

Parshas Ki Sisa

This week's parsha famously recounts the destruction of the Luchos after Moshe saw the Jews engaged in the sin of the golden calf. The parsha begins with the giving of the half shekel as a form of redemption, a form of donation, and a method of a census of the number of Jews. Whenever there was a "counting" it is to show the love Hashem has for the Jews, which is appropriate here, in that it is possible to say that with the sin the Jews would be destitute, which was not the case (due to the selflessness of Moshe and other reasons).

In other places in the Torah (such as why Maseches Gittin precedes Kiddushin- according to mepharshim) Hashem give the "refua" for the "maka". Here the half shekel is a tool of redemption for atoning sins. Furthermore, Hashem tells us to keep Shabbos. This is one of the sources for how we know that the work in the Mishkan are the source for the 39 avos melachos. Rashi explains this on 31:13 on "veata" that the work of the Mishkan does not push off Shabbos. Additionally, Shabbos as a sign for the generations (Verse 13) to know that "I am Hashem". Keeping Shabbos and remember Hashem as the Master of the Universe is a protection from outside forces that could stray us from the path.

The Baal Haturim (as quoted to me by Rabbi Y. Holzberg) explains on Chapter 30 posuk 14, the words "Miben Esrim Shana" (that 20-year old's and older gave the donation) if you reverse the last letter of each word, you get Haman, which references the

holiday of Purim¹, and that one of the mitzvos of the day is to give tzedakah, which apparently takes reference from here. Further reference to Purim is from the ingredients of the spices and incense used in the Mishkan. Mor Dror is "prime spices". In Megilla daf 10b posits that the name of Mordechai (from the story of Ester) is sourced from the posuk in our parsha Chapter 30, posuk 23. Unkelos translates Mor Dror as Meira Dachya, which the gemara explains that Mordechai was like the "chief or prime" spices. Perhaps the connection to Purim is the fact that the Jews here committed a cardinal sin of serving an idol, whereas by Purim they accepted fully (kimu v'kiblu) the Torah.

Chapter 32 begins with the Jews seeing that Moshe was delayed from returning from the mountain. The Gemara in Shabbos 89a explains the word "boshesh" to mean that they were confused in the 6th hour. Moshe said that he would descend the mountain in the 6th hour, and Satan came along and made a storm, so they couldn't see the hour of the day, Satan then showed the Jews the image of Moshe's bier, and they relented against Hashem. One can also derive from the Gemara in Megilla 29a, that the "6" refers to the multitude (600,000) men who witnessed the giving of the Torah- and just as it was given so could it be taken away. I think this first recount of the sin shows the potential for people to easily be swayed from truth, even when it seems counter intuitive. It is a reflection of how us humans operate, and that the events of 3000 years ago can take on an alternative form, but manifest similarly.

¹ You can even posit that in posuk 16 of chapter 30 where we see the word "kippurim" which is famously an adage recounted that what can be

accomplished on Purim is more than Yom Kippur, which is referred to Yom Kipurrim, i.e., that it is "ki (like) purim".

This can be seen with the Haftora. The Haftora from Melachim 1 (there is a difference between Sephardic and Ashkenaz communities for how much is read) recounts the era when Eliyahu Hanavi lived during the time of the first Beis Hamikdash, under the rule of King Achav and Queen Yizevel. Yizevel had convinced Achav to rebel against the word of the prophets, especially since Eliyahu (along with the other prophets of the time) warned against the negative that can befall the Jews for straying from the path of Torah and Mitzvas. Achav and Yizevel were so incensed they ordered the murdering of all prophets. During the three-year spree, while Eliyahu was in hiding, Ovadiah saved many prophets, and merited a book in Nach, and a single prophecy reconciling Yakov and Esav's feud and the rule of Edom (descendants of Esav) would be crushed, and we would usher in the era of Mashiach. (That Haftora is read for Parshas Vayishlach). Eliyahu as well shows that Ba'al the primary idol of the time was not a true god and showed the Jews and the priests of Ba'al on Mt. Carmel who the true Master of the Universe is.

Essentially the connection to parsha and us is that no matter where Jews are and where they find themselves, Hashem is the Master of the Universe, and we will be rejoined with Eliyahu, Moshe when we usher in Mashiach.

Good Shabbos