

פרשת כי תשא

וירא בְּעַם כִּי בָשָׂר מֹשֶׁה לְכַדֵּת מֹזֶה-הָבָר וַיַּקְרֵל הַעַם עַל-אַהֲרֹן וַיַּאֲמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם |
עֲשֵׂה-לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יְלַכֵּנוּ לְפָנֵינוּ כִּי-זֶה | מֹשֶׁה הָאֲיָש אֲשֶׁר הָעָלָנוּ מִאָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם לֹא
יַדְעָנוּ מִה-דָּבָר לֹא: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶחָד פְּרָקָן נְצָמֵן הַזָּבֵב אֲשֶׁר בָּאֶזְנֵי נְשִׁיכָם בְּנֵיכָם
וּבְנֹתִיכָם וְהַבְּרִיאוּ אֵלֵינוּ וַיִּתְפַּרְקֵן כָּל-הָעָם אֶת-נְצָמֵן הַזָּבֵב אֲשֶׁר בָּאֶזְנֵיכָם וַיַּבְרִיאוּ
אֶל-אַהֲרֹן

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." 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." And all the people stripped themselves of the golden earrings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron.

Rena Schwartz- Class of 2020

This is when the Jews are waiting for Moses to descend the Mountain and bring down the Torah, and he is late. This is the beginning of the sin of the golden calf. It seems odd that Aaron is the man (the holy man) who prompted the Jews to remove their own gold to eventually create one of the worst sins of the Jews that ever occurred. Yet, that is what we see here.

Below is an excerpt from an article by Sholom Kesselman, a Chabad Rabbi from LA that sheds some light on this issue.

It is clear from this that Chur did indeed attempt to stop the sinning. He realized that as a leader, it was up to him to respond, and he did so with serious rebuke and condemnation. But his response was so harsh that, in their frenzy, the Jews did the unthinkable and actually killed him.

Aaron's response was exactly the opposite. He was known as a peaceful and loving person, not the confrontational type. He used diplomacy and appeasement and pretended to go along with the "plan," in an attempt to stall things until Moses

returned. In the end, he simply ran out of time, and the Jews did what they did with Aaron powerless to stop them.

What was it about Moses' leadership that even Aaron and Chur could not replicate? We first need to understand what it takes to be the ultimate, ideal leader of the Jewish people.

The ultimate leader must embody two opposite dynamics. On the one hand, he must care deeply for his people, love them, and have only their best interests in mind. And he must find a way to communicate his love, devotion and care, so that the people know their leader feels this way about them. On the other hand, a leader needs to display strength and boldness. He must communicate to his people what is right and what is wrong and stand firmly for what is true and correct.

Source:

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2864244/jewish/Will-the-Real-Leader-Please-Stand-Up.htm

Yehuda Stock - Class of 2023

In this week's parsha, (Ki Sisa) Moshe is about to come down from the mountain. The people thought he died because he did not tell the people when he was coming down. Then the people went to Aaron and asked what to do. He said give me all your gold and then he built a golden calf.

I don't understand why Aaron would make a golden calf when he knew it was a sin because he could have said let's wait a few more days but he said let's make a golden calf instead. Then I saw Moshe left two advisors Aaron and Chor and the midrash says that they went to Chor first and he said no and then they killed him. That could be one of the reasons why Aaron said yes to the people because the people might kill him. When Moshe came down the mountain and saw the calf he melted it down and made everybody drink it, even the people not a part of it. Why? One reason I would give is because the people not a part of it could've stopped the people from building it so they were partially guilty.

When Aaron made the golden calf it never said he got punished but I think his punishment was when his son's went into the beit hamikdash and then they were killed. I think that was his sin. Why did Aaron say he will build the calf by himself why did he not ask for help. A reason I will give is because if it is just him it will go much slower and maybe Moshe will come down before he is done. When G-D saw the calf he killed the people who made it but even after that he brought one more punishment- a plague. Why did he do two punishments why did he kill some people who were not part of it. I think because bnei yisrael is one family so if

one person does something bad they all get punished. Another reason i have is that they were maybe thinking about idolatry like they wanted to do it but they knew it was wrong. What does moshe mean when he tells G-D to erase him from his book. Moshe is saying that if you want to take away my nation you can just kill me because he feels like he failed his purpose in bringing the people to the land of milk and honey.

Hadassah Elliot: Class of 2022 A Challenge for God !!

Why is God always so ready to annihilate the jews? Why were the jews always so ready to abandon god? I find the relationship between god and the jews quite strange. It's pretty clear they are both not into each other. It's like we're only together because if we weren't then the other nations would gossip about us. Moshe is like the child that's in the middle of his parents divorce. I see it as Moshe saying, don't split up, or i'll xyz. It's a kind of emotional manipulation. Can god really be emotionally manipulated? It appears to be that way.

I find something innately dirty about this kind of love. I've heard people say that God is deeply and madly in love with us, but the text tells us he's ready to kill us on a whim. When i look in the text, i just don't see that love. The way i see god being described by the bible versus how people talk about him are like polar opposites. What was God truly expecting when he decided to deal with victims of abuse? That they'd be amiable? They had issues, for crying out loud! I just wonder where God's compassion is. Where is the "all knowing" part of this "all knowing" God?

