

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

SIMCHAT TORAH

Simchas Torah: The Greatest Love Is For The Jewish People

The last Parsha of the Torah, V'zos Habracha, is read on Simchas Torah, and it concludes with telling of the greatness of Moshe, each accolade greater than the previous, culminating with the final words of the Torah "Before the eyes of all of Israel."

Rashi explains that this refers to when Moshe broke the first set of tablets of the Ten Commandments, which he did "Before the eyes of all of Israel." He continues to say that Hashem agreed to Moshe's action, saying, "Yasher koach sheshibarta," (i.e. Well done that you broke them).

Rashi comes to tell us the simple meaning of the verse, but this doesn't seem like the simple meaning. Rashi was explaining how the last few verses of the Torah are telling of the greatness of Moshe.

"Who knew Hashem face to face," Rashi says, "For he was familiar with Him, speaking with Him at any time he wanted."

"And to all the strong hand," Rashi says, "that he received the Torah on the tablets, with his hands."

"And all the great awe," Rashi says, "miracles and great deeds in the great and awesome desert."

And all of a sudden, Rashi changes his tune, saying one of the worst things, on the final words of the Torah, "before

the eyes of all of Israel," Rashi says, "his heart was stirred (literally: he raised his heart) to smash the tablets before their eyes, as it is said, 'and I shattered them before your eyes,' And the Holy One Blessed is He gave His approval, as Scripture states, 'which you broke,' (Hashem said to Moshe) "Well done that you broke them!"

BY LOVING OUR FELLOW JEW, WE COMPLETE THE PURPOSE OF THE TORAH, TO MAKE THIS WORLD INTO A HOME FOR G-D.

Other commentaries say that the last words, "Before the eyes of all of Israel," are connected to the accolades that precede. In other words, they were done "Before the eyes of all of Israel."

However, Rashi chooses to explain these words as a separate thing, and just after the Torah tells us the

amazing and positive greatness of Moshe, it turns around and concludes with what seems to be a negative thing about Moshe. Therefore, it seems that this is not the simple meaning.

The commentaries on Rashi say that this is why Rashi adds the part about Hashem agreeing with him, to show that it is really to bring out the greatness of Moshe, that Hashem agreed to him.

However, this is difficult to understand because if it wants to say something positive, why would the Torah say such a negative thing to bring it out? This question becomes stronger when you realize that Hashem agreed to him on other occasions that were not negative. Why doesn't it say one of those? And besides, the fact that Hashem agreed to him is only a side point to the breaking of the tablets. The words that the Torah says, "Before the eyes of all of Israel," hint to the breaking of the tablets and not to the fact that Hashem agreed with him.

We also have to understand the words of the verse, "Before the eyes of all of Israel," which, according to Rashi, means that Moshe broke the tablets. That it was done "Before the eyes of all of Israel" seems beside the point. But the fact that the Torah mentions these words means that it is an important point. What is the significance of his breaking the tablets "Before the eyes of all of Israel.?"

Rashi tells us, "he raised his heart to break the tablets." Why doesn't he simply say that Moshe broke the tablets? Why does he add the words, "he raised his heart"?

Another question. We have a rule that we conclude with something good. Why would the Torah conclude with something negative, the breaking of the tablets? It's not only negative, it is not in the honor of the Torah, which we are concluding. Rashi also concludes his commentary of the Torah with the word "sheshibarta," which means "that you broke them." Why does he end on a negative note?

With all these questions, we are forced to conclude that according to Rashi, the breaking of the tablets was the best thing that Moshe ever did and that it deserves greater praise than the miracles that he did, receiving the Torah and his ability to talk to Hashem whenever he wanted to. Rashi says that Hashem "gave His approval" to prove that it was a good thing. And since it is a good thing, it would make sense to end the Torah on this note. So why is Moshe's breaking of the tablets such a good thing?



When Hashem commanded Moshe to hew new stones for the second set of tablets for the Ten Commandments. On the words, "hew for yourself," Rashi says, "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 is Hashem, and the betrothed is the Jewish people. The troublesome maidservants are the mixed multitude, which was the Non-Jews that came out of Egypt with the Jewish people and were the instigators of all kinds of trouble, including the sin of the golden calf. And the bridesman who saved the Jewish people by breaking the tablets is Moshe Rabbeinu.

Moshe, the faithful shepherd of the Jewish people, had only one intention: to save them. Just imagine the sacrifice he made at that moment. He was the one who received the Torah directly from Hashem, and he spoke to Him whenever he wanted to, transmitting the word of Hashem, which is Torah. He was the one who performed the miracles, of which the Torah speaks, and he was the one who taught the Torah to the Jewish people. The Torah was so very precious to him, and he was willing to throw it away to save a relatively small number of Jews who served the golden calf.

Moshe, who taught them to honor the Torah, broke it in front of their eyes, even though it was the greatest sacrilege, to show them the value of a Jewish person, that he or she is more precious than the Torah, even if he or she sinned a grave sin, he was teaching us how much we must love every Jew. And Hashem agreed with him. He said, "Yasher Koach sheshibarta, well done that you broke them."

This took great strength and love on Moshe's part. He had to raise his love for the Jewish people over his love for the Torah. That is why Rashi says, "he raised his heart." That is the main point.

And that is why the Torah ends with this, and Rashi ends with this because it's the best thing that Moshe ever did.

However, we are left with a question. This is the end of the whole Torah, shouldn't it end with the greatness of the Torah? Even though it's positive about Moshe, it seems to be negative about the Torah; the breaking of the Ten Commandments isn't honoring the Torah.

In Tana D'vei Eliyahu Raba, it says, "There are two things in the world... Torah and (the Children of) Israel, but I don't know which one was first. I said, 'My son, it's the way of people to say that Torah was first, but I say that (the Children of) Israel were first.'"

Isn't it obvious that the Jewish people were first? The whole Torah addresses the Jewish people, "command the Children of Israel, speak to the Children of Israel." If there were no Jews, there would be no Torah.

The question that was posed to Eliyahu was not: Which

one was first in time? But which is first in importance? And to that, Eliyahu said that the Children of Israel is first. The whole Torah is only for the Jewish people because the Jewish people are more important.

And that is what Rabbi Akiva says that loving your fellow Jew "is a great rule of the Torah," and Hillel says that is the "whole Torah." In other words, by ending this way, the Torah is saying that the essence of the Torah is that we should love each other.

And that is why we read Parshas V'zos Habracha on Shemini Atzeres in Israel and Simchas Torah (the second day of Shemini Atzeres outside of Israel), because while on Sukkos seventy bulls were offered for the nations of the world, on Shemini Atzeres only one bull was offered for the Jewish people. Shemini Atzeres is all about the Jewish people. And that is why we celebrate Simchas Torah on Shemini Atzeres because the Torah is all about the Jewish people.

And this is hinted at in the words Simchas Torah. On the one hand, it means that we are joyous for the Torah as it's once again completed. On the other hand, Simchas Torah could mean the joy of the Torah that we make the Torah joyous we give to the Torah, showing that we are greater, the Children of Israel are first.

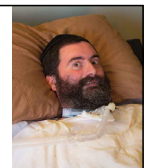
By loving our fellow Jew, we complete the Torah. By loving our fellow Jew, we complete the purpose of the Torah, to make this world into a home for Hashem, which means that we bring Moshiach. May he come soon.

*"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,
Even though you can no longer speak, you should know that you ARE speaking to me every week. You inspire me and make me want to be a better man. As always, thank you, and have a good Shabbos!"*

- Jared S, Temecula California

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
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Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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