

Fill Your Own Cup Year Two - Omer Series – Moshe's Leadership **Session V: The Second Tablets, Moshe's Death**

1) Dr. Sue Johnson, “Love Sense: The Revolutionary New Science of Romantic Relationships” (2013)

Loving is a process that constantly moves from harmony to disharmony, from mutual attunement and responsiveness to misattunement and disconnection—and back again... **It's important to emphasize that misattunement is not a sign of lack of love or commitment.** It is inevitable and normal; in fact, it is startlingly common. Ed Tronick of Harvard Medical School, who has spent years absorbed in monitoring the interactions between mother and child, finds that even happily bonded mothers and infants miss each other's signals **fully 70 percent of the time.** Adults miss their partner's cues most of the time, too! We all send unclear signals and misread cues. We become distracted, we suddenly shift our level of emotional intensity and leave our partner behind, or we simply overload each other with too many signals and messages... We are sorely mistaken if we believe that love is about always being in tune.

What matters is if we can repair tiny moments of misattunement and come back into harmony. **Bonding is an eternal process of renewal.** Relationship stability depends not on healing huge rifts but on mending the constant small tears.

2) Exodus 32:1-19

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who shall go before us, for that fellow Moses—the man who brought us from the land of Egypt—we do not know what has happened to him.”

Aaron said to them, “[You men,] take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.”

And all the people took off the gold rings that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron.

This he took from them and cast in a mold, and made it into a molten calf.

And they exclaimed, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!”

When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron announced: “Tomorrow shall be a festival of God!”

Early next day, the people offered up burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; they sat down to eat and drink, and then rose to dance.

God spoke to Moses, “Hurry down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have acted basely.

They have been quick to turn aside from the way that I enjoined upon them. They have made themselves a molten calf and bowed low to it and sacrificed to it, saying: ‘This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!’”

God further said to Moses, “I see that this is a stiffnecked people.

Now, let Me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation.”

But Moses implored his God, saying, “Let not Your anger, God, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand.

Let not the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.’ Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people.

וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי־בִשָּׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לֵרְדֹת מִן־הָהָר
וַיִּקְהֵל הָעָם עַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם
עֲשֵׂה־לָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ כִּי־יָהּ
מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלְבֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא
יָדָעֵנוּ מִה־הָיָה לוֹ:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַהֲרֹן פָּרְקוּ נִזְמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר
בְּאָזְנֵי נְשֵׁיכֶם בְּנִיכֶם וּבְנִתֵיכֶם וְהָבִיאוּ אֵלָי:
וַיִּתְּפְרוּ קֹל־הָעָם אֶת־נִזְמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר
בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אַהֲרֹן:

וַיִּקַּח מִזֶּלֶם נִיזָר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרֹט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל
מִסִּכָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר
הָעֵלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

וַיֵּרָא אַהֲרֹן נִכְסוּ מִזְבֵּחַ לִפְנֵי וַיִּקְרָא אַהֲרֹן
וַיֹּאמֶר תָּג לַיהוָה מִחָר:

וַיִּשְׁלִימוּ מִמִּחְרָת וַיַּעֲלֵוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׁוּ שְׁלָמִים
וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וּשְׂתוֹ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק: {פ}
וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵּדֹרֹךְ בִּי שַׁחַת עַמִּי
אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

סְרוּ מִהֵר מִן־הַדֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתֶם עֲשׂוּ לָהֶם
עֵגֶל מִסִּכָּה וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ־לוֹ וַיִּזְבְּחוּ־לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ
אֵלָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה רְאִיתִי אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה
וְהִגַּה עִם־קִשְׁוֹ עֲרֹף הוּא:

וְעַתָּה הִנֵּיתִיָּה לִי וְחִסַּר־אִפִּי בָהֶם וְאֶכְלָם
וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אוֹתָהּ לְגוֹי גְדוֹל:

וַיִּתֵּל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־פָּנָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה
יְהוָה יִתְרָה אֶפְדָּה בְּעַמִּי אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם בְּכֶסֶם גְּדוֹל וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה:

לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר בְּרָעָה הוֹצֵאתָם
לְהָרֵג אֹתָם בְּהָרִים וּלְכַלֵּתָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי
הָאֲדָמָה שׁוֹב מִחֲרוֹן אַפָּה וְהַנִּתָּם עַל־הָרָעָה
לַעֲמֹד:

Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, how You swore to them by Your Self and said to them: I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your offspring this whole land of which I spoke, to possess forever.”
And God renounced the punishment planned for God’s people.
Thereupon Moses turned and went down from the mountain bearing the two tablets of the Pact, tablets inscribed on both their surfaces: they were inscribed on the one side and on the other.
The tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing, incised upon the tablets.
When Joshua heard the sound of the people in its boisterousness, he said to Moses, “There is a cry of war in the camp.”
But he answered,
“It is not the sound of the tune of triumph,
Or the sound of the tune of defeat;
It is the sound of song that I hear!”
As soon as Moses came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, he became enraged; and he hurled the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

זָכַר לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיִּשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לָהֶם בְּךָ וּבְדָבָר אֱלֹהִים אַרְבָּה אֶת-
זַרְעָכֶם כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת
אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֲמֹן לְזַרְעָכֶם וְנָחֳלוּ לָעַלְמָּה:
וַיִּנָּחֶם יְהוָה עַל-הַתְּרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת
לָעָמוֹ: {פ}
וַיִּפֹּן מִיָּרֵד מֹשֶׁה מִן-הָהָר וַיִּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הַעֲדֻת
בְּיָדוֹ לַחַת כְּתוּבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבָרֵיהֶם מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה
הֵם כְּתוּבִים:
וְהַלַּחַת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים הַמָּה וְהַמְּכָתֵב מִכְּתָב
אֱלֹהִים הוּא חֲרוּת עַל-הַלָּחַת:
וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת-קוֹל הָעָם בִּרְעָה וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶל-מֹשֶׁה קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בְּמִחְנֶה:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵין קוֹל עֲנֹת גְּבוּרָה וְאֵין קוֹל עֲנֹת
חִלּוּשָׁה קוֹל עֲזוֹת אֲנָכִי שָׁמַע:
וַיְהִי כֹאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל-הַמִּחְנֶה נִרְאָה אֶת-הָעֶגְלָה
וּמִחְלַת הַיִּסְרָאֵף מֹשֶׁה נִישְׁלַח מִיָּדוֹ אֶת-
הַלַּחַת וַיִּשְׁבֶּר אֹתָם תַּחַת הָהָר:

3) Deuteronomy 10:1-5

Thereupon God said to me, “Carve out two tablets of stone like the first and come up to Me on the mountain; and make an ark of wood.
I will inscribe on the tablets the commandments that were on the first tablets that you smashed, and you shall deposit them in the ark.”
I made an ark of acacia wood and carved out two tablets of stone like the first; I took the two tablets with me and went up the mountain.
After inscribing on the tablets the same text as on the first—the Ten Commandments that God addressed to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the Assembly— God gave them to me.
Then I left and went down from the mountain, and I deposited the tablets in the ark that I had made, where they still are, as God had commanded me.

דברים יא – ה

בָּעֵת הַהִוא אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלֵי פֶסֶל-לִי שְׁנֵי-לוּחֹת
אֲבָנִים כְּרָאשֻׁנִים וְעֵלָה אֵלַי הַהָרָה וְעָשִׂיתִי לָךְ
אֲרוֹן עֵץ:
וְאֶכְתֹּב עַל-הַלָּחַת אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל-
הַלָּחַת הָרָאשֻׁנִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ וְשָׂמְתָם בְּאֲרוֹן:
וְאָעֵשׂ אֲרוֹן עֵצִי שְׁטִים וְאֶפְסָל שְׁנֵי-לוּחֹת אֲבָנִים
כְּרָאשֻׁנִים וְאָעַל הַהָרָה וְשָׁנִי הַלָּחַת בְּיָדִי:
וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל-הַלָּחַת כְּכָתֹב הָרָאשֻׁן אֶת עֲשֹׂרַת
הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלֵיכֶם בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ
בְּיוֹם הַקֹּהֵל וַיִּתֶּנֶם יְהוָה אֵלַי:
וְאָפֹן וְאָרַל מִן-הָהָר וְאָשַׁם אֶת-הַלָּחַת בְּאֲרוֹן
אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי וַיְהִיו שֵׁם כֹּאֲשֶׁר צֻוֵּי יְהוָה:

