



JLC NEWS & Upcoming Events

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Shabbos Times

Parshat Ki Tisa/Parah

Mar. 13th - Mar. 14th 2020

18th of Adar, 5780

Candle Lighting: 7:11pm

Shabbos Schedule

Bais Peretz Synagogue

Friday, Mar. 13th, 2020

Mincha / Maariv: 7:20pm

Shabbos, Mar. 14th, 2020

Tanya Shiur with Rabbi Gordon

9:30am

Shacharit: 10:00am

Kiddush / Lunch: 12:00pm

Mincha/Torah Time: 7:05pm

Daily Davening

Schedule:

Shacharit: 9:15am

(Sunday - Friday)

JLC Shabbos

Kiddush / Lunch

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Shmuli Backer in

**honor of the Yahrtzeit of
Avraham Rappaport A"H**

And sponsored

by Shaya & Sterel

Boymelgreen

The JLC Kids

Shabbos Program

is sponsored by Chili &

Sarah Baron in honor of

Ezra's Birthday

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This Week @ The JLC

Sunday

Shiur Chassidus with Rabbi
Gordon 8:30am

Tuesday

TORAH & PIZZA

Girls grades 1-4

From 5:00-6:00pm

1st Floor

Wednesday

MINI MISHMAR

Boys, ages 5-8

5:00-6:00pm at Polo Park

MISHMAR

Boys, ages 9-13

6:00-7:00pm at Polo Park

Thursday

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Teen Boys Program

for grades 5-8

7:30-8:15pm - 2nd Floor

Young Jewish Professionals

Chassidus Shiur by Rabbi

Shmuli Lezak

7:30PM at the JLC

Teen Scene a.k.a Pickles &

Parsha 6:30pm for girls grades

6-9

Next Shabbos

Parshas Vayak'hel-Pekudei

Friday, Mar. 20, 2020

Candle Lighting: 7:14pm



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Parsha

Reading in short



The people of Israel are told to each contribute exactly half a shekel of silver to the Sanctuary. Instructions are also given regarding the making of the Sanctuary's water basin, anointing oil and incense. "Wise-hearted" artisans Betzalel and Aholiav are placed in charge of the Sanctuary's construction, and the people are once again commanded to keep the Shabbat. When Moses does not return when expected from Mount Sinai, the people make a golden calf and worship it. G-d proposes to destroy the errant nation, but Moses intercedes on their behalf. Moses descends from the mountain carrying the tablets of the testimony engraved with the Ten Commandments; seeing the people dancing about their idol, he breaks the tablets, destroys the golden calf,

and has the primary culprits put to death. He then returns to G-d to say: "If You do not forgive them, blot me out from the book that You have written." G-d forgives, but says that the effect of their sin will be felt for many generations. At first G-d proposes to send His angel along with them, but Moses insists that G-d Himself accompany His people to the promised land. Moses prepares a new set of tablets and once more ascends the mountain, where G-d reinscribes the covenant on these second tablets. On the mountain, Moses is also granted a vision of the divine thirteen attributes of mercy. So radiant is Moses' face upon his return, that he must cover it with a veil, which he removes only to speak with G-d and to teach His laws to the people.

Haftorah in a Nutshell

I Kings 18:20-39.

In this week's haftorah, Elijah the Prophet demonstrates the worthlessness of the Baal, just as Moses chastised the Israelites for serving the Golden Calf, as discussed in this week's Torah reading. The background of this week's haftorah: King Ahab and Queen Jezebel ruled the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and encouraged the worship of the Baal deity as well as other forms of idolatry. To prove that G-d alone is in control and provides sustenance, Elijah decreed a drought on the kingdom—no rain fell for three years. When Ahab then accused Elijah of causing hardship for the Israelites, Elijah challenged him to a showdown. He, Elijah, would represent the cause of monotheism, and 850 idolatrous "prophets" would represent their cause. Ahab accepted. The haftorah begins with Elijah, the Baal prophets, and many spectators gathering atop Mount Carmel. Elijah rebuked the people of Israel, uttering the famous words: "How long will you hop between two ideas? If the L-rd is G-d, go after Him, and if the Baal, go after him." Elijah then stated his challenge: "Give us two bulls and let them [the Baal prophets] choose one bull for themselves and cut it up and place

it on the wood, but fire they shall not put; and I will prepare one bull, and I will put it on the wood, and fire will I not place. And you will call in the name of your deity, and I will call in the name of the L-rd, and it will be the G-d that will answer with fire, he is G-d." The people agreed to the challenge, and the prophets of the Baal were first. The prophets' entreaties to their god went unanswered. Elijah taunted them: "Call with a loud voice, for you presume that he is a god. [Perhaps] he is talking or he is pursuing [enemies], or maybe he is on a journey; perhaps he is sleeping and will awaken..." As evening approached, Elijah took center-stage. He built an altar, laid his offering upon it and surrounded it with water. "Lord, the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Israel," he declared. "Today let it be known that You are G-d in Israel and that I am Your servant, and at Your word have I done all these things. Answer me, O L-rd, answer me, and this people shall know that You are the L-rd G-d..." A fire immediately descended from heaven and consumed the offering, as well as the altar and the surrounding water. "And all the people saw and fell on their faces, and they said, "The Lord is G-d, the L-rd is G-d."

