



Ki Tisa

Why Would Hashem Want To Show His Back To Someone?

It may sound like a ridiculous question, but this is exactly what happened in Parshat Ki Tisa. Moshe asked Hashem: "Can I see you, God?" And Hashem's response was:

"וַרְאִיתָ אֶת־אֶחְרָי"
"You will see my back"

And that is what Moshe was able to behold. How do we grasp an explanation for this? Most of our commentators tell us Hashem was saying: look behind. If you want to see God's presence in this world, look at history. Because if we look back on Jewish history, we will be able to discover the presence of Hashem at every single significant point in our past.

And I find this to be extraordinarily reassuring at a time like now. When there is so much danger to the state of Israel and to Jews worldwide, we turn heavenwards and say to Hashem that we need reassurance. And his message to us is to look at the past.

שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ -

In every generation that there have been those who have sought to destroy us.

וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם -

Hashem always guarantees that the Jewish people will live on. This is what happened in ancient Persia. That's the narrative of the story of Purim which we have just celebrated.

And now, in the modern day state of Iran, which used to be Persia - likewise, there has been a declared intention to annihilate Jews. And yet we know from looking to the past, Hashem will save his people.

So from the unlikeliest of sources in our parsha, where Hashem says to Moshe, "you will see my back" we gain the reassurance we need so deeply: Am Yisrael Chai.

Hashem will guarantee that the Jewish people will not just live on, but we will continue to thrive.

Shabbat Shalom.