

# TAL TorahActionLife

## COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

### KI TISSA

18<sup>th</sup> ADAR 5776

Shabbat begins: 17:20

Shabbat ends: 18:24

This week's edition is sponsored  
Leiluy Nishmat Yedidya Ben  
Chorshit Z'L. Tihyeh Nishmato  
Betsurat Hachaim



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
DIRECTOR, TAL

### Your True Self!

After the Golden Calf debacle, Moshe sought to open a path for the Jewish people to attain G-d's forgiveness. To this end, G-d revealed to Moshe the Thirteen Divine Attributes of Mercy, opening a pathway for all future generations to achieve atonement and healing: And the G-d passed before him and proclaimed: "G-d, G-d, benevolent G-d, Who is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, preserving lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity, rebellion and sin, and He cleanses . . ." (Shemot 34:6-7). The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 17b) states that Rabbi Yochanan taught: "If it would not be expressly stated in the Torah, it would be sacrilegious for us to think it. G-d wrapped Himself in a (Tallit) prayer shawl like a cantor, and showed Moses how to pray. He told him, 'Whenever Israel sins, they should pray before me in this fashion and I will forgive them.'"

Thirteen deep values and attributes of mercy in which the Almighty envelopes Himself. Thirteen attributes which we can tap into and pray to G-d guaranteeing results.

Yet we are left with a question as to why "an abundance of truth" is considered one of the attributes of mercy?

Compassion, graciousness and kindness seem par for the course; but truth?

Truth is a severe and honest judge, unwilling to overlook misdeeds and transgressions. How does that fit in with being merciful?

Surely truth contradicts mercy and repentance? Furthermore what is the idea of R Yochanan teaching that G-d wrapped Himself in a Tallit?

Let me share with you a fascinating true story. A few years ago there was a young lady called Sarah that applied for a popular job in a factory in Israel. The girl arrived and was welcomed through to the interview waiting room where she found herself amongst another three candidates. One by one they were called and entered the intimidating interview room. She was to be the last interview of the day.

Whilst waiting for her turn she started a conversation with an older looking lady. The older lady explained how unfortunately her husband had passed away suddenly and she had four young children at home and she was looking for a job to secure their future. She was so excited that this opportunity and was sure she had what it took to perform. They spoke together for about 20 minutes and then the older lady entered the interview. The wait was daunting but eventually Sarah went through.



Although her interview seemed forever, the interviewees which included the owner of the factory were so impressed by Sarah's capabilities that they decided to offer her the job on the spot.

What happened next seemed unreal.

Sarah explained that she was overwhelmed by their decision and thanked them for their time, but unfortunately she had to decline the offer.

"Decline?!"

"How can you decline? Why did you come here if you didn't want to accept the job?" Asked the shocked owner.

Sarah explained how she had sat in the room and conversed with the previous lady.

"Having met this previous lady and knowing her circumstances I know she is the best person for this job. She seemed just as capable if not more, plus she needs the job more urgently than I do. With that I thank you for your time." She said as she swiftly left the room.

Everyone there was flabbergasted. They had never experienced such anything like this in before.

They were left with no alternative but to accept the 'second best' candidate which they all agreed was the other lady.

That night the owner of the factory returned home and explained to his wife what a crazy day it had been.



1. When else in the year do we read from Parshas Ki Sisa?
2. Why is the *Kiyor*, Laver, mentioned here separately to the other vessels of the Mishkon?
3. Which mitzvos in Parshas Ki Sisa have the punishment of kores?
4. How did Moshe manage to learn and remember the whole Torah in a mere forty days?

Answers On Page 3

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"Can you believe that we finally found the right person and made her a fantastic offer she couldn't refuse? Only for her to immediately tell us that she was no longer interested! That's just not normal!" exclaimed the owner. His wife looked on in amazement and with her wise intuition she asked for the girl's number.

"Why do you want her number she specifically said no to the job?" said the owner. His wife replied "leave it to me."

The next day the wife called up Sarah who was surprised to receive the call.

"I understand that you let go of an amazing opportunity yesterday. I am not calling you for the job; rather I wanted to ask you if you are dating anyone at the moment."

Sarah was stunned.

She replied that although she was beginning to go out with intention of marriage she was not dating anyone at that moment.

"You see replied the owners wife, we have only one son, he is very special, kind hearted and unique. When I heard of the great kindness that you showed yesterday I thought perhaps you would be ideal together." Sarah sat quietly on the phone for a few seconds and then agreed in principle to go out subject to more referencing.

A week later they went out on their first date and two months later they were engaged.

Sarah went to apply to be a worker at the factory, and through her selflessness and act of kindness ended up being the owner of the factory.

At times we think we are giving and therefore losing, however G-d sees everything and all is noted in the book of memory, no good deed goes unattended for, and immense reward awaits those who act kind.

R Yochanan taught that in order for the prayer mentioning the Thirteen Attributes to work, there needs to be some action. When we beseech G-d to be merciful, we too need

to be merciful. We need to act, like G-d acted so to speak by putting on the Tallit.

The Jewish soul runs deep. There are times in the year that we sin, but there is always a glowing soul that shines and breathes deep under the darkness of sin.

The Hebrew word for sin, Chet, actually means "to miss the mark, to be deficient." Essentially we are not wrongdoers; we are simply falling short of our potential. The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy and the intertwined concept of Teshuva, properly translated as a "return" to one's real self, are the road that reconnect us to our potential, our truest self. This potential remains whole and unaffected by whatever temporary detour we have taken.