Parsha Q&A

"This shall they give — everyone who passes through the census — a half-shekel..." (30:13)

QUESTION: Rashi says, "He showed him a kind of coin of fire, the weight of which was a half shekel, and He said to him, 'Thus shall they give.'" Why a fiery coin?

ANSWER: Hashem demonstrated a fiery coin, to illustrate the

positive and negative qualities of money. Fire has both beneficial and destructive effects. On the one hand, it can destroy, but through the smelting of metals, it can also unite and join together. Similarly, money can destroy a relationship or family, or unite and help build a beautiful family. The fiery coin was Hashem's way to caution the Jewish people to use money properly and reap its benefits.

A Stiff-Necked People

By Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

It is a moment of the very highest drama. The Israelites, a mere forty days after the greatest revelation in history, have made an idol: a Golden Calf. G d threatens to destroy them. Moses, exemplifying to the fullest degree the character of Israel as one who “wrestles with G d and man,” confronts both in turn. To G d, he prays for mercy for the people. Coming down the mountain and facing Israel, he smashes the tablets, symbol of the covenant. He grinds the calf to dust, mixes it with water, and makes the Israelites drink it. He commands the Levites to punish the wrongdoers. Then he re-ascends the mountain in a prolonged attempt to repair the shattered relationship between G d and the people. G d accepts his request and tells Moses to carve two new tablets of stone. At this point, however, Moses makes a strange appeal: And Moses hurried and knelt to the ground and bowed, and he said, “If I have found favor in Your eyes, my L rd, may my L rd go among us, because [ki] it is a stiff-necked people, and forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance.” The difficulty in the verse is self-evident. Moses cites as a reason for G d remaining with the Israelites the very attribute that G d had previously given for wishing to abandon them:

“I have seen these people,” the L rd said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave Me alone so that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.” How can Moses invoke the people’s obstinacy as the very reason for G d to maintain His presence among them? What is the meaning

of Moses’ “because” – “may my L rd go among us, because it is a stiff-necked people”? The commentators offer a variety of interpretations. Rashi reads the word ki as “if” – “If they are stiff-necked, then forgive them.” Ibn Ezra and Chizkuni read it as “although” or “despite the fact that” (af al pi). Alternatively, suggests Ibn Ezra, the verse might be read, “[I admit that] it is a stiff-necked people – therefore forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance.” These are straightforward readings, though they assign to the word ki a meaning it does not normally have. There is, however, another and far more striking line of interpretation that can be traced across the centuries. In the twentieth century it was given expression by Rabbi Yitzchak Nissenbaum. The argument he attributed to Moses was this:

Almighty G d, look upon this people with favor, because what is now their greatest vice will one day be their most heroic virtue. They are indeed an obstinate people...But just as now they are stiff-necked in their disobedience, so one day they will be equally stiff-necked in their loyalty. Nations will call on them to assimilate, but they will refuse. Mightier religions will urge them to convert, but they will resist. They will suffer humiliation, persecution, even torture and death because of the name they bear and the faith they profess, but they will stay true to the covenant their ancestors made with You. They will go to their deaths saying Ani ma’amin, “I believe.” This is a people awesome in its obstinacy – and though now it is their failing, there will be times

far into the future when it will be their noblest strength. The fact that Rabbi Nissenbaum lived and died in the Warsaw ghetto gives added poignancy to his words. Many centuries earlier, a Midrash made essentially the same point: There are three things which are undaunted: the dog among beasts, the rooster among birds, and Israel among the nations. R. Isaac ben Redifa said in the name of R. Ami: You might think that this is a negative attribute, but in fact it is praiseworthy, for it means: “Either be a Jew or prepare to be hanged.” Jews were stiff-necked, says Rabbi Ami, in the sense that they were ready to die for their faith. As Gersonides (Ralbag) explained in the fourteenth century, a stubborn people may be slow to acquire a faith, but once they have done so they never relinquish it.

