

## *Ki Tissa*

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Shabbat Shalom!

When I first looked at my Torah portion, I had many questions. Some were easy to answer, and some took more opinion and thought. One of those deeper questions was posed by Rabbi Small, “What are your beliefs about your portion?” My answer was that I believe that G-d is a mentor, G-d teaches us moral lessons. Do you know what comes with being a teacher? Frustration. In my portion, Ki Tissa, Moses goes up to Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. While he is on the Mountain, Aaron and the future Israelites take all the women’s gold jewelry to make it into a golden calf.

When Moses retreats from the Mountain, he smashes the tablets, this is because he believes that part of the reason they wanted to leave Egypt was because they wanted freedom of religion.

Moses retreats to the top of Mount Sinai and Moses and G-d speak:

Moses explains about what the future Israelites have done, both he and G-d are upset.

G-d says that if Moses wants, he can give him a whole new people, people that are cooperative.

Moses says that he wishes to stay with these people. Although they made mistakes, mistakes are a part of learning, everyone makes mistakes.

I am very grateful that Moses chose to stay with us; we’ve turned out pretty good in my opinion.

Although my week is Ki Tissa, the portion that I am reading from is one of four special pre-Passover portions; Parshat Parah. A quick summary of that is:

If there is a ritually impure person, the only way to purify them is to find a pure red cow and sacrifice it; but the twist is that whoever cleans up the ashes of the red cow is tainted with the impurities. In other words one issue leads to another. This rule is a rule that no human being can completely understand, it’s just one of those rules where G-d overpowers.

For my Bat Mitzvah Project I am collecting books for a pediatrician’s office in St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. The program is called Reach Out and Read; it is designed to give children a book of their choice every time they visit the Doctors office. At the moment, the supply of books is extremely low, and the children coming into the office are eager to receive books again. I believe that by collecting and then donating books, I am like Moses. This is because although literacy is not directly related to my portion, without these books, the kids are like the future Israelites because the Israelites were without direction, and being able to read opens up a world

of knowledge. I do not hold as much of a powerful part as Moses, I still feel like I am a small part of the picture.

The founders of Reach out and Read, pediatricians Barry Zuckerman and Robert Needlman and early childhood educators Jean Nigro, Kathleen MacLean, and Kathleen Fitzgerald-Rice are also “Moses” in their own ways; they all had faith in what they were doing was right.

Connecting to Parshat Parah, if these children do not receive the books that they need, their opportunity to read is lowered therefore, future opportunities, like college are lowered. The shortage of books in the Pediatricians office will spark into other issue; like the cleaning of the ashes.

I would like to thank many people for helping me prepare for this day.

Thank you Rabbi Small for sparking my ideas for this D’var Torah.

Thank you Cantor Cohn for being like Moses, having faith in me even when I struggled.

Thank you Mrs. Fox for helping me edit this D’var Torah.

I would also like to thank all of my past and present Religious school teachers for teaching all the knowledge I hold on Judaism.

Lexi- Thank you for putting up with my practicing, and although we may fight, I want you to know I love you.

Mom and Dad- I love you. Thank you for molding me into the person I am today and helping me grow in Judaism.

Now as we continue the service please turn to the big red book titled Etz Hiyem page

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