

## HE WILL LEND YOU A MILLION DOLLARS FOR 70 YEARS!!

### PARSHAS KI SISA

*"For the last ten years of his life, Rabbi Shimon Schwab zt"l, was confined to a wheelchair, unable to walk. His grandson asked him why he always smiled and never complained about his circumstance. Rabbi Schwab replied, 'Imagine that a wealthy man lent you a million dollars and let you keep it to use as you wished for seventy years! After the seventy years, he told you that he wanted one hundred or one thousand dollars back. Would you be angry with him? He gave you the opportunity to use a special gift for so long, he is entitled to take any part of it back whenever he wants. My feet were a gift from Hashem. He has the right to take them back.'* (Reflections of the Maggid by Rabbi Paysach Krohn)

After speaking with Moshe on Har Sinai, Hashem presented him with the two *Luchos* which were "inscribed by the finger of Hashem". Before Moshe descended the mountain to return to the Jewish People, a terrible situation occurred. Through imagery, the Satan had convinced the Jews that Moshe had died. Events moved quickly and culminated with the construction of the Golden Calf. Less than 3,000 of the 600,000 males (from ages 20-26) sinned. The sinners were mainly from the mixed multitude of nations who had joined the Jews leaving Egypt, and not from the Jews themselves. Yet, since the creation and the subsequent serving of this idol were done publicly, and no one protested, all the Jews were considered culpable. At this point, the Torah continues with the narrative of Moshe descending Har Sinai, carrying the *Luchos*. The Torah describes the *Luchos* in detail (Shmos 32:15-16). The *Luchos* were inscribed on both sides. **Rashi** explains that the words could be seen the same way whether one saw them from the front or from the back. The **Ohr HaChaim** explains that Hashem Himself had inscribed the Tablets so that the writing could be read from either

*"When Hashem finished speaking to Moshe on Mount Sinai, Hashem gave Moshe the two Luchos of stone, inscribed by the finger of Hashem."  
(Shmos 31:18)*

side, something which would have been impossible if they had been inscribed by human hands. Such writing would appear on the reverse side as if it had been written backwards had it been inscribed on one side by a human scribe. The **Talmud** (Megillah 2B- 3A) says that the final letters **ו** and **ד** appeared with their respective centers suspended in the air miraculously. The **Chizkuni** says that the raw material that the Tablets consisted of was of Divine manufacture."

The **Ramban** and many other commentaries are bothered by a question. Why was the specific description of the *Luchos* mentioned at this point and not earlier when Hashem had first presented the *Luchos* to Moshe?

The **Ramban** answers, it teaches us that despite the greatness of the *Luchos* and despite how extraordinary they were, Moshe did not hesitate to break them when he saw that the Jews were sinning. The **Tur Ha'aruch** (by Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, also known as Ba'al haTurim) adds that despite the fact

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

that the *Luchos* were Hashem's personal handiwork, that did not stop Moshe from smashing them.

**Rabbeinu Bachaya** asks, how was Moshe permitted to break the *Luchos*? He should have returned them to Hashem or asked Hashem what to do with them. The **Avos D'rav Nosson** says that Hashem told Moshe to break them. **Rabbeinyu Bachaya** answers, when Moshe came in sight of the Golden Calf, the letters on the *Luchos* flew away. At that point, Moshe realized that the *Luchos* no longer retained holiness and that he was permitted to break them.

Returning to our initial question of why the description of the *Luchos* was mentioned at this later point in time, the **Ba'alei Bris Avraham** (by Rabbi Avraham Azulay, a student of Rabbi Chaim Vital) gives a beautiful answer. He says that it is to teach us a very important lesson. Human nature is that we don't appreciate the value of something that we receive without hard work and without paying for it. Once it is gone, THEN we appreciate it. Only when the *Luchos* were broken, that's when their full value was recognized. Then, at that point, the Jews recognized the magnitude of losing such a gift made by Hashem's own hands.

**This is a very important lesson for life. We often do not fully appreciate what we have until we lose it.**

**Often, we don't fully appreciate our loving and supportive parents until they have passed on.**

**Do we fully appreciate a good friend before he moves to a different state?**

**Often, we don't realize to appreciate Hashem's gift of health until it is taken away from us.**

**We must stop, think, and appreciate the loving gifts that Hashem bestows upon us,  
as well as the loving people He puts in our lives.**

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*Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.*

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