We catch a glimpse of this extraordinary obstinacy in an episode narrated by Josephus, one of the first recorded incidents of mass non-violent civil disobedience. It took place during the reign of the Roman emperor Caligula (37–41 CE). He had proposed placing a statue of himself in the precincts of the Temple in Jerusalem, and had sent the military leader Petronius to carry out the task, if necessary by force. This is how Josephus describes the encounter between Petronius and the Jewish population at Ptolemais (Acre):

There came ten thousand Jews to Petronius at Ptolemais to offer their petitions to him that he would not compel them to violate the law of their forefathers. “But if,” they said, “you are wholly resolved to bring the statue and install it, then you

must first kill us, and then do what you have resolved on. For while we are alive we cannot permit such things as are forbidden by our law..." Then Petronius came to them (at Tiberius): "Will you then make war with Caesar, regardless of his great preparations for war and your own weakness?" They replied, "We will not by any means make war with Caesar, but we will die before we see our laws transgressed." Then they threw themselves down on their faces and stretched out their throats and said that they were ready to be slain... Thus they continued firm in their resolution and proposed themselves to die willingly rather than see the statue dedicated." Faced with such heroic defiance on so large a scale, Petronius gave way and wrote to Caligula urging him, in Josephus' words, "not to drive so many ten thousand of these men to distraction; that if he were to slay these men, he would be publicly cursed for all future ages." Nor was this a unique episode. The rabbinic literature, together with the chronicles of the Middle Ages, are full of stories of martyrdom, of Jews willing to die rather than convert. Indeed the very concept of Kiddush Hashem, sanctification of G d's name, came to be associated in the halachic literature with the willingness "to die rather than transgress." The rabbinic conclave at Lod (Lydda) in the second century CE, which laid down the laws of martyrdom (including the three sins about which it was said that "one must die rather than transgress") may have been an attempt to limit, rather than encourage, the phenomenon. Of these many episodes, one stands out for its theological audacity. It was recorded by the Jewish historian Shlomo ibn Verga (fifteenth to sixteenth centuries) and concerns

the Spanish expulsion: One of the boats was infested with the plague, and the captain of the boat put the passengers ashore at some uninhabited place... There was one Jew among them who struggled on afoot together with his wife and two children. The wife grew faint and died... The husband carried his children along until both he and they fainted from hunger. When he regained consciousness, he found that his two children had died. In great grief he rose to his feet and said: "O L rd of all the universe, You are doing a great deal that I might even desert my faith. But know You of a certainty that – even against the will of heaven – a Jew I am and a Jew I shall remain. And neither that which You have brought upon me nor that which You may yet bring upon me will be of any avail." One is awestruck by such faith – such obstinate faith. Almost certainly it was this idea that lies behind a famous Talmudic passage about the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai: And they stood under the mountain: R. Avdimi b. Chama b. Chasa said: This teaches that the Holy One blessed be He, overturned the mountain above them like a barrel and said, "If you accept the Torah, it will be well. If not, this will be your burial place." Said Rava, Even so, they re-accepted the Torah in the days of Ahasuerus, for it is written, "the Jews confirmed and took upon them", meaning, "they confirmed what they had accepted before." The meaning of this strange text seems to be this: at Sinai the Jewish people had no choice but to accept the covenant. They had just been rescued from Egypt. G d had divided the sea for them; He had sent them manna from heaven and water from the rock. Acceptance of a covenant under such conditions cannot be called free. The real test of faith

came when G d was hidden. Rava's quotation from the Book of Esther is pointed and precise. Megillat Esther does not contain the name of G d. The rabbis suggested that the name Esther is an allusion to the phrase haster astir et panai, "I will surely hide My face." The book relates the first warrant for genocide against the Jewish people. That Jews remained Jews under such conditions was proof positive that they did indeed reaffirm the covenant. Obstinate in their disbelief during much of the biblical era, they became obstinate in their belief ever afterwards. Faced with G d's presence, they disobeyed Him. Confronted with His absence, they stayed faithful to Him. That is the paradox of the stiff-necked people. Not by accident does the main narrative of the Book of Esther begin with the words "And Mordechai would not bow down." His refusal to make obeisance to Haman sets the story in motion. Mordechai too is obstinate – for there is one thing that is hard to do if you have a stiff neck, namely, bow down. At times, Jews found it hard to bow down to G d – but they were certainly never willing to bow down to anything less. That is why, alone of all the many peoples who have entered the arena of history, Jews – even in exile, dispersed, and everywhere a minority – neither assimilated to the dominant culture nor converted to the majority faith. "Forgive them because they are a stiff-necked people," said Moses, because the time will come when that stubbornness will be not a tragic failing but a noble and defiant loyalty. And so it came to be.



