

CHAYUS

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ע"ה And Tzvi Daniel ע"ה ben ט"ט David Ainsworth ש"י

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

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ערב שבת פרשת כי תשא, י"ז אדר א', ה'תשפ"ב

כתר שם טוב

PORTIONS OF LIGHT

Adapted from
Keter Shem Tov

Divine Providence

Our Sages state that the distinction between the world's present state and the era of Moshiach is only the subservience to the kingdoms (Berachos 34b). Elsewhere, they state that the Jewish people were not exiled until they denied G-d and Dovid (Zohar II 175b).

The deeper significance of these statements is as follows: The name Dovid is spelled *daled, vav, daled*.

The Ein Sof, G-d's infinite light, is represented by the initial *daled*, for being infinitely removed from Creation and beyond all understanding, it is referred to as ayin, "nothing," similar to *daled*—similar to *dalus*—meaning "impoverished," or "one who has nothing." The next letter, *vav*—which is a vertical letter downward—represents the elicitation of Ein Sof into the final *daled*, which represents a person who considers himself nothing

before G-d, in light of G-d's *hashgachah pratis* (Divine Providence) that controls and orchestrates each detail of existence.

One who denied this "Dovid," meaning the wondrous *hashgachah pratis* that flows from Ein Sof, is considered denying G-d's kingship, for he claims that G-d is not the ruler of each detail. He believes that he controls his own fate, and he denies the kingship of Dovid, as explained above.

In the era of Moshiach, when evil will vanish and the screen that prevents us from seeing *hashgachah pratis* will disappear, the kingship of "G-d and of Dovid" will be fully revealed. The subservience of the kingdoms, meaning, the subjugation of the kingdoms of G-d and of Dovid to the forces of concealment will end.

Keter Shem Tov, Vol. 1, 46a

גאולה

GEULAH

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by Yaakov Paley

Giving Charity

The theme of the half shekel donation is to build the Beis Hamikdash and to bring the Redemption. The donation is used to fund the offerings, and also for Temple upkeep. The sacrifices and the act of donating money to *tzedakah* share a common theme: they greatly elevate the material world, hastening the era in which the material world will be entirely elevated. At present, the forces of *kelipah* derive their nurture from sanctity

via *kelipas nogah*. All of Torah and *mitzvos*, but especially the offerings and *tzedakah*, raise *kelipas nogah* into the realm of *kedushah*, at which point it cannot serve as a conduit to *kelipah*. This process will be completed in the era of redemption and the forces of *kelipah* will be left with no further means of endurance.

The Rebbe

The Power of Repentance

The Verse: After the episode of the sin of the Golden Calf, the Torah relates:

“G-d spoke to Moshe: ‘Go, ascend from here, you and the people whom you brought up from the land of Egypt...’” (*Shemos* 33:1).

The Rashi: *You and the people*—Here it does not say, “your people.”

Rashi’s Intent: Rashi is addressing the following difficulty:

Earlier, when G-d informed Moshe of the people’s sin, He commanded Moshe to “Descend, for *your people* whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have become corrupted” (*Shemos* 32:7). Rashi explains that the unusual phrase “your people” refers to the “mixed multitude”—Egyptian converts whom Moshe accepted into the Jewish people. G-d disparaged the mixed multitude, referring to them as Moshe’s people and not G-d’s people, because they were the ones who instigated the sin of the Golden Calf (*Rashi, ibid.*).

After Moshe successfully petitioned G-d for forgiveness, and after the idolatrous Jews were punished, G-d told Moshe to continue on towards the land of Israel: “Go lead the people to where I have told you...” (*Shemos* 32:34). Then, the Torah tells of a plague that G-d sent upon a remaining segment of the offenders. And following this interruption in the narrative, our verse appears: “G-d spoke to Moshe: ‘Go, ascend from here, you and the people whom you brought up from the land of Egypt...’”

Rashi is bothered by G-d repeating His instruction to Moshe to continue traveling with the people toward Israel in verses 32:34 and 33:1.

