

Once a little girl asked me, "Rabbi, how come all calendars are sad?". I looked at her and I said, "I didn't know that calendars were sad". She said, "Yes, they are sad because their days are numbered". It's true that all of us eventually are going to die. The tragedy is not that we die but that some of us never live. We never make the best use out of our life. It is, though, terribly tragic when a person's life is cut off even before he has begun to live. When a young person is for no reason shot, it's a terrible thing. One of the most destructive concepts today is the idea that there is no objective morality, that we are all free to do what makes us feel good. The Ten Commandments were given on stone to teach us that it's the outside that makes the impression, that puts us on the right path, not the subjective inside forces about how we feel about something.

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In the Torah portion, Ki Sissa, we learn how the Jewish people worshipped the Golden Calf when Moshe delayed from coming down from the mountain. The people are people of little faith. They cannot wait. They are very impatient. They wanted to realize their fantasies. The Torah says "and the people saw Ki Bosheish Moshe" that Moshe delayed. Bosheish in Hebrew is the same word as shame. It was a shame that Moshe was not here. It's a shame that they could not enjoy the good things of life right now. They did not want to postpone gratifying their senses. Unfortunately, in our day and age we have similar problems. People talk all the time about things feeling good. They do not want to deny themselves anything. To them morality is determined solely by how they feel about something. They do not believe anymore in objective morality. They just believe in their subjective feelings. If something feels good it must be good. This is a tragedy.

"Rabbi", someone asked me a little while ago, "you are always talking about relationships and the importance of relationships. Don't you believe that relationships can, also, be stifling, and that they can also hinder a person and harm him? Don't you think it is sometimes better that a person have no relationships than the types of relationships that we see around us so many times? After all, there is so much hate and ugliness in these relationships. We see so many people who just love to give it to their spouses or children or others. Wouldn't they be better off if they did not have these types of relationships?"

✓ In the Kedusha^h which we say at least twice a day, when we repeat the Shmoneh Esre^h, we speak about G-d's holiness. Holiness really means otherness. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." G-d is separate. He is different. He is not like us. He is unique, and we remind ourselves at least twice a day in the Kedusha^h about the fact that G-d is ✓ holy, other from us. However, Judaism is not a religion which just stresses G-d's transcendence, his otherness. We also, in the same Kedusha^h, speak about the glory of G-d emanating from His abode and how the Lord reigns forever in our lives and in the lives of all human beings. G-d is completely other, but He is, also, completely accessible. We believe that He is in each of us. That's what our soul is, the piece of G-d that is in each of us. G-d is close to us. We can talk to Him at any time and we know that He will listen. He may not do what we want, but He will do what is ultimately good for us and for all mankind. G-d is completely unique and special, yet He has a bond with each of us, a special bond. G-d does not have a body like us nor a mind like ours, but He has a close special bond with each of us which we can feel.

We, in Judaism, have never been troubled by the problem of "if G-d is omniscient, if He knows everything, how can we have free will?". We have never been bothered by that problem, as Maimonides said, because G-d's mind is different from ours. G-d exists on a different level of being, and it is possible for Him to know everything, and for us to still have free will. G-d's mind is different from ours. This can best be explained by the fact that if we are on one side of the mountain, we cannot see the other side.

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However, if we are on the top of a mountain, we can see both sides. To G-d, everything is possible, even things which are not possible for us. G-d and man intersect only in that we have a common morality. G-d expects us to live by His standards which He has given us and by which He tells us He, too, ultimately abides. That, of course, is the basic Jewish belief, that the Judge of all the world does do justice, and that ultimately His justice will be seen.

Our relationship to G-d is the paradigm for all human relationships. Each human being is unique and special. In order for a human relationship to endure, that relationship must recognize the uniqueness and specialness and otherness of each of the parties. G-d has a bond with each of us even though He is unique and special, and we, too, have bonds with each other only if we, too, recognize that each of us is unique and special. The reason many relationships fail is because the parties in these relationships fail to recognize that both parties in the relationship are unique and special. One party should not be a carbon copy, a mere mirror image of the other. Each of us ^{has} ~~have~~ our own special ways and needs and each of us must be accommodated.

