
THE WEISS EDITION

כִּי-תִשָּׂא

Ki Sisa



A Conflict of Interest

Learned from the Pro

A Role Model

When Broken Comes Before Whole

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת צבי אלימלך ב"ר מרדכי גרשון ע"ה

שפאלטר

נלב"ע ביום כ"ח אדר א' ה'תשל"ח

ולעילוי נשמת

מרת אסתר מאטיל בת ר' מאיר יוחנן ע"ה

שפרינגר (שפאלטר)

נלב"ע ביום כ"ד אדר ה'תשע"ז

תנצב"ה

כִּי תִשָּׂא
Ki Sisa

לב:לב | 32:32

וְעָתָה אִם תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מְחַנֵּי נָא מִסְפָּרְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ

*And now, if You forgive their sin—But if not,
 erase me now from Your book that You have written.*

A Conflict of Interest

Moshe's life was defined by two passions: his passion for the Torah and his passion for Bnei Yisrael.

On the one hand, Moshe was “the lawgiver,”¹ the perfect conduit through whom G-d communicated His Torah to humanity. Hence the prophets' reference to the Torah as “Moshe's Torah.”²

In his other role, Moshe was Bnei Yisrael's faithful shepherd. His devotion to his nation was such that Rashi writes, “Moshe is Yisrael, and Yisrael is Moshe.”³

1. Devarim 33:21.

2. Malachi 3:22.

3. Bamidbar 21:21.

But when Bnei Yisrael rebelled against the Torah's most basic principle and worshipped the Golden Calf, Moshe's passions clashed. As a result of their transgression, G-d threatened to wipe Bnei Yisrael out and start a new nation from Moshe alone. But Moshe pleaded with G-d to spare Bnei Yisrael, ultimately demanding, "If You will not forgive them, erase me now from Your Torah"—i.e., his attachment to Bnei Yisrael ran even deeper than his attachment to the Torah.

With this demand, Moshe secured forgiveness for Bnei Yisrael and saved them from devastation. By expressing *his* unbreakable attachment to Bnei Yisrael, Moshe similarly evoked *G-d's* affection for the Jewish people—an affection that transcends even His oneness with the Torah. By rekindling G-d's love for Bnei Yisrael, Moshe caused G-d to accept and forgive them—and grant them another opportunity to keep His Torah.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 21, pp. 174-177*

 לב:לב | 32:32

וְעַתָּה אִם תִּשְׂחָא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מִחַנִּי נָא מִסְפָּרָה אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ

And now, if You forgive their sin—but if not, erase me now from Your book that You have written.

Learned from the Pro

To the greatest degree possible for any human being, Moshe's identity and existence became one with the Creator. He surrendered himself to G-d to the extent that our Sages say, "The Shechinah (Divine Presence) spoke through Moshe's throat"⁴—i.e., he was G-d's veritable mouthpiece on this earth.

Accordingly, when Moshe demanded that his name be erased from the Torah if G-d would not forgive Bnei Yisrael for the sin of the Golden Calf, he was threatening to abandon much more than his own legacy. For considering Moshe's oneness with the Shechinah, to suggest erasing Moshe's "name" and association with the Torah would be to suggest erasing, in a sense, the Shechinah's association with the Torah!

Nevertheless, to save Bnei Yisrael, Moshe believed that such extreme measures were acceptable. Moshe learned this from the method by which the Torah tells us to examine a *sotah*, a woman accused of infidelity, who may not live with her husband until it is determined that she is innocent of sin. In order to restore their marriage, a portion of the Torah containing several mentions of G-d's name is erased into water which the *sotah* must drink. The water will affect her only if

4. See Zohar 3:232a.

she is guilty. If it has no adverse effects on her, we consider her innocent, and she may return to her husband. Of this process, the Talmud declares, “G-d says: Let My Name, written in sanctity, be blotted out in water to make peace between a man and his wife!”⁵

In the same vein, Moshe reasoned that it was right to demand that his name be erased if it meant Bnei Yisrael would be saved. Taking an example from G-d’s willingness to “sacrifice” His name, allowing it to be erased in order to restore the relationship between a husband and wife, Moshe felt justified to compromise his name, his honor, and everything he represented, in order to restore the precious bond between G-d and the Jewish people.

