

# Kindert Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Ki Sisa

## A Golden Opportunity

"Ravina says, 'The owner of an ox has to pay full damages if it gores another ox in its owner's courtyard.' Zalman, did you hear me?"

"What? Of course I heard you, Tzvi. What did you say?"

"If you don't know what I said, then you didn't hear me. Come, let's try it again."

"I'm sorry, Tzvi. My mind was wandering. Can you blame me? Look around us. There are so many empty seats in the Beis HaMedrash."

Tzvi looked around and saw that it was true.

"Zalman, this is a golden opportunity."

"Really? In what way?"

"This is a time of *rifion* (weakness) in our Beis HaMedrash. What shall we do in such a situation? Let us look in this week's parasha - 'Whoever is for Hashem, join me!' (Shemos 32:26)."

"That verse is speaking about the Chet Ha'egel (Sin of the Golden Calf). What is the connection to our Beis HaMedrash?"

"The Chet Ha'egel was a time of terrible *rifion* in Klal Yisrael. Rav Aharon Kotler learns a lesson from this to all times of *rifion*."

"Please share it with me."

"Firstly, we must feel badly for those who are here and not here, for having to suffer this *rifion*. Even more so must we feel Hashem's *tsar* (anguish) over the failings and weakness of His children."

"I understand."

"Now, we can use as a motivation to *mechazek* (strengthen) ourselves and those around us. You should know, Zalman, that there is a very big reward for this."

"Please tell me about it."

"Let us return to the Chet Ha'egel. Moshe called out, 'Whoever is for Hashem, join me!' Who responded? The tribe of Levi. They strengthened themselves at this time of *rifion*, rallied around Moshe, and carried out Hashem's Will. For this, they were rewarded with the *zechus* to perform the *avodah* (service) in the Beis HaMikdash, greatness in Torah, and preference for positions in the Sanhedrin."

"That is awesome."

"I could not have said it better. Times of *rifion* are golden opportunities to strengthen ourselves, others, and reap tremendous rewards. Rav Kotler adds that only we can direct ourselves to put all of our *koach* (strength) into fulfilling our obligation.

Kindertlach . . .

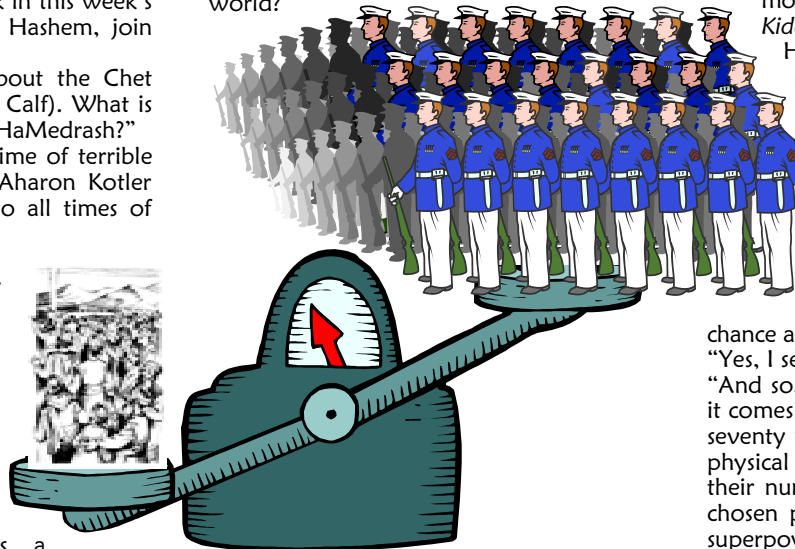
*It is important to be in a good, strong environment. We draw inspiration from our surroundings. Sometimes we find ourselves in weak atmosphere. What shall we do? Redouble our efforts! Hashem is giving us a golden opportunity for extra reward. Shevet Levi taught us a lesson for all time. They strengthened themselves, Klal Yisrael, gave Hashem nachas, and earned eternal reward. Follow their example. Seize the opportunity! "Whoever is for Hashem, join me!"*

## The Percentages

"Avi, I must be making a mistake in my *cheshbon* (calculation)."

"That's possible, Chaim. Can I help you?"

"Sure, Avi. How many nations are in the world?"



"Seventy."

"That means that Klal Yisrael is outnumbered seventy to one. That puts our number at 1.4 percent of the world's nations."

"So far, so good."

"Additionally, the number of people in Klal Yisrael is smaller than the population of other nations. We are actually far less than one percent of the world's population."

"Correct."

"If so, how have we survived for 2000 years of exile? We were taken out of our homeland and left without a source of income, defense force, formal government, and many other institutions necessary for the survival of a nation. We have been hated and persecuted by virtually every nation on the face of the earth. How could we possibly have survived against such odds? The percentages are way against us!"

"Correct again!"

"So I ask you Avi, if all of my *cheshbons* are correct, how are we still here today, learning Torah and performing mitzvos?"

"Correct for the fourth time, Chaim!"

"What do you mean? I did not give an answer, I asked a question."

"Yes, but the answer lies in your question. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin addresses your point. He explains that Klal Yisrael's accounting is not quantity, but quality. If you look at our quantity, our situation looks hopeless, as you very accurately described. However, our numbers are measured in quality. The second verse in this week's parasha describes how a census was taken in Klal Yisrael. 'When you take a census of the Children of Israel according to their numbers, every man shall give Hashem a ransom for his soul when counting them' (Shemos 30:12). Each man gave a sum of money - half a shekel. This money was referred to as, 'Every man shall give Hashem a ransom for his soul.' This is a description of the essence of a Jew. Every person in Klal Yisrael is prepared at any moment to sacrifice his life for *Kiddush Hashem* (Sanctification of the Holy Name). He is ready to give everything that he has to his Creator. What courage! What selflessness! What holiness! Such a person is worth more than hundreds of thousands of cowards, who selfishly take everything that they can. They care nothing about other people, and even less about The Almighty. They stand no chance against a holy Yid."

"Yes, I see."

"And so, the *cheshbon* is different. When it comes to quality, we far outnumber the seventy nations. Their only power is their physical weapons. They are limited by their numbers. Contrast this to Hashem's chosen people. Each and every Jew is a superpower. He is connected to Hashem, the All Powerful. We are the majority. The percentages are on our side. How have we survived? It is quite simple. We outnumber them."

Kindertlach . . .

*Who is the world's most powerful nation? Who is the superpower of superpowers? China numbers over a billion people. Russia has vast expanses of land and nuclear weapons. The United States has great wealth and super weaponry. The Middle Eastern nations own vast resources of petroleum fuels. However, all of these nations are puny weaklings against Klal Yisrael. What do we have? Hashem. We uphold His Honor in this world. We are prepared to sacrifice everything that we have for Him. Each one of us has Kiddush Hashem inside of us. That is a power far stronger than physical numbers, wealth, or weapons. We are the world's strongest nation. We far outnumber them in terms of quality. We are the only superpower. We are Klal Yisrael - the greatest nation on the face of the earth.*

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