

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON KI TISAH - 5758

B'S'D' was told to descend because of the graven image the people created.

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mj-ravtorah@shamash.org kitisa.98 Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Ki Tisa (Shiur date: 12/1/56, Masechet Berachos 32a)

The Gemara (Berachos 32a) discusses in detail the prayer of Moshe to Hashem to forgive the people for the sin of the golden calf. [The Rav noted that one must be extremely careful when discussing Aggadic texts in the Gemara. In Aggada one must take care to draw out the full meaning of the text to prevent others from drawing incorrect interpretations that will lead to the disparagement of the Aggada as meaningless, God forbid. The interpretations presented in this shiur are essential to understanding the true definition of leadership according to Judaism.]

The Torah says Vayedaber Hashem El Moshe Lech Rayd, go down from your exalted status. Since Hashem gave Moshe his status as leader in order to lead Bnay Yisrael, now that the people have sinned there is no longer a need for Moshe as leader. The Torah continues Vayomer Hashem El Moshe, Hashem tells Moshe to allow Him to destroy the people and make Moshe into a great nation in their place. The Gemara uses the parable of the King who punished his son to the point of nearly killing him and said that if not for the fact that his close friend was here he would surely have killed him. The friend of the king realized that he is the key to saving the prince, and immediately he stood up and rescued him.

The Rav asked what forced Rabbi Eliezer to interpret the word Rayd as anything other than a command that Moshe should descend from the mountain? Why interpret it allegorically to mean descend from your exalted level? Because Moshe had just completed his stay of 40 days and nights and he had received the Torah. It was now time for Moshe to descend the mountain on his own anyway. There was no need for Hashem to tell him to descend at this point. Also, it says Vayedebaer Hashem El Moshe, Hashem ordered him to go. Moshe knew on his own that the time had come to return to the people. Apparently this led Rabbi Eliezer to interpret that he had to relinquish his status. Rashi adds that Moshe was excommunicated in heaven (the Gemara does not mention this).

The Gemara says that Moshe lost his ability to pray and protest when he was ordered to descend. Only after he realized that Hashem left open a window of opportunity for Moshe to prevent their annihilation, did Moshe interject himself and he immediately began to pray on their behalf, despite his diminished status. [The Rav noted that Rashi quotes much of this in Chumash. Rashi was the one who popularized the statements of Chazal to the masses. In general, Rashi tends to quote statements that are readily understood and appreciated without requiring vast amounts of commentary.] This is the story of the friend of the King quoted in the Gemara. This story requires explanation. There are people who recognize that at times their temper is uncontrollable and they call out to others "hold me back!". However, how does this example pertain to Hashem? If the people were guilty and deserved destruction, then what could Moshe possibly do to change that? Hashem should have punished them accordingly. If they were not punishable then why did He go through this episode with Moshe and tell him to descend? In the end we find that Moshe did not descend from his status, rather he became the greatest of all leaders and prophets of Bnay Yisrael. Then why was he told to descend?

The Rav explained that the Torah adds some words that on the surface are extraneous. Hashem told Moshe, Vayedaber Hashem El Moshe, to descend because his people have sinned. The Torah then says that Hashem told Moshe, Vayomer Hashem El Moshe, that if Moshe will not protest He will destroy the people and replace them with Moshe and his descendants. Why was it necessary to introduce these statements with Vayomer? After all, they are apparently the continuation of the previous statements where Moshe

When Moshe prayed to Hashem, he mentioned the promises made to the patriarchs. Who was greater, the patriarchs or Moshe? From the earlier Parshios in Shemos, it would appear that the patriarchs were greater. Moshe mentions them in his prayers, Hashem notes that the patriarchs never questioned Hashem, even though they never saw the fulfillment of the promises that their children will eventually inherit Eretz Yisrael and will be a great nation. Chazal say that only 3 of our ancestors are referred to as patriarchs. For example, we mention only Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Shemoneh Esray, excluding Moshe, On the other hand we say that Moshe was the greatest of prophets that came before or after him, including the patriarchs. Let us compare Avraham and Moshe.

