

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו.
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל-מלאכתך,
ויום השביעי שבת לה'

SHABBAT LASHEM

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IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

JONATHAN LEVENE
SHEVET DOROT

There are two common assumptions about this week's Parasha:

1. When Moshe broke the tablets, it was out of a fit of rage – he had lost his temper. He shouldn't have reacted in this way and broken them.

2. The second set of tablets (written by Moshe) are not as holy as the first (written by G-d).

Let us challenge these assumptions!

Rashi explains (thank you to Rabbi Lew for explaining this to me) that the breaking of the tablets was actually due to something else – and it was the necessary response. Although the passuk does say that Moshe became angry, this is only to help us understand the story and know how to relate to it (just as is true when the Torah says G-d 'gets angry'). Moshe was by no means an impulsive, hot-headed person – this is impossible for someone of his greatness and level.

The core reason why Moshe broke the tablets is that the Jewish people were not fit to receive them and live by the Torah's commandments. Having built and worshipped an idol, this made them into the type of people who (by the Torah's law) could not take on the laws of the Torah. Thus, the contract had to be annulled – broken, literally.

Although the breaking of the tablets was indeed a tragedy, it was necessary in the circumstances. The tragedy was not that Moshe got his response wrong. The tragedy was that the Jewish people had stooped to such a low spiritual level that this response was the correct and necessary one. Thus, given this sad turn of events, many people come to resent the second set of tablets and think that they cannot be as holy as the first. After all,

God wrote the first ones, but a human – Moshe – wrote the second.

There is a Midrash (Midrash Tanchuma, Tazria, 5) which I believe answers this exact grievance. The Roman governor Turnus Rufus comes to Rabbi Akiva one day, and asks him: "Whose deeds are greater – G-d's or man's?" Rabbi Akiva replies that man's deeds are greater (within the areas we can control). He explains that G-d creates the building blocks of the world (for example, wheat), but it is up to build the right thing with them (bread). In doing so, we are made holy and "purified," elevating G-d's creation with us.

This is why the second tablets are in fact holier than the first. As Rabbi Tatz also explains elsewhere, in any spiritual work, there are three stages:

1. G-d shows you the level you can achieve – a 'free gift' of inspiration.
2. G-d removes this inspiration;
3. To allow you to build up to this level and earn it yourself.

This is exactly what happened with the tablets. The first ones were made entirely by G-d with no human input. The second ones, however, were made entirely by humans.

G-d doesn't want us to exist passively in the world. Like a parent gains the ultimate satisfaction from seeing their child become even greater than them, G-d chose (for our sake) to build the world with work still to be done – so that we could, as Rabbi Sacks zt"l put it, build a "partnership with G-d in the work of creation." G-d wants us to use His tools to perfect His world and build something even greater, elevating ourselves and taking up G-d's creations with us. As the expression goes (thank you to Rabbi Lew for suggesting this): it takes two to tango.

JONATHAN IS CO-ROSH OF STANMORE SVIVA 5781.

London In: 17:33 Out: 18:40

Manchester In: 17:39 Out: 18:49

Cambridge In: 17:28 Out: 18:39

Oxford In: 17:34 Out: 18:44

Bristol In: 17:39 Out: 18:50

Birmingham In: 17:36 Out: 18:47

Leeds In: 17:33 Out: 18:46

Liverpool In: 17:39 Out: 18:52

Jerusalem In: 17:04 Out: 18:17

KI TISA 5775: THE OBJECT AND THE OBJECTIVE

RAV ARI FAUST | RAV SHALIACH 5774-5777

Moshe Rabbeinu had a long, illustrious career as the leader of Am Yisrael. He is credited with being at the forefront of many key historical events: The exodus from Egypt, giving and teaching the Torah, guiding Am Yisrael through the wilderness and preparing them for their entry into Israel are just a few examples of this. But there is one act of leadership which exemplifies Moshe's greatness, which the Torah emphasizes as his lasting legacy; it is one which at first-glance seems so negligible we would possibly have considered it more of a failure than success.

In our parasha we read about the sin of the Golden Calf. Upon bearing witness to his nation's behavior, Moshe throws the luchot – the tablets – to ground, shattering them to pieces (Shemot 32:19):

"...As soon as he came close to the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moshe's anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount."

The Torah, foreshadowing Moshe's destruction of the luchot, expresses how special they were (v. 15-16):

"...tablets that were written on both their sides... were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tablets."

This begs the question question: How could Moshe have destroyed such a prized possession? It cannot be that he acted carelessly, simply out of anger. The support for this – which makes the question even stronger – is that the Torah testifies that this decision was in fact laudable. In summarizing Moshe's life, the Torah concludes in its very last pasuk (Devarim 34:12):

"...For all the mighty hand, and all the awesome greatness, which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel."

Rashi comments that these words allude to Moshe's most significant achievements. What did Moshe perform "before the eyes of all Israel"? He decided to destroy the luchot before the eyes of the nation. In fact our sages (Shabbat 87a) teach that Hashem praised Moshe for his decision! Why is the destruction of the luchot, so creditable, and why does it become Moshe's most memorable and lasting legacy?

This week we celebrated Purim. Haman's hatred towards the Jews was triggered by Mordechai who refused to bow before him. One must wonder why was

Mordechai so adamant not to bow to Haman – nowhere is it implied that it was meant to be any more than a polite gesture and form of greeting? Also, what made Haman extrapolate that Mordechai's behavior reflected the attitude of the entire people? The Midrash (Esther Rabbah 6:2) explains that Haman wore an idol around his neck and thus Mordechai refused to bow, as by bowing to Haman one would be bowing to an idol. What is the Midrash's intention with this commentary? If Haman truly wore an idol, than bowing to him would be strictly prohibited by Jewish law; why then did all Jews not follow Modechai's example?

