

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

KI TISA

FEBRUARY 15, 2013

15 ADAR I 5774

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Yosef Ben Esther

Friday is Purim Katan – Please join us for a breakfast following Shahrit. Thanks Dr. HAL!

Candle lighting this Friday evening is at 5:10 p.m. Mincha at 5:10
SHABBAT 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:49AM

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30

Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom

Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library

Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

The sisterhood combined with the Synagogue will be sharing in a Kiddush in memory of Yosef Ben Esther, our Parnass, Rabbi David Bibi's father – , please join us. Fruits and Deserts will be provided by Marina Samilov in memory of her mom Chava Bat Miriam

Mincha follows Kiddush with amidah not before 12:36 PM

Shabbat Ends – 6:10PM

Return for Arbit – 6:30 PM

Kid's Movie Night follows at 7:00

Pizza and Fun!

And Motsei Shabbat at about 8:15PM, we will have a Zohar Reading – Berit Yishak in anticipation of the Brit Milah of Joe and Ilana Sabbagh's baby. Please join us for Torah and Deserts at the Synagogue.

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yenai – 7PM –

Daily class with Rabbi Colish at 6:30AM

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Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor,
Artistic Frame at 5PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100

If anyone can join us for Minyan – give us 22 minutes and we'll give you the world to come – we would appreciate it. Through the first week in

March when we change the clock we will be moving tefilah to 5PM in order to say mincha and arbit. As a couple of regulars cant join us we would appreciate any help from the outside. If you have friends or relatives who work or live by 59th and 3rd, please pass the word. THANKS

PURIM KATTAN

The first Adar of a Jewish leap year
by Rabbi Y. Sasportas
based on shiur of Rabbi Yosef Greenwald Shlit"a

The Jewish leap year ends with two successive months of Adar. In the following article we will attempt to define the properties of the first one, and the extent to which it is considered the month of Adar.

The Mishnah in Megillah (6b) states that there is no difference between both months of Adar, except for the observance of the mitzvos of Purim on the fourteenth of the month, such as the reading of the Megillah and Matanos La'evyonim, which apply only during the second Adar. However, the prohibition to conduct a eulogy and to fast on a holiday applies on the fourteenth of the first Adar as well. This day is thus termed as "Purim Katan". This ruling would seem to imply that the status of the first month is that of a full-fledged Adar, and as the Gemara explains (ibid.), could equally have been the month when Purim is observed, if not for the fact that its observance is postponed to the second Adar, because of the advantage of joining the "salvation" of Purim with that of Pesach.

The Ran adds that although the actual mitzvos of Purim don't apply on the fourteenth of the first Adar, feasting and merriment should be conducted on that day too. Tosafos and others, however, maintain that the obligations on the fourteenth of the first Adar are limited to the prohibition to fast or eulogize, and that there is no obligation of feasting or merriment on the fourteenth of this month. Both views are quoted in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 697), and the Rema says that although it is not customary to prepare a feast on the fourteenth of the first Adar, we should nevertheless prepare a bigger meal than usual in honor of the day.

The opinion of the Rosh, however, is that the above indication in Megillah that the first Adar has the same status as the second one, applies only in ancient times when the decision to establish every individual leap year was rendered by Beis Din even after the Adar of that year had already begun. Since this had been the only Adar until that point, it has the status of a legitimate Adar, with the exception of the mitzvos of Purim. Nowadays, however, when we have a fixed calendar, and the leap year is anticipated before the first Adar begins, it is considered no more than the month of Shevat, and fasting and eulogies are permitted on the fourteenth of this month. Now, although the Shulchan Aruch quotes this view, it is not the generally accepted halachah, and even nowadays that we have a fixed calendar, fasting and eulogies are prohibited on the fourteenth of the first

Adar. We will see, however that this opinion has bearing upon other areas of halachah.

There is a well known query regarding the status of a boy who was born in Adar of a regular year, but whose Bar Mitzvah occurs in a leap year. The question is, which one of the two Adars is deemed the genuine one when this boy would attain adulthood and be obligated in mitzvos. Here the Rema (O.C. 55:10) quotes a Teshuvah Mahari Mintz (9) who rules that the boy's Bar Mitzvah falls out on the second Adar, not the first. Interestingly, the Mahari Mintz's reasoning is based on the above-mentioned opinion of the Rosh, that the first Adar is no more than an additional month of Shevat. Although it is called Adar, this is merely because we lack an additional name for the thirteenth month of a leap year, but it does not, in fact, have the properties of a genuine Adar, and as such, does not serve to complete the thirteen year of adulthood for a boy who was born in the genuine Adar of a non-leap year.

