

# פרשת כי תשא / Parashat Ki Tisa

Shabbat Adar 18, 5769, March 14, 2009

32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d

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5

## Drinking the blood of the golden calf?

### השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 30:11-34:35  
הפטרה: 1 Kings 18:1-18:39  
הברית: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18  
החדשה

10 In this week's parashah we find the story of Chet Ha'Egel (the sin of the golden calf). In the events leading up to Chet Ha'Egel Moshe had informed the people that he was leaving "until he returns" without specifying a date. The Chumash tells us that Moshe remained on the mountain for forty days (see *Shmot / Exodus 24:18*) according to the pshat of the text, the people have no idea how long Moshe would be gone for. After having been gone for forty days the people presumed Moshe to be dead. Believing he was dead the people demanded Aharon make for them a god and upon seeing the idol declared "This is your god O'Yisrael, who brought you out of Egypt" (see *Shmot / Exodus 32:1*). After forty days Moshe comes down from off of Mount Sinai (here in *Shmot / Exodus 32*) seeing their "va-yakumu l'tzachek," (their frivolous behavior and idolatry).

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### שמות 32:15-23

15 ׀ וַיִּפֹּן וַיֵּרֶד מֹשֶׁה מִן־הַהָר וַשְּׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדוּת בְּיָדוֹ לַחַת  
16 כְּתָבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבָרֵיהֶם מִנֶּה וּמִנֶּה הֵם כְּתָבִים: וְהִלָּחַת  
מֵעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים הַמָּוֶה וְהַמְכַתֵּב מִכְּתָב אֱלֹהִים הוּא חֲרוּת  
17 עַל־הַלָּחַת: וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹל הָעָם בְּרָעָה וַיֹּאמֶר  
18 אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בְּמַחֲנֵה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵין קוֹל עֲנֹת  
19 נְבוּרָה וְאֵין קוֹל עֲנֹת חֲלוּשָׁה קוֹל עֲנֹת אֲנֹכִי שָׁמַע: וַיְהִי  
כַּאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הָעֵגֶל וּמַחֲלַת וַיַּחֲרֶ־  
אֵף מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלַךְ מִיָּדוֹ אֶת־הַלָּחַת וַיִּשְׁבֵּר אֹתָם תַּחַת  
20 הָהָר: וַיִּפֹּק אֶת־הָעֵגֶל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ וַיִּשְׂרֹף בָּאֵשׁ וַיִּמְחֶן עֵד  
אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַק וַיִּזֹּל עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם וַיִּשְׁק אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
21 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אֶהֱרֹן מַה־עָשִׂה לָּךְ הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־  
22 הִבֵּאתָ עָלָיו חַטָּאת נְדָלָה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶהֱרֹן אֶל־יַחֲרֵךְ אָף  
23 אֲדֹנָי אַתָּה יָדַעַת אֶת־הָעָם כִּי בָרַע הוּא: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ  
עֲשֵׂה־לָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ כִּי־זָה מִשֵׁה הָאִישׁ  
24 אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ: וַאֲמַר

### Shmot / Exodus 32:15-23

Exo32:15 Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one side and the other. 32:16 The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets. 32:17 Now when Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, 'There is a sound of war in the camp.' 32:18 But he said, 'It is not the sound of the cry of triumph, Nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat; But the sound of singing I hear.' 32:19 It came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain. 32:20 He took the calf which they had made and burned it with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink it. 32:21 Then Moses said to Aaron, 'What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?' 32:22 Aaron said, 'Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. 32:23 'For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' (NASB)

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25 When Moshe came down and saw Beni Yisrael (the children of Yisrael) sinning he took the golden calf, burned it with fire, ground it up to a fine powder, placed it in water and made Beni Yisrael drink it.

***Shmot / Exodus 32:20***

30 *32:20 He took the calf which they had made and burned it with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink it.*

35 What was the purpose of drinking the powdered golden calf? Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaqi (רבי שלמה יצחקי) better known as Rashi (רש"י) said in his commentary "and He made the children of Yisrael drink. He intended to test them like sotot." According to the *Avodah Zarah 44a*, Sotot are women suspected of adultery as it says in *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:11-31*. Now the classical interpretation for the reason behind Moshe grinding up the golden calf into fine powder, spread out over water and causing the people to drink was for the purpose of testing. The waters tested the people and their stomachs became distended. Being guilty of sin a disease would come upon them which distended the belly. This is similar to the death that was suffered by a sotah who is guilty of adultery.

40 One of the Mitzvot discussed in Parashat Naso is known as the law of the sotah, which describes how a Jewish court is meant to deal with an adulterous woman (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:21-31*). If a woman is accused of adultery by her husband she is to stand up to a test. The test requires her to drink "bitter waters" into which the name of HaShem is dissolved. According to the *Talmud Bavli Sotah 27b*, "while it is the accused woman who must actually drink the bitter waters, the waters affect her male partner in adultery identically. Just as the waters examine her, they also examine him." Nachmanides (Ramban (רמב"ן)) points out that of all the 613 mitzvot, it is only the sotah mitzvah that requires HaShem's specific co-operation to make it work. The bitter waters can only be effective miraculously. The adulterous relationship in this case was performed by Beni Yisrael against HaShem. An interesting question though is why did Moshe use the golden calf to cause the waters to become bitter for the people to drink?

