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SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE
SHABBAT PARAH
MARCH 6, 1999 • 18 ADAR 5759

READER: DAN MOSKOVITZ **PARSHA:** KI TISA
TORAH: EXODUS 32:7-14 (PLAUT, P. 646) **HAFTARAH: EZEKIEL** 36:22-36 (PLAUT P. 1651)

A SENSE OF YOUR PREESENCE...

AMONG OUR MANY APPETITES
THERE IS A CRAVING AFTER GOD.

AMONG OUR MANY ATTRIBUTES
THERE IS A TALENT FOR WORSHIPPING GOD.

JEWS WHO WANDERED IN DESERTS BENEATH THE STARS
KNEW THEIR HEARTS WERE HUNGRY FOR GOD.

JEWS WHO STUDIED IN CANDLE-LIT GHETTO ROOMS
THIRSTED LONGINGLY AFTER GOD.

IN TENT OF HUT OR SLUM
JEWS PRAYED TO GOD.

BUT WE WHO ARE SMOTHERED WITH COMFORT
SOMETIMES FORGET TO LISTEN.

HELP US, ADONAI, TO RECOGNIZE OUR NEED,
TO HEAR THE YEARING WHISPER OF OUR HEARTS.

BLESS US, LIKE OUR ANCESTORS IN ANCIENT DAYS
WITH THAT MOST PRECIOUS GIFT: A SENSE OF YOUR PRESENCE.

BRUSH US WITH THE WIND OF THE WINGS OF YOUR BEING.
FILL US WITH THE AWE OF YOUR HOLINESS.
WE, TOO, WILL, PRAISE, GLORIFY, AND EXALT YOUR NAME.

-RUTH F. BRIN

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FROM OUR RABBIS ON THE PARSHA...

AND GOD SPOKE TO MOSES AND SAID, "THE PEOPLE HAVE MADE A GOLDEN CALF AND BOWED DOWN TO IT, AND PRAYED TO IT AND SACRIFICED TO IT PROCLAIMING, "THIS IS YOUR GOD O' ISRAEL, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT." AND GOD FURTHER SAID TO MOSES, I SEE THAT THIS IS A STUBBORN PEOPLE, NOW LEAVE ME ALONE SO THAT MY ANGER MAY RAIN DOWN UPON THEM AND DESTROY THEM. THEN I WILL START OVER AGAIN, AND YOU MOSES WILL BE THE LEADER OF A GREAT NATION. BUT MOSES IMPLORED GOD NOT TO DO THIS, HE SAID TO GOD: "PLEASE DON'T LET YOUR ANGER RAIN DOWN UPON YOUR PEOPLE, THE PEOPLE WHOM YOU DELIVERED OUT OF EGYPT FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM. DO NOT DESTROY THIS PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THEIR ONE MISTAKE, INSTEAD TURN FROM YOUR ANGER AND RENOUNCE YOUR VOW TO PUNISH THEM.

GOD CONSIDERED WHAT MOSES HAD SAID AND TURNED BACK TO HIM AND EXPLAINED, "BUT I HAVE DECLARED A LAW, AND MADE A VOW, WHOEVER AMONG MY CHOSEN PEOPLE ISRAEL WHO BOWS DOWN TO AN IDOL AND PROCLAIMS IT TO BE THEIR GOD SHALL BE KILLED. THIS IS THE LAW, AND I MADE A VOW TO UP HOLD IT, GET OUT OF MY WAY SO I MAY DESTROY THIS PEOPLE AND MAKE FOR YOU A NEW AND GREATER NATION.

AT THIS MOSES REBUKED GOD, HE CRIED OUT TO GOD: "GOD OF ALL THE WORLD! DID YOU NOT GIVE US THE LAW OF ABSOLUTION FROM A VOW, IN WHICH POWER IS GIVEN TO A LEARNED MAN TO ABSOLVE ANY ONE FROM HIS VOWS? IS THIS NOT THE PURPOSE AND INTENTION OF THE SACRED KOL NIDREI PRAYER WHICH WE OFFER TO YOU ON YOM KIPPUR. IN MY FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS THAT I JUST SPENT WITH YOU ON TOP OF THIS MOUNTAIN YOU EXPLAINED THIS LAW AND ITS UNIVERSAL APPLICATION FOR ALL OF ISRAEL. YOU EXPLAINED EVEN A JUDGER OF OTHERS WHO DESIRES TO HAVE HIS DECISIONS HELD VALID, MUST SUBJECT HIMSELF TO THIS LAW. ARE YOU NOT NOW PASSING JUDGEMENT UPON THE PEOPLE, ARE YOU NOT SUBJECT TO THE SAME LAW OF ABSOLUTION?" AND MOSES, DEMANDED OF GOD: "DO NOT DESTROY THESE PEOPLE BECAUSE OF A TECHNICALITY, ABSOLVE YOURSELF OF THIS VOW AND DEAL MORE EVEN HANDEDLY WITH YOUR CHOSEN PEOPLE.

AT THIS, GOD SEATED HIMSELF BEFORE MOSES, AND MOSES WRAPPED HIS ROBE AROUND HIM, AND INSTRUCTED GOD HOW TO TAKE BACK HIS VOW. AND THE MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE SPOKE TO MOSES AND SAID: " I REPENT BECAUSE OF THE EVIL THAT I HAD DETERMINED TO BRING UPON MY PEOPLE." AND MOSES, CRIED OUT: "YOU, THE MASTER OF ALL THE WORLD, YOU ARE ABSOLVED FROM YOUR OATH AND VOW."

THIS MIDRASH IS ADAPTED FROM A COLLECTION OF MIDRASHIM KNOWN AS YALKUT REUBENI

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