

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Ki Sisa 5778

year 8 # 328

פרשת כי תשא תשע"ח

The master plan of creation a lesson for all

וְרָאִיתָ אֶת־אֶחָדָם וְפָנֶי לֹא יֵרְאוּ: (לג כג)

"And You shall see my back but my face may not be seen."

(33:23) The posuk is referring to the request from Moshe to be able to see the face of Hashem. The Chasam Sofer offers a brilliant insight to this posuk: Things happen and occur in ones life. Everything is done through a master plan from Hashem, yet the sequences and obstacles along the way seem odd and are not understood but after the goal of Hashem was attained, one then sees the tremendous path and wisdom of Hashem. The same idea we see by the miracle of Purim. The path begins with Achashverosh who became king. The Gemarah Megillah 11a states he wasn't bright at all. He wasn't even a descendant of a king, and all his weaknesses led to his agreeing to kill his wife Queen Vashti. Then Esther was taken to be the queen. This path again was odd and the Yidden were worried, but at the end it was Esther who persuaded Achashverosh to kill Haman. It was through her that Klal Yisroel was spared. At the end line of the story we realize and follow step by step the hand of Hashem and see how everything was done with wisdom and now makes sense. This is what the posuk is saying: You will see my back, meaning only at the back end of the story will you see how beautiful my plan was, but my face, meaning in the beginning, till the plan was achieved, you will not understand my plan. [Torah is eternal and a lesson for everyone. One must have complete trust that Hashem has a purpose in what is happening to every individual. This will bring calm and happiness. YZK] (תורת משה חת"ם סופר)

We know which day is the real Shabbos

וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם: (לא טז)

Thus shall the children of Israel observe the Shabbos, to make the Shabbos throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant.(31:16) The words לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת remain difficult to account for: "וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם" *"The Bnei Yisroel shall observe Shabbos throughout their generations"* could have sufficed to convey the essential message. We cite the false views of apikorsim/freethinkers, 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 gather renewed energy after a tiring workweek. According to this, claim the apikorsim, one should be able to choose any day he wishes to take his rest ח"ו. The Torah responds categorically that the day of Shabbos Kodesh is holy, in itself, that Yidden have been counting without interruption since the Creation of the Universe. 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. Shabbos is intrinsically Holy of Holies, an everlasting Covenant between the Creator and his sheep / Klal Yisrael. This is what it's meant: וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם. Just as Shabbos was kept in the Wilderness, לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם so 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)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

***** *The shmek tabak that brought wealth to one and the reverse of fortune to another* *****

A wealthy man named Zalman, always carried with him a small, silver box filled with the finest snuff, and he gladly offered a pinch of snuff to anyone who wanted it. In his town, there also lived a pauper named Moshe, who was too proud to ask for charity but often did not earn enough money to feed his family bread and water. One Erev Yom Kippur, in Moshe's home there was little food, that after he fed his children the barest minimum, he did not have enough food left for himself for the final meal before the fast. Dejected, he left for Shul for Kol Nidrei on an empty stomach. The people were already saying Tefilla Zaka, the prayer of contrition that ushers in the holy day. Moshe also opened his machzor to Tefilla Zaka, but he could not stop thinking about the hunger pangs in his stomach. He could not imagine how he would manage through the night. And how would he be able to concentrate on his prayers in such a dark mood?

He desperately needed something to cheer him up. It suddenly occurred to him that a good pinch of aromatic snuff might do the trick. Zalman always carried his silver snuffbox with him and never hesitated to share it with others. He would go up to him and ask for some snuff. He rose from his seat and approached Zalman, who was wrapped in his tallis and swaying back and forth as he said Tefilla Zaka. Zalman was a good man, at peace with the world and ready for the arrival of the holy day. It was time to connect with Hashem and confess his failures and shortcomings. Engrossed in the Tefilla Zaka, he heard someone clearing his throat behind him. He looked up, there stood Moshe, with a smile on his face. "Rav Zalman, could I trouble you for a shmek tabak, a pinch of snuff?" "Are you joking?" asked Zalman. At this most holy moment, all you can think about is the pleasure of a shmek tabak? Can't you see that I'm

saying Tefilla Zaka? Maybe you should do so as well.” Moshe’s shoulders slumped. He nodded his head and walked back to his seat. He stared at the open machzor but could not see the words. “Master of the Universe,” he lamented, “is this what I’ve come to, that people think I am not even worth a shmek tabak?”

There was an immediate uproar in Heaven. All the beneficent malochim (angels) created by Zalman’s generosity and good deeds were forced to fall silent as newly created angels stormed against the insensitivity and injustice with which he had treated the heartbroken pauper, and demanded retribution. The Heavenly Court weighed the matter and decided that Zalman’s wealth should be transferred to Moshe right after Yom Kippur.