In the Torah portion, Ki Sisso, we have many of these ideas spelled out. The Jewish people sin with the sin of the golden calf. They fail to recognize that G-d is unique and special. They try to make Him an object of their own fantasies. They try to make G-d a projection of their own desires. G-d was to become an object. They no longer wanted a relationship with G-d. They wanted a relationship with their fantasies. Moshe prays for the people and G-d eventually forgives them. Moshe then asks that G-d reestablish His presence with the Jewish people. It is not enough just for G-d to forgive them. Moshe wants G-d's presence to be with them, too. Negative relationships are not relationships. Anonymity or the proximity of others do not constitute relationships. An act, a presence, a loving concern, a bond is required. "If Your presence does not go with me, do not bring me up from here, for how shall I know if I have found favor in ^Your eyes, I and Your people? Is it not that when You will go with us?"

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Also this thing that you spoke
G-d says, "All right, I will show you My glory. I will ^{do} be with you." Then He tells Moshe to stand in the cleft of a rock while His glory will pass by. G-d's hand will shield ^{Moshe} him and ^{he} Moshe will only see G-d's back but not His face. This incident, the Rabbis explain, dramatically demonstrates that we cannot know G-d directly, that we can only know Him by what He does, by looking, so to speak, at His footprints in human history, and by recognizing Him in our soul. We know G-d by following His path, by doing good just as He does good, by being merciful just as He is merciful, by striving to cling to Him, by doing deeds of loving kindness.

This is really true of all relationships. It is impossible to know the essence of another human being. There is an impenetrable essence in each of us that no one can ever fathom. Every human being ultimately remains alone, but we can establish bonds and relationships with others by doing deeds of kindness, by sharing, by being concerned. We can only establish relationships with each other, though, if we learn to appreciate and to recognize each other's deeds, accomplishments, talents, feelings, etc. In order for a relationship to be successful, a relationship must respect the other party's uniqueness and specialness. It is easy to rip a person apart. It is easy to pick at another's faults. No one is perfect. In a marriage, it is easy to attack. It is easy to provoke your partner, but a marriage relationship, to last, must not violate certain parameters. It must never destroy the essence of an individual. If it does, that individual will be left nothing more than a cowering rag, and even the domineering, tyrannical partner will not be happy. He or she will quickly become bored with his or her rage.

It is our uniqueness which makes the world great. A symphony is composed of many different instruments. Each of these instruments must play with their own sound. If they do not, then the music will turn into cacophony. Of course, each piece in the orchestra must respect each other and play its part, but it must play it with its own sound and character. When every instrument of the orchestra plays in harmony, beautiful music ensues. When, however, instruments are broken or try to drown out other instruments,

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the total music is harmed and it becomes almost nonexistent.

This, too, is true in the life of nations. The Jewish people have a special relationship to G-d. This is not an exclusive relationship. G-d has relationships with all peoples. Unfortunately, the nations of the world hate the Jews because of this relationship. Whether we Jews will admit it or not, Hitler claimed that Jews' greatest crime was that they gave the world a conscience. The nations of the world do not want us to be special and unique, to have our own song, and they always seek to destroy us. That is the story of Purim. Haman could not stand to see a people with its own laws and customs even though it was not harming anyone. He wanted to destroy them. He was even willing to pay a fortune to destroy them. This is the same today. The word, Zionist, has become a dirty word. A man who is ugly and sinister in the world, and even in certain circles of this country, is called a Zionist. In the U.N., Israel is condemned as a Zionist Nazi State. The Russians claimed that the Jews in Babi Yar were killed by the Zionists and Nazis. How ludicrous! How sad!

We believe that everyone should have a bond with everyone else and that everybody should be allowed to be special and unique. ^{These are} ~~That~~ the only true kinds of relationships there are. Other relationships are false. Moshe, when he went up to receive the second set of Ten Commandments, had to hew out the two tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were written ^{by} himself. This was different than with the first Ten Commandments when G-d had hewed out the stones. The first set of the Ten Commandments were given among thunder and lightning, the second set with silence but after Moshe received the second Ten Commandments his face glowed. He had worked hard, but he had established a relationship with G-d. The first Ten Commandments were just given to him.