Avraham sought Hashem without receiving any help from Hashem in his quest. The Rambam (Hilchos Avoda Zara) says that the world was cascading down hill till the pillar of the world, Avraham, was born. At a young age he began to question what controls the world. Even though he had no teacher to lead him down the right path and he lived in a family and town that were steeped in idolatry, he figured out on his own that there is a God that controls everything. Some say that Avraham was 3 when he came to this conclusion, others say that he was 40. The Torah tells us that the first communication from Hashem to Avraham was when he was 75 years old. In the intervening years he debated the idolaters and defended his belief in the one God that created and controls the world. During these years he was mocked by many. He must have been asked many times "Avraham, you believe that there is a single God? Have you ever spoken with Him? Has He ever told you anything?" Yet he dedicated his life to this task, attracting individuals one by one to recognize Hashem without any help at all from Hashem. The Torah does not relate any supernatural miracles (in comparison with the miracles that occurred to Moshe and Bnay Yisrael) that were done to the patriarchs. Even the miracle of Sarah bearing a child at the age of 90 was not as visible and remarkable a miracle as the splitting of the Red Sea. Isaac and Jacob did not have obvious supernatural miracles either, even though they obviously received miracles through natural means. The patriarchs are treated specially because they popularized the name of Hashem without His help, and they dedicated their lives to this task, despite all the hardships they endured.

Moshe came to learn of Hashem in a completely different way. Hashem sought Moshe at the burning bush, not the other way around. Moshe spent a week arguing with Hashem to send someone else to redeem the people. And when Moshe finally agreed to redeem the people, he was given a message to the people and was given signs and plagues to convince the people and Paroh that the time of their redemption had arrived. Moshe did not win the right to be the leader of the people. Hashem gave it to Moshe because the situation demanded it: Hashem wanted to redeem the people from Egypt. Moshe did not have to go through an Akeidah like Avraham did in order to attain his leadership.

However all this changed when the people sinned. In fact, it was the Erev Rav that you, Moshe, decided to bring along from Egypt that led to this disaster. You never sacrificed for the people, everything that you did as their leader was handed to you on a silver platter. Avraham built the nation, Moshe, you inherited it without any effort. You told Paroh to let the people go, and when he refused to recognize Hashem and listen, Hashem supported you and sent the plagues upon Egypt. At the Red Sea, you simply raised your hand and the sea split. You have expended minimal effort on behalf of the people. On the other hand, Avraham could only try to reason with Nimrod, and when that failed he was hurled into the furnace.

With the episode of the golden calf, Moshe forfeited his original leadership mission of taking the people out of Egypt which was entrusted to him at the burning bush. If the people were threatened with destruction and Moshe would not sacrifice himself on their behalf, he had to relinquish his leadership role. There is no need for a leader if he has no one to lead, Ayn Melech Bli Am, there is no king without a nation.

To this point, the patriarchs were greater than Moshe because of their dedication to the people and their willingness to persevere in building a nation despite all sorts of hardships. However at this point Hashem hinted to

Moshe that he could still save the people. Vayomer Hashem El Moshe. Hashem said to Moshe: Moshe, you have lost a nation that you did not sacrifice for. At Har Sinai Hashem gave the Torah to the people. Moshe, you have not taught the people anything yet. However, now Moshe I have a new proposition for you. Now you have the opportunity to follow the footsteps of the patriarchs and work and sacrifice on their behalf. You have the opportunity to rebuild this people as the Am Hashem. However, this time you will have to accomplish it without Osos Umofsim, without Kolos Uberakim. From now on you will have to travel the path of Avraham, a road littered with difficulties and hazards, one that will require great sacrifice on your part. You will have to educate them and persevere through their complaints and tribulations. The choice is yours. You can educate your own children (Gershom and Eliezer) to eventually become the Am Hashem, and sanction the destruction of this group. Or, if you are willing to follow the path of Avraham and shoulder the responsibility for this group of idol worshipers and educate them to be Shomrei Torah, then you can be their true leader. If you are willing to teach each and every Jew Torah over the coming years and show the future generations the correct path, like the patriarchs were willing to do, then you have a chance to save them.

