

THE  
SWEETNESS OF SHABBOS

## מתיקות השבת

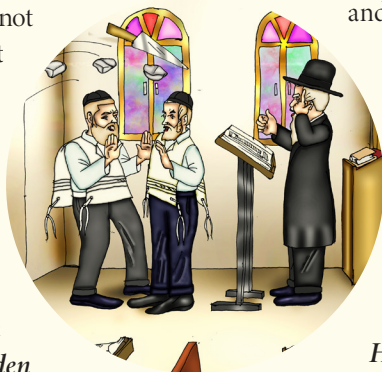
Published by: Yeshivas "Chayim shel Torah – Lublin" Yerushalayim.

Based on the lectures of the Rosh Yeshiva, Hagoan Harav Menachem Boruch Yaveh shlit"א talmid of Posek Hador Harav Shmuel Vosner ztz"l

HOW COULD A LIVE COW ATONE  
FOR THE GOLDEN CALF?!

This week's *parsha* begins with the subject of *para adumah*. The Midrash says, "Korach who was a wise man, what did he see that caused him to disagree with Moshe and Aharon? He saw the *parsha of para adumah*." Now, even the simplest Jew understands that loyalty to Hashem demands of us that we accept commandments from Hashem even when we do not understand their reason, and only gentiles who are not loyal to Hashem cannot accept any commandment that they do not understand. If so, how was it that Korach – who was no doubt on a great level spiritually since he was one of the carriers of the *Aron* – able to demonstrate such a lack of loyalty of not being able to accept anything that he did not understand?!

Rashi brings in the name of Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan, "Let the mother [red cow] come and clean off her child's filth [golden calf]." Now, Korach was willing to accept *mitzvos* that we do not understand their reason, only he argued that where a reason is brought and it does not make sense to him, he could argue that Moshe invented that *mitzvah*. And so, by *para adumah* he argued, that the *para adumah* cannot atone for the *egel*, because how can a living creature atone for an inanimate object?! Moshe, therefore, suggested to Korach and his assembly to perform the service of *ketores* in copper shovels, because according to Korach, this should be a better atonement for the golden calf – both being inanimate. This caused their destruction and they were all burnt and swallowed by the earth. But, what is the answer to Korach's argument?



## The Intention in Making the Egel...

Ramban and the Kuzri both explain, that the golden calf was not meant for idol worship; rather, they had a different intention in mind. It can be explained as follows: Moshe explained to the nation about the service of *korbanos* – the blood has to be poured on the *mizbeach*, the flesh and limbs offered; as gratitude to Hashem for our healthy blood, flesh and limbs that He has given us. The *Erev Rav* did not accept this service and claimed that Moshe invented it on his own. Their arrogance did not allow them humble themselves by dealing with what they felt was repulsive – an animal's flesh and blood.

When "The people saw that Moshe had delayed in descending the mountain," Rav Avigdor Miller ztz"l explains, the *Erev Rav* did not believe he was on the mountain with Hashem, and thought that Moshe was just lost in the wilderness. They also thought Moshe was mistaken for commanding that blood be put on Aharon's ear and toe; and since he embarrassed him with this [*busha*], therefore "בַּעַשׂ מִשָּׂה" – Hashem made him disappear.

Upon seeing this, the *Erev Rav* approached Aharon and told him "Rise up, make for us a god." You be our leader, in condition that you don't command us strange things like Moshe; "לֹא יִדְעֵנוּ מָה הָיָה לוֹ" – he commands us unreasonable things and we are not interested in him or his commands.

## The People Do Not Want Moshe...

Aharon understood their real intent – to throw off the yoke of Torah and Moshe's

## MY STORY!

Forgiveness  
Saved My Life...

My name is Eliezer. When I was in *yeshiva* many years ago, there was a *bachur* named Tzefanya (name changed), who was very talented. He never tried hiding his sharpness in learning, just the opposite, he would hurt many of the *bachurim*, me included, by asking question that he knew we won't know the answer for, just for the point of showing off his genius.

One day, when the *beis medrash* was full of *kol Torah*, I was very upset because I didn't understand the *shiur klali*, the lecture that was given earlier on the *Gemara* we were studying. In my sorrow, I sat in a corner and said *Tehilim* with tears in my eyes.

