



## Torah Reflections on *Parashat Ki Tissa*

Exodus 30:11 – 34:35

**15 Adar, 5771    February 19, 2011**

The Torah portion *Ki Tissa*\* is filled with the dramatic story of Moses' ascension to Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. As you may recall, while on Mount Sinai, Aaron and the children of Israel build a golden calf. Both God and Moses become enraged. Moses breaks the tablets and then re-ascends the mountain to receive them again.

The portion is filled with enriching lessons and is compelling in the way it is written. One compelling aspect is the way in which God sees the mistakes of the Children of Israel, talks with Moses about them, and then comes to forgive the Children of Israel and returns Moses to them with a second set of tablets containing the Ten Commandments. That process can inform how we come to forgive ourselves and others around us.

First, God sees the mistake of building the golden calf and is angered by it. It seems that all acts of forgiveness begin with acknowledging that with which we feel angry and hurt. Second, God, Moses and the Children of Israel talk. They exchange harsh words, but stay in communication. It seems as well that even in hurt and anger, we need to stay in communication, even when it is hard. Third, God asks Moses to return to Mount Sinai and there gives him another set of the Ten Commandments. Moses returns to the Children of Israel with a face that radiates light. Acts of forgiveness can leave us feeling relieved, with their power to release us from difficult burdens and to give us a chance to move forward. Interestingly, despite their mistakes, the Children of Israel still receive the Ten Commandments, with all their expectation of relationship with God. Ultimately, any act of forgiveness contains an agreement; a covenant, which binds us together in healthier relationship. It is the memory of the mistake, and the process of reconciliation, by which forgiveness forms a framework for clearer relationship.

May we be inspired to learn from our mistakes and allow forgiveness to transform our relationships.

---

\*Ki Tissa means "when you take" and refers to the taking of the census of the Children of Israel.

© Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, Rabbi Eric Weiss



*This Torah Reflection was written by Rabbi Eric Weiss, Executive Director of the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center. The Torah Reflections series is published by the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center (a beneficiary of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties), an affiliate of the Institute on Aging. More information and healing-oriented resources can be found at [www.JewishHealingCenter.org](http://www.JewishHealingCenter.org).*



\*\*\*\*\*

The Bay Area Jewish Healing Center provides Jewish spiritual care for people coping with illness, loss and dying, regardless of affiliation or ability to pay. Our services include:

- Rabbinic care, chaplaincy, counseling and spiritual direction—at home or in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes or other care facilities
- Spiritual support groups for patients, caregivers, and the bereaved
- Healing and memorial services, and specialized rituals

Whether through prayer, study materials, or simply a listening presence, the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center is here to support you during difficult times.

\*\*\*\*\*

3330 Geary Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor West, San Francisco, CA 94118  
(415) 750-4197 [www.Jewishhealingcenter.org](http://www.Jewishhealingcenter.org)