When Moshe realized that the fate of the people was in his hands, he said Zechor Lavraham Yitzchak UIYisrael, I am ready to emulate the patriarchs and sacrifice on behalf of the nation. At the first Kabbalas Hatorah, Moshe had only to stretch out his hands and receive the Luchos. At the second Mattan Torah, Moshe had to carve out the Luchos himself from stone as well as to carve them into the hearts of the people. The first Mattan Torah was to all Jews. Hashem gave the second Mattan Torah only to Moshe. The first Mattan Torah made the complete Torah accessible to all Jews. The second Mattan Torah required Moshe to become the teacher of the people. Chazal say that the first Mattan Torah was to include all of Torah as Torah Shbichtav. The second Mattan Torah introduced Torah Shbeal Peh, which now required Moshe to teach each and every Jew. Moshe had to accept this new and difficult role in order to save and rebuild the nation.

This Mattan Torah has continued throughout the generations. The leaders of each generation are the Moshe of their time, responsible to teach the people and continue the process of Mattan Torah until the arrival of Moshiach. This is what Rabbi Eliezer said: descend from your exalted leadership role. After all, you never sought leadership, you never sacrificed for it, it was granted to you only for the sake of Bnay Yisrael. Until the golden calf, Moshe was amazingly successful. When Moshe heard this, his strength was sapped. However, he heard that he had the chance to regain his leadership by standing up and sacrificing himself on their behalf. How did Moshe prove that he was a leader like the patriarchs? By praying on their behalf 40 days and 40 nights. By, Kvayachol, grabbing on to the garment of Hashem and refusing to release it until the people were forgiven. This was his initial test. If you are willing to give up easily, then you are no leader. You must be like Avraham, who was willing to take up the cause of Sdom.

This is where Moshe proved that he was a second Avraham. Hashem said if you, the friend of the King, are willing to stand by while I destroy the people, then you are no Avraham. If you are willing to sacrifice yourself on their behalf and relinquish the chance of you yourself being the father of a great nation, then you are worthy of being another Avraham. As soon as Moshe heard that it was up to him, he immediately was energized and rose to the task, as if Avraham had stood up again to plead on behalf of the people. Moshe was willing to sacrifice his entire future on their behalf. He knew that he would never be included as a fourth patriarch, or called the father of the nation. He said if a chair of 3 legs cannot stand, Avraham Isaac and Jacob, then how could a chair with one leg, Moshe alone, stand. He said that he is interested only in saving this Jewish Nation.

We now understand the relevance of the story of the friend of the King. It is easy to be the friend of the king if one is in constant agreement with the king. For example, it is very lucrative and prestigious to be a close personal friend of the President of the United States [much of what the Rav said about political leaders and events 42 years ago is still relevant and applicable today as well, especially in light of recent political scandals]. However, sometimes

true friendship with the king demands a willingness to oppose the king when necessary, even when it involves personal sacrifice. The King punished the son in order to test the friend to see if he had the strength of character to oppose the king. Moshe answered, I am willing to give up my own personal comfort and place in history, I am willing to sacrifice myself and my potential future greatness in order to save the Jewish Nation.

After this act of sacrifice, Moshe attained a status that was greater than the patriarchs. Only after Moshe displayed his self sacrifice did his face light up, after the third time that Moshe descended from Mount Sinai after the second Mattan Torah. Moshe became the Adon Haneviim when he emulated the patriarchs. Chazal say that Hashem does not retract a positive offer, that of making Moshe into a great nation. The offer came true since all of Kneses Yisrael now became the children of Moshe. He became Moshe Rabbeinu. Kiddushin, Gerushin, contracts are all created according to Das Moshe Vyisrael. Moshe became identified with the entire Torah, because he himself on behalf of the people. This was the way of Avraham. Hashem told Moshe Lech Rayd, relinquish your original leadership role for which you did not have to struggle and now accept a leadership role fraught with difficulties.

Rabbi Avahu said that Moshe refused to release Hashem, Kvayachol, which showed how far Moshe was willing to sacrifice on their behalf. He was the friend of the king that was willing to oppose him if necessary in order to save the people. Moshe argued that a chair of one leg cannot stand if a chair of 3 legs will not stand. After Moshe showed his willingness to sacrifice on their behalf, he became the fourth leg of the chair. After the prayer of Vayechal Moshe became the fourth father of the nation. A father is defined as someone who will sacrifice on behalf of his children, and Moshe now attained that status.