Rashi concludes that the people mentioned in each verse are in fact different segments of the nation. The people in chapter 32—“Go lead the people to where I have told you”—are the remaining members of the original, native Jewish people who did not sin with the Golden Calf and who were spared capital punishment. The people in chapter 33—“Go, ascend from here, you and the people whom you brought up from the land of Egypt”—are some members of the mixed multitude who *did* sin with the Golden Calf, but who were spared punishment, as we will soon see. Moshe was commanded to not only bring up the innocent Jewish people, but some of the guilty mixed multitude as well.

The Spared Sinners: What evidence is there that some

of the mixed multitude were spared? Rashi previously explained that there were three death penalties meted out for those who worshiped the Golden Calf: “If there were witnesses and warning—they were punished by the sword...; witnesses without warning—through a plague...; neither witnesses nor warning—through *hydrokan* [a disease that distends the belly, similar to the death suffered by a *sotah*, a suspected adulteress whose culpability was confirmed by miraculous water], for the water tested them, and their stomachs became distended” (*Rashi on Shemos* 32:20).

Regarding the first two penalties, the Torah says, “there fell from the people...” and “G-d smote the people” (*Shemos* 32:28, 35). However, regarding those who “the water tested... and their stomachs became distended,” it says, “He gave the Children of Israel to drink” (*ibid.* 32:20).

Clearly, “the people” includes the entire nation, including converts, whereas “the Children of Israel” (when it appears in contrast to “the people”) refers specifically to the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

Why were the mixed multitude spared from the punishment of the testing waters? Rashi explained that the water was meant to test the people’s innocence like the *sotah* waters administered to a suspected adulteress (*Rashi to* 32:20). If innocent, the water would bring blessing into the woman’s life, and if guilty, she would die of a distended belly. In a later comment, Rashi introduces a parable where G-d is the King, the Jewish people are His betrothed, and the mixed multitude are the maidservants whose immoral behavior sullies the reputation of the betrothed (*Shemos* 34:1). It follows, therefore, that the test of the water could only be given to native Jews—the betrothed—and not to the mixed multitude—the maidservants. The mixed multitude who sinned, but there was neither witnesses nor warning were thus spared from a punishment.

Thus, Rashi comments: “*You and the people*—Here it does not say, ‘your people.’” While previously the mixed multitude were in a degraded, sinful state—“your people”—now they were fit to go on toward Israel and would be referred to in a more dignified, inclusive way: “the people.” Although they had sinned in the most grievous way, through repentance, they elevated themselves from their inferior position and joined the remaining Jewish nation—“the people.”

The Deeper Dimension: The repentance and subsequent salvation of the mixed multitude was the climax and ultimate objective of the saga of the Golden Calf. Our Sages taught that: “The Jewish people were not deserving of involvement in the incident of the Golden Calf”; it was, rather, “a Royal decree... in order to pave the way for a penitent” (*Avoda Zara* 4b).

Meaning, G-d allowed the people to be swayed by their evil inclination so that the possibility of repentance could be created. The superiority of the penitent over the purely righteous person is that the penitent can reveal the unity of G-d in a deeper way than the righteous person can. When confronted with evil, which challenges G-d’s unity, the righteous person rejects and discards this evil, thus revealing that it had no substance, it was a mere mirage, and so, posed no challenge to G-d’s unity. The penitent, however, already engaged with the evil, and then through his repentance,

he elevated and transformed that experience into sacred energy. Thus, he revealed that G-d is one even with the negative forces within Creation.

In order to achieve this display of His unity in the world, G-d engineered the sin of the Golden Calf, so that this sin could be rectified through repentance. The lowest and darkest sin was perpetrated by the mixed multitude who not only sinned themselves, but also incited others to sin. Their repentance, therefore, represents the full realization of G-d’s “plot,” namely, the transformation of abject evil, to reveal G-d’s unity.

The Lesson: No one can excuse themselves from influencing, teaching, and interacting with those who engage in sinful behavior. For the deepest expression of G-d’s unity comes not through the service of the righteous, but through the difficult transformation of the penitent.

