

Parshas Ki Sisa

This week's parsha is Ki Sisa, which covers the various donations to the Mishkan and the sin of the golden calf.

The parsha begins with the giving of the half shekel for the census but is a redemption, as Rashi points out, because counting people give an evil eye, so a substitute method of collecting data is that everyone must give an equal-sized coin, the number of coins in the coffers, equals the number of people between the census age, which was military age. The count that is taking place is because it is connected to the fact that many Jews died after the sin of the golden calf, and the Torah shows us that we are still regarded in our number and cared for by Hashem, even if, at times, we fail.

After the half-shekel census gathering, the Mitzvos began with "Vayidaber Hashem El Moshe Leimor," Hashem spoke to Moshe. A simple reason for this is a reminder that all the Mitzvos come from Hashem and that we cannot self-interpret outside of the principles of learning from the Torah and create our own interpretation of the Torah. For example, when you build the washbasin, there is no alternative to what is to be built outside of how Hashem designed it and instructed the Jews to make it, similarly with the spices, and who is called to build the Mishkan (Betzael). It is all Hashem and His world, and it is a matter of fact, and not up for any argument, these mandates must be followed in accordance with Halacha. This may be because of the conclusion of the parsha; the Jews veered off the

righteous path and quickly committed idolatry based on what seemed like logic. Moshe was "late" and not coming back, it seemed genuine, and showed just how quickly a society and group can fly off the path if what seems like truth is presented.

Moreso, we are reminded of the Mitzvah of Shabbos because Shabbos is the crucial mitzvah that anyone who observes commits to the fact that they unequivocally believe that Hashem is the Master of the Universe, and by doing that, there is a stronger likelihood of remaining on the true and righteous path. If all else fails, try keeping Shabbos; even acknowledging the day itself is a level of believing that Hashem is the Master of the Universe.

Finally, one last point, Hashem empowered us with the detail of drawing the spirituality out of the physical items of this world. Even more, the tools of this world need to be used to perform the Mitzvos. By the Torah providing the many details, of all the physical dimensions and characteristics, and beginning each section by repeating that Hashem commanded us to do this, we confirm that this world is ours to use for the better, for spirituality, for Hashem.

On that note, may we draw on the physical world to serve Hashem better and expose the spirituality by preforming our Mitzvos and learning Torah, and in this way, we stay the righteous path. Good Shabbos.