

Parsha Plug: Parshat Ki Tisa

Shemot 31:18-32:10	שמות לא:יח-לב:י
<p>18 When He had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, stone tablets, written with the finger of God. 1 When the people saw that Moses was late in coming down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aaron, and they said to him: "Come on! Make us gods that will go before us, because this man Moses, who brought us up from the land of Egypt we don't know what has become of him." 2 Aaron said to them, "Remove the golden earrings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters and bring them [those earrings] to me." 3 And all the people stripped themselves of the golden earrings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took [them] from their hand[s], fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it into a molten calf, upon which they said: "These are your gods, O Israel, who have brought you up from the land of Egypt!" 5 When Aaron saw [this], he built an altar in front of it, and Aaron proclaimed and said: "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord." 6 On the next day they arose early, offered up burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and they got up to make merry. 7 And the Lord said to Moses: "Go, descend, for your people that you have brought up from the land of Egypt have acted corruptly. 8 They have quickly turned away from the path that I have commanded them; they have made themselves a molten calf! And they have prostrated themselves before it, slaughtered sacrifices to it, and said: 'These are your gods, O Israel, who have brought you up from the land of Egypt.'" 9 And the Lord said to Moses: "I have seen this people and behold! they are a stiff necked people. 10 Now leave Me alone, and My anger will be kindled against them so that I will annihilate them, and I will make you into a great nation."</p>	<p>יח וַיְתֵן אֱלֹהִים-מֹשֶׁה, פְּכַלְתּוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֹתוֹ בְּהַר סִינַי, שְׁנֵי, לַחַת הָעֵדוּת--לַחַת אֶבֶן, כְּתוּבִים בְּאֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים. א וַיֵּרָא הָעָם, כִּי-בָּשַׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לָרֶדֶת מִן-הָהָר; וַיִּקְהָל הָעָם עַל-אֶהֲרֹן, וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם עֲשֵׂה-לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לְפָנֵינוּ--כִּי-זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה-הָיָה לוֹ. ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵהֶם, אֶהֲרֹן, פָּרְקוּ גִזְמֵי הַזֹּהָב, אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשֵׁיכֶם בְּנִיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם; וְהִבְיֵאוּ, אֵלָי. ג וַיִּתְּפֹקֶדוּ, כָּל-הָעָם, אֶת-גִּזְמֵי הַזֹּהָב, אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם; וַיְבִיאוּ, אֶל-אֶהֲרֹן. ד וַיִּקַּח מֵיָדָם, וַיַּצַּר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרָט, וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ, עֵגֶל מַסְכָּה; וַיֹּאמְרוּ--אֵלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם. ה וַיֵּרָא אֶהֲרֹן, וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו; וַיִּקְרָא אֶהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר, חַג לַה' מָחָר. ו וַיִּשְׁפְּכוּ, מִמִּחְרָתוֹ, וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת, וַיַּגִּישׁוּ שְׁלָמִים; וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וְשָׂתוּ, וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק. ז וַיְדַבֵּר ה', אֶל-מֹשֶׁה: לֶךְ-רֵד--כִּי שָׁחַת עַמֶּךָ, אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם. ח סָרוּ מִהָרַ, מִן-הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָם--עָשׂוּ לָהֶם, עֵגֶל מַסְכָּה; וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ-לוֹ, וַיִּזְבְּחוּ-לוֹ, וַיֹּאמְרוּ, אֵלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם. ט וַיֹּאמֶר ה', אֶל-מֹשֶׁה: רְאִיתִי אֶת-הָעָם הַזֶּה, וְהִנֵּה עַם-קָשֵׁה-עַרְפָּה הוּא. י וְעַתָּה הִנֵּיחָה לִי, וַיַּחַר-אַפִּי בָהֶם וְאָכַלְתִּים; וְאֲעֲשֶׂה אוֹתְךָ, לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל.</p>

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The irony is that we attempt to disown our difficult stories to appear more whole or more acceptable, but our wholeness-- even our wholeheartedness-- actually depends on the integration of all of our experiences, including the falls....

There's a pivotal scene in *The Empire Strikes Back* when Yoda is training Luke to be a Jedi warrior, teaching him how to honorably use the Force and how the dark side of the Force-- anger, fear, and aggression-- can consume him if he doesn't learn how to find calm and inner peace. In this scene, Luke and Yoda are standing in the dark swamp [and Luke notices a dark cave at the base of a giant tree]...As

Luke slowly makes his way through the cave, he is confronted by his enemy, Darth Vader. They both draw their light sabers and Luke quickly cuts off Vader's helmeted head. The head rolls to the ground and the face guard blows off the helmet, revealing Vader's face. Only, it isn't Darth Vader's face; it's Luke's face. Luke is staring at his own head on the ground. Walking into our stories of hurt [and failure] is like walking into that cave in Yoda's swamp. It can feel dangerous and foreboding, and what we must ultimately confront is ourself. The most difficult part of our stories is often what we bring to them-- what we make up about who we are and how we are perceived by others. Yes, maybe we lost our job or screwed up a project, but what makes that story painful is what we tell ourselves about our own self-worth and value. Owning our stories means reckoning with our feelings and rumbling with our dark emotions-- our fear, anger, aggression, shame, and blame. This isn't easy, but the alternative-- denying our stories and disengaging from emotion-- means choosing to live our entire lives in the dark. When we decide to own our stories and live our truth, we bring our light to the darkness.

