

Beit Chachamin

PARSHAT KI TISA

6TH MARCH, 2026

COME & LEARN

THE BIG RECAP [PARSHA SUMMARY]

1 – God has each Israelite male give a half-shekel as a kind of census and atonement money, to support the House of Meeting. He then describes the bronze washbasin for the priests' hands and feet, the special anointing oil to consecrate the Tabernacle and its vessels, and the unique incense whose recipe must not be copied for private use. God appoints Bezalel (from Judah) and Oholiab (from Dan), and “all who are wise-hearted,” to build the Tabernacle and all its furnishings, but emphasizes that, despite all this work, the Israelites must still keep Shabbat as a sign of the eternal covenant.

2 – God gives Moses the two stone tablets, written “with the finger of God,” but down below the people panic at Moses' delay and pressure Aaron to make a visible god. Aaron fashions a golden calf; the people proclaim it their god and celebrate with offerings and revelry. God tells Moses what is happening and threatens to destroy the nation, but Moses pleads for them and reminds God of the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God relents. Moses descends, shatters the tablets when he sees the calf and dancing, rebukes Aaron, grinds the calf to dust, makes the people drink it, and then calls out, “Who is for the Lord?” The Levites respond and strike down the ringleaders. God then announces ongoing punishment for this sin, sends a plague, and tells Moses to continue leading the people, while Moses sets up a tent outside the camp where he speaks with God “face to face,” and Joshua does not leave the tent.

3 – Moses asks God to clarify who will really go with Israel on the journey and pleads that God's own Presence, not just an angel, must accompany them. He argues that God's Presence is what makes Israel distinct from all other nations, and he begs God to “make Your ways known to me” so he can truly know God and find favor. God responds that His Presence will indeed go with them and that He will give them rest.

4 – God assures Moses that He will do what Moses has asked, because Moses has found favor and God knows him by name. Moses then dares to ask, “Show me Your glory,”

4 (cont.) – And God explains that Moses may see only His “back,” not His “face,” because a human being cannot see God fully and live. God promises to pass all His goodness before Moses, proclaiming the divine Name, while protecting Moses in a cleft of the rock with His hand until He passes by.

5 – God tells Moses to carve two new stone tablets like the first ones, and to come up Mount Sinai alone in the morning; no one else, not even animals, may be on the mountain. God descends in a cloud, stands with Moses, and proclaims the divine Name and attributes—compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, forgiving yet not ignoring guilt. Moses quickly bows, and again asks God to go in the midst of this “stiff-necked people,” forgiving their sin and taking them as His own.

6 – God renews the covenant and promises to perform wonders and drive out the nations of Canaan, warning Israel not to make covenants with them nor join their idolatrous worship. Instead, they must tear down altars and sacred poles, and avoid intermarriage that would lead them to serve other gods. God reiterates core practices: no molten gods, the pilgrimage festivals (Matzot, Shavuot, and the ingathering at year's end), redemption of firstborns, Shabbat even during plowing and harvest, and bringing first fruits to God's house, plus the prohibition of boiling a kid in its mother's milk.

7 – God instructs Moses to write down these covenant words, for they define the renewed relationship. Moses remains with God forty days and forty nights, without eating or drinking, and God inscribes the words of the covenant—the Ten Declarations—on the tablets. When Moses descends, he does not realize that the skin of his face radiates light from speaking with God; the people are afraid to come near, so he calls them, relays God's commands, and then covers his face with a veil, removing it only when he goes in to speak with God again.

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In this week's Prasha we see Moses create the two tablets containing the ten commandments twice. By comparing the first and second giving of the Ten Commandments shows how God's unchanging covenantal demands are re-offered in a changed relational context after Israel's sin and repair.

the First Tablets:

EXODUS 32:15–16

**וַיִּפֹּן וַיֵּרֵד מֹשֶׁה מִן־הָהָר וּשְׁנֵי לַחֹת הָעֵדוּת בְּיָדוֹ לַחֹת כְּתוּבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבָרֵיהֶם מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתוּבִים:
וְהַלַּחֹת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים הֵמָּה וְהַמְּכֻתָּב מִכְּתָב אֱלֹקִים הוּא חֲרוּת עַל־הַלַּחֹת:**

Thereupon Moses turned and went down from the mountain bearing the two tablets of the Pact, tablets inscribed on both their surfaces: they were inscribed on the one side and on the other. The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing, incised upon the tablets.

EXODUS 32:19

וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הָעֵגֶל וּמַחֲלַת וַיַּחֲרֵאֲף מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלַח מִיָּדוֹ אֶת־הַלַּחֹת וַיִּשְׁבֵּר אֹתָם תַּחַת הָהָר:

As soon as Moses came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, he became enraged; and he hurled the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

the Second Tablets:

EXODUS 34:1

**וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פְּסֹל־לָךְ שְׁנֵי־לַחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשֵׁינִים וְכַתְּבֵנִי עַל־הַלַּחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־
הַלַּחֹת הָרֵאשֵׁינִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ:**

GOD said to Moses: "Carve two tablets of stone like the first, and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered.

EXODUS 34:6

**וַיַּעֲבֵר ה' עַל־פְּנֵי וַיִּקְרָא ה' ה' קַל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אַרְךָ אָפַיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת
נֹצֵר חֶסֶד לְאֵלִפִּים נִשְׂא עוֹן וּפֹשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְהָ לֹא יִנְקָה פֶקֶד עוֹן אָבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וְעַל־בְּנֵי בָנִים עַל־
שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל־רִבְעִים:**

The ETERNAL passed before him and proclaimed: "GOD! GOD! a Deity compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin—yet not remitting all punishment, but visiting the iniquity of parents upon children and children's children, upon the third and fourth generations."

EXODUS 34:28

**וַיְהִי־שָׁם עִם־ה' אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַל וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתָה וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלַּחֹת אֶת דְּבָרֵי
הַבְּרִית עֶשְׂרֵת הַדְּבָרִים:**

And he was there with GOD forty days and forty nights; he ate no bread and drank no water; and he wrote down on the tablets the terms of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

The two givings of the Ten Commandments teach that while God's core commandments do not change, their inscription into Israel's life change through failure, forgiveness, and a more mature covenantal partnership