

MARCH 13, 2020

Parashat Ki Tisa

Exodus 30:12-35:35

Taught By:

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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.



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 twill 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*?

SAMANTHA: I think destroying the Israelites is not ok. They are a group of people used to being slaves and they are learning to trust G!d. They made a mistake and should have a chance to learn instead of all being wiped out for making a new G!d.

YEHUDA: I remember a time when my classmates and I were in class, but there was no teacher. I felt a little confused. Were we lost? Were we in the right place? The teacher came in after just a moment, but if we had needed to wait longer, I probably would have been more confused. If we had waited for a really long time, I probably would have gone to the office to check and see if anyone knew where my teacher was. This might be a little like the Israelites. Maybe they were asking *Aharon* to make a new G!d because they were confused that their leader was not there, so they need to see someone.

SAMANTHA: I agree that it might feel stressful and confusing to the Israelites that *Moshe* is taking longer on Mt. Sinai than they expected. Because they can't see G!d or *Moshe*, they are probably not sure what they should be doing. Just like our stress went away when we saw that our teacher is in class--even before our teacher tells us what to do--maybe the Israelites tell *Aharon* to make a G!d they can see because they think it will help their stress go down.

3) G!d tells the Israelites that they should put *keruvim* on top of ark, then tells them that G!d will talk to them from between the כַּרְבִּים. *Rashi* says that they looked like babies. *Rashbam* says that they looked more like birds. Why do you think G!d would tell the Israelites to put כַּרְבִּים on top of the ark that would carry the 10 Commandments and from which G!d would talk to the Israelites?

SAMANTHA: The Talmud teaches us that G!d is proud of *Moshe* for breaking the 10 Commandments. Our early rabbis saw this as an appropriate consequence for the Israelites' behavior, but I disagree. I think it was ok that he got mad, but he should not have smashed the 10 Commandments given to him by G!d.

YEHUDA: I agree that it is appropriate for *Moshe* to be angry when he sees the Israelites dancing with a new G!d they have created, but I think G!d is not happy about *Moshe* throwing and destroying the 10 Commandments and this is why G!d gives *Moshe* the consequence of carving the second set of stone tablets out of Mount Sinai himself.