his name be blotted out from the Torah omitting his name from the entire Parshas Tetzaveh. This act of omission spared a bit of ink. Another bit of ink was spared by the lack of a "yud" from the word עניו in the posuk recording Moshe's extreme humility והאיש משה ענו מאד (במדבר יב ג). That humility and his self-effacing self-sacrifice for Klal Yisroel provided the merit which enabled the ר' to be generated by the bit of surplus ink.

(חנוכת התורה רבי ר' העשיל זצוק"ל).

In the times of the Ba'al Shem Tov, there lived a man named Gershon Yitzchok whose livelihood involved the local *poritz*/gentile landowner in two ways: He rented a *kretschma*/country inn and also licensed the exclusive rights to catch fish for the *poritz* from the stream which ran through the village. Between the two activities, he managed to have a comfortable life. He got along quite well with the *poritz* for several years, but dark clouds formed when a new priest was appointed for the district. This man was a rabid Jew-hater and immediately set out to ruin Gershon Yitzchok's livelihood. But not content with that, the wicked clergyman tagged Gershon Yitzchok's twelve-year-old son Dovid as a target for conversion *רח"ל*. He convinced the *poritz* that raising the rent he had been charging for years was well below the current real estate market. The new rent was way beyond the *yid's* ability to pay, but despite that, he borrowed money, hoping to bring his finances into balance. For a few months, he managed to eke out an existence, but soon fell deeper and deeper into the red. The priest demanded from the *poritz* that he be allowed to hold the boy Dovid as a "pledge" for the money the *Yid* owed, with the threat that should he not pay his debts – along with the usurious interest -- within the year, the man and his wife would be thrown into debtor's prison, for how long, nobody knew. To the family's horror the innocent boy was taken captive into the priest's lair – the "kloister." The *poritz* had a son who was a decent person, and Gershon Yitzchok tried to convince him to intercede with the *poritz* to get Dovid set free, but the young man dared not oppose his father's decision. He did promise, though, to monitor the boy's situation and keep his parents informed of the boy's fate. The grieving parents could do nothing more than daven and say *Tehillim* from tear-soaked *seforim*. One bleak day, the *poritz's* son informed the couple that the priest had taken to forcing Dovid to abandon *Yiddishkeit* with a vengeance, subjecting him to cruel beatings. The boy stood firm and refused to abandon his faith, until he passed out from the pain, and a doctor was called. The poor parents were gratified that their son withstood the bitter trials at his tender age, but feared how much longer he could endure the torture. In order to raise funds to clear his debts and free his son, Gershon Yitzchok decided to sell off, for a bargain price, his license to catch fish and operate the *kretschma*. The priest got wind of the deal and undermined it by convincing the buyer to back out of it, since he would soon be able to close it at a much lower price – after Gershon Yitzchok were out of the picture. In the next town lived a completely

## STORY OF THE WEEK:

*Pidyon shevuyim paves the way for a tzaddik of a son*

G-d-fearing *Yid*, childless, who delighted in helping others. His name was Yaakov Kerpil and his business took him on many trips in the region, during one of which he met Gershon Yaakov in the *kretschma*. Gershon Yaakov easily sized him up as a man with a good and generous heart. (Around this time, Yaakov Kerpil also struck up an acquaintance with a talmid of the Ba'al Shem

Tov named Hirsh Leib, who learned *Mishnayot* with him and promised to stay in touch in the future.)

In the midst of his troubles, he decided to visit Yaakov Kerpil at home and ask him to help him out of his financial bind. But the mendacious priest told the *poritz* that the debtor was trying to escape his clutches by fleeing from the town.

Gershon informed the *poritz* coolly that he was merely going to visit an old friend who could help him with his debts, aside from which he was leaving his beloved son behind, so there was no reason to think he was absconding. The *poritz* found this explanation plausible and did not stand in his way. Gershon Yitzchok laid his bitter plight before Yaakov Kerpil, who was very shaken by the predicament of his fellow Jew. He and his wife, childless themselves, decided to liquidate most of their property and bail Gershon Yitzchok out of debt. This selfless act yielded a princely sum which Kerpil handed over to Gershon. Gershon lost no time in bringing the money to the *poritz*, who seemed happy to get it and put an end to the protracted affair. In truth, the *poritz* had always been well-disposed to his long-term tenant, but had fallen under the sway of the wicked priest. And don't think that that miscreant was so quick to release the boy Dovid from his grasp. Kerpil had to pull some strings with the local mayor, whom he knew from business dealings, to make that happen. The boy was set free and sent to a distant *yeshiva* where he could sit and learn without distraction. This happy picture had one missing piece, however. Yaakov Kerpil and his wife were left in tight straits financially after nobly assisting Gershon. His health took a turn for the worse. But salvation was soon to come. Kerpil and his wife had a visit from his old acquaintance, the *tsaddik* Hersh Leib, who came directly from the Ba'al Shem Tov. He bore the message that the couple's selfless and magnanimous act of *pidyon shvuyim*/redeeming the captive boy had caused a stir in *Shomayim*, and it was decreed that they would be blessed with a son destined to be a *gaon* and *tsaddik*. (He also brought along a bag of cash to get them back on their feet.) The boy was named Yosef Yitzchok, who lived up to his promised potential, and who later married the sister of the Ba'al haTanya's father, Rav Boruch.

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