

## Parashat Ki Tisa

Exodus 30:12-35:35

March 13, 2020



### SUMMARY

In this *parasha*, *Moshe* collects a half-shekel coin from each Israelite man over the age of 20 in order to count how many men there are.

We learn more about some of the items and actions that are needed to prepare *Aharon* and his sons to serve G'd as *kohanim* or priests in the *Mishkan*--the portable, desert sanctuary. When the Israelites saw that *Moshe* was taking longer to return down Mt. Sinai than they had expected, the Israelites asked *Aharon* to build them a G'd. They gave *Aharon* gold and jewelry. When a calf made out of gold had been formed they said, "This is your G'd, Israel, who brought you out of Egypt."

Although G'd told *Moshe* that the plan was to destroy the Israelites and start fresh--making a new nation from *Moshe's* family--*Moshe* asked G'd not to do this and G'd agreed. *Moshe* started down Mt. Sinai carrying the stone tablets engraved by G'd, with the Ten Commandments. When he heard and saw all that was happening, he got angry and threw the tablets that he was carrying--shattering them at the bottom of Mt Sinai.

The Israelites earned serious consequences from G'd for their behavior, as well as a ritual to help them repair their relationship with G'd. *Moshe* returned up Mt. Sinai to receive another set of stone tablets with the Ten Commandments on them. This time it was *Moshe's* job, not G'd's, to carve out the tablets. Then G'd carved the words into them. When *Moshe* returned down Mt. Sinai with the new tablets--the Israelites all saw that *Moshe's* face glowed with light.

#### From Our Commentators:

##### Talmud Bavli Menachot 99b

דכתיב (שמות לד, א) אשר

שברת אמר לו הקב"ה

למשה יישר כחך ששברת

As it is written, "**which you broke**" (Exodus 34:1). The Holy Blessed One, said to *Moshe*: May your strength-of-breaking stay strong [*yishar koh'kha*].

[Colloquially: "Congrats on shattering!"]

#### FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) *Moshe* takes longer than expected to receive Torah from G'd on Mount Sinai. The Israelites gather against his brother *Aharon*, and demand that *Aharon* makes them a G'd. What might make them act that way?
- 2) G'd sees the Israelites making a new G'd, and tells *Moshe* that, as a consequence for this, G'd will destroy all the Israelites and start over--with *Moshe*. G'd will make a whole new people from *Moshe* and *Moshe's* family. *Moshe* argues with G'd, explaining why this is a bad idea. Do you think G'd's consequence is a good one or do you agree with *Moshe*?
- 3) When *Moshe* comes down from Mount Sinai he hears a lot of noise and sees the Israelites dancing around the golden calf that was made. He gets angry, throws the stone tablets with the 10 Commandments, and shatters them to pieces. Was it ok for *Moshe* to be angry with the Israelites? After all, he was late, so wasn't he responsible?