In order for relationships to succeed, for a face to glow, we must recognize each other's uniqueness and also work hard to make sure that the bond between us is a bond expressed in deeds of loving, caring concern. Let us hope that the world, too, will allow the Jew to be himself and will not demand that we be just like everybody else

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before they will establish bonds of friendship with us. I hope and pray that the day will come when all mankind's faces will glow from the happiness, joy, which comes from having relationships expressed in loving deeds ~~and~~ which respect every individual's and group's uniqueness.

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In this week's Torah portion we learn about the worshipping of the golden calf. What was really so bad about worshipping the golden calf? It could not be because there was an image involved, because there was even an image in the Holy of Holies, in the Temple in the cherubim who the Rabbis say were children. There were lions and eagles on the curtains of the Tabernacle. What was so bad about the golden calf? Also, the Rabbis say that the purification rites associated with the Red Heifer, or calf, or cow, in effect purified or made up for the sin of the golden calf. It seems that it was not the golden calf that was itself wrong, but the relationship of the people to it. In the Kedusha we say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. His glory fills the whole world." G-d is holy different from us. That's what the words mean but at the same time, G-d is close. We can speak to Him. We have a bond with Him, the bond of Mitzvahs. When we relate to G-d we have to realize that He is holy other than us. He is not the product of our fantasies. Each of us has a piece of G-d in us and when we relate to other human beings we must relate to them as unique creatures not as products of our fantasies. The trouble with the golden calf is that the people worshipped their fantasies. They were worshipping the product of their own imaginations. Unfortunately, this is true with our relationship with people, too. Many times we cannot have good relationships with people because we do not recognize that they are unique and special. We treat them as our fantasies. This is why so many marriages break up. Also, so many people are afraid of being unique and different. In our society there is a great deal of pressure to be the same. If you have special talents you should hide them. This is wrong. We should be proud that we are unique. This is also the same about being Jewish. It means being different and many people are afraid of being different, but they should not be because each of us is different and each of us should recognize the right of every person to be different and unique. We each have a relationship with each other based on kindness, the same type of bond that G-d has with us, the bond of Mitzvahs. The golden calf was an episode of the people failing to appreciate G-d's uniqueness and being in love with their fantasies. The Rabbis say that the Pura Aduma was an antidote to this because normally when a person became ritually unclean he could immerse himself

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in a mikvah and become clean. However, if he came into contact with human death he, himself, could not purify himself alone. True, he still had to go into a mikvah, but he also had to be sprinkled with the ashes of the Red Heifer. He could not do it himself. He needed a relationship with others. Otherwise life itself becomes overwhelming. Our fantasies end up by depressing us. They do not make life full. They, in effect, push life out. The sin of the golden calf was that the people worshipped their fantasies instead of having real relationships. That reminds me of the story of a man who tried to convince his friend to live with him. He said, "Oh, I will not feel comfortable." The man said, "No, you should feel it is your house. I want you to know it is your house." The man decided to live with him. Since he felt it was his house, the next day he sold it. This, of course, is what happens to many people. They fall in love with their fantasies and do not have any real relationship with G-d or with each other and, therefore, miss a lot in life.

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In this week's Torah portion we learn how when the people saw that Moshe delayed coming down from the mountain they made a golden calf and worshipped it, and G-d saw this and became very angry and He told Moshe Rabbeinu "Hanichole, leave Me alone and I will destroy this people and make a new people from you". Moshe then answers, "Do not do it" and he gives three reasons why He should not destroy the Jewish people. "First, You brought them out of Egypt; second, what will the Egyptians say; and, third, remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". The Rabbis learn that since G-d said, "Hanichole, leave Me alone" Moshe was able to argue with G-d. What does this mean that G-d gets angry and argues and wants us to change His mind? I thought that G-d was perfect. G-d here, of course, is just teaching us how we are supposed to behave, how we are supposed to order our relationships. G-d, by telling Moshe to leave Him alone, was actually telling him to interfere. When a spouse tells the other, "Leave me alone, I don't care what you do" you sure as heck better not do it. We have to know what people mean not just what they say. It is very important to read each other's feelings not just their words. But what kind of arguments did Moshe use against G-d? G-d knew all these arguments. Again, these were just to teach us. When Moshe said, "Remember, You took them out of Egypt" he was pointing out that they were not perfect. After all, they were just slaves. How could He expect them to act perfectly? We have to remember that we all make mistakes. In dealing with people you have to realize that people do make mistakes and you have to act accordingly. Second, when he said, "What will the Egyptians say?" he was saying, "G-d, why are You so strict on them? They are at least trying to do the right thing. The Egyptians worship idols all the time. The Egyptians do not even try." It is usually the case that we criticize harder those people who are trying. People who work for the community or are trying to raise money for the community and are working hard for good causes are always the butt of our criticism. They are at least trying. Sure, they make mistakes, but they are trying. And the third argument, "Remember the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". The Jewish people make mistakes but they have solid values they are working toward. They are not trying to do bad things. They are trying to achieve the ideals of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Many times they make mistakes, but they are trying. Unfortunately, in our human relationships we have a tendency

