



# NHS Sedra Sheet

Ki Siso – Edward Glyn (*reprinted*)

כ' אדר תשע"ז – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2017 – שבת פרשת כי תשא

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Ki Tisa is certainly a parsha of dichotomy, parallels or pairs of holistic concepts that can only exist in intended harmony due to their constituent parts. This concept of addition or adding one thing to another to obtain something else starts right at the beginning of Ki Tisa when we read that the Bnei Yisrael are counted by each person giving half a shekel. Straight away this gives rise to the theory that only through “halves” can the eventuality of a “whole” occur. Thus we are humbled by the understanding that only through the unity of all our half shekels of tzedakah can we become a true community of Jews truly establishing ourselves as a whole nation. Only through all our contributions can we build a place in which Hashem will dwell.

We learn also from Rashi that the half shekel illustrated by Hashem to Moshe was “a coin of fire”, a parallel between the earthly, gravity-constrained metal of a coin, representing our most basic human instincts and fire, a seemingly unstructured, unbound element that strives, as our inner spirituality does, to lift itself forever upwards until finally it leaves the element that maintains it and disappears skyward back to its original source.

This theory of exact pairing or binary division manifests itself throughout Ki Tisa. Shabbat versus the rest of the week, the Shmitta year versus the other years, the precise mixing of the incense ingredients... etc. We see too that the Children of Israel were too arrogant after acknowledging their own spiritual heights at the revelation at Sinai and Hashem’s miracles of the Exodus out of Egypt to merit the receiving of the Torah and so only by the humbling experience of having the first set of tablets destroyed, due to the mistaken duality of worship of Hashem and a man-made idol, do they enact the mitzvah of Teshuvah thus warranting that they receive not only the 10 commandments again, but also Halacha, Midrash, and Aggdot. It was through this sinning and subsequent Teshuvah that we also received the 13 Attributes of Mercy – a valuable lesson to all of us in our less forgiving moments with others.

The tablets themselves are hugely symbiotic: The first are wholly constructed by Hashem, the second are carved by Moshe. This teaches us that only through calescence of the human and the divine can the Shechina exist on earth – a theory mirrored by the fact that we see that the 10 commandments were given on 2 tablets, one half dedicated to laws between Hashem and man and the other half dedicated to laws between man and man. The tablets themselves as we learn in Bava Batra (14a) were actually equal in length and width (6 Tefachim by 6 Tefachim) each forming a perfect square, again illustrating their equality or symmetry. It is interesting to note though, that possibly due to censorship in Roman times, how many of our modern synagogues depict the tablets as being rectangular in shape with semi-circular heads...

The end of Ki Tisa mentions the commandment that has led to us not mixing milk and meat. This perhaps gives us an insight into another illustration of binary division or powerful pairing of ideas. Milk, the nourishment with which a mother maintains and enriches her children can surely be regarded as the ultimate symbol of life. In contrast, meat, an inert, bloodless carcass can in turn be used as a metaphor for the ultimate symbol of death. We are taught that they must not be mixed at any cost, perhaps a lesson to ourselves and other religions (especially during these troubled times of terrorism and suicide bombs) that just as the co-existence of milk and meat is impossible, so to life and the love of God can never be reached through acts of death and self-destruction.

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