Masechet Bava Batra 25b	מסכת בבא בתרא כה:
Rebbe Yitzchak said: One who desires to become wise should turn his face southward [during <i>tefillah</i>].	אמר רבי יצחק הרוצה שיחכים ידרים.

Masechet Sanhedrin 102a	מסכת סנהדרין קב.
Rebbe Yitzchak said: No punishment whatsoever comes upon the world which does not contain a slight fraction of the first calf [Chet HaEigel], as it is written, "But on the day I make an accounting [of sins upon them], I will bring their sin to account against them" (Shemot 32:34)	אמר ר' יצחק אין לך כל פורענות ופורענות שבאה לעולם שאין בה אחד מעשרים וארבעה בהכרע ליטרא של עגל הראשון שנאמר וביום פקדי ופקדתי עליהם חטאתם.

Bereshit Rabbah 18:6	בראשית רבה יח:
"And they were both naked." Rabbi Eleazar said: there were three who did not wait for their contentment even six hours, and these are they: Adam, and Israel, and Sisra. Adam, as it says: "and they were not embarrassed" (Genesis 2:25) - six hours had not passed, and he was content. Israel, as it says: "And the nation saw that Moses delayed" (Exodus 32:1), when six hours had passed and Moses had not appeared. Sisra, as it says: "Why does his chariot delay in coming?" (Judges 5:28) - every day he would come in three or four hours, and today six hours have past and he is not here [these are all cases related to "and they were not embarrassed"].	ויהיו שניהם ערומים - אמר רבי אליעזר: שלושה הן שלא המתינו בשלותן שש שעות, ואלו הן: אדם וישראל וסיסרא אדם, שנאמר: ולא יתבששו לא באו שש שעות, והוא בשלותו. וישראל, שנאמר (שמות לב): וירא העם כי בשש משה, כי באו שש שעות ולא בא משה. סיסרא, שנאמר (שופטים ה): מדוע בשש רכבו לבא, בכל יום היה למוד לבא בשלוש שעות בארבע שעות, ועכשיו באו שש שעות ולא בא.

Netivot Shalom Parshat Ki Tisa	נתיבות שלום פרשת כי תשא רמט:א
<p>In God's great mercy, He kept a path of teshuvah for us. Even after a Jew has already failed and arrived at his lowest point, God created for him a means of healing within the sin. This is the suffering of the conscience that a person experiences after he sins, when his heart is broken within because of the sin. And even if he does not feel this, that brokenness is still present in the interior of his heart. This potential life in the midst of upheaval¹ awakens a person within his sin through the suffering of the conscience so that he is able to return to his true self, as it is written "Your wickedness will correct you" (Jeremiah 2:19). Within the sin and the failure, the medicine for the wound is hidden, so that "your wickedness will correct you".</p>	<p>והב"י בזה דהקב"ה ברוב רחמיו השאיר דרך תשובה, שאפילו לאחר שיהודי כבר נכשל והגיע למצב שפל וירוד ביותר, ברא לו הקב"ה תרופה מתוך החטא עצמו, את יסורי המצפון שיש לו לאחר החטא שלבו שבור בקרבו על חטאו, וגם אם הוא אינו מרגיש בזה אך בפנימיות הלב שבור הוא מאד. וזה בבחי' קוסטא דחיותא המתעוררת באדם מתוך החטא גופו המעורר בו יסורי מצפון שע"ז יחזור לשורשו, וכמאה"כ (ירמיה ב') תיסרך רעתך, שבתוך החטא והפגם טמונה התרופה למכה אשר תיסרך רעתך.</p>

¹From Ner Le'Elef on this idea of B'nai Yisrael's suffering and דחיותא: "The Netivot Shalom compares this idea to a seed that needs to rot in the ground before a new plant can grow from it. If it does not rot, it cannot create the space for the new plant to grow. If it rots completely, it will lose its kernel of life and no new plant will emerge. The new plant emerges exactly at the point where the seed lies between destruction and existence."

נתיבות שלום, עמ' לא: צריך ביאור ... מדוע סבב הקב"ה שישארו במצרים עד הרגע האחרון, ומדוע לא הוציאם קודם ששקעו במ"ט שערי טומאה שלא יהיו בסכנת אבדון. אלא עומק העניין הזה על דעת משכתוב לגרעון הזרע הנזרע באדמה, דקודם מרקבי הגרעון עד שלא נשאר בו כי אם קוסטא דחיותא ואז מתחיל להצמיח. כי לא תתכן צמיחה מחודשת אלא כאשר קדם לה ההעדר, וכל זמן שלא נרקב הישן אין החדש יכול להצמולץ אמנם אם יתקרב לגמרי ולא תשאר הקוסטא דחיותא כברר גם כן לא תתכן הצמיחה וזמן הצמיחה המחודשת הוא כאשר הגרעין נמצא בין ההעדר והקיום, שכולו נרקב מלבד הקוסטא דחיותא.