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to look at not what people really mean but at what they say. We also have a tendency to criticize heavily those people who are trying, those people who are working. This is wrong because it discourages people from working and it ends up in bitterness. We should all remember what G-d is telling us here when He let Moshe present these arguments to Him, that we are not all perfect but we should at least give credit to those people who try.

themselves. G-d, for His own reasons, has limited Himself. G-d has made part of the perfection of this world dependent upon man. G-d did not have to do that, but He has done it. G-d has said, "I need you and you need Me." We have a mutual relationship. The people did not want to have a relationship anymore. G-d is dependent upon man in this world to make His name known and to help Him perfect it. We are junior partners with G-d, but still partners. That's why, contrary to all expectations, the survivors of the Holocaust are, by and large, much more religious than other Jews. They do not blame the Holocaust on G-d. They blame it on man. Williamsburg is filled with survivors of the Holocaust as is Mea Sharim in Israel. Almost every synagogue in the United States, whether it is orthodox, conservative, or reform, has leaders which were touched by the Holocaust. G-d and man need each other. This is, of course, a paradigm for the marriage relationship. A man and a woman need each other. The Rabbis explain that Eve was not created from Adam's rib, although there is a story that says that the first thing that Eve did when Adam came home was to count his ribs, but, according to the Rabbis, originally man was split in two. The word "Selah" in Hebrew also means "side". Man and woman by themselves are not complete. They need each other to become complete. No one is doing anyone any favors when they get married, not like they used to say in the West where the man was doing a favor marrying the woman, or now as they say in women's lib, a woman is doing a man a favor by marrying him. A man and a woman both need each other. That's what I believe love is. Love is, of course, based on sexual attraction, but that's not enough. If it were there would be no brothels. Love is also based on emotional need. The man and the woman emotionally need each other. Based upon my many years of marriage counseling, I can say that men and women, by and large, do not have the same needs. A man needs to feel important. This does not mean that the wife always has to go, "Yes, sir." Sometimes the way a man feels important is by running around the woman doing everything she says. A woman, on the other hand, must be made to feel secure, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and even financially. No one does anyone any favors when they get married. They both need each other and if they do not go into a marriage feeling they need each other, then the marriage is in trouble. That's why,

too, in the beginning of the Sedra we learn about giving half a shekel not a whole shekel, how we learn about the laver. The Kohen did not wash himself. The Levites washed him. The Tabernacle, too, was to demonstrate the need that man and G-d have for each other. It is mutuality of need which makes a marriage work. I am reminded of the story of a woman who came to a lawyer and said she wanted a divorce. The lawyer asked her, "Do you have any grounds?" She said, "Yes, three-quarters of an acre." He then asked her, "Do you have a grudge?" She said, "No, but I have a lovely carport." He then asked her, "Does your husband beat you up?" She said, "No, I get up an hour before him every morning." He then said, "Why do you want a divorce?" She answered, "Because I cannot carry on an intelligent conversation with him." I hope that all young couples especially will be able to carry on an intelligent conversation, but, more important, that they will always realize that they need each other and that neither of them is doing the other a favor by marrying them.