The difficulty is, however, that the Rama himself ruled against this opinion regarding the prohibition to fast or eulogize on Purim, and he maintains that these do apply to the Purim Katan of the first Adar. This can only be true if the first Adar is not genuine in that a boy would have to wait until the second Adar to become Bar Mitzvah?

Perhaps we can say that the Rema's ruling regarding a Bar Mitzvah is not based only on the above logic of the Mahari Mintz, but also on an additional one presented there. The Mahari Mintz adds that we can infer from the fact that a boy born in Nissan must wait until both Adars of the leap year have elapsed and the following Nissan arrives to become Bar Mitzvah, that reaching adulthood is not merely dependent on a day of the month, but rather, it requires one to wait a complete thirteen years. Since the extra month of a leap year is added in order to align the solar year with the lunar one, thus ensuring a full cycle, the completion of thirteen years must also include the extra month of a leap year. Therefore, although the Rema considers the first Adar to be legitimate, nevertheless, the date of a boy's Bar Mitzvah, that requires a full thirteen years to elapse since his birth, occurs only during the second, and final, Adar.

OUTLOOKS

The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy
- Invoking Divine Favor

Following Hashem's promise not to destroy the Jewish people, after the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe requested that Hashem make known to him

the qualities of Divine mercy. In response Hashem showed Moshe a prophetic vision, in which He was wrapped in a tallis as a shaliach tzibbur while reciting the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy (Rosh Hashanah 17b). Hashem informed Moshe that whenever the Jewish people sin in the future, they should recite the Thirteen attributes and He will forgive them. Moshe subsequently employed the Thirteen Attributes during the second and third forty-day periods on Har Sinai, which culminated with the atonement on Yom Kippur.

R' Yehudah in the Gemara adds that a covenant exists concerning these Thirteen Attributes, guaranteeing their effectiveness forever. The Brisker Rav explains that all the mercy that Klal Yisrael would require until the final redemption was, as it were, depowdered into an account at that time, to be withdrawn when necessary. Today, writes Rabbeinu Bachaye, we are without the Bais Hamikdash, without a Kohen Gadol, without the sacrifices to aid in atoning for our sins. All that is left is the ability to invoke these Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy in our prayers. Though we do not understand the true nature of these middos, and we lack the perception of how they affect the Heavenly realms, still they remain the key with which to open the gates of mercy in every generation for both the community and the individual.

There are two basic opinions as to how the Thirteen Attributes work. According to Tzror Hamor, Reishis Chochmah and Alshich, the mere recitation of these attributes is not enough. One must accompany their recitation with action by emulating these attributes in his relationships with his fellow man. (Rabbi Moshe Cordevero in the first chapter of Tomer Devorah gives guidance as to how to integrate these attributes into one's interpersonal relationships.) For this reason, says the Ma'or Vashemesh, these Divine attributes are only recited in a minyan. It is difficult for any one individual to embody and apply all of these attributes in his personal life. However, among a tzibbur, all of the attributes can be found.

The prophetic vision of Hashem wrapped in a tallis relates to this need to emulate His Attributes by reminding us of our obligation to perform all the mitzvos. The tallis hints to the fact that one must clothe himself in these attributes and not merely recite them.

Ibn Ezra asks why we wear a tallis gadol only during prayer. Would it not be more logical to wear a reminder of Hashem's mitzvos when engaged in our mundane pursuits? The wearing of tallis addresses the danger that one will mistakenly think that the

words of prayer are enough to effect Divine mercy. The tallis reminds us that lip service alone is not effective. One must live and fulfill that which his prayers represent.

The second line of opinion - e.g., Tzedah Laderech and Bnei Yisaschar - views recitation of the Thirteen Divine Attributes as effective by itself. They point to the fact that the first three attributes, according to many opinions, are proper names of Hashem which do not lend themselves to emulation.

Two questions must be addressed according to the opinion that the mere recitation is effective. First, how can mere recital of these words be effective? And if it can, how can we reconcile this to the fact that these attributes are often recited without any noticeable result? The Maharal answers the first question. Even if recitation is sufficient, he writes, it must be with concentration, intention and understanding. This is hinted to by the wrapping of the tallis over one's head. The tallis signifies concentration and the banishment of outside distractions.