—*Sefer Hasichos 5749, vol. 1, p. 290, fn. 68*

5. Shabbos 116a.

 לב:לב | 32:32

וְעַתָּה אִם תִּשְׁחָא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מִחַנִּי נָא מִסְפָּרָךְ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ

And now, if You forgive their sin—but if not, erase me now from Your book that You have written.

A Role Model

When Bnei Yisrael rebelled against the Torah’s most basic principle and worshipped the Golden Calf, G-d threatened to wipe them out and to start a new nation from Moshe alone. But Moshe pleaded with G-d to spare them, ultimately demanding, “If You will not forgive them, erase me now from Your Torah.” The reason behind Moshe’s demand, Rashi explains, was “so that they will not say about me that I was unworthy of asking for mercy on their behalf.”

Why was Moshe so concerned about the way future generations would view him? *This* is what worried him as he considered the possibility that G-d might not forgive Bnei Yisrael!

Clearly, Moshe was not simply worried about his own legacy. His concern was that if he did not insist on his name being erased from the Torah if the Jewish people weren’t forgiven, future generations might reach mistaken conclusions about the extent to which a person must go in his love for his fellow Jew.

Moshe’s love for Bnei Yisrael exceeded the Torah’s command to “love your fellow as *yourself*.”⁶ Although the defining feature of Moshe’s “self” was the Torah that he brought to

6. Vayikra 19:18.

this world—“Moshe’s Torah”⁷—his love for Bnei Yisrael was such that he was ready to sacrifice his association with the Torah—his “self”—if G-d would not forgive Bnei Yisrael and spare them from devastation.

Moshe therefore asked that G-d erase his name from the Torah if He would not forgive Bnei Yisrael. He wanted to ensure that no one would ever mistakenly think that the reason he was unsuccessful in saving Bnei Yisrael was because his love for his fellow Jew did not exceed his love for “himself”—in his case, his connection to the Torah. He therefore insisted that his name be erased from the Torah if G-d would not forgive Bnei Yisrael, to serve as an example for all future generations that you must be willing to *sacrifice even “yourself”* out of love for your fellow Jew.

And how do you express that limitless love to your fellow Jew? Says the Mishnah:⁸ by drawing them near to the Torah.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 21, pp. 175–180*

7. Malachi 3:22.

8. Avos 1:12.

 לֵד: א | 1:34

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה פָּסֵל לְךָ שְׁנֵי לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשֹׁנִים

G-d said to Moshe:

“Hew for yourself two stone tablets like the first ones.”

When Broken Comes Before Whole

The Midrash relates that Moshe was distressed over having broken the Luchos, until G-d said to him, “Do not be pained over the first Tablets, which contained only the Ten Commandments. The second Tablets that I will give will be accompanied by *halachos*, *midrash* and *aggados*.”⁹ Implied is that the extensive and multifaceted Oral Torah—“*halachos*, *midrash* and *aggados*”—was gifted to Bnei Yisrael only as a result of Moshe’s breaking the first Luchos.

How did such a negative event yield such positive results?

The Torah is Divine wisdom. Therefore, like G-d Himself, the wisdom of the Torah transcends any definition or limit. This infinitude is particularly evident in the Oral Torah. Whereas the Written Torah contains an exact amount of letters and words—even one extra letter renders a Torah scroll invalid—the Oral Torah is limitless: Aside from its myriad details, we are obligated to constantly extrapolate new details and applications of the law following the guidelines set out in the Torah, rendering the Oral Torah truly dynamic and endless.¹⁰