The Jewish leader cannot inherit his leadership. He must build it. There were 2 Moshes. The first ended with the golden calf. The new Moshe, the fourth leg to the Merkava of Hashem, similar to Avraham, was now created.

Vayechal Moshe shows that Moshe expressed self sacrifice by praying strongly on their behalf. The Gemara interprets Vayechal meaning that he, Kvayachol, made Hashem ill, that he continued to pray until he was answered. It takes self sacrifice to keep knocking on the door of the King. When Moshe prayed for himself he was very brief. When he prayed on behalf of the people he was willing to continue as long as necessary to attain forgiveness on their behalf.

Another interpretation of Vayecahl is that Moshe was Mattir Neder for Hashem. How? [The Rav noted that this Gemara is the source for the Tikunay Zohar that we are Mattir Neder for Hashem each year at Kol Nidre, that Hashem should forgive the people.] When one expresses remorse over taking the oath before a Beis Din, the oath can be removed. An expression of remorse that expresses satisfaction with the oath up until this point, but now the person wants to pursue a different path is unacceptable as far as Hataras Nedarim. Remorse for a Neder must express regret for the totality of the oath in order to remove it. The same applies with Teshuva. For example, if someone says that he was satisfied with his previous sinful actions but that now he desires to change his ways because these actions are no longer applicable, this does not constitute Teshuva. Rescinding an oath, like Teshuva, requires that the Jew realize that the entire action was wrong and he regrets it in its entirety. Man must feel the embarrassment of his act and regret it completely. The concept of Teshuva is built on the notion that the person who is now asking for forgiveness is not the same one who committed the act. In Teshuva, man says that something extraneous caused him to do the act, as if a dybbuk possessed him and caused him to sin. He looks back on his actions and does not understand how he possibly could have acted that way. Man sins because he becomes intoxicated with the situation. When the stupor wears off he wonders how could he have possibly done such an act. The only answer for his actions is that he had a double, inconsistent personality. The Torah teaches us to be consistent at home and in public. Rabbis must be careful to avoid acting one way in private and more piously in public. The Rav said that this was the mark of Reb Chaim Brisker ZT"L, to maintain a consistent personality.

The story is told of the wagon driver who drove Reb Yisrael Salanter.

The driver saw a pile of hay and took some. Reb Yisrael yelled at him that people were watching, the driver immediately dropped the hay and moved on. When asked later who was watching, Reb Yisrael asked why was he concerned that a human was watching him? What about the fact that Hashem is constantly watching? Man must recognize this and behave the same in public and private.

When Beis Din absolves the Neder through Hattaras Nedarim, they say that the Neder was taken in error. The entire person must be of a single mind when taking the oath. The person tells Beis Din that he was a split personality when he took this oath. He acted in a way that he cannot explain or defend. The same is true of Teshuva. Man must announce that there were 2 personalities at work here. The personality that sinned has been driven out. People who returned to religion later in life would tell the Rav that they can't understand how they acted the way they did. They realize that it must have been a dybbuk that caused them to act incorrectly. For example, Shaul Hamelech was possessed by a Ruach Raah that forced him to try to kill David. Shaul, the chosen one of Hashem who Chazal say was pure from sin, did not act that way on his own. A person says "where was I when this happened", even though he signed the document himself. Beis Din can find that the person was not really there when this act took place. It is as if someone else did this act on his behalf. This principle of an alternate personality underlies modern psycho-therapy. This is a Judaic principle.

Moshe asked Hashem to look at Bnay Yisrael the same way that Beis Din looks at the Noder. Moshe argued that the inner personality of the people who worshiped the golden calf was still pure. They were searching for a way to worship Hashem and this led them down the wrong path. For every Jew that worshipped the golden calf there was another Jew who was still pure from sin. The nature of the Jew is good. Hashem, please be Mattir Neder and spare them.