The recitation of these attributes creates an eis ratzon, a period of favor and grace brought about by recitation of the Divine Attributes (Malbim). In this respect, the Heavenly Kingdom patterns itself after the earthly kingdom: the periods of Divine favor and grace, parallel those times when an earthly king grants pardons not mandated by the law (Netziv). There are, says Ramchal, two types of Divine Providence, one in which Hashem has, as it were, subjugated Himself to a system of reward and punishment dependant on man's conduct, and another where Hashem acts independent of man's worthiness.

We can elucidate this last idea as follows. The entire creation was designed so that God could shower good on man, the ultimate good being the experience of the Divine Presence. To that end, God created a physical world in which man can earn this reward and develop his relationship with Hashem through Torah and mitzvos. At the same time, Hashem created an intricate system of reward and punishment through which His kindness is funneled.

Under normal circumstances, kindness outside this system would be detrimental to man, for it would suggest to him that justice does not exist and one can receive good without deserving it. That would obscure recognition of God. However, there are times when the application of justice would permanently impair kindness and thus place the entire purpose of creation in jeopardy. At such times, Hashem chooses

to let us know that He exists by showering upon us undeserved kindness beyond our understanding.

But to receive this undeserved beneficence, we must first recognize that this mercy and kindness emanates from God and is not an indication, *chas veshalom*, of a random universe and refutation of God's control over the world. Hence, the necessity to recite these attributes with intention and concentration to bring about this period of favor.

Although there is a covenant that the recitation of these attributes is always effective, this depends, according to the first opinion, on our emulation of these attributes and, according to the second opinion, on their being said with concentration, intention and understanding. Though a proper recitation of the Divine Attributes is always effective according to the Vilna Gaon, sometimes the effect only results in mitigation of the Divine decree, not its complete annulment (*Tzedah Laderech*). That is why we sometimes fail to see the effect of the recitation.

We are now in the midst of trying times for Klal Yisrael, a time in which we need Divine mercy. Let us attempt to recite, learn and live these Divine Attributes of Mercy - and thereby fulfill all these various opinions - so that we can partake of the abundant wellsprings of Divine mercy already prepared for us and effect a period of favor and grace.

A Lesson in Leadership By: Rav Avigdor Meyerowitz

Possibly one of the most "dramatic" moments in the Torah appears in this week's Parsha. We all know what happened. Moshe Rabeinu, after hearing that Bnei Yisrael have sinned with *chet ha'egel* and after first praying for their forgiveness then descends Har Sinai.

"Now Moshe turned and went down from the mountain [bearing] the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets inscribed from both their sides; on one side and on the other side they were inscribed.

Now the tablets were G-d's work, and the inscription was G-d's inscription, engraved on the tablets...

Now it came to pass when he drew closer to the camp and saw the calf and the dances, that Moshe's anger was kindled, and he flung the tablets from his hands, shattering them at the foot of the mountain".[1]

A careful look at the verse also seems to suggest that Moshe did not merely drop the Luchot, but deliberately cast them down – "*va'yashlech*", and then shattered them -"*va'yeshaberotam*".

Various different explanations have been offered for Moshe's deliberate breaking of the Luchot.

The Rashbam[2] and others[3] explain that Moshe "*tashkocho*" meaning that his strength was exhausted, and he could no longer bear the weight of the Luchot. The Rashbam explains that the simple explanation is that since he could no longer carry the weight of the Luchot, seeing Am Yisrael around the golden calf, he therefore flung them away from himself so that he would not be hurt by the shattering of the stones.

The Sforno and the Malbim both emphasize the point that Moshe sees not only the *egel*, but also the "*mecholot*" – the dancing and rejoicing that was going on around it - and realized that in their situation, Bnei Yisrael were not worthy of the Luchot.

One of the most forceful comments on this verse was made by Rav Meir Simcha Hacoen in his commentary on Chumash, the *Meshech Chochmah*. In a long essay[4] he explains the reasons and dynamics of *Avodah Zarah*. The difficulty in comprehending the essence of an incorporeal G-d is what leads man to try and realize G-d in a physical way. That realization for Bnei Yisrael was in Moshe, who was the leader of their redemption from Egypt and brought to them the word of G-d. Once Moshe had gone, they needed to replace their fruition of realizing G-d in someone or something new – hence the creation of an *egel*, a calf.