Ki Sissa 1999

In the Torah portion Ki Tisa we learn how the Jewish people sinned by worshipping the golden calf. G-d gets very angry, as it were, and informs Moshe that he will destroy the Jewish people and start another people from Moshe. Moshe pleads with G-d not to do this, and he says "G-d, don't be angry at your people because you brought them out of Egypt." And as a second reason he said "Why give the Egyptians a reason to say that with an evil intent you brought them out to wipe them off the face of the Earth? Turn from your anger, and reconsider this evil you want to do to the people." In other words, it seems like Moshe Rabinu had finished his defense of the Jewish people. He gave G-d two reasons why he should forgive the Jewish people. After all, he knew who they were when he took them out of Egypt, and he didn't want to give the Egyptians a reason to believe he had brought the Jewish people out of Egypt to destroy them. He then pleaded with G-d to relent. It seems, though, that the pleas did not work. G-d was not relenting. Moshe, according to Rabbi Soloveitchik, had finished his arguments. All of a sudden, though, Moshe hit upon a third

argument. He had already made his summation, but reminded himself of a third argument. "Remember Abraham, Isaak, and Israel, your servants. As long as the Jewish people remember from whence they came, that their forebearers had a great message to teach, they will return to you. They are a good people. They lapse every once in a while, but they will come back. After G-d heard the final argument, he did relent, and he did reconsider. He no longer wished to destroy the Jewish people. As long as we still have as our heroes Abraham, Isaak, and Jacob, and we acknowledge that their message must be carried to the world, even though we sometimes lapse, we can come back and once again don our mantle as G-d's partners in creation. As long as we maintain our links with the past, we are an eternal people. But if we break those links, we are doomed. There is always hope for the Jewish people, if we want to attach ourselves to the past and claim the ^{mantle} ~~footsteps~~ of Abraham, Isaak, and Jacob.

I'm reminded of a story they tell of a mystic in Safat. A group of tourists came to see him, and asked what the weather would be like

tomorrow. He told them he couldn't tell. One of the tourists pleaded with him and said "But last year you told me!" The mystic looked at him and said "Yes, but last year my radio wasn't broken." We must all attach ourselves to our heritage. Our radios cannot be broken – we must have links to the past. Then when occasionally as a people we lapse, we will find a way back and continue to be G-d's partners in creation. May this be so, so that the Mashiach will come quickly in our day, Amen.

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The torah portion Ki Sissa is usually read after Purim. Purim we learn about Esther. We learn about her extraordinary sensitivity. She was one who could have escaped from the plight of her people because know one would have known that she was a Jew. But she was sensitive to the needs of her people. She was a person who was sensitive to her Uncle Mordecai. She was someone who was sensitive to the goings on in the court. Because she was sensitive, she was able to save the jewish people. Even before she knew the jewish people were in danger she displayed her sensitivity when she reported to the king how Mordecai had saved his life by reporting the plot of Bigson and Tavish. She was a remarkable woman who was beautiful inside and outside. What made her exceptionally beautiful was her empathy & was her sympathy and that of course is something that we all should cultivate. In the torah portion Ki Sissa, we learn about this. We learn how we are to cultivate our sensitivity. You know the difference between a minor operation and a major operation? A minor operation is something that happens to someone else. A major operation is something that happens to you. Unfortunately most people are only sensitive to there own pain. There not sensitive to the pain of others. They're not considerate, they're not empathizing, they're not sympathizing with other people in their plight. In the torah portion Ki Sissa we have two huge opening aliyahs. The Cohen aliyah is very long and the Levis aliyah is very long and all the other aliyahs are very short and they ask the question, " Why is it that the Cohen is so long and the Levi aliyah so long? And the answer the rabbis give is because the sin of the golden calf is detailed in the second aliyah and the tribe of Levi did not participate in the sin of the golden calf. So therefore the second Levi aliyah is reserved for them. So no one should be embarrassed. This showed an extreme

amount of sensitivity. We shouldn't bring up and throw in peoples faces, the fact that their ancestors sinned at the sin of the golden calf. And also too, we know that the Cohen sinned. Arron was the first Cohen and therefore he thought proper also the sin of the golden calf recounted to his portion. And in his portion what we start in the very beginning we learn about how all the Jewish people had to be counted from twenty to sixty, those who were serving in the army and we know that those people who were counted had to also bring a kofer. In other words, they were counted by counting the shekels that they gave and the reason for that was that this shekel was an atonement for them and the rabbis always ask the question, " Why was this shekel an atonement for them?" Why did there have to be any atonement at all? And the answer they tell us is the men had to go into the army and they had to kill somebody because that's what you do in an army, you kill people, although this was in order to save the Jewish people. Yet we Jewish people never glorify killing and they required an atonement for their souls because it showed a great deal of sensitivity. Even though they were killing enemies in an army it does something to you, it changes you, it doesn't allow you to be as sympathetic and empathetic as you should be and also the very fact that we have to kill people. Maybe our enemies were misled by their leader. We don't want to kill anybody. That's of course what Yaakov said when he met Asaf, he said I am afraid that he might kill me but, I'm more afraid that I will have to kill him. And Golda Meir later paraphrased it saying, I can forgive the Arabs for killing our children but I can't forgive the Arabs for causing us to kill their children. Because it deadens a person's soul and the most important thing is that we learn how to be sympathetic and the same thing we learn later on is also in this first section. We learn about the alter and we learn that how before the alter there was a basin, a copper basin where the people that had to walk had to wash themselves. It is