One must try to reach this hidden personality within the non-observant Jewish community at large. [The Rav noted that this especially applies to those engaged in outreach and education.] There are 2 kinds of rebukes. The direct approach that scolds the Jew as wicked and a habitual transgressor will not succeed in attracting any Baalei Teshuva. Today we must use Moshe's approach, one that shows these people that they are not quite as bad as they think they are. Sometimes these Jews feel that they are so far entrenched in sin that there is no way back. The true leader must be able to show them that they can return. The great leader is capable of showing the people that they are never as unredeemable as they may believe themselves to be. The original approach of Chassidus in general, and Chabad in particular, was that the Jew is always salvageable. We can never lose sight of this, we can never be Mafkir the Tzibbur.

The Gemara interprets Vayechal Moshe, according to one interpretation, that Moshe was Mattir Neder for Hashem, not to destroy Bnay Yisrael. Moshe was told that it is up to him. If he will have Mesiras Nefesh he will find in the people the true spark of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Moshe grabbed the opportunity and used the same argument with Hashem. He said that Hashem swore to destroy the Jewish Nation because of their sin. (An utterance by Hashem has the weight of an oath.) However I have a Pesach for You, Hashem, through which You can rescind the oath of destruction and retribution. Each of them has 2 personalities. The personality that worshipped the golden calf should be destroyed, but the good side of the Jew must be preserved. This was the role of the friend of the king, to point out to the king that the son has a good side as well that must be protected and preserved. Moshe said that he would work to expose the pure Jew hidden beneath the sin.

(Please note that Mr. B. David Screiber will soon be publishing a new volume of Noraos HaRav on Inyanei Pesach. Please contact him at 212-480-0594 (fax 0890) for additional information.)

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ravfrand@torah.org "RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Ki Sisa

The Half-Shekel Census: Economy Class Giving For Everyone In relation to the Census of the Half-Shekel the Torah tells us "The wealthy should not give extra and the poor should not give less" [Shmos 30:15]. Rav Yeruchem points out that there is an opinion among the enumerators of the commandments that this is one of the 365 negative prohibitions of the Torah. It is understandable why the Torah must prohibit giving less than a half Shekel. We all know that when we are asked to give 'X' amount of dollars, we always have excuses to give less. However, there has probably never been a Building Campaign in the history of the Jewish people where there was a need to emphasize "The wealthy should not give more". What kind of person is the Torah referring to here when specifying that he shouldn't give too much? Rav Yeruchem tells us an insight into human psychology. He says there is a Yetzer Hara for a wealthy individual to want to give more than his neighbor. Part of the Yetzer Hara of being rich is the attitude "It is not appropriate for me to be like everyone else." This is what I call the "First Class Syndrome". Recently, I received a free upgrade from US Air. It was only good until January 15. I had never before flown first class, so I decided to take advantage of the opportunity. I had a scheduled flight from Newark to Baltimore -- all of forty minutes but I wanted to find out once and for all what goes on behind that curtain. I was the only person there. As soon as I came in the stewardess asked me "Would you like a drink?" Why would someone pay 20% more for a ticket just so the stewardess can offer him a drink, before he has a chance to sit down? Does it make sense to pay \$50 dollars more to save \$3 on a cocktail? The insight here is that some people sit in first class because "es'past nischt" (it's beneath my dignity) for me to sit back there with the masses in economy class. This attitude, says Rav Yeruchem, is what the Torah is addressing here -- everyone will give the same amount. The wealthy person is confronted with a constant test (nisayon) of haughtiness. "How can I let this person, who has a tenth of what I have, give the same thing as me? I'm different. I'm better. I can't just give a half shekel. I can't just be equal." This is what the Torah is addressing. Here there is only one class. Everyone is the same. There is a Yetzer Hara against this. Some of us have it with money; others have it with where we sit or how we are treated. We all have it on different levels. "I should get Revii?" (See Glossary) There is a famous story of a fellow who comes to shul and the gabbai wants to give him Chamishi. He tells the gabbai "where I come from, they give Chamishi to the 'proste mentchen' (coarse people)". The gabbai responded "that is our custom too." "The wealthy shall not give more" -- that is the test the Torah is addressing.