Hatzalan
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How Leaders Fail

By Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Leaders can fail for two kinds of reason. The first is external. The time may not be right. The conditions may be unfavorable. There may be no one on the other side to talk to. When British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan was asked what was the most difficult thing he had to deal with in government, he replied, "Events, dear boy, events." Machiavelli called this *Fortuna*: the power of bad luck that can defeat even the greatest. Sometimes despite your best efforts, you fail. Such is life. The second kind of failure is internal. A leader can simply lack the courage to lead. Sometimes leaders have to oppose the crowd. They have to say No when everyone else is crying Yes. That can be terrifying. Crowds have a will and momentum of their own. To say No may be to put your career, even your life, at risk. That is when courage is needed, and not showing it can constitute a moral failure of the worst kind.

The classic example is King Saul, who failed to carry out Samuel's instructions in his battle against the Amalekites. Saul was told to spare no one and nothing. This is what happened, as told in I Samuel 15:

When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The L rd bless you! I have carried out the L rd's instructions." But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?"

Saul answered, "The soldiers

brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the L rd your G d, but we totally destroyed the rest."

"Enough!" Samuel said to Saul.

"Let me tell you what the L rd said to me last night." "Tell me," Saul replied.

Samuel said, "Although you may be small in your own eyes, are you not head of the tribes of Israel? The L rd anointed you king over Israel. And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.' Why did you not obey the L rd? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the L rd?"

"But I did obey the L rd," Saul said.

"I went on the mission the L rd assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to G d, in order to sacrifice them to the L rd your G d at Gilgal."

Saul makes excuses. The failure was not his; it was his soldiers'. Besides which, he and they had the best intentions. The sheep and cattle were spared to offer as sacrifices. Saul did not kill King Agag but brought him back as a prisoner. Samuel is unmoved. He says, "Because you have rejected the word of the L rd, He has rejected you as king." Only then does Saul admit, "I have sinned."

But by then it was too late. His career as a leader was at an end. There is an apocryphal quote attributed to several politicians: "Of course I follow the party. After all, I am their leader." There are leaders who follow instead of leading. Rabbi Yisrael Salanter compared them to a dog taken by its master for a walk. The dog runs on ahead, but keeps turning around to see whether it is going in the direction the master wants it to go. The dog may think it is leading but actually it is following.

That, on a plain reading of the text, was the fate of Aaron in this week's parsha. Moses had been up the mountain for forty days. The people were afraid. Had he died? Where was he? Without Moses they felt bereft. He was their point of contact with G d. He performed the miracles, divided the Sea, gave them water to drink and food to eat. This is how the Torah describes what happened next:

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered round Aaron and said, 'Come, make us a god who will go before us. As for this man Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' Aaron answered them, 'Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.' So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they

handed him and he fashioned it with a tool and made it into a molten calf. Then they said, 'This is your G d, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

G d became angry. Moses pleaded with Him to spare the people. He then descended the mountain, saw what had happened, smashed the tablets of the law he had brought down with him, burned the idol, ground it to powder, mixed it with water and made the Israelites drink it. Then he turned to Aaron his brother and said, "What have you done?"

"Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. They said to me, 'Make us a god who will go before us. As for this man Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"

Aaron blamed the people. It was they who made the illegitimate request. He denied responsibility for making the calf. It just happened. "I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!" This is the same kind of denial of responsibility we recall from the story of Adam and Eve. The man says, "It was the woman." The woman says, "It was the serpent." It happened. It wasn't me. I was the victim not the perpetrator. In anyone such evasion is a moral failure; in a leader, all the more so.

The odd fact is that Aaron was not immediately punished. According to the Torah he was condemned for another sin altogether when,

years later, he and Moses spoke angrily against the people complaining about lack of water: "Aaron will be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I give the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah".

It was only later still, in the last month of Moses' life, that Moses told the people a fact that he had kept from them until now: I feared the anger and wrath of the L rd, for he was angry enough with you to destroy you. But again the L rd listened to me. And the L rd was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, but at that time I prayed for Aaron too.

G d, according to Moses, was so angry with Aaron for the sin of the golden calf that He was about to kill him, and would have done so had it not been for Moses' prayer. It is easy to be critical of people who fail the leadership test when it involves opposing the crowd, defying the consensus, blocking the path the majority are intent on taking. The truth is that it is hard to oppose the mob. They can ignore you, remove you, even assassinate you. When a crowd gets out of control there is no elegant solution. Even Moses was helpless in the face of the people at the later episode of the spies.

