



GETTING IT RIGHT

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

We do it every Shabbos morning. We read a Parsha of the Torah and hopefully gain some insight into what it is the Eibishter seeks for us. I am certain my readership is well learned and there is little I can offer that you all haven't heard before. Allow me though just to underline that in the Torah small variances, little nuances of the wording, are meant to open up vast wellsprings of holiness. Let me share a few of these keys from this week's reading, that can unlock vast insights into who we are as a nation.

The seven Aliyos into which each weekly parsha is subdivided are generally evenly spaced. However, this week's parsha of Ki Sisa contains 139 verses, yet the first two Aliyos contain a disproportionate 92 verses, or two-thirds of the entire parsha. Why is this? The Chiddushei HaRim explains that the majority of the parsha discusses the sin of the golden calf, a national embarrassment of unprecedented proportions. For somebody to be called up to the Torah when this sin, in which his ancestors may have played a role, is being recounted would be humiliating. The tribe of Levi proved their faithfulness by refusing to take part in the sin and assisting Moshe in punishing the wrongdoers. Therefore, the first two Aliyos, which are given to descendants of the Levites, are atypically lengthened until the narrative of the golden calf is completed.

It's interesting to note yet another aspect of this portion of our Torah. By the Cheit HaEigel (The sin of the golden calf) Hashem forgives Am Yisroel after Moshe prayed for them, despite the fact that we don't see anywhere that they did tshuva (repentance). Yet by the sin of the Miraglim (The spies) Hashem does not forgive them even though they showed remorse and did do tshuva. This seems counter intuitive, what is happening here? Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshischa answers that they did not do tshuva by the eigel because they didn't think it would help. They were bitter and remorseful of their

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behaviour and held no other ulterior motive. By the time they did the sin of the meraglim they were very familiar with the mechanism of tshuva and how it could cleanse you so their tshuva had a tad of self service in it.

The Iturei Torah brings from Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk that the Eigel while it was a terrible aveira nevertheless had an underlying yearning to reach Hashem albeit in a very misguided way. The sin of the Miraglim on the other hand was a yearning for gashmiyus or to use the sharp wording of the holy Kotzker, "good potatoes" (attractive fress)!

The torah tells us of the misdeeds of our ancestors for a purpose. We are His chosen nation, and our actions have consequences. We must believe that our souls were carved from Hashem, the Source of Life, and that Hashem rejoices over us and takes pleasure when we fulfill His will. This is the meaning of the verse, "They believed in Hashem and in His servant, Moshe." They believed in the collective soul of Moshe, which includes all six hundred thousand souls of Israel. They believed that Hashem desired them and has nachas from the good within them.

In Ger after the Churban there was a special neshomah named Rav Gad'l Eisner, who was the mashgiach in the Gerrer yeshiva and guided the many post Churban survivors back to a fulsome yiddisha life. He would share the following story with his students: "There was a thief who would break into homes at night by crawling down the chimneys. Once, late at night, he came down a chimney and saw that he had broken into the home of the local rabbi. The Rav was awake studying Torah, and his Rebbetzin was awake preparing tea. The thief was startled, but quickly came to his senses, and told the Rebbetzin that he had come to ask the Rav a question.

The Rebbetzin was surprised that the visitor had come through the chimney; she surmised that he must have arrived from the heavens to ask the halachic question of a human rabbi, because the Torah is not arbitrated in Heaven. She brought the thief to the Rav to ask his question. The Rav lifted his head from his Gemara and invited the thief to ask his question. The thief asked, "How do I get out of this place?!"

We often find ourselves asking the same sort of question. The world seems so chaotic, how can we ever find peace and calm whilst being caught in the currents of today's material world? A Gutta Yied was heard to say, 'Don't tell Hashem how big your problems are; tell your problems how big Hashem is!'

Rebbe Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin writes: "Just as a person must believe in Hashem, he must then also believe in himself. He must believe that Hashem interacts with him. His good deeds do not go to waste. His immortal soul is not something that was "created overnight and overnight is lost, "like the beasts of the field that are lost after their deaths and are no more.

The obstructions caused by the materialist world are here for us to fix by fulfilling the Will of Hashem without ulterior motive. Every Yied has the power to create Kedusha and bring illumination to the heavens and earth. We just have become entwined in the world that thinks it doesn't need Chas Vesholom the Eibishter, and our sensitivities have become dulled. The Torah shares our previous mistakes as a chizuk for us to know the truth. We each can and must bring to hand our inert abilities to bring holiness to the world, you just need to believe in yourself.

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