Sneak Preview of Messianic Times (Succas-Pessach 5752; Winter 1991-92) This week's portion contains the incident of the sin of the Golden Calf. The Ramba"n says this was not real idolatry that was being worshipped -- the Jews just wanted an intermediary, thinking Moshe Rabbeinu was dead. Nonetheless, it was a terrible sin. What the Torah tries to convey is that what happened was akin to a run-away freight train. Things got out of hand. Moshe was late in returning. The Satan saw an opportunity. He made, what Rash"i tells us was the appearance of "confusion in the world". The people clamored for an intermediary. Chur got up and tried to stop them. The people killed Chur. That is how things got out of hand. It was like a snowball coming down a mountain. Unstoppable. Aharon, who feared for his life after seeing what happened to Chur, went along with the people, while trying to minimize and mitigate. But he also gets swept along in this unstoppable snowball. All of a sudden Moshe came down from the mountain. He put up his hands and, in a sense, said, "Stop!" In an instant the whole thing stopped. What happened? How is it that this unstoppable "snowball" could stop on a dime? The Beis Av makes the following observation: This is the power of Truth. Since their sin was based on Falsehood, on an incorrect assumption, on an act of Satan with no validity to it, as soon as the Truth became apparent, it was as if someone turned on a light in a dark room. The darkness dissipates in a moment. Such is the power

of Truth to push away Falseness. Sheker (falsehood) can be stopped in its tracks with pure unadulterated Emes (truth). This is a tremendous ethical lesson for us. For thousands of years we have been wanting, praying for the coming of Moshiach. We say that when Moshiach will come that "every creature will know that You have created him..." We may ask ourselves, how will it turn-around in Moshiach's time? How will it be that all of a sudden all people will realize the centrality of the Jewish people in the Universe? How will it be that the religious leaders of other faiths will all of a sudden say "You are right -- there is only One G-d; the rest of it is all Sheker"? How is this entire scenario going to happen? This Parsha in the Torah teaches us how it will happen. When Falsehood meets Truth, Falsehood melts. When the Truth of Moshiach becomes evident, the whole world will turn around. Note: This story occurred in 1992 when Rav Pam came to Baltimore to visit Rabbi Binyomin Steinberg (z'l) who was very ill. Rabbi Steinberg was a student of Rav Pam and was the Menahel (principal) of the Bais Yaakov High School of Baltimore for many years. Rabbi Steinberg was also an outstanding teacher of Jewish history and current events. I was not privy to the following conversation. But, I am told that Rabbi Pam visited Baltimore not long ago and was at Rabbi Steinberg's house. Rabbi Steinberg had the opportunity to speak to his Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Pam, and asked him the question that is on everybody's mind: What is going on in the world? The world that we are living in today -- shortly before Pessach 5752 (1992) -- is a different world than the world we were living in 6 months ago before Succos 5752 (1991)! Before Succos there was a Communist Government in Russia, the world was functioning as it has "always" functioned, there were two Germanys, everything was "normal." Less than six months later everything has changed. What does it mean? Why does it all happen? In his characteristic fashion, Rav Pam shrugged his shoulders and said, "I don't know." But he did offer one insight. G-d is trying to show us -- See! This is how it is going to happen! If anyone doubts how the Moshiach will turn things around, how overnight people will reject life-long beliefs and proclaim that G-d is True and the Jewish People are his Chosen Nation, and all other religions will be thrown in the towel... If anyone will say to himself "It can't happen -- How can it change overnight?", this is what G-d has done for us in the last 6 months. The world has revolutionized almost overnight. This has been the "sneak preview". This too is the lesson of our parsha. Sheker can be pushed away by Emes. Moshe Rabbeinu stopped the Golden Calf on a dime. This is how the Moshiach will do it -- may it be speedily in our own days.

Personalities & Sources: Rav Yeruchem Levovitz -- (1874-1936) the Mir Mashgiach; Mir, Poland. Beis Av -- Rav Elyakim Schlesinger- Rosh Yeshiv, London England Rav Pam -- Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Torah Vo'daath, Brooklyn, NY; Member of Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Israel. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.org Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Balt, MD dhoffman@clark.net Rav Frand, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. http://www.torah.org/ Baltimore, MD 21215 (410) 358-9800 FAX: 358-9801

