

This Week In Torah *Ki Tisa*

The great Hasidic master Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav said: “If you believe it is possible to break, believe that is possible for repair.” Another Hasidic master Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk added: “There is nothing so whole as a broken heart.” These sages could have been commentating on this week’s *parasha*. The tablets are broken, the calf is an expression of sin for abandoning God. There is profound confusion, longing, and then healing.

As our ancestors stood at Sinai, waiting for Moses to return. The inner voice got a better hold of them. Their needs yielded to a panic that compelled them to inappropriate behavior. The golden calf collapsed into the ground as Moses threw down the first set of tablets. Transgression led to atonement with the second set of tablets; but our tradition has it that the first set of broken tablets were carried around as a symbol. In the brokenness, there was still holiness. Remember that.

For us, the imagery of this *sedra* is quite graphic but the healing is symbolized in the most tender of moments. Moses is exasperated and frustrated; he is at his wits end so to speak. He pleads to God to reveal the Divine face to give him what the people yearned for as they built the molten idol of the golden calf. God responded—placing Moses in the cleft of a rock. Covering his eyes, God gives him a glimpse of the Divine.

Let that be a symbol for what we aspire to in our faith. When times are challenging, search deeply for the blessings. Find the gem of sanctity within the tumultuous and even the painful moments. There is a wonderful quote from Fred Rogers of “Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood.” He said: “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, **“Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.”**

Moses found that reassurance by a glimpse of the Divine as God walked past him. The Israelites discovered this when Torah was revealed to them a second time. **You and I can experience this as we acknowledge those who serve as God’s holy emissaries who are doing God’s work by touching the lives of others with dignity and love.**

