

Parsha Plug: Ki Tisa and Vayakhel Pekudei

<p>Shemot 32:15-20, 34:1</p>	<p>שמות לב:טו-כ, לד:א</p>
<p>15 Now Moshe turned and went down from the mountain [bearing] the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets inscribed from both their sides; on one side and on the other side they were inscribed. 16 Now the tablets were God's work, and the inscription was God's inscription, engraved on the tablets. 17 When Joshua heard the voice of the people in their shouting, he said to Moshe: "There is a voice of battle in the camp!" 18 But [Moshe] said: "[It is] neither a voice shouting victory, nor a voice shouting defeat; a voice of blasphemy I hear." 19 Now it came to pass when he drew closer to the camp and saw the calf and the dances, that Moshe' anger was kindled, and he flung the tablets from his hands, shattering them at the foot of the mountain. 20 Then he took the calf they had made, burned it in fire, ground it to fine powder, scattered [it] upon the surface of the water, and gave [it to] the children of Israel to drink...1 And the Lord said to Moses: "Hew for yourself two stone tablets like the first ones. And I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.</p>	<p>(טו) וַיִּפֹּן וַיֵּרֵד מֹשֶׁה מִן־הַהָר וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הַעֵדוּת בְּיָדוֹ לַחַת פְּתוּבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבָרֵיהֶם מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם פְּתוּבִים: (טז) וְהַלַּחַת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים הָמָּה וְהַמִּכְתָּב מִכְתָּב אֱלֹקִים הוּא חֲרוּת עַל־הַלַּחַת: (יז) וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹל הָעָם בְּרִיעַה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בְּמַחֲנֶה: (יח) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת גְּבוּרָה וְאֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת חַלוּשָׁה קוֹל עֲנוֹת אֲנָכִי שָׁמַע: (יט) וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הָעֵגֶל וּמַחֲלֹת וַיַּחֲרַאֲף מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלַךְ מִיָּדוֹ מִדֵּיו אֶת־הַלַּחַת וַיִּשְׁבֵּר אֹתָם תַּחַת הָהָר: (כ) וַיִּלָּח אֶת־הָעֵגֶל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׂרַף בְּאֵשׁ וַיִּטְחֵן עַד אֲשֶׁר־דָּק וַיִּזֶר עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם וַיִּשְׂק אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: (כא) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אֱהֲרֹן מַה־עָשִׂיתָ לָּךְ הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־הִבֵּאתָ עָלָיו חַטָּאת גְּדוֹלָה: א וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פֹּסֵל־לָךְ שְׁנֵי־לַחַת אֲבָנִים כַּרְאשֵׁימִים וְכַתְּבָתִּי עַל־הַלַּחַת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־הַלַּחַת הָרְאשִׁימִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ:</p>

<p>Shemot 40:17, 20</p>	<p>שמות מ: יז, כ</p>
<p>17 It came to pass in the first month, in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the Mishkan was set up...20 He took and placed the testimony into the ark, put the poles upon the ark, and placed the ark cover on the ark from above.</p>	<p>יז וַיְהִי בַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּשָׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיית בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַיּוֹקִים הַמְּשֻׁפָּן: ... כ וַיִּלָּח וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הָעֵדוּת אֶל־הָאָרוֹן וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַבָּדִים עַל־הָאָרוֹן וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הַכַּפֹּרֶת עַל־הָאָרוֹן מִלְּמַעְלָה:</p>

<p>Rashi on Shemot 31:18</p>	<p>רש"י על שמות לא:יה</p>
<p>He gave Moses: In the Torah, chronological order is not adhered to. The episode of the calf took place long before the command of the work of the Mishkan. For on the seventeenth of Tammuz the tablets were broken, and on Yom Kippur the Holy One, blessed is He, was reconciled to Israel. The next day, they began to collect donations for the Mishkan, and it [the Mishkan] was established on the first of Nissan.</p>	<p>ויתן אל משה וגו': אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה. מעשה העגל נעשה קודם לצווי מלאכת המשכן ימים רבים היה, שהרי בשבעה עשר בתמוז נשתברו הלוחות, וביום הכפורים נתרצה הקב"ה לישראל, ולמחרת התחילו בנדבת המשכן והוקם באחד בניסן:</p>

Rashbam on Shemot 32:19	רשב"ם על שמות לב:יט
<p>“He flung the tablets from his hands”: When Moshe saw the golden calf, he became physically too weak to carry the weight of the tablets and he threw them far from himself so that they would not drop on his feet. This is the way all who throw away a burden they carry and which has become too heavy for them do this. This is the way Pirkei deRebbe Eliezer explains this verse. This is also the plain meaning of the verse.</p>	<p>וישלך מידו: כשראה את העגל תשש כחו ולא היה בו כח והשליכם רחוק ממנו קצת שלא יזיק את רגליו בנפלים, בדרך כל משליכי משאוי כשאין בהם כח לשאת. וכן ראיתי בפרקים של רבי אליעזר, ועיקר פשוטו כך:</p>