Likkutei Sichot vol. 16, p. 408ff

סיפור חסידי

ONCE UPON A CHASID

By Yanki Tauber

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Chassidic Contraband

“He [Moses] threw the tablets from his hands, and broke them at the foot of the mountain” (Ki Sisa 32:19)

Said G-d to Moses: Thank you for breaking them.

- Rashi’s commentary

Said G-d to Moses... The first tablets contained only the Ten Commandments. With the second tablets I shall give you midrash, halacha and agadah...

- Midrash Rabba

Chassidim would often steal manuscripts (‘ksovim’) which their Rebbe had declined to make public, out of a tremendous thirst for his teachings. Once, during the years that Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch lived in Warsaw, several of his chassidim succeeded in duplicating the key to his desk drawer. When the Rebbe left town for a few weeks they raided the drawer, took some manuscripts, and gave them to someone to copy. Because of this heist, these manuscripts survived the tragic fire which destroyed many other invaluable manuscripts.

Many manuscripts belonging to Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (the Tzemach Tzedek) were also once lost in a fire. Later, he

said to his chassidim: “Gevald! Why didn’t you steal! Had you stolen, something would have been saved...”

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi actually wrote on one of his manuscripts: “A cherem (excommunication) in both this world and the world to come upon anyone who violates the privacy of this manuscript.” This manuscript was also lost in a fire. When Rabbi Schneur Zalman later searched for a ‘contraband’ copy, his son Rabbi DovBer said: “But did you not write ‘A cherem in both this world and the world to come’?”

Replied Rabbi Schneur Zalman: “What has become of the self-sacrifice [‘mesirus nefesh’] for Torah...?”

Man As A Channel Of Divine Mercy

“And I will favor when I wish to favor” (Ki Sisa 33:19)

When one wishes to draw water to one’s field from a distant wellspring, one prepares a duct. The duct must be carefully examined, to ensure that there are no cracks or holes that would prevent the flow of the water, and it must be precisely aligned so that the pristine water does not end up misrouted into a putrid swamp. Crucially, one must ensure that the duct remains firmly connected to its source at the wellspring, without even a hairsbreadth between the duct and the well, so that water will perpetually surge forth. If the duct is not designed with care, the pure water may never reach its destination. Worse, it may be misdirected into a foul mire.

Similarly, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are a wellspring and man is a duct, directing G-d’s mercy into the world with prayer and Torah study. When per-

forming divine service, one must therefore first examine one’s own nooks and crannies, lest inappropriate thoughts or ulterior motives clog the duct. Even minor imperfections in one’s intent could prevent mercy from surging forth or, heaven forbid, route the flow of divine mercy away from this world, instead strengthening the forces of evil. One must also ensure that one’s thoughts are perpetually connected to G-d and His Thirteen Attributes, without even minor interruptions.

But when one succeeds in praying or studying Torah with proper intent, one becomes the duct by which G-d’s lofty wellspring channels mercy—to the individual, and to all of the worlds.

The Holy Zohar (Tikkunei Zohar 25b; Zohar III 121b) stresses the centrality of proper intent during divine service, cautioning that “any word which is not emitted with fear and love does not ascend upward.” For the goal of divine service is to elevate words uttered in prayer or Torah study to their root on high, where their component letters come before G-d and He looks at them. In an instant, with but a glance, G-d responds by unleashing a downpour of mercy, which flows through the one who uttered those letters with pure intent, in love and fear, and from there His mercy sustains all of the worlds.

“And I will favor when I wish to favor” hints at this exchange. The word “when” (אשר) can also mean “to praise” or “to glance,” and the grammatical preposition את is a reference to the words of prayer and Torah study, which are comprised of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet that begin with the letter *Alef* and end with the letter *Tav*. The phrase could thus be translated: “**And I will favor** one who **praises** Me with the **letters of the Hebrew alphabet**, and this causes Me to **glance** at those letters and respond, by **favoring** sincere divine service with a merciful answer.”

Ohr Torah, par. 105

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

SHABBOS CHITAS / RAMBAM GUIDE

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