



Determined Patience

Anticipation, waiting, looking forward. It is a difficult task to do these patiently, remaining focused on the goal and willing to wait for it, however long it takes. Yet it is that kind of dreaming and discipline that keeps us aiming high and avoiding settling for mediocrity.

This tension was at the core of the story of the Golden Calf, in which the Jewish people ran out of patience, lowering their standards and expectations from living under the leadership of the saintly Moshe to following the image of an animal. What a shocking change! Yet they made that adjustment because – after all – Moshe had been gone for forty days and they could now conceive of life without him.

This same issue may be the intent of the familiar verses about Shabbos that are found immediately before the story of the Golden Calf (Shemot 31:16). “The Jewish people shall guard the Shabbos so as to make the Shabbos an eternal covenant for their generations.” The *Ohr HaChaim* suggests that the mandate to “guard”

the Shabbos, *v’sham’ru*, relates to the use of that same term describing Yaakov’s attitude towards Yosef’s dreams, where it is written (Bereishit 37:11) that “his father guarded the matter,” *v’aviv shamar et hadavar*. There we are taught by Rashi that the term implies a carefully guarded hope as Yaakov was waiting and anticipating the fulfillment of Yosef’s dream.

It was this anticipation that prevented Yaakov from becoming reconciled with the loss of Yosef, as he maintained the hope and dream of being reunited with and seeing the future leadership of Yosef (37:35; see Rashi there). He could easily have become resigned to the apparent reality of Yosef’s death, but he chose to dream on, and the dream was ultimately fulfilled.

That is how we “make the Shabbat.” We wait for it, holding on with anticipation for the special quality of that day, not allowing ourselves to settle into the mundane world of our weekdays. The more we “wait for Shabbat,” the more we long for something deeper and calmer, something more connected and sacred than our regular days, the more we will experience Shabbat in that fashion.

This same attitude stands as the basis for the core value of *tz’piyah l’yeshuah*, the yearning for redemption that is expected of all of us. The world is not quite right, there is much that is still broken. The more comfortable we get with it as it is, the less likely we are to be able to see it arrive at its ultimate perfection.

Ours is the task of patience, waiting with determination to see our personal and collective dreams fulfilled, and never settling for anything less. ■



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