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"Because it is a sign [of the covenant] between Me and you . . ." (31:13) A number of poskim/halachic authorities have dealt with the question: Should Shabbat begin throughout the entire world at the same time, specifically at sunset in Eretz Yisrael, or should each person observe Shabbat according to sunset where he finds himself? R' Ben Zion Meir Chai Uziel z"l (see page 4) writes in the name of Radvaz z"l (16th century): As the above verse states, Shabbat is a sign of the covenant between Hashem and each Jew individually. Accordingly, each Jew observes Shabbat according to

the local time where he is. A proof of this, Radvaz states, is the fact that Hashem gave Moshe the mitzvah of Shabbat at the place called Marah, which is at a different latitude than Eretz Yisrael. Hashem wanted to teach that wherever a Jew finds himself on Shabbat, he observes Shabbat according to the time of sunset at that place. R' Uziel adds: If Hashem did not intend each Jew to observe Shabbat according to the "times" where one finds himself, how could Jews throughout history have observed Shabbat? Certainly they did not have the means to calculate when sunset would occur in far-off Eretz Yisrael! Just as we observe Shabbat at different times in different places, so Hashem made each creation appear in different places at different times. For example, light did not appear all at once throughout the world. Rather, light appeared first at some longitude and gradually made its way around the planet. Similarly, when it was already Shabbat on one side of the earth, Hashem was still "creating" on the other side. R' Uziel cites a number of sages, among them R' Avraham ben Chiya z"l (see page 4) who note that Shabbat is never postponed for any reason. This is because the time of Shabbat is directly tied to the progress of creation. If so, argues R' Uziel, Shabbat must begin at the time that creation ended in each different place. Where in the world does Shabbat begin first, i.e., where does halachah consider the international date line to be? R' Uziel concludes (based on the works of the Ba'al Hamaor and Kuzari) that the date line passes through Eretz Yisrael itself. Chazal teach that Eretz Yisrael is where creation began, so that must be where Shabbat came first. Moreover, in the era before the calendar was composed, when the sanhedrin had to declare each new month when the moon was seen, the new month began first where the sanhedrin was, i.e., in Eretz Yisrael. Similarly, Shabbat should begin there first. (She'eilot U'teshuvot Piskei Uziel Be'she'eilot Ha'zman No. 21)

[Ed. Note: There are a number of halachic opinions regarding the location of the international date line. Those traveling to the quarter of the globe east of Israel should consult a competent halachic authority.] Hamaayan, Copyright (c) 1998 by Shlomo Katz and Project Genesis, Inc. Posted by Alan Broder, ajb@torah.org . Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. http://www.torah.org/ Baltimore, MD 21215 (410) 358-9800

yhe-parsha.ml@jer1.co.il HAFTARAH KITISA TANACH STUDY CENTER www.virtual.co.il/torah/tanach In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag HAFTARAH - PARSHAT KI-TISA / I MELACHIM 18:1-39

This week's Haftarah describes the famous 'showdown' between Eliyahu and the prophets of Baal on Har Carmel. This week's shiur discusses both the prophetic and 'political' background of this event.

INTRODUCTION The time period of Shlomo ha'melech marked a high point in Jewish history. Finally, some five hundred years after the Exodus, the Am Yisrael had attained its fullest borders, the economy flourished, unity was achieved, and the Bet Ha'Mikdash was built in the new capital of Jerusalem. However, only a short time later, the empire crumbled. Not only did the kingdom split between Rechavam [Yehuda] and Yeravam [the Ten Tribes], Sheyshak, king of Egypt, attacked, leaving the country in shambles. Even though Yehuda recovered rather quickly during the reigns of Assah and Yehoshaphat, the situation of the Ten Tribes went from bad to worse. Yeravam's dynasty lasted only two generations, so too the dynasty of his rival Baasha. Afterward the country suffered from a war between generals (Zimri, Omri and Tivni). Finally, Omri managed to secure the kingdom, and moved its capital to Shomron. [For more details, read I Melachim chapter 16.]