So how do we sugar coat this overzealous God and make this story less uncomfortable? We can say that,

God loves us so much and he only wants us for himself, he'd kill us if we weren't with him. ♡

Oh god, sounds pretty messed up still no? It's romantic in a creepy stalker way.

"Mightier than the waves of the sea is his love for you" - Psalm 93:4

God bless you, amen.

Rafi Gross- Class of 2022

After the Jews committed the sin of the Golden Calf, G-d was angry with the Jewish people and said to Moshe "And now, desist from Me! Let My anger burn against them and I shall annihilate them; and I shall make you a great nation." (Exodus 32:10) This Pasuk means that G-d will kill all the Jewish people and restart a new nation with Moshe being the forefather and that G-d will make a covenant with Moshe and erase the covenant he made with Abraham. Rashi says "desist from Me" means that he was telling Moshe that it was his decision as to whether or not he should kill all the Jews and start a new nation with him and that if he prays for the Jewish people he will not kill all the Jews. We can infer from Rashis statement that

because G-d made a covenant with Abraham and He knew it was going to be fulfilled no matter what because G-d doesn't lie and a Covenant is a promise, so we learn that G-d wanted Moshe to pray to him. Moshe's prayer was telling G-d that it makes no sense that you would take the Jews out of Egypt with great power and a strong hand and then just kill them all because the Egyptians will say "with evil intent did he take them out, to kill them in the mountains and annihilate them from upon the face of the earth" (Exodus 32:12) Moshe also told G-d that he should relent from his anger and reconsider the evil against his nation. He further says remember the covenant that you made with Abraham and that you promised him offspring like the stars of the heavens, and that your offspring will have Eretz Yisrael as a heritage forever. Right after Moshe's prayer G-d decides he will not kill all the Jews and that G-d thought Moshe's prayer was good. Here we see the power of prayer and how important it is to pray. Even though we might not always get our prayers answered we pray for ourselves to become better. Prayer if for us, not for G-d because G-d doesn't need to hear how great he is, he already knows that. G-d gets a huge ego boost every time we pray to him. Prayer is all for us to become better and see how we can improve ourselves. Although Praying is very hard because we say the same things most days and it's hard to find it meaningful and we have to sit and stand and we're tired in the morning and just don't feel like praying. I would encourage everyone to look into the prayers we say and try to see how you can reflect and improve yourself. Although it's very hard to find meaning in prayer and we're tired and Kavana doesn't just come out of nowhere, it takes a lot of time, I would encourage everyone because just like G-d didn't need Moshe to tell him how great he is when he prayed. G-d wanted Moshe to pray so he can reflect on himself and the Jewish people by praying that he should not annihilate the Jews so they can reflect on themselves and improve themselves through Moshe's prayer.

Ashley Taibel- Class of 2023

In this week's parsha, Ki Tisa, the sin of the golden calf takes place. Moshe ascends to Har Sinai to receive the tablets, but the Jews slip up and assume that Moshe has been gone longer than he said he'd be. They decide they want another leader like Moshe, but perhaps this time it should be a physical item.

In chapter 32, verse 34, Hashem says these words: "When I will have to punish them for something else, I will take their sin into account." From this verse, I have a question. If Hashem is always so invested in the welfare of his people, then why does He not want to forget entirely about the sin of the golden calf? I think that this statement by Hashem can be interpreted as an act of loving kindness between Him and His people. Hashem is saying that if the Jews ever sin like this again, He will take into consideration this sin. He will justify that when they worshipped the calf He forgave them, so if they sin in the future, He will forgive them again and not destroy them.

Another interesting commentary is that in chapter 32, verse 15, it says how the letters on the tablets were engraved from one side to another. When the letters n and

o are engraved, the center would fall out. Miraculously, the center hung in the air. The question is, what is the significance of this miracle? The letters n and o spell the word "mas" which means tax. When a person earns money, they "tax" their income by setting aside a portion for necessities and a portion for pleasure. Unfortunately, many people are reluctant to "tax" their income for the noblest charity- Torah institutions. Hashem demonstrated to Moshe that the "mas" of the tablets, or the "tax" that is needed to support Torah, will always be there.

Nathan Bogomolny: Class of 2022

Chapter 35 in תיינש starts with the beginning of what would become the sin of the golden calf. This sin was one of the biggest sins that the Jewish people committed during the times of Moshe but the Jewish people are not punished severely. The Jews are punished with a plague and the people directly involved are killed. This punishment is light compared to what G-d has done to people involved in other sins like the sin of the spies where everyone in the generation of the spies would not enter Israel.

I believe that the Jewish people should have been punished very severely for the sin of the golden calf because the people had just seen the splitting of the sea and many other miracles along the way to Mount Sinai. This should mean that their faith in G-d should be stronger. Also Aaron was somewhat involved in the sin so he should've been punished individually.

The reason I think he is not punished is because he meant well by trying to delay. In the end, he does not end up delaying or solving the problem- therefore he is part of the sin of the Golden Calf.