Suddenly, Tzefanya noticed me and decided to have some fun. He approached me, banged on a *shtender* loudly enough to quiet everyone, then called out, "Hey, Eliezer, what do you think of the hard question the *rosh yeshiva* asked at the lecture?" My face turned pale, I had no idea what he was talking about. Everyone looked at me while a tear went rolling down my cheek. There was some laughter heard and the *sefer* when back to normal.

After a few minutes, I couldn't carry the humiliation and left the study hall to my room in the dorm, where I sat and cried for

commandments, because they feel that the *korbanos* humiliate them, and they want to serve Hashem only in a way that will not humiliate them. So, he said to them, “Remove the rings of gold [that you got from the plunder of Egypt]... and bring them to me [by tomorrow].” This way, he hoped, perhaps he will be able to push them off until Moshe will descend.

However, the *yetzer hara* succeeded and they hurried to bring all their jewelry. Aharon then threw it all into the fire, to teach them that the inanimate gold and silver has no worth compared to a living sacrifice, and may as well be burnt; and their rejection of the service of *korbanos* is wrong.

### Praising Hashem Only for Wealth...

The people did not understand Aharon’s intention, and so, Hashem made a golden calf come out miraculously. This came to show Aharon that he would not be able to change the people’s heart easily, and they are strongly rooted in their mistake and arrogance; they desire to be grateful only for the gold and silver they got on their way out of Egypt. They then said, “אֱלֹהֵיךָ, אֵלֶּהָ” – “אֵשׁ אֵל” – this symbolizes Hashem’s kindness and love for us; “אֵשׁ אֵל” – taking us out of Egypt with great wealth. They preferred to ignore what they heard on *Har Sinai*, “אֲנִי ה’” – “אֵלֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים” – where Hashem specifically reminded them of their physical salvation from their

slavery, keeping their blood from being spilled by their oppressor’s.

“וַיֵּשְׁבוּ הָעָם לֵאכֹל וְשָׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק” – “They sat to eat and drink, and they got up to revel.” They mocked the service of *korbanos*, claiming, it is a waste to burn an animal; it is a waste to pour wine [*nisuch hayain*] on the *mizbeach*. Like Miriam bas Bilga had complained that the sacrifices waste Israel’s money (*Sukkah* 56b). Meat and wine are meant only for eating and drinking, they said, not to be burnt and poured on the altar. But the truth is, the offering of flesh, limbs and blood on the *mizbeach* brings us to praise Hashem for our own limbs and blood. *Nisuch hayain* brings us to praise Hashem for the seven species of fruits and grains that *Eretz Yisrael* has been blessed with. This gratitude to Hashem is the greatest benefit to us.

### Moshe Gives Up Being Father of The Nation...

Hashem immediately said to Moshe, “לֵךְ יֵרֵד כִּי שִׁחַת עַמֶּךָ”, “Go descend, for your people has become corrupt.” Hashem told Moshe He wants to wipe out all the people and create a new nation from Moshe alone. But Moshe understood that this was only a test that Hashem wanted to try him with, does he understand His true desire – “I do not desire the death of the wicked one, but rather the wicked one’s return from his ways.” Where did he learn this from? Hashem had commanded him to build a *Mishkan* where the sinners could offer a *korban chatas* to atone

## THE BITTERNESS OF THE DISGRACEFUL PRAISE...

**A MASHAL:** A child was thrown from home out to the streets, with no one to take care of him and give him food. After a while of eating crumbs from the trash, it made him physically and mentally ill, and he started eating dangerous things and he hurting and injuring himself, until his life was in serious danger.

A wealthy and goodhearted man had pity on him, and took him to his own house; gave him food and drinks, brought doctors to heal him. He cared for all his needs, and raised him to the stage that he brought him to marriage.

When the day of the wedding arrived, the wealthy man bought him a beautiful and expensive present, and asked him to say a few words of gratitude for all the years of kindness he has been showering



upon him. All the people of the town anticipated to hear his words, but to their dismay, the young man was embarrassed to mention the low stage he had been in, so instead, he just thanked the wealthy man for the expensive gift he bought for his wedding. This distressed the wealthy man terribly, how dare he thank me for a little gift when I saved his entire life.

for sins, and this shows that Hashem desires the sinner's return, not his punishment and destruction.