The answer to both of these challenges is one and the same: Haman had just received a promotion, becoming the king's chief minister (Esther 3:1). He became euphoric by his new-found stature and importance. Haman allowed this power to get-to his head; it inflated his larger-than-life ego, led him to idolize himself and

attempt to transform himself into a cultural idol. Even if bowing to Haman did not constitute a strict halachic violation, Mordechai would still have nothing to do with it. A fundamental Jewish belief is that preoccupation with ego blocks the divine light

from shining through. Each person is able to be a vessel through which Godliness is manifest in the world, and an encounter with all creations can be an encounter with The Creator. This is only if we keep perspective on context, and don't ascribe independent significance to that person or object.

This was exactly Moshe's concern: After the Golden Calf, Am Yisrael could have been lead to ascribe independent holiness to the luchot. While it would have been amazing to have an object which is "the work of God", the risk was that they would have veered us away from God was too, instead of directing us to an encounter with Him. The broken luchot were kept in the holy-of-holies in order to underline this message.

Our attitude towards life can be divided into two: Emphasizing the manifestation of Hashem in the world, or emphasizing our ego. The message we learn from Mordechai, and the last legacy taught by the Torah about Moshe, is that with the right attitude everything about us can contribute towards the manifestation of God, making our world more Godly.

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GODLY.**

A TASTE FROM THE ARCHIVES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...WHAT'S IN A NUMBER? 5772

DANIEL ROSE | SHEVET NETZACH

This week's Parasha begins with Moshe being commanded to count Bnei Yisrael. Why did the Torah use the phrase "*Ki Tisa*"? Why not use the word used in the rest of the Passuk, *'tifkod*'? Also, why is the word (pakad) used, why not use the regular word for counting, *'lispot*,' as in Sefirat Ha'omer?

In order to answer, we need to understand why Hashem wanted to count Bnei Yisrael in the first place. If He wanted to know how many of us there were, He certainly didn't need to count, so it must be that it was for our benefit.

The Avnei Ezel explains that through being counted together as a group, the individuals are raised up, and feel special, being part of something unique.

This, I think, explains the use of *'Ki Tisa*', it can be translated as 'when you raise up.' Through being counted together, Am Yisrael were raised up into the nation worthy of building the Mishkan, and being the Holy Nation.

So great, we understand the use of *'tisa*', so why not stick with it, why change to *'tifkod*'?

The answer is that *'tifkod*' implies a position, a role within a group. It's no coincidence that we BA-niks get all excited about tafkidim, which is our role, or position on camp. This also is one of the reasons given as to why each person gave half-a-shekel, not a whole one. Each person is just as important as the next. We're incomplete with even one person missing.

Moshe was told to count Am Yisrael for two reasons. One to excite them about being part of this special nation,

MOSHE WAS TOLD TO COUNT AM YISRAEL FOR TWO REASONS. ONE TO EXCITE THEM ABOUT BEING PART OF THIS SPECIAL NATION, AND TWO, TO MAKE THEM REALISE THAT EACH PERSON IN IT HAS A ROLE TO PLAY, A ROLE THAT NO ONE ELSE CAN PLAY, A GOAL THAT NO ONE ELSE CAN ACHIEVE, AND CHALLENGES THAT NO ONE ELSE HAS TO FACE.

and two, to make them realise that each person in it has a role to play, a role that no one else can play, a goal that no one else can achieve, and challenges that no one else has to face.

Avraham Avinu was told that his descendants would be like 'stars in the sky.' At a distance stars all blend together and make a beautiful night sky, but close up, each star is a sun,

an entity with tremendous power and potential, to light up entire worlds! This is the Jewish people, this is each and everyone one of us!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Applications are open for **Summer Machane 5781!** With the Government's roadmap in place we are looking forward to a fantastic Summer Machane, with some epic residential Machanot and day camps for children in Years 3-10. Spaces are filling up fast, so if you haven't yet signed up make sure you do so as soon as possible and join us for a summer experience not to be missed! Join us from **2nd-15th August** and enjoy a fantastic Bnei Akiva experience full of fun, friends and Ruach! Sign up today at bauk.org/camps or email camps@bauk.org for more information.

- Calling **Shevet Hineini** (Year 13!) Join us on **The Bet Midrash L'Manhigut Programme!** A unique leadership (Manhigut) experience to develop your learning through Shiurim and Chavrutot and leading others through Tochniot and Chaburot! **Apply now - www.bauk.org/bmp-tafkid/** For more information about the programme or other options this summer please email - Chinuch@bauk.org or Camps@bauk.org

- **Svivot are continuing!** Look out for updates and virtual events from your local sviva or **visit www.bauk.org/svivot**.

- **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Coronavirus has hit

Bnei Akiva hard, costing us over £150,000. Our Mazkirut, Bogrim and Madrichim have been working tirelessly to put on a range of fantastic programming for our youth, from Machane Aviv last Spring, to a celebration of Israel like no other on Yom Ha'atzmaut, a packed summer of programming for over 400 children, and Winter Machane. Please support our **Yad Achim Campaign**. Visit bauk.org/yad-achim for more information and to donate.

- Join **Rav Joel's Torat Rav Kook Chabura! Monday's at 8:30pm** in the BA Zoom Room for all Bogrim!

- Keep an eye out for **exciting virtual events** for all ages! **Stay Safe > Stay Inspired > Stay BA**

- **Mazal tov to Matan and Nini Milner**, our Northern Shlichim on the **birth of a baby boy!!!**

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (bneiakivauk)** to get regular updates with what is going on in the Tnuva.

- Visit bauk.org/feedback for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!



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