

Candle Lighting

5:54

S”Z Kriat Shema

9:45

Sunset

6:13

Motzei
Shabbat

6:49



Parshat HaShavuah

כי תשא

KI TISA

ט"ו אדר-א תשע"ד

FEBRUARY 15,
2013

A PUBLICATION OF



Ashreiinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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Sponsored in memory of Lana (Leah) D. Goldberg

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE
RABBI CHAIM LANNER

In Shmot 31:18, the Torah records that when Hashem finished speaking with Moshe on Har Sinai, He gave him the *luchot* to bring down and reveal to the Jewish people.

Oddly enough, there is no description whatsoever of the *luchot*. The Torah includes no detail of their appearance, no depiction of their heavenly creation. In fact, immediately after telling us that Moshe receives the *luchot* from Hashem, the pesukim simply move right on to the next story.

Interestingly enough, just moments before Moshe ends up shattering the *luchot* upon seeing the terrible sight of the Golden Calf that the Jews have erected, the Torah interrupts itself and interjects with what we've been waiting for this whole time – a magnificent description of these supernatural *luchot*.

Not only do these *luchot* contain the written word of God, but these *luchot* were miraculously inscribed on both sides of the stone. The tablets were the handiwork of God and the letters were the script of God. This was certainly a most precious and special gift. And then, just two pesukim later, Moshe is forced into smashing this wonderful gift into dust. Why does the Torah wait until moments before their destruction to describe how special and unique the *luchot* really are?

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WHAT IS THE REASON? ANDREW BRONNER ('15)

This week's parsha, Parshat Ki Tisa, includes the prohibition of cooking milk and meat together: "Do not cook a kid in its mother's milk" (Shmot 34:26). What is the reason behind this seemingly reasonable law? What's the issue with cooking milk and meat together?

There are many opinions as to why we can't cook milk and meat together. The Rambam explains that the reason for this mitzvah is to distance ourselves from a practice that was originally used for *avodah zara*. Others suggest that the reason behind this mitzvah is that it is inhumane to cook an animal in the milk of its mother.

Some suggest that the reason we do not cook the two together is for health reasons. Some state that the reason behind this mitzvah is that we do not want to mix two things that represent opposing traits of Hashem. Ultimately, the reason for this mitzvah is beyond our comprehension and has not been discovered by us.

For centuries, Rabbis have struggled with explaining the fundamental purpose of this prohibition, but we must accept that Hashem has His reason for this even though we might not understand it at this moment. This concept applies to every mitzvah. We never truly know why we do certain deeds, but that is what ultimately strengthens our belief in Judaism.

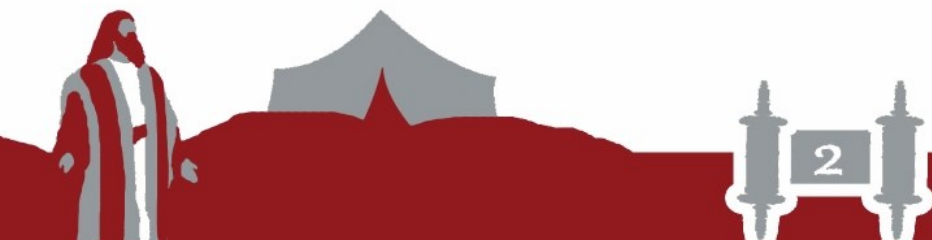
BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY JOSH GILINSKI ('15)


Parshat Ki Tisa teaches us about the prohibition of cooking meat and milk together.

Many of us think that all the laws regarding not mixing milk and meat are directly written in the Torah. However, some were actually instituted afterwards as Rabbinic laws. The Rabbis inferred from our Torah law several of the other prohibitions relating to eating milk and meat together.

One example is the rule of waiting a certain number of hours between eating meat and eating milk. Why do we have to wait for an extended period of time between meat and milk, and why can't we eat meat and milk together?

Continued page 3





Gilinski continued

The Rabbis instituted the rule of waiting because they realized that our digestive systems take hours to work; without a set amount of time to wait between eating meat and then eating milk, we might mess up and end up eating them together. The Rabbis instituted these laws as a barrier to protect us from our own flaws, while at the same time protecting the laws of the Torah. Had the Rabbis not made this law, we could be constantly falling into the trap of eating or cooking meat and milk together. We would not necessarily even realize that there is a problem with what we are doing.

Although sometimes on the surface a rule appears to be unfair or difficult to understand, looking at it carefully often reveals that the rule was there for our benefit all along.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

EZRA SPLAYER ('15)

In this week's parsha, Parshat Ki Tisa, we learn about the sin of the Golden Calf. This is when the Jews say to Aharon, "Build for us a God" (32:1) because they feel that Moshe has been on Har Sinai for too long. In reality, they simply miscalculate.

One question comes to mind: if Moshe is with Hashem, shouldn't he have known about the Golden Calf and not have been so surprised when "*he saw the calf and the dances*" (Shmot 32: 19)? If so, why doesn't Moshe just come down without the *luchot* instead of smashing them afterwards?

The Sforno suggests that of course Moshe knows that the Jews build the Golden Calf, but he is unaware of the extent of their worship. He also thinks that when the Jews see him with the *luchot*, they will immediately do teshuva.

However, once Moshe realizes that the people are dancing with such joy and worshipping the Golden Calf, he comes to the conclusion that they are not ready to repent. Only after that realization does he decide to break the *luchot*. Clearly, Moshe does not know that Bnei Yisrael's actions are as bad as they actually are until he sees it with his own eyes.

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Splaver continued

From here we see the importance of not forming judgments until we've seen or experienced something firsthand. We always gain greater understanding of a situation when we experience and see it for ourselves, instead of just hearing about it from others.

Rabbi Lanner continued

If nothing else, the Torah is giving us an important insight into human psychology. All too often we take many of the things in our lives for granted. We come to expect them, and we don't take the time out to appreciate them until it is too late. This includes things like our health, our friends, our families, our homes, and the very food we eat. Unfortunately, we often tend to pay attention and notice the things we have only when we are worried that the possibility of losing them is imminent.

I was reminded this past week that my annual subscription to "The Week" is almost expired. I received a renewal offer in the mail from "The Week," which gave me multiple options for a new subscription, but what caught my eye were the big letters running across the outside of the envelope – "You never know what you have until it's gone..."

How correct they are! Only moments before these magnificent and special *luchot* were going to be smashed did the Jews actually see and appreciate them for what they were, but by then it was too late.

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