The morning after Yom Kippur, Moshe was walking through the streets looking for any odd jobs that would bring him a few pennies. Along the way, he met a relative he had not seen for a long time. “Moshe!” said the relative. “It’s good to see you. How are you?” Moshe shrugged. “Things have been a little difficult.” “Well, it’s a new year. Hopefully, things will get better. Here, I’ll lend you three hundred rubles. Do some business with it.” Moshe’s face brightened. “Thank you so much.” Every business venture Moshe undertook from that time on was amazingly profitable, and over a period of time, he became quite a rich man. During the same time, Zalman suffered a reversal of his fortunes, as one investment after another failed. He was not particularly alarmed at first. But as the reverses continued to pile up, he became frightened. Was Hashem angry with him? Had he done something to deserve this? He also noticed that as his star was descending almost into oblivion, Moshe’s star was enjoying a meteoric rise. Was there a connection between the two diametrically opposite trends? What was he to do? He decided to travel to Berditchev and seek Rav Levi Yitzchok’s advice. Rav Levi Yitzchok listened patiently as Zalman told his story at great length and with abundant detail. He also mentioned his suspicion that his fate was somehow linked to Moshe’s rise in fortune. Rav Levi Yitzchok nodded. “That seems to be the case. Have you done anything to him? Have you wronged him in any way?” “I don’t think so,” said Zalman. “I can’t think of anything bad I’ve ever done to him.” “Think hard.” Zalman knitted his brows and concentrated. “I’m sorry. I can’t think of anything.” “Think even harder,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok. “I can’t think—” His eyes opened wide, and he slapped himself on the forehead. “Yes, yes, I can think of something. Last Yom Kippur, Moshe came over to me in the middle of Tefilla Zaka and asked me for a shmek tabak, and I brushed him aside. I may have been a little harsh with him.”

“Yes,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok, “that is the source of your misfortune. Hashem decreed that your wealth be transferred to Moshe, and so it was.” “But was that such a horrible

thing? Did I deserve to lose everything because of it?

“You don’t know what a shmek tabak meant to him at that moment. Apparently, it meant quite a lot. Your rejection was a stab in his heart.” “I did not intend to hurt him. I am really sorry. I would gladly have given him a shmek tabak had I known it was important to him. So what can I do?” “Nothing?” “The money belongs to Moshe now. You cannot take it back.” Zalman began to cry. “There must be something, anything.” “All I can suggest,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok, “is that you wait for the right moment and ask him for a shmek tabak. If he refuses to give it to you, things may change.” Zalman returned home with a tiny glimmer of hope in his heart, but the more he thought about it the more despondent he became. Moshe was generous to a fault, never forgetting his own suffering and never having less than full sympathy for those who suffered similarly. How would he manage to get Moshe to refuse a simple shmek tabak? Time passed, and Moshe’s daughter became engaged to the son of the Rav of the town. The upcoming wedding was the sensation of the town. When the wedding day finally arrived, the excitement in the town was at a fever pitch. After the bride walked down the aisle, Moshe stood next to the Rav under the chuppa waiting with bated breath. The grand moment was finally here, and he wanted to savor every second of it. “Rav Moshe, do you have the kesuba?” said the Rav. “Yes, I do,” he replied. “It’s right here in my pocket.” Just then, Moshe felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned and saw Zalman standing there. “Moshe, could I perhaps trouble you for a shmek tabak?” said Zalman. Moshe glanced at his precious daughter standing under the chuppa. Then he smiled at Zalman. “Of course,” he said. He reached into his pocket, took out his silver snuffbox and handed it to Zalman. “Here, take as much as you like.” As Moshe reached into his other pocket for the kesuba, he heard a loud thud. He looked down and saw that Zalman had fainted. He quickly summoned two attendants to carry the unconscious man to a room and revive him.

After the chuppa, Moshe came to see how Zalman was faring. He had recovered consciousness and was sitting in a chair with a despondent look on his face. “Are you all right?” asked Moshe. “Yes, I’m fine. Go back to your daughter’s wedding. Don’t waste your time here with me.” “Well, you don’t look fine,” said Moshe. “I insist that you tell me what this is all about.” “Ok, but not now. After the wedding.” Late that night, Moshe listened sympathetically as Zalman told him the entire story, and they resolved to travel together to Rav Levi Yitzchok as soon as possible. In Berditchev, Rav Levi Yitzchok listened to both of them and then suggested that they share the fortune. “Are you willing to do that, Rav Moshe?” he asked. “Absolutely,” said Moshe. “Half of everything goes back to him.”

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