Malbim on Shemot 32:19	מלבי"ם על שמות לב:יט
<p>Until now, he had not broken the tablets because he thought that they made the calf because he was late to come down from the mountain and they wanted a leader in his place. But when they saw that he was coming from the mountain, surely they would stop what they were doing and repent. However, he saw that also when he drew close to the camp and they saw Moshe coming, even then they still kept the calf and rejoiced over it with dances. From this, he saw that it was their intention to rebel against God and Moshe His servant. They did not make the calf for it to be a leader but rather to do idol worship. Thus, “Moshe’s anger was kindled, and he flung the tablets from his hands”. Chazal say that the letters flew up at the time that he drew close to the calf, and so the tablets became heavy and he needed to hold them with his two hands, for the neshamah that lifted them went out from them. And so, he broke them after the holiness passed from them.</p>	<p>ויהי. הנה עד עתה לא שבר את הלוחות כי חשב שזה עשו בעבור שבושש לרדת ורצו מנהיג במקומו, וכשיראו שבא מן ההר יחדלו ממעשיהם ויעשו תשובה, אבל כשראה שהגם שקרב אל המחנה וראו שבא משה, ובכ"ז היה עדיין העגל והם שמחו עליו במחולות, מזה ראה שבדעתם למרוד בה' ובמשה עבדו ולא עשו שיהיה טלמס ומנהיג רק לע"ז, אז ויחר אף משה וישלך מידיו את הלוחות, וחז"ל אמרו שפרחו האותיות בעת שקרב אל העגל, וע"כ נעשו כבדים והוצרך להחזיק אותם בשתי ידיו כי הלך מהם הנשמה הנושאת אותם, וע"כ שברם אחר שחלפה הקדושה מהם</p>

Masechet Menachot 99a-b	מסכת מנחות צט.:
<p>“Which you broke, and you will put them in the aron” (Devarim 10:2): Rav Yosef taught: This teaches us that both the tablets and the fragments of the tablets were placed in the aron. From here [we learn that] a scholar who has forgotten his learning through no fault of his own must not be treated with disrespect...Resh Lakish said: There are times when the nullification of the Torah may be the foundation of the Torah, for it is written, “Which you broke”. God said to Moshe, ‘Well done for shattering them!’</p>	<p>אשר שברת ושמתם בארון - תני רב יוסף: מלמד, שהלוחות ושברי לוחות מונחין בארון; מכאן, לתלמיד חכם ששכח תלמודו מחמת אונסו, שאין נוהגין בו מנהג בזיון...אמר ריש לקיש: פעמים שביטולה של תורה זהו יסודה, דכתיב: אשר שברת - אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה: יישר כחך ששברת.</p>

Rashi on Devarim 34:12 (Last Rashi on the Torah)	רש"י על דברים לד:יב
<p>Before the eyes of all Israel: For his heart stirred him to break the tablets before their eyes, as it is said, “And I shattered them before your eyes”. And God gave His approval, as it says, “[the first tablets] which you shattered”, Well done for shattering them!</p>	<p>לעיני כל ישראל: שנשאו לבו לשבור הלוחות לעיניהם, שנאמר (לעיל ט, יז) ואשברם לעיניכם, והסכימה דעת הקב"ה לדעתו, שנאמר (שמות לד, א) אשר שברת, יישר כחך ששברת</p>

Fred Ehrman, *The Broken Tablets and Mr. Gottlieb*, *The Jewish Week*

Why did Rashi choose to end his commentary in this way? I would like to try and answer with a personal story. I was a 7-year-old second grader at the Ramaz Academy...We were not the best-behaved students during the service, and talking, passing notes and other such inappropriate behavior was all too common...[One day] Mr. Gottlieb [our teacher] took his siddur, his prayer book, and flung it across to the other side of the room, where it thumped on the floor. A large gasp was heard from all of the class. Hands went up to our mouths. We were all shocked and stunned. The teacher deliberately throwing his siddur, a book that we kissed if we accidentally dropped it? There was a deafening silence in the room. Mr. Gottlieb then explained that if we could not respect the prayer service, then the book in which we prayed had also been disrespected. He then said he would give us one more chance. Each of us began to pray and there was not a hint of any further disturbance or distraction. This decorum continued day after day and almost all of us began to concentrate on the prayers. And to this day, that incident has remained with me.

Abraham Besdin, *Reflections of the Rav: Lessons in Jewish Thought, Adapted from the Lectures of R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik*, pp. 81-2.

The views of Maimonides and Nachmanides can be reconciled. Both regarded prayer as meaningful only if it is derived from a sense of Tzora (trouble). They differ in their understanding of the word. Maimonides regarded daily life itself as being existentially in straits, inducing in the sensitive person feelings of despair, a brooding sense of life's meaninglessness, absurdity, lack of fulfillment. It is a permanent Tzora which exists BeChol Yom, daily. The word Tzora connotes more than external trouble; it suggests an emotional and intellectual condition in which man sees himself as hopelessly trapped in a vast, desolate universe, desolate, without hope. Certainly the Psalmist's cry (118:5) "Min HaMeitzar Karati Kah" (out of my straits I have called upon the Lord) refers to an inner, rather than an externally induced, state of constriction and oppression.

Rabbi Yaakov Bieler, *Parshat Ki Tissa: Broken Tablets – Embarrassment or Inspiration?*

[Regarding the scholar who forgot his learning, Yismach Moshe (R.Moshe Teitelbaum b.1759, d.1841) on Parashat Eikev (105a)] contends that while forgetfulness is definitely a scourge for the individual who wishes to know and to come to conclusions based upon comparing and contrasting the various bits of information and concepts that s/he has accumulated over the years, nevertheless it has a silver lining as well. Were one not to forget, this would paradoxically impair his/her ability to come up with new ideas and avenues of thought!...The broken "Luchot" then represent a breaking down of what is already known, in order to allow for a reconstruction that may even improve upon what had been originally thought and understood. Such a mindset holds the key to not only moving on through the desert, but also to achieving repentance and reconciliation. As long as people think that they remember or know all that there is to be known, that there is nothing more to think, say or do, then the possibility for change for the better and rapprochement will be virtually non-existent. Sometimes it is important to wipe the slate clean, in effect to break and forget in order to begin again, to revisit what is known and what has been done, in order to determine whether there may be additional paths as yet uncharted, and new directions that can lead to greater harmony and spiritual wholeness.