When Moshe descends from Har Sinai, he wants to instill in Bnei Yisrael the magnitude of their misunderstanding. The only *Kedusha* is that of G-d alone. All other *Kedushot* in the world derive their *Kedusha* from G-d alone. Moshe understood that when Bnei Yisrael would receive the Luchot, they, the Luchot, would replace the *egel* and become the physical realization of G-d in the world. In order to eradicate this belief, Moshe throws down the Luchot and then proceeds to shatter them completely, showing Bnei Yisrael that the *kedusha* does not exist in objects or people, but only in G-d himself, and obedience to him is what is *kadosh* – holy.

This lesson of Moshe to the people was an ongoing one that apparently Bnei Yisrael always had difficulty internalizing. According to the *Meshech Chochma*, in numerous places in his commentary on Chumash, this misconception was at the root of many if not

almost all the shortcomings of the generation of the wilderness. The sin of the spies was caused by the people's over-reliance on the "kedusha" of Moshe and ultimately Moshe was not "allowed" into the land out of the fear that he would turn into an idol and alternative to G-d himself.

The last verses in the Chumash portray the uniqueness and greatness of Moshe Rabeinu:

"And there was no other prophet who arose in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, as manifested by all the signs and wonders, which the Lord had sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and all his servants, and to all his land,

and all the strong hand, and all the great awe, which Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel." [5]

On the words "before the eyes of all Israel" Rashi comments:

"before the eyes of all Israel: [This expression alludes to the incident where] his heart stirred him up to smash the tablets before their eyes, as it is said, 'and I shattered them before your eyes' (Deut. 9:17). - [Sifrei 33:41] And [regarding Moses shattering the Tablets,] the Holy One Blessed is He gave His approval, as Scripture states, '[the first Tablets] which you shattered' (Exod. 34:1); [God said to Moses:] 'Well done for shattering them!'. [6]"

The final words in the Torah, the final words of Rashi, the highest praise of Moshe, all come back to this! According to the Meshech Chochmah, this is because of the importance and centrality of the lesson of the breaking of the Luchot.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe [7] however had difficulty accepting that the Torah would end with that message and that was the ultimate praise of Moshe Rabeinu. Albeit its importance - ultimately it is bringing us back to chet ha'egel - a negative experience. A lot of the commentators on Rashi also shared this difficulty and so explained that Rashi therefore adds the words "And [regarding Moses shattering the Tablets,] the Holy One Blessed is He gave His approval" suggesting that the praise of Moshe was his attaining a level where G-d subsequently agrees with his actions.

The Rebbe explains differently why this verse is the ultimate praise of Moshe Rabeinu, and also sheds a completely different light on the motivation of Moshe when breaking the Luchot. After reading all the commentators on this incident, one is left with the impression of a stern and severe leader who is

almost unforgiving of his people's sin. However, Rashi, also in this week's Parsha comments:

"And the Lord said to Moshe: "Hew for yourself two stone tablets like the first ones. And I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.

Rashi: Hew for yourself: You broke the first ones. You hew others for yourself. This can be compared to a king who went abroad and left his betrothed with the maidservants. Because of the immoral behavior of the maidservants, she acquired a bad reputation. Her bridesman [the person appointed to defend the bride should any problems arise] arose and tore up her marriage contract. He said, "If the king decides to kill her, I will say to him, 'She is not yet your wife.'" The king investigated and discovered that only the maidservants were guilty of immoral behavior. He [therefore] became appeased to her. So her bridesman said to him, "Write her another marriage contract because the first one was torn up." The king replied to him, "You tore it up. You buy yourself another [sheet of] paper, and I will write to her with my [personal] hand [writing]." Likewise, the king represents the Holy One, blessed is He. The maidservants represent the mixed multitude. The bridesman is Moshe, and the betrothed of the Holy One, blessed is He, is Israel. That is why it says: "Hew for yourself."

In other words, when G-d wished to destroy the Jewish people because of their involvement in the worship of the egel, Moshe smashed the tablets -- G-d's "wedding contract" with the Jewish people -- thereby dissolving the marriage-bond that they had allegedly violated. This left G-d no grounds on which to punish His "bride's" unfaithfulness.