55 The answer to this question may be found in modern day chemistry. When gold is ground up into a fine powder, approximately 100 nanometers and suspended in an aqueous (water) solution the color changes to a very intense red. Suspending gold particles in water is known as colloidal gold; its synthesis has been known from ancient times and was used as a method to stain glass. Modern scientific investigation of colloidal gold did not begin until Michael Faraday's work in the 1850s. Today, colloidal gold is produced in a liquid by reduction of chloroauric acid  $H(AuCl_4)$ . The  $H(AuCl_4)$  solution is stirred while a reducing agent is added causing  $Au^{3+}$  ions to be reduced to neutral gold atoms. As more of these gold atoms form the solution becomes supersaturated and gold begins to precipitate in the form of nanometer



70 particles. The resulting aqueous colloidal gold solution becomes a very intense  
red color. With this in mind, it is possible while Moshe ground up the golden calf  
into a fine powder and cast it over water, the color of the water turned red. When  
Moshe threw the gold powder into the water and caused the people of Israel to  
drink it would have appeared as if they were drinking blood.

75 Isn't this a fascinating insight into the biblical text in light of our  
understanding of modern day chemistry? Taking a multidisciplinary approach in  
our studies we can speculate with confidence this phenomena occurred on the  
appearance of blood in the bitter waters of testing. Being multidisciplinary while  
studying the scriptures is what I call "intelligent reading." When we study the  
80 bible, it is important to work at the task of "intelligent reading." The reason is  
today intelligent reading in America and around the world is on the decline.  
According to some estimates, less than one third of all college graduates have the  
ability to read and understand a text that demands deep thought and careful  
interpretation. This is because of the increase of literary illiteracy that is a direct  
85 function of our culture. We are living in an accelerated culture of perpetual  
distraction; the multimedia age of the sound bite and the instant message. This  
has implications for biblical literacy. How so? Look in your churches and  
synagogues today; the trend is toward shorter sermons, simplified Bible  
translations, and less patience for in-depth study for the average layperson.

90 In conclusion, in this week's Torah portion it is with a high likelihood the  
people drank the water which contained golden idol had the appearance of blood.  
The implications are interesting but the message I would like to get across this  
week is this "read with intelligence." Try to begin studying the scriptures with  
95 depth in reading that is centered on careful interpretation and deep thought. As  
believers we need to be "people of the Book." We need to build upon a  
foundation of Scripture. I want to encourage you today to make a renewed  
commitment to regular bible study. Try to dig a little deeper for more extensive  
study of the Word of G-d. Let's take a portion of text to be our example.

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***Luke 10:38-43***

*10:38 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a  
woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. 10:39 She had a  
105 sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His  
word. 10:40 But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and  
she came up to Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has  
left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.' 10:41 But  
the Lord answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and  
bothered about so many things; 10:42 but only one thing is necessary, for  
110 Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'  
(NASB)*

115 Here Yeshua is giving a lesson and Mary had chosen to take the time to listen.  
Martha failed to see what was right by worrying more over the busyness of life.  
Have you been too busy with life to spend the appropriate time with the Lord?  
This is exactly what happened in this week's parsha, Parashat Ki Tisa. A life that

is not focused upon the Lord becomes too cluttered and distracting from the true meaning of life which is to serve G-d. A failure to focus brought Beni Yisrael dissatisfaction, discontentment, and sin. The results were horrible having committed adultery against the Lord and being tested with bitter waters that looked like blood which caused their stomachs to become distended.

G-d provided a wonderful deliverance for Yisrael from the Egyptians (see *Shmot / Exodus 14:13*). In the apostolic writings, HaShem has delivered us from the guilt and pollution of sin by His Messiah Yeshua. An interesting parallel in the Pesach service we drink the wine which represents the blood of the covenant (note: wine is a red color). It is in Yeshua's blood we have the forgiveness of sins and in which HaShem has brought us such a wonderful deliverance / salvation. If you want delivered from sin and forgiveness of sins you can have justification today in the blood of our savior Messiah Yeshua.

Heavenly Father,

It is possible I have had a whorish heart like the children of Yisrael did going after idols. For me it isn't so much worshiping an inanimate object as it is creating in my heart an idol through my iniquity and love for things like money and material possessions. Please take from me the iniquity in my heart, and take from me the desire to have lots of money and material possessions. Change these desires toward you Lord. Make in my heart a longing desire to serve and obey you Lord. Please give me a love for you that draws others to pursue you as I now choose to pursue you. I would like to begin by making a new commitment today by faith in the blood of the covenant you made in Yeshua the Messiah. I believe he died for my sins and that I am forgiven; thank you Lord for such a wonderful salvation and deliverance from sin.

In Yeshua's Name I pray, Amen!

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### Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever

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