Nor was it easy for Moses to restore order now. He did so only by the most dramatic action: smashing the tablets and grinding the calf to dust. He then asked for support and was given it by his fellow Levites. They took reprisals against the crowd, killing three thousand people that day. History judges Moses a hero but he might

well have been seen by his contemporaries as a brutal autocrat. We, thanks to the Torah, know what passed between G d and Moses at the time. The Israelites at the foot of the mountain knew nothing of how close they had come to being utterly destroyed. Tradition dealt kindly with Aaron. He is portrayed as a man of peace. Perhaps that is why he was made High Priest. There is more than one kind of leadership, and priesthood involves following rules, not taking stands and swaying crowds. The fact that Aaron was not a leader in the same mold as Moses does not mean that he was a failure. It means that he was made for a different kind of role. There are times when you need someone with the courage to stand against the crowd, others when you need a peacemaker. Moses and Aaron were different types. Aaron failed when he was called on to be a Moses, but he became a great leader in his own right in a different capacity. Aaron and Moses complemented one another. No one person can do everything. The truth is that when a crowd runs out of control, there is no easy answer. That is why the whole of Judaism is an extended seminar in individual and collective responsibility. Jews don't, or shouldn't, form crowds. When they do, it may take a Moses to restore order. But it may take an Aaron, at other times, to maintain the peace.

Here's what's happening at the JLC

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ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Moishe Epstein was a new immigrant to America before the war and while he never had a formal education, he always had a good head for business. He opened his own dry goods store, which almost immediately began to prosper. He opened another, and then another and soon enough he was a very rich man.

One day, his bank manager called him and said, "Moishe, I have a question about one of your recent checks. Could you confirm it is one of yours? For years, you've been signing all of your checks with two X's but this one is signed with three X's. Is it yours?"

Moishe replied, "Yes, it is."

"Why the change?" asked the bank manager.

"Since I've become so wealthy, my wife thought I ought to have a middle name."

An orthodox rabbi dies and goes to heaven. As he's approaching the pearly gates, he hears a band of angels approach and gets excited. The head angel approaches the rabbi and asks him to step aside.

Shocked, the rabbi moves over. The angels march out of the gates and encircle a man who was right behind the rabbi and parade him inside the gates. The man was an Egged tour bus driver.

When the parade is over, an angel returns to the rabbi and says, "You may come in now."

The angel begins to lead the rabbi inside alone. The rabbi, somewhat confused, asks, "I'm not one to make waves or anything, but I need to know something. I think I've been a good rabbi. I've worked hard all my life. Why is it that the Egged bus driver gets led in by a band of angels ahead of me and I get only you?"

The angel says, "To be honest, rabbi, whenever you preached, people slept. But whenever he drove, people prayed."

As Morris and Sidney are walking down High Street, Sidney says, "Morris, if you had two top-of-the-line Lexus cars, would you give me one?"

"Sidney," replies Morris, "we've been best friends for over 30 years now, ever since we left school and if I had two top-of-the-line Lexus cars, yes, I would give one to you."

They continue walking. After a couple of minutes, Morris turns to Sidney and says, "Sidney, if you had two luxury jet planes, would you give one of them to me?"

"Morris," replies Sidney, "you and I are like twins. You were my best man at my wedding and we've both attended the same shul for 30 years. So if I had two luxury jet planes, then yes, I would give one to you."

They continue walking. A couple of minutes later, Sidney turns to Morris and says, "Morris, if you had two 86" flat screen HD ready LCD televisions ..."

"Hey, hold on a minute," interrupts Morris, "you know I've got two 86" TVs."

Tony owns a local car repair garage. One day, Martin, one of his customers, arrives to pick up his car. Tony goes over to him, shakes his hand and says, "I'd just like to say thanks for your patronage. I wish I had 10 customers like you."

"Wow! It's nice to hear you say that," says Martin, "but why are you thanking me? You know I always argue with your prices and I always complain about the work you do on my car."

"I know," says Harry, "but I'd still like 10 customers like you – instead I have 50 customers like you."

Moshe applies for a job at WHAT-LOVELY MEN'S WEAR. During his interview, Benjamin the personnel manager asks him, "Where did you last work?"

"Shmatters R Us," replies Moshe, proudly.

"And how long did you work for them?" asks Benjamin.

"A long time - 40 years in fact," replies Moshe.

Benjamin is a bit startled by this response and says to Moshe, "40 years, eh? So how old did you say you were?"

"I'm 51 years old, kin-a-hora," replies Moshe.

"I don't understand," says Benjamin. "If you're 51, how come you say you worked for them for 40 years?"

Quick as a flash, Moshe replies, "I put in a lot of overtime."