ACHAV, KING OF ISRAEL & HIS TREATY WITH SIDON Omri's son - Achav - was the first king to put the Ten Tribes 'back on the map'. He stabilized the internal political situation, built a strong army, and boosted the economy by entering into an alliance with Sidon (in Lebanon), opening Israeli trade to the entire Mediterranean basin. As part of this alliance, Achav married Eyzavel, the daughter of the King of Sidon (a common practice in ancient times when two countries enter a treaty or cooperation). Unfortunately, together with the new trade routes, Eyzavel

brought with her Canaanite culture. The establishment of 'state sanctioned' houses of worship for Baal and Asheyra (16:30-33) was the price that Achav was willing to pay for his treaty with Sidon. In Achav's own eyes, this newfound prosperity was in Israel's best interests, and therefore, he was willing to pay the price, for without this treaty, the country may have very well fallen apart.

EYZEVEL AND ELIYAHU Eyzével, after rising to a powerful position within Achav's government, began to purge the country from its prophets (see 18:4, 18:13). In her opinion, these backward 'religious fanatics' would prevent Israel from molding into an integral part of the 'new Middle East' which Sidon was creating. Even though there were other high ranking officials in Achav's government, such as Ovadyah, who remained sympathetic to God's persecuted prophets (see 18:4), Eyzével's policy became dominant during the early years of Achav's rule. Furthermore, Achav had made peace with Yehoshafat, king of Yehuda (their children intermarry as well). For the first time since the split of the kingdom, prosperity returned and tribal unity was re-established. It is at this point when ELIYAHU enters. His plan is quite simple: If he can convince Achav and his countrymen to repent, a new 'messianic' time period similar to that of Shlomo could be re-created. However, the primary obstacle to Eliyahu's plan is Eyzével. It is Eliyahu's assumption that Bnei Yisrael are not following Eyzével for ideological reasons, but rather for practical ones. They have accepted Eyzével's Canaanite culture only because it has brought them prosperity. If however, Eliyahu can prove to the people that it is God who controls their prosperity (e.g. the rain etc.), and not Baal (the Canaanite rain god), surely the people would return to Him. Therefore, Eliyahu's first step is to decree a terrible drought upon the Land (see 17:1). By bringing this drought, Eliyahu hopes to convince the people that it is indeed God who controls their destiny, and not Ba'al & Asheyra and an entire pantheon of gods. After three years of drought, Eliyahu is ready for the big 'showdown' with the prophets of Baal. On Har Carmel, he hopes to prove to the people that it is God who brings the rain, and not Baal. Before this confrontation, Eliyahu enters into a heated debate with Achav over WHO is responsible for the terrible situation which the drought has brought. Achav accuses Eliyahu that he has brought upon the demise of Israel (18:17). Eliyahu retorts that Achav himself is responsible, because of his alliance with Eyzével and the Baal worship which she has instituted (18:18).

JUST ONE MIRACLE... Eliyahu is sure that with one big miracle he can 'turn everything around'. He invites the prophets of Baal to a showdown on Har Carmel. All the people gather to watch (18:19-20). From his censure of the people before this showdown, we see that Am Yisrael are actually torn between both cultures: "Eliyahu came to people and told them: For how long can you continue to 'straddle the fence', if Hashem is God, then follow ONLY Him, and if Baal is god, then follow him, but the people could not answer him." (18:21) After the prophets of Baal are unable to cause their god to answer them (18:22-29), Eliyahu gathers the people around his MIZBAYACH, and prays to God that He answer him IN ORDER that Bnei Yisrael become certain the He is indeed their God (18:30-37). God answers Eliyahu's prayer and consumes his offering. The people, amazed by this event, declare their belief in God (18:38-39). Even though the Haftara ends of this 'happy note', the final outcome of this miracle falls very short of Eliyahu's hopes. The very next day, Eyzével, unmoved by these events, declares that the fate of Eliyahu will be like that of the prophets of Baal (19:1-2). Upon hearing this, Eliyahu is distressed. He had hoped that this miracle would cause the people to revolt against Eyzével. Instead, she remained in power; no one contested. Achav remained powerless against her. Eliyahu, realizing that he has failed (19:3-4), 'gives up' his battle and 'runs away' to Har Chorev (19:5-14). The meaning of God's "hitgalut" to Eliyahu at Har Chorev, and the lesson which God is teaching him, is an exciting topic, but beyond the scope of this week's shiur. Iy"h, we will discuss it in our shiur on the Haftara for Parshat Pinchas. shabbat shalom menachem