9. Shemos Rabbah 46:1.

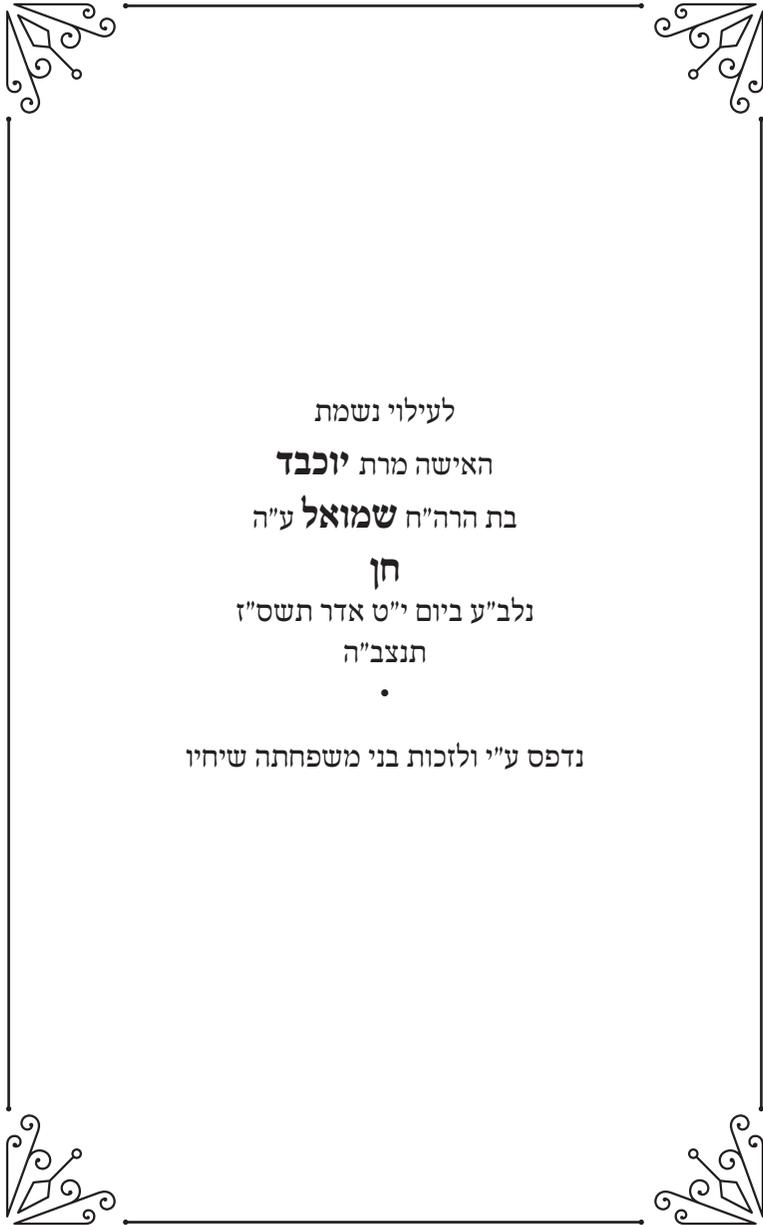
10. See Shulchan Aruch Admor Hazaken, Hilchos Talmud Torah 2:2.

The human being, however, is fundamentally finite and limited. As such, to merit and be capable of absorbing G-d's inherently infinite wisdom, even as it is manifest in the comprehensible teachings of the Torah, a person must utterly remove his own limited identity from the equation. Simply put, he must rid himself of any sense of pride or ego—not only before G-d, but also before man. In the words of the Talmud, “If a man renders himself like a wilderness upon which everyone treads, his study will be retained by him; otherwise, it will not.”¹¹

Bnei Yisrael attained this sense of humility only after the humbling experience of the Golden Calf. When Moshe shattered the Luchos before their eyes, driving home the devastating reality of what they had done, they were utterly broken and humbled. Now, said G-d to Moshe, I can finally bestow upon them the limitless gift of the Torah. Now I can grant them the *halachos*, *midrash* and *aggados* of the Oral Torah that will accompany the Second Luchos.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 26, pp. 249–253

11. Eruvin 54a.



לעילוי נשמת
האישה מרת **יוכבד**
בת הרה"ח **שמואל** ע"ה
חן
נלב"ע ביום י"ט אדר תשס"ז
תנצב"ה
•
נדפס ע"י ולזכות בני משפחתה שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת
מרת יהודית בת ר' שלמה ע"ה בייטש

נפטרה ביום הפורים י"ד אדר ה'תש"פ

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו



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