

Tell a story
Parshah Ki Tavo
by Julie Zhuk on 2022-09-17

Comments

Before diving into the story of the Parsha for the week, I want to bring up a parable that will relate. I got the idea from reading many Midrashim. Stories help people understand the material the Parsha has. There is always a message to convey in the Parsha, not always interesting or easy to understand. That is why any text written in story form is helpful. Going back to the biblical days thousands of years ago, there were once two sisters who grew up side by side. These sisters lived at home and it was a Jewish custom/tradition for the father to find them, husbands, through a matchmaker. One of them had a kind heart and would help anyone out whenever. The downfall for her was, that she didn't look attractive. The second sister was the opposite.

She was very good-looking, but she wasn't kind in the slightest. The father found a matchmaker who came up with a plan, the daughter who didn't have the best of appearances was going to marry a blind man. The daughter who wasn't kind would marry a deaf man. It ended up being a perfect plan because the blind man couldn't see his not-so-pretty wife. The deaf man could see his wife, but he wouldn't hear her vicious commentary. Things worked out well for a long while for these two couples, but then a doctor came along the way and said he could help fix the problems these husbands had. The doctor could operate on the blind man and make him see and operate on the deaf man and he would be able to hear again.

The doctor was able to do this, then the blind man could see his wife and he was no longer happy. The deaf man could hear his wife's previous vicious commentary and he was no longer pleased with her. It didn't matter to the man who had been deaf that his wife was beautiful because her comments were just cruel. These husbands were so upset, that they refused to pay the doctor. The doctor sent them to a Rabbi's Chamber also known as a Jewish Court. The Rabbi listened to both the patient's arguments and then the doctor himself. After careful consideration, the Rabbi told the husbands if they didn't want to pay the doctor, then the doctor had done them a disservice. And it was possible for the doctor to undo the operation he had performed on them.

The husbands heard this idea and neither of them liked it one bit. The blind man said how happy he is to be able to see again, and he didn't want to go back to how things once were for him. The deaf man came to the same conclusion, that he couldn't hear for a long time. Now he can finally hear again and he never wanted to go back. Hearing this, the Rabbi asked the husbands if they were happy after all with the results of what the doctor did. Letting them hear and see, if that was the case these gentlemen owed the doctor compensation for his fine work. The husbands did just that and somehow figured out how to live with their wives, even though weren't so beautiful and the others made comments that weren't so nice.

The story relates to the Parsha this week because there is a mitzvah of Bikkurim. It used to be many years ago, in Israel, the farmers would bring their first fruits that they had spent a long time harvesting to the Kohen. This took place in Jerusalem, it was done in elaborate expression to G-d. It was the Jews' way of giving a thank you to G-d. After all, it was G-d who gave the Jews the land to grow the fruit in the first place.

By doing this mitzvah of Bikkurim, the Jews were able to show their appreciation to G-d. From this week's Parsha, we have to think to ourselves if we are happy with everything we have. It is natural for humans to constantly yearn for more material items and sometimes we think that life was much better thousands of years ago. One way to think about this is, G-d was able to communicate directly to Moses or Eliyahu or some other prophet. Now that it's been thousands of years later, He doesn't talk to humans directly. We don't hear Him the way He spoke to them. Some of us, me in particular would have liked that. We learn from this week's Parsha, that what was seen as the "good old days" back then, thousands of years ago was not really as great as we make it sound to be in our minds.

We learn another thing from the Parsha, it was Moses' last day on earth. It was a very busy day and Moses had a lot to say, he was going to let the people know he wouldn't be their leader anymore. Some of his last words were that the Jews had all seen what G-d has done before them, with their very eyes. He was referring to how G-d was able to get the Jews out of Egypt so successfully. Moses told the Jews that it was that day, his last day on earth, that it had been forty years since their birth as a people. Now G-d was ready to give them eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart for them to know. Something important happened that day to the Jewish people, and Rashi shares a story. Moses gave the Torah scroll to the members of the Tribe of Levi. By doing this it set off a firestorm among the people. The Jews came running to Moses claiming how they stood at Mount Sinai and accepted the Torah.

This group of Jews that were jealous that Moses gave the Torah scroll to the Tribe of Levites instead of every Jew or all of them as a whole. The people who were jealous, worried that the Tribe of Levites would one day take the Torah scroll for themselves. Hearing this, Moses felt rejoiced and exclaimed that it was only on this day that the people became a nation of G-d. Moses knew he was dying, there was nothing he could do about it. He didn't want to fight about staying alive anymore, he accepted the ruling G-d made. He felt so happy that the Jewish people had finally wanted to truly be a part of a nation. This was the final proof, that these Jews were for real and they were ready to be the Jewish nation. The jealous Jews claimed that the Torah doesn't just belong to the Tribe of Levites. They added that "Their affinity with G-d is the property of every Jew."

Moses was thrilled to hear these words and told the Jews to not worry about the Torah scroll being given to the Tribe of Levites. Moses reminded the Jews that when they wandered in the desert for a long time, they were promised a portion of the land. The Tribe of Levites on the other hand were not promised this. Therefore, they got the Torah scroll, it was their inheritance. As a leader of the Jewish people, there was something he wanted from the Jewish people. Maybe he didn't say it in the right words for them to understand him. This applies to people in the present day, to take our religion seriously. Meaning in a personal way and for our thoughts about G-d to sit in the front and center of our lives until we carry it through. We learn from this Parsha that back then, there was a lot of poverty, deprivation, ignorance, and life, in general, was a lot harder.

Some Jewish sources claim that since many thousands of years have passed, a lot more Torah study is being done today. This is compared to back many years ago, there are a lot more places providing education teaching Judaism around the Jewish world. It is because of this that the Jewish world is staggering. People all over the world are traveling from South Africa and other places to the Holy land. This Parsha is sending a message, by blessing the first fruits and gratitude for what we already have. We should be happy with what we already have, let that ring loud and clear. Thank You, G-d, for all of our blessings.