interesting to know that this basin was between the alter and the tent of meeting. It should have been before the alter but, the rabbis tell us that many times we sacrifice for things and then we have to take into accounting if we really sacrificed the right thing. Before we go in to the tent of meeting, the All Holy, we have to examine what we are doing ever once and awhile. Unless we examine what we doing once in awhile we are going to end up in a lot of trouble. Today is Parshas Purim and there's something very unique about Parshas Purim. What is Parshas Purim? It's when the Jewish people had to take a red heifer and they sacrificed it and then they burnt it. The ashes of the red heifer was combined with a few other ingredients and they were sprinkled on the person that came in contact with the dead on the third and seventh day. We all know that when a person come in contact the dead they become depressed and you have to serve G-d with joy. You have to somehow break out of this depression and this ceremony helps people to break out of their depression and we know that it is essential that a person be optimistic and filled with enthusiasm in order to serve G-d and to allow themselves it be part with G-d in perfecting this world. There was something very strange about this red heifer because although it had the capacity to make other people ritually clean, those who came in contact with the dead and everybody who had a hand in preparing this red heifer, who gathered the ashes, who bring the ashes, these people became themselves ritually unclean because they became insensitive. People usually, when they are in a certain type of situation they become insensitive. Funeral directors soon become insensitive to the suffering and greef of the people with whom they deal and they even seem to no longer seem to treat the dead bodies with the dignity that they should. They have to constantly have to fight to do it. Many times doctors who do operations as if they are on an assembly line become callus and so many times the spiritual leaders and psyciatrist and

people who hear other people's problems, they don't empathize and sympathize the way that they really should and that of course is one of the great points of Judaism that we have to maintain our ability to empathize & sympathize with people, we always have to have rachmones, have to be able to feel for people and feel with people.

Also we learn in this portion of the Kohen and the Ki Sissa. We learn how they were to mix spices that they would use to anoint the different utensils and the tabernacle appurtenances of the tabernacle. But, one of the spices was a chavonah. Chavonah is a foul smelling spice and the rabbis always ask the question why would they use this foul smelling spice? To teach us that we have to include all Jew, even those Jews that may have not lived up to all our expectations; that we have to empathize with them and sympathize with them and try to bring them back into Judaism. In fact they say that a fast day and prayers that do not include sinners, is not a fast day and no prayers. Even on Yom Kippur we go out of our way to invite the sinners in with us, to pray with us because we realize that there are problems. We do not justify what they have done if they have done some real moral offense but we hope we can change them. We want them to be a part of us. We want to sympathize with them and empathize with them and make them into decent and upright and good people. And we see also too that Betsala, that Uley who was commanded to build the tabernacle had to have chacomlayd not just skill, had to have chochom had to have chacomlayd, had to have empathy and sympathy. We all know too that when we are involved in construction projects, if you empathize and sympathize with your workers and they like you you'll meet all your schedules but, if they think that you are a terrible boss they will procrastinate and they won't work well, you'll never meet your schedule. Because you realize that you are working with people and when you work with people you have to empathize and sympathize with them.