So, Moshe began praying – "וַיִּחַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת פְּנֵי ה'". He said, לָמָּה "לָמָּה" "Why should Egypt say, with evil intent did He take them out." That is, Pharaoh already said, "Look, that evil is opposite your face" – he saw in the stars that blood will come upon the Jewish nation. Meaning, the Erev Rav will mock the blood of *bris millah* and *korbanos*, and they will spill Chur's blood – killing him. Pharaoh foresaw that *Am Yisrael* could go lost by this; so Moshe said to Hashem, why would You kill the Jews, and all the nations will see that Pharaoh was right?!

When Hashem saw Moshe's good heart – how he cares for the Nation although he is losing an opportunity of being Father of the Nation – "וַיִּנְחֶם ה' עַל הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת לְעַמּוֹ". This was His consolation and, so to speak, this caused His anger to subside.

### What Sound is Coming From the Camp?

Out of his great loyalty, Yehoshua thought that the noises from the camp are the people debating with each other in Torah, to better understand what Moshe had taught them about *korbanos*. He couldn't imagine that someone would dare disagree with Moshe's words. So, when Moshe descended from the mountain, Yehoshua said about the noises in the camp "קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בַּמַּחֲנֶה" – it's the noise of battle in Torah that the people are busy with.

But Moshe replied, no, "אֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת גְּבוּרָה וְאֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת חִלּוּשָׁה" – it is no discussion about the *mitzvah* of *korbanos*, which teaches of Hashem's might [*gevurah*], bringing down rain [*gevuros geshamim*]

that eventually turns into the blood in our body. Neither are they discussing the *mitzvah* of *semicha* that weakens a man's arrogance [*chalusha*] and make him humble. Rather, "קוֹל עֲנוֹת אֲנָכִי שִׁמְעִי" – I hear a sound of people who are inventing a new way of serving Hashem; because of their arrogance they have the audacity to feel worthy of having a voice in inventing new ways.

### Gold is Worth Less than Dirt...

Moshe then approached the camp and saw the golden calf, and was enraged to see that they want to praise Hashem only for the wealth they got from Egypt, rather than appreciate their physical health; because such praise is no praise but a disgrace. As Rabbi Chaninah rebuked the *chazzan* who overpraised Hashem, "G-d, the great, mighty, awesome, powerful, mighty, awe-inspiring, strong, fearless, steadfast and honored"; saying, "It is comparable to a king who possessed many thousands of golden dinars, yet they were praising him for silver. Isn't that deprecatory?" (Brachos 33b). The *chazzan* meant to praise Hashem for the honor and wealth instead of focusing on the essential needs of a person – "hagibor" – *gevuros geshamim*, the rain that gives us means of sustenance, which turns into our blood and flesh.

In the days of Shlomo, gold and silver had no value, as the pasuk says, "וַיַּעֲפֹרֶת זָהָב לוֹ", "and he had dust of gold." Shlomo, the wisest of all men, taught the people to value dust more than gold, for dust can provide us with food that grows from it, (see Zohar Bereishis 249b).

### The Miserable Boy Found in the Streets...

As an example for this, we will give a *mashal*. A child was thrown

## THE SWEETNESS OF THE VALUE OF LIFE...



**THE NIMSHAL:** The Jewish people made a golden calf as an exchange for the service of *korbanos*, because they didn't want to deal with the flesh and blood of an animal, and come through it to praise Hashem for their own healthy life, as Moshe had taught them. This

service caused them sham and humiliation, feeling that they are living only due to Hashem's kindness. They preferred to serve Hashem with means that will give them respect – praising Him for the gold and silver they got from Egypt's wealth.

This angered Hashem, so to speak, and Moshe broke the *luchos*. The *mitzvah* of *para adumah* comes as an atonement for this sin, where we are forced to serve Hashem outside His Palace; dealing with the sacrifice with longing eyes to come back inside to pour the blood on the *mizbeach*.

out from his home to live in the streets. He wandered around searching for leftover crumbs in the trash, until he came to mortal danger from malnutrition. A well-to-do man saw him and had pity on him, and decided to take him under his wings. He brought him to his house to live with him, brought doctors to heal him from all the sicknesses he caught from the food he had eaten all this time.

This way, he looked after him and raised him until it was time for him to get married. The wealthy kindhearted man found a bride for the now young man, and set up for a beautiful wedding. There, he gave the groom an expensive and most beautiful watch made of gold, and requested him to please arise and say a few words of thanks for all the years of care he had cared for him.