According to Rashi, the incentive of Moshe when breaking the Luchot was to save Bnei Yisrael. Obviously the kedusha of the luchot was paramount in the eyes of Moshe, however when the existence of the Luchot could endanger the people, Moshe immediately breaks them. The Rebbe also emphasizes that this was to save even the most low-down of the people, the ones responsible for the sin.

Indeed the ultimate praise of Moshe Rabeinu is his willingness, not only of self-sacrifice for Am Yisrael, "And now, if You forgive their sin But if not, erase me now from Your book, which You have written," but moreover his willingness to "break the Torah" for their sake. [8] The final words of the Torah about Moshe are about his limitless Ahavat Yisrael and concern for even his rebellious people.

- [1] Shmot 32: 16;19.
 [2] Rashbam Shmot ibid.
 [3] Chizkuni ibid, see also Ibn Ezra ibid.
 [4] Meshech Chochma ibid.
 [5] Devarim 34; 10-12.
 [6] Rashi ibid.
 [7] Likutei Sichot 34; pp. 217-223.
 [8] See Likutei Sichot Ibid for a discussion of the Philosophical implications of such an action.

Consumer Oriented

Volume 6 Issue 21

by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

In one of the most difficult portions of the Torah, and chapters in our history, this week the Children of Israel make a Golden Calf and serve it. The act warrants their annihilation, and Hashem threatens Moshe with just that, adding that He is ready to build a nation from Moshe himself. "Hashem said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold! it is a stiff-necked people: And now, desist from Me. Let My anger flare up against them, and I shall annihilate them, and I shall make you a great nation.'" (Exodus 32:9-10) But Moshe beseeches Hashem to forgive the nation for the calamitous sin of the Golden Calf, and Hashem acquiesces, offering an historic formula which is the precursor to every prayer of penitence. Hashem entails the supplication that is known as "the thirteen attributes of Hashem." They include the words "Hashem, Hashem, G-d, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to Anger, and Abundant in Kindness and Truth..." (Exodus 34:6-7). Those powerful, deep, and concise statements that embody anthropomorphic qualities to an Omnipotent Creator contain significant meaning far beyond mortal comprehension. What is astonishing is that almost immediately after Hashem forgives the people, Moshe beseeches Hashem to accompany them for the precise reason that Hashem was angered by them! "If I have now found favor in Your eyes, my L-rd, let my L-rd go among us -- for it is a stiff-necked people, and You shall forgive our iniquity and error, and make us Your heritage." (Exodus 34:9) Was it not stiff-neckedness that caused Hashem to want to annihilate them?

It had become a nuisance for most of those who strolled in the Swiss forest in the early 1950s. Hikers would come home and spend time removing the sticky cockleburrs that had fastened to their clothing. But it was something that their forebears had lived with for years and another hindrance that nature had put in their way. But George de Mestral did not look at the cockleburrs that had snagged his sweater as a nuisance. In fact, he realized that Divine genius played a vital role in their physiology. Returning home after a walk one afternoon, he took out a microscope to get a better look at Hashem's prodigy. When he realized that the burrs were actually comprised of thousands of natural hooks that would engage countless loops he realized that this was no nuisance of nature. Their sticky nature was actually the way that these seed pods were transported to find new breeding grounds. They would latch themselves to the fur of animals and be transported. De Mestral realized that he could carry this wisdom to the more mundane world. And so with a system of a fuzzy felt and crocheted hooks, he combined more than just two divergent materials. He also combined two words, velvet and crochet, now employed in the lexicon and inventory of both schoolchildren and rocket-scientists. He invented, or perhaps introduced us to, Velcro®. The Dubno Maggid explains that after Moshe heard the wondrous quality of Unrestricted Compassion, he realized that Hashem was actually offering a product that was well-tailored to our mortal needs. It was in fact Moshe's biggest argument for Hashem to accompany His nation. "Angels don't need those attributes! It is the fallible human who needs that ever-lasting, unceasing mercy! It is only because we are stiff-necked that we need Your unending kindness!" That is why after Moshe heard Hashem's argument, followed by His attributes, he presented his plea for Divine accompaniment. Often, we do not take advantage of the great goodness of Hashem. We leave His attributes in heaven, distancing our mundane needs from His all-powerful abilities. Moshe teaches us that it is distinctly our capriciousness and mortality that needs His omnipotence. We must realize that the attributes of Hashem are specifically assigned to sustain His nation. And all we have to do is utilize that unceasing, unyielding, and everlasting product to our advantage