



Parshas Ki Tisa 2020, we are never alone

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the speedy recovery of Batsheva Sarah Bas Chana, Sasson Betzalel Ben Batya, Shaul Ben Berta, and Sapir Bas Ariela.

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated to the memory of Shlomo Ben Edward and Edward Ben Shaul. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha tells us the story of perhaps the biggest lapse of judgment in our history. A sin that caused G-d to want to destroy that generation and begin anew. The transgression that thousands of people died from and is felt till this very day, the sin of the Golden Calf.

The story began at the end of last week's Torah portion when G-d called Moshe Rabbienu up the mountain after the giving of the Torah. He was to stay on the mountain for forty days and nights to study the Torah and then teach it to the Jewish nation.

While he was on the mountain, some people intentionally miscalculated his return date and convinced people that Moshe had died. They went to Aaron and Chur, Miriam's son, demanding they make an Idol to lead them in Moshe's stead.

Chur immediately tried to talk them out of it; he told them that Moshe's return was imminent and there was no need to worry. But he was killed for refusing to follow along with their sinful plans. Aaron realized he had no choice but to follow their plan or face a similar fate. He told them to gather all their gold and bring it to him to create an Idol.

Secretly he hoped that it would take a while for them to collect it, and Moshe would come back before they were done. Unexpectedly, the people swiftly collected all their gold and brought it before him. Having no other choice, Aaron put all the gold into a fire, and the gold took the form of a calf. The Jewish nation began dancing around the Golden Calf, believing it was their leader in Moshe's stead.

Meanwhile, G-d saw what the Jewish people were doing and told Moshe to go down to them. Moshe took the two Luchos and headed down the mountain; he saw the Golden Calf and the people dancing around it as he got closer. The Luchos he was holding suddenly became heavy, so he threw them to the ground, shattering them instantly.

Moshe burnt the Golden Calf and ground it into a fine powder. He went to the tribe of Levi and said, ***"join me and defend the oneness of G-d and His Torah."*** The entire tribe joined him as he punished those that sinned with the Golden Calf.

After they finished, Moshe turned to G-d and begged Him for mercy; he asked G-d to remember the covenant He made with Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov. He told G-d that if He was to destroy the Jewish nation, G-d should erase his name from the entire Torah. G-d forgave the Jewish nation and told Moshe the thirteen attributes of mercy we say daily.

A question comes to mind: Before the Torah recounts the sin of the Golden Calf, it reminds us of the Mitzvah of Shabbos. As the pasuk says (31:13), *"And you (Moshe) shall tell the Jewish people to keep my Shabbos, for it is a sign between you and Me for generations so that they shall know, that it is I that makes them holy."* Why does the Torah repeat the Mitzvah of Shabbos before the story of the Golden Calf?

Rashi explains that the Mitzvah of Shabbos is repeated because the Torah just completed the commandments on how to build and use the Mishkan.

Therefore, the Torah reminds the Jewish people that even though it is a Mitzvah to build the Mishkan, it is forbidden to do so on Shabbos. The Mitzvah of Shabbos takes precedence over almost all other Mitzvahs. Since G-d rested on the seventh day of creation, we also rest on Shabbos.

The Rabbienu Bachya gives a deeper and more powerful explanation. He explains that the Mitzvah of Shabbos is repeated because G-d was trying to prevent the sin of the Golden Calf from ever occurring. The reason that the sin of the Golden Calf happened was that the Jewish people thought that they had no leader.

This is why the pasuk says (31:16-17), **“The Jewish people shall keep the Shabbos, for observing the Shabbos is a covenant for all time. A sign for eternity between Me and the Jewish people, for in six days G-d made heaven and earth, on the seventh day He ceased from work and rested”**. G-d was reminding the Jewish people that when they think that He has forsaken them C “V, they should know that there is a bond between Him and the Jewish people for all of eternity.

This important lesson is especially prevalent after the holiday of Purim, for it was the first time the Jewish people experienced exile. When they lost all hope, thinking that G-d has given up on them C “V until He changed their dire situation into a joyous celebration.

G-d wants us to know that from the time of Avraham Avinu. There has been a constant and everlasting bond that has solidified our relationship with G-d. We should never think that we are forsaken or without a leader, for even when we can't see Him, we must remember that **He** is with us and guiding our way.

שׁוֹיִתִּי הַ לְיָמֵיךָ תְּמִיד כִּי מִיְמֵינִי בֵּל-אֲמוּט:

“I always place G-d before me, for with Him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”

-King Dovid in Tehillim 16:8

Have a meaningful Shabbos, Rabbi Sholom Yemini