### **The Boy's Disgraceful Praise...**

All around, were assembled the most prestigious men in town, talking about the groom. One said, *"I remember how as a little boy he was laying in middle of the street covered in blood, with none to care for him."* Another said, *"He couldn't even walk straight at first, until this kindhearted man helped him step by step."* Another one said, *"How miserable he was, sick with all kinds of infections, he lost his sanity and ate dangerous things, putting his life in total danger. Yet, this man saved him and raised him to this wonderful point that he is getting married!"*

The groom walked into the big hall, everyone waiting silently just to hear what he has to say. However, he was embarrassed to tell all about his shameful state he had been in. Standing with the golden watch on the table in front of him, he started speaking, *"What a wonderful man, such a wealthy person, what a stunning gift you have given me for the wedding! Such an expensive gift! I have no words to thank you for it..."*

These words that would otherwise seem like praise, here it no doubt was the greatest shame and audacity. A man who brought you back to life, you are praising for a little gift?! That shows only how little you appreciate his great kindness!

### **Gold Has No Beauty!...**

So too, the Jewish people forgot how many

of them were killed by Pharaoh while their own lives were spared from death; and they made a golden calf to thank only for the wealth they got; what a disgrace! For that, Hashem commanded us in the day before leaving Egypt to smear blood on the doorposts – so that it will remind us how He had saved our blood every time we went in and out of the house.

So also, the *tefillin* has to be made only out of an animal's skin, and cannot be covered with silver or gold. Why not, isn't it the honor of Hashem to beatify His commandment?! But Hashem wants this *mitzvah* to remind us of the miracles He had sent on the Egyptians to save our flesh and blood, as well as during all the troubles throughout the generations. The *tefillin* has to be painted black – which is considered one of the colors of blood that is defected; to remind us of how Hashem saved us from all the afflictions, and keeps our blood healthy with no illnesses. The straps symbolize the arteries and veins that branch all throughout the body to provide life-giving oxygen etc.

But the *Erev Rav* did not bother appreciating their mere existence, and took it for granted as if they deserved it and not as a kindness. So, Moshe burnt the golden calf, grinded it, and gave it to the nation to drink – like the *mei sotah*, the water given to a disloyal woman; because they were disloyal and ungrateful to Hashem, like this woman who is ungrateful to her husband and is disloyal to him.

### **The Atonement for the Severe Sin...**

For an atonement for all these sins toward all the commandments that were strange in their eyes, comes the *mitzvah* of *para adumah* that everything done with it is different and strange; its blood isn't poured on the *mizbeach*, and all the service with it is done outside of the *machaneh*. Like a prince who was banished from his father's palace and longs to serve his father the king in the palace, but since he cannot do so, he is forced to only serve him from the outside. So too here, they have to deal with the sacrifice outside in front of everyone; pouring its blood far away from the Mishkan while yearning to go back into the King's palace. And this shame of only being able to serve Hashem from afar, is an atonement for them.

a long time; praying to Hashem to open my heart to understand the holy Torah, and that in the merit of this embarrassment I will find my *shiduch* shortly and get married.

My prayer was accepted, and in just a couple of weeks I was engaged. A few months later I got married and started learning in a *kollel*, where I saw much *siata diShmaya* in my learning.

Many years have passed since, and a month ago I got a phone call from Tzefanya. He was begging me to forgive him for the embarrassment he had caused me, because he was still single, and he felt it was a punishment for his bad deeds. I still felt the pain of my humiliation in my heart, so I told him I have to think about it for a while.

I was driving on the 443 highway in Israel, and I thought to myself about the saying of the sage, that a man who does not forgive another is punished himself; so I decided to completely forgive Tzefanya. Then I suddenly got a flat tire. I parked in the shoulder of the road, and before going out to take care of the problem I decided to call Tzefanya just to inform him that I have forgiven him.

When I finished the phone call, I opened the door to walk out of the car. Right then, a car collided with another, sending it out of the lane straight to... me. The accident could have crushed me to death, but instead, for no simple reason I went flying upwards, landing right on the roof of my car.

An ambulance was summoned immediately, and I was taken to the hospital just to find that nothing was wrong with me, with no internal damage either. I guess a terrible decree was cancelled due to my giving in and forgiving Tzefanya.

**A. Y. Bnei Brak, Israel.**