You can't just castigate them and treat them like dirt. They're human beings with real problems and sometimes these problems are terrible problems. They have problems with health, they have problems at home with their families, they have different kinds of learning disability problems and we have to help them and be with them and we all know that many times people do not have this empathy, and they do not have this sympathy. That is one of the complaints that people have today about the medical profession. We no longer have family practitioners, and a lot of family practitioners. People treat you like siffers. We are a very fortunate congregation that we have such caring and loving and concerned doctors. And even at the end of the Torah portion we learned how Moshe came down with the second tablets and his face was glowing and he put a mask on his face because he didn't want to embarrass people and turn them away and make them seem insignificant in his presence because he was glowing so much and he seemed so much superior to them. He wasn't superior to them, he knew he was a human being too. He wanted them to feel close to him. He wanted to empathize with them and he wanted them to be able to talk to him. This is very, very important and hopefully we will all learn this lesson. That we must empathize and sympathize with people.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a man who had a heart condition and his wife opened a letter which said her husband won \$10 million in the lottery. She did not know what to do. She was afraid that if she told him, he would have a heart attack, so she decided to call his doctor. His doctor said, "Bring him to me and I will tell him about winning the lottery as I am giving him an examination, and since he is right with me, I'll be able to take care of him." She thought this was a wonderful idea, so she brought him to the doctor and the doctor examined him and said, "Mr. Goldberg, what if I should tell you that you won

\$10 million in the lottery?" The man said, "Doctor, if you should tell me I won \$10 million in the lottery, I would give you half of it," at which point the doctor had a heart attack. We all have to remember that we have to be empathetic and sympathetic. That is one of the prime commandments of our religion. Let us hope and pray that all of us will be empathetic and sympathetic so the Mashiach will come quickly in our day. Amen.

(Oct 10)

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Jeff B

Joseph Radinsky

From: "Rabbi Nisson Shulman" <sermons@rabbis.org>
To: <members@rabbis.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2003 12:28 PM
Subject: [RCA Members] Sermons

Rabbinical Council of America,
305 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY, 10001
Tel. 212 807-7888; Fax. 212 727-8452
e-mail rabbis@rabbis.org

From Rabbi Dr. Nisson E. Shulman
To: Members of the RCA
Ki Tisa, Vayakhel, Pekudey
Adar 5763 (WORD)Re: SIVAN 5761 (WORD) Drasha Material
February 17, 2003, 15 Adar I, 5763

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 Rabbi Myron Rakowitz

Dear Chaverim, I was delighted to hear that Rabbi Bertram Leff will assume the position of Executive Director of the RCA during this interim period in the history of our organization. I join all of you in wishing Rabbi Leff great success during this period of time that he will be leading our organization.

KI TISA: SHIUR HARAV JOSEPH B. SOLOVEITCHIK ZT"L

(Shiur date: 2/26/57 from the shiurim of the Rav ZT"L on Masechet Brachos)

The Torah tells us that Moshe prayed three separate times during the episode of the golden calf and its aftermath. The first prayer was Vayechal Moshe, the prayer that Moshe offered immediately upon being informed by Hashem that Bnay Yisrael sinned in the gravest manner, by creating an idol. The Torah records Moshe's remarkably short prayer, after which the Torah tells us that Hashem, Kivayachol, consoled Himself (Vayinachem Hashem) and Moshe descended the mountain with the Luchos. After breaking the Luchos, he again ascends the mountain on the eighteenth of Tammuz in an effort to win forgiveness for the people (Uly Achaparah Panav) and spent another forty days praying on their behalf. The Torah tells the story of the golden calf in Ki Tisa and in Eikev (Sefer Devarim). Complementary details of the story are presented in the two Parshios. For example, the Torah does not record the length of his stay in Parshas Ki Tisa, but it is mentioned in Parshas Eikev. The Torah uses different terms to describe the events in the two Parshios. For instance, the prayer of Vayechal is not mentioned in Eikev. However in Eikev Moshe states that the second prayer lasted forty days and nights through which Moshe fasted. In Eikev, Moshe says that he was fearful of the anger of Hashem. Moshe concludes the story of the second prayer with the statement that Hashem listened to Moshe again that time (Vayishma Hashem Alay Gam Bapaam Hahee). The complete story is stitched together through both Parshios.

In Parshas Eikev Moshe tells of the second prayer that he offered. This prayer appears very similar to Vayechal, yet it has certain important differences. In Eikev the word Nachalascha (Your portion) is used and the words Yad Chazakah are added. This prayer also lasted for forty days. The Torah only records the essence of the prayer, those key points that Moshe made in defense of the people, and omits the details of the prayer.

Parshas Eikev records a third prayer of forty days by Moshe that culminated with the 13 Midos (attributes) of Hashem and the receipt of the second set