By acting in certain ways that manifest G-d's attributes we invoke these attributes and reconnect to G-d. The darkness above our Holy soul is polished away and the existing glow is able to shine through.



RABBI DOV LEVY  
KOLLEL NETZACH YISROEL

## What's In A Count?

The Parasha begins by instructing us only to count the Jewish people by way of their donations, since direct counting will cause plague to break out amongst Klal Yisrael. Indeed we find, later in history, seventy thousand people struck down by a plague as a punishment for King David's count.

But why is counting the Jewish people so detestable? It's hard to understand why counting warrants such a harsh punishment. Hashem detests certain actions and traits, such as promiscuity, idol worship, arrogance and deceit. For such sins we can expect severe consequences but why does counting people invoke such fury?

King David (Shmuel 2 24) decided to count the men eligible for army duty. Until then Jewish leaders had not kept a record of eligible army recruits, relying on the enthusiastic response of the people when called to fight. Now, after various rebellions, King David had lost a degree of confidence in the people and felt the need to keep track of those eligible to be called for army duty. This proved a costly mistake as seventy thousand people were killed in a twenty four hour plague.

By way of introduction to this out of character error by King David, the pasuk begins the episode thus: (Shmuel 2 24:1) "And the fury of Hashem continued to rage in Yisrael, and so Hashem provoked David against them saying 'Go count Yisrael and Yehudah'" Seemingly Hashem was upset with the people and therefore gave King David the inspiration to count them. The commentaries struggle to understating the reason for the underlying anger Hashem had with the people. Rashi comments that he does not know the cause. The Abrabanel explains that Hashem was upset with the rebellions of the people and so planted a seed of mistrust in King David's heart provoking him to count the people to avoid deserters.

But, aside from specific occasions, Hashem is only prepared to act with supernatural conduct by hiding it. He has created a natural world and wants it to stay that way, ostensibly at least.

The Ramban (Vayikra 16:21) amazingly attributes Hashem's anger to the fact the Jewish people had not demanded the building of the Bet Hamikdash. He was disappointed that the central focus of Avodah had remained in the Mishkan and the people had not come of their own initiative to demand Hashem's a more

permanent dwelling for the Shechina. A bigger, grander, more solid building would intensify the presence of the Shechina and thus the people's connection to Hashem. Had the people wanted, they could have built the Bet Hamikdash any time in the previous four hundred years. Only with King David as the initiator could the house of Hashem not be built. This underlying anger had caused King David to count the people, with catastrophic consequences.

We can then ask why the punishment for this predated failing played itself out by means of counting the people? What is the connection between apathy towards the intensity of the Shechina in Klal Yisrael and counting people?

There are several reasons proposed for counting people to be forbidden. The Malbim offers the following beautiful explanation. The Jewish people's very conception defied nature. Their ongoing existence, success and prosperity are only possible through Hashem's direct intervention. The natural order Hashem has put in place, the mechanism of angels, mazalot and sustaining forces resist everything about the Jewish people. The Avot were barren and their offspring were to live supernaturally. The only way the Jewish people can exist is through Hashem's direct providence, overriding the structure He has put in place. But, aside from specific occasions, Hashem is only prepared to act with supernatural conduct by hiding it. He has created a natural world and wants it to stay that way, ostensibly at least. Counting the Jewish people, exposing their growth and success, removes them from Hashem's direct supervision and throws them into Hashem's





natural order. This causes destruction since the Jewish people have no way of existing under those conditions.

The Jewish people didn't yearn for a closer connection. They didn't seek a Bet Hamikdash which would intensify the Shechina, Hashem's direct supervision. Because of this Hashem provoked King David to count the people, removing them

from Hashem's direct providence, bringing terrible destruction.

The Gemarah (Berachot 62b) says in response to the plague King David instituted saying one hundred berachot per day. This is the basis for the obligation to reach a minimum of one hundred berachot daily. The Maharsha explains that this neutralised the plague because one saying berachot realises Hashem's existence in every aspect

of creation and everyday life. King David wanted to reverse the damage and find a way to bring Hashem's direct providence into everyone's everyday life. We too have this opportunity by making Berachot with concentration and so filling our lives with the Shechina. We have to realise that our existence doesn't add up and seek out the unique connection with Hashem our being carries with it.

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1. The beginning of Parshas Ki Sisa is read as the maftir for Parshas Shekolim. Also, a section of it is the reading for the public fast days, on Shabbos Chol Hamoed and the third day of Chol Hamoed Pesach.
2. The Sforno (30:18) brings that the purpose of the Kiyor was not to bring down the Shechina in the Mishkon (unlike the other vessels) but came to prepare the Kohanim for the avoda. This is why it is mentioned separate. The Chizkuni brings it was only to prepare for a mitzvah. Unlike the other vessels that were transported with badim, the kiyor was carried on wagons.
3. Transgressing Shabbos (31:14); Duplicating the anointing oil (30:32); also anointing oneself with it (ibid); duplicating the ketores, incense (30:37)
4. The Gemora (Nedorim 38a) brings from our parsha that R' Yochanon says that Moshe started learning Torah and forgot it until it was given to him to remember as a present.

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*Tuesday 8th March*  
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*Time: 19:00*



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