4) Exodus Rabba 46:1

Rebbe Aha said: He did not move from there, until he cleared them of their sin. As it says, “*And he looked, and Moshe came down,*” Since he cleared them of their sin.
Moshe said: Israel had someone to ask for forgiveness on them, but who will ask forgiveness for me?
And he began to feel remorse for having broken the tablets, but God reassured him saying: Do not grieve over the first tablets. They contained only the Ten Commandments, but in the two tablets I am about to give you now, there will also be laws, midrash and Aggadot...

שמות רבה מו:א

אמר רבי אחא: לא זו משם, עד שפנה חטייה שלהם, שנאמר: ויפן וירד משה, כיון שפנה חטייה שלהם.
אמר משה: הרי היה לישראל מי שיבקש עליהם, אני מי יבקש עלי?
התחיל מצטער על שבור הלוחות.
ואמר לו הקב"ה: אל תצטער בלוחות הראשונות, שלא היו אלא עשרת הדברות לבד, ובלוחות השניים אני נותן לך, שיהא בהם הלכות מדרש ואגדות.

5) Babylonian Talmud Bava Batra 14b

Rabbi Joseph learned: [The verse states: “the tablets] that you broke and put them” (Deuteronomy 10): [the juxtaposition of these words] teaches us that the tablets as well as the broken pieces of the tablets were placed in the Ark.”

תלמוד בבלי בבא בתרא יד:

דנני רב יוסף (דברים י, ב) אשר שברת ושמתם מלמד שהלוחות ושברי לוחות מונחין בארון

6) Lord Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, Covenant and Conversation, Ha'azinu 2017

<https://rabbisacks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CC-5777-Moses-the-Man-Haazinu-2.pdf>

Yet what is so moving about the portrayal of Moses in the Torah is that he appears before us as quintessentially human. No religion has more deeply and systemically insisted on the absolute otherness of God and Man, Heaven and Earth, the infinite and the finite. Other cultures have blurred the boundary, making some human beings seem godlike, perfect, infallible. There is such a tendency – marginal to be sure, but never entirely absent – within Jewish life itself: to see sages as saints, great scholars as angels, to gloss over their doubts and shortcomings and turn them into superhuman emblems of perfection. Tanakh, however, is greater than that. It tells us that God, who is never less than God, never asks us to be more than simply human.

Moses is a human being. We see him despair and want to die. We see him lose his temper. We see him on the brink of losing his faith in the people he has been called on to lead. We see him beg to be allowed to cross the Jordan and enter the land he has spent his life as a leader travelling toward. Moses is the hero of those who wrestle with the world as it is and with people as they are, knowing that “It is not for you to complete the task, but neither are you free to stand aside from it.”

The Torah insists that “to this day no one knows where his grave is” (Deut. 34:6), to avoid his grave being made a place of pilgrimage or worship. It is all too easy to turn human beings, after their death, into saints and demigods. That is precisely what the Torah opposes. “Every human being” writes Maimonides in his Laws of Repentance (5:2), “can be as righteous as Moses or as wicked as Jeroboam.”

Moses does not exist in Judaism as an object of worship but as a role model for each of us to aspire to. He is the eternal symbol of a human being made great by what he strove for, not by what he actually achieved. The titles conferred by him in the Torah, “the man Moses,” “God’s servant,” “a man of God,” are all the more impressive for their modesty. Moses continues to inspire.