

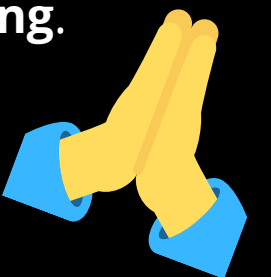
## כי תישא - KI TISA

### WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

Hashem commands Moshe to take a **census** of the Jewish people through each man over the age of 20 giving a silver **half-shekel**, which were used in building the **Mishkan**. Then, Hashem commands Moshe to build the **kiyor**, a copper basin used by the Cohanim to wash their hands and feet before working in the Mishkan. Moshe is told to collect specific spices and to mix them with pure olive oil, creating the **anointing oil** to anoint the Mishkan, its contents, and the Cohanim. He tells the Jews that the oil is holy and can only be used for the Mishkan and, later, the **Holy Temple** in Jerusalem. Hashem also commands Moshe to make the **incense** for the incense altar in the Mishkan. Hashem appoints **Betzalel** from the tribe of **Yehuda** to build the Mishkan and to create the clothing for the Cohanim, and **Oholiav** from the tribe of **Dan** to assist him, as Hashem has endowed both of them with the knowledge necessary for the job. Hashem reminds the Jews to keep **Shabbos**, even while building the Mishkan. Hashem gives Moshe the **Tablets**, inscribed by Hashem Himself. The Jewish people see that Moshe has not yet come down from **Har Sinai**, and approach **Aharon**, asking him to make them a new leader\* to replace Moshe. Aharon tells the Jews to collect gold from their families and creates the **Golden Calf**, and announces that there will be a festival the next day. Hashem tells Moshe to return to the Jews because they have turned away from Him and created an idol. He says that He will destroy the Jews and begin a new nation from Moshe, but Moshe prays for the Jews, causing Hashem's anger to abate. Moshe descends from Har Sinai holding the **tablets** and is joined by **Yehoshua**, and when Moshe sees the Golden Calf, he **breaks the Tablets** at the foot of **Har Sinai**. He takes the calf, burns it, grinds it into a powder, and makes the Jews drink it. He asks Aharon what happened, and then stands at the gate to the camp and says, "**Whoever is for Hashem, come to me!**" The tribe of Levi answers the call, and Moshe tells them to kill anyone who sinned with the golden calf: about **3,000** people. Moshe tells the Levis that they now have unique status among the Jews. Moshe again asks Hashem to forgive the Jews, and if not, to **erase Moshe** from the Torah. Hashem says that He will erase those who sinned, and He sends a plague to punish them. Hashem says that He will send a messenger to lead the Jews into Israel as He can no longer be in their midst. The Jews mourn this news. Moshe moves the **Tent of Meeting** to a distance from the camp to speak to Hashem in the future. Moshe asks Hashem to continue to lead the people, and He agrees. Then, Moshe asks to see Hashem's Face, but Hashem says that no one can see His Face and live, so He tells Moshe to hide behind a rock and shows Moshe His Back. Hashem tells Moshe to carve two **new Tablets** and to come up to **Har Sinai** with them. Moshe calls out the **Thirteen Attributes of Hashem's Mercy** and begs Hashem to forgive the Jews again. Hashem says that He will drive out the nations from the land of Israel if the Jews destroy their idols, do not worship false gods, and do not make treaties with the nations of the land. He prohibits the Jews from making idols and tells them to dedicate the male firstborn of livestock to Him. He reminds the Jews of **Shabbos** and the holidays of **Passover, Shavous, and Sukkos**, the **three holidays of pilgrimage** to Jerusalem. He tells the Jews to dedicate the first fruits to Hashem and prohibits cooking an animal in its mother's milk. He tells Moshe to write down the commandments, and Moshe stays on **Har Sinai** for **forty days and nights**. Moshe brings the **new Tablets** to the Jews with his face radiating light from speaking to Hashem. Moshe teaches the Jews the laws, and veils his face because of the light, as he would whenever he went to and from speaking to Hashem in the **Tent of Meeting**.

#### THINK ABOUT IT:

When he first asks Hashem to forgive the Jews, Moshe makes two points: that the Egyptians would say that Hashem only freed the Jews to kill them in the desert, and that Hashem made a covenant with Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. What do you think of these points? Imagine that you were trying to convince Hashem to forgive the Jews. What would you say?



### THE GOLDEN CALF\*

The Sin of the Golden Calf, only **40 days** after Hashem revealed Himself at **Har Sinai** and **three months** after miraculously leaving Egypt, is shocking. **You might ask: How could the Jews abandon Hashem so quickly?** **Rashi** (1040-1105, France) teaches that the incident was instigated by the **erev rav**, the non-Jews who left Egypt with the Jews, when they saw that Moshe was delayed in descending from Har Sinai. **Rabbi Ken Spiro** (Jerusalem) points out that only 3,000 Jews were found guilty of sinning with the Golden Calf, out of about 3,000,000 Jews who left Egypt! **Ramban** (1194-1270, Spain & Israel) explains that the Jews didn't want to replace Hashem, but they wanted a new **leader\***. **Rabbi Ari Kahn** (Jerusalem) adds that the Jews no longer wanted to be lead by a person, who could die or abandon them. **Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson** (1902-1994, Brooklyn) teaches that the Jews wanted to build a representation of Hashem, bringing all of their experiences down to Earth - which was the purpose of the Mishkan! But, their sin was that they built a representation that Hashem **didn't command**: an idol.



#### THINK

What do you think of these explanations? How else can you explain the behavior of the Jews? What would you have done in this situation?

### TABLETS 1.0 AND 2.0

After Moshe breaks the first tablets, Hashem commands him to carve a new set. **What was the difference between the first and second tablets?** The first set was made **only** by Hashem, and the second set was made by **Moshe and Hashem**. The **Midrash** explains that the first set contained the **entire Torah, Mishna, and Talmud**, while the second set contained only the **10 commandments**. The **Beis HaLevi** (1820-1892, Belarus) teaches that the first set was **carved**, and nothing could be forgotten from them, just as carving can't be erased. The second set was **inscribed**, and therefore, the Jews people could forget the Torah. However, he also points out that the second set allowed the Jews to be **involved** in figuring out the Torah, unlike the first, where every point in Judaism was clearly explained.

#### A SHORT IDEA:

The Midrash explains that Moshe didn't break the first tablets out of anger. Rather, he broke them to protect the Jews - like ripping up a contract that someone is about to violate, so there is no record of it.



#### DISCUSS:

Which tablets do you think are better? Why?



וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה פָּסֵל לָךְ שְׁנֵי לַחַת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשִׁימִים וְכָתַבְתִּי עַל הַלַּחַת אֶת הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל הַלַּחַת הָרֵאשִׁימִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַרְתָּ: (שמות לד:א)

The Hashem said to Moses: "Carve two tablets of stone like the first, and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered."