

# **Dvar Torah** by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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## **KI TISA**

Moshe's presence on Mt. Sinai allowed the Israelites the most direct transmission of G-d's teachings and guidance. The Mt. Sinai experience was a time of unparalleled holiness, far removed from the rhythms of everyday life. The creation of a golden calf by the people stood in contrast to their exalted leader's rise in holiness while on Mt. Sinai. At that very moment that the Luchot were given to Moshe, his people were preparing to commit idolatry. This chasm between Moshe and the Israelites that had grown during the forty days and forty nights of separation, can be blamed for the creation of the golden calf. The lone spiritual advancements of Moshe while his people were left behind, stagnating, does begin to explain how such a tragedy could unfold. As compared to two friends attempting mountain climbing, one takes the lead of moving slowly and carefully, blazing a path up the side while leaving behind the ropes and stirrup ladder for the next guy to climb up easier. This parable is quite apt since Moshe's spiritual ascent was clearly meant to be followed by that of his

people. However, the distance from his people can be very dangerous as well. When setting out to return to the troubled encampment, the epicenter of the golden calf sin, Moshe is told: LEICH REID... "Go forth, descend..." Why the need of the obvious redundancy - "go forth" would have sufficed without the additional "descend". Rashi tells us that the word "descend" was a command to Moshe to diminish his "own" level of personal greatness. Moshe, humbly assumed the posture of a leader whose discouraged and alienated people require his time and attention in their basic challenges and struggles in faith. "Descend from your own lofty heights of perfection in order to deal with the corruption that besets your people. The personal pronoun is stressed "your nation", is meant to remind Moshe of his true duty, to remain firmly attached to the people in his charge, always. He must turn back, pick up the pieces and restore their unswerving loyalty to G-d's Torah.

The Meshech Chochma adds that this was a call to Moshe to descend and embark on introspection and self-examination which would enable Moshe to identify fully with the sinful Israelites and to understand the nature of their sin to begin rehabilitating the nation. We, as parents and grandparents assume leadership positions in our families. It is

important to stay vigilant and be attuned to the kinds of spiritual challenges that our children and grandchildren face. By showing our interest in their concerns, we are there for them if they need us, to give guidance as true leaders. We pray for the safety of all, especially our soldiers and allies on the front lines.

