

Parshas Ki Sisa

This week's parsha is Ki Sisa, where the Torah introduces the half shekel to count the Jews. There is also a minhag that on Erev Purim, we give a half Shekel as a commemoration of the coins offered in the Beis Hamikdash during Adar. We are taught that the half-shekel is specifically provided to teach that no person is whole without another. This means that the Jewish people are whole when they work with one another in the service of Hashem.

The reference to the Jews being whole is also expressed in the time of the giving of the Torah, where the Jews were K'ish echad b'leiv echad, as one man with one heart, because the Torah was only able to be given and received when everyone was working with one another. On Purim in the Megillah, it says, Kimu V'Kiblu, which the Mepharshim tells us is when the Jews fully accepted the Torah. (At Har Sinai, the mountain was held over their heads, so one can say they forcefully accepted the Torah, but now, at Purim, they wholly accepted it.) This means the Parsha of the week and Purim are connected.

Purim is a holiday where Hashem isn't expressly written in the Megillah; instead, His presence is only referred to, yet we know it's Hashem's hand in everything. This critical theme of Purim teaches us that even when we cannot "see" Hashem, He is there.

I was sitting at a Seuda, and we talked about Purim, and someone gave a Bracha for all good things to be revealed. I added to his Bracha that we should be blessed

to recognize all the good stuff. I meant that all the good things that happen to us sometimes go unrecognized because they may not be precisely as we foresaw or even asked for. But realizing that it is a blessing may help us understand what we are looking for. Sometimes things don't work out exactly how we anticipate, but taking the time to see the blessings in it is the way Hashem directs His hand in our lives. It starts with recognizing the most minor things that can be taken for granted and taking account for how that is a blessing.

Similarly, a Yiddish cynical adage says, "A Mencht Tracht un Got Lacht," "Man thinks/plans and G-d Laughs". This would, heaven forbid, assume that Hashem is some jokester that takes joy in misery, which is far from the truth. Instead, re-interpret this line, that man plans, and G-d laughs with you. Meaning the blessings will come from your planning, and together you will be so happy that you will laugh, and Hashem will do so alongside you. The plans that have to happen will happen for the good.

On that note, may the joy of Purim, where joy breaks all boundaries, truly free us from the shackles of Golus, may the unity in the Jews, also break us free from the shackles of Golus, and may we celebrate our own Purim with the rebuilding of our Beis Hamikdash, speedily in our times.

Good Shabbos