

תקופת בין המצרים הרב שעפטל מאיר נויברגר

The two *aveiros* done by Klal Yisroel in the *Midbar* that established our history of tragedies that befell us throughout the generations are of course the *Chet ha'Eigel* and the *Chet HaMeraglim*. The *Mishna* in *Taanis 26a* reads as follows.

חמשה דברים אירעו את אבותינו בשבעה עשר בתמוז וחמשה בתשעה באב, בשבעה עשר בתמוז נשתברו הלוחות ובטל התמיד והובקעה העיר ושרף אפוסטמוס את התורה והעמיד צלם בהיכל, בתשעה באב נגזר על אבותינו שלא יכנסו לארץ וחרב הבית בראשונה ובשניה ונלכדה ביתר ונחרשה העיר

This *Mishna* lists the five things which happened on *Shiva Asar b'Tammuz*: 1) The *Luchos* were broken when Moshe Rabbeinu came down and saw the *Eigel*. 2) The *Korban Tomid* was discontinued. When Yerushalayim was under siege, every day they would put money in a basket over the wall and the Romans would send back two sheep. At one point, they sent a pig instead and it touched the wall which caused a near-earthquake and that marked the last time they brought the *Tomid*. 3) The walls of Yerushalayim were penetrated from the siege. 4) Apostamos burnt a *Sefer Torah*. 5) Menashe put a *tzelem* in the *Heichal*.

The *Mishna* continues with listing the five things which happened on *Tisha b'Av*: 1) On this day it was decreed that the *Dor HaMidbar* would not enter *Eretz Yisroel*. 2) & 3) *Bayis Rishon* and *Bayis Sheni* were destroyed. 4) Beitar was captured, this being the end of Bar Kochba's rebellion. 5) The city of Yerushalayim was plowed under. (Following this was the one *tekufa* when there were no *yidden* in Yerushalayim.)

What is *pshat* in this *Mishna*? What is the *inyan* of *chamisha devarim* both on *Shiva Asar b'Tammuz* and on *Tisha b'Av*?

Clearly, the *Mishna* wants to describe to us the *shelaymus* of the *Churban*. We know the number ten to represent totality. We see this by "*Ba'asara maamarim nivra ha'olam*," the *Aseres HaDibros*, and other instances. *Chazal* are telling us that the bookends of *Bein HaMitzarim* represent the totality of the *shelaymus haChurban* which we commemorate with the *halachos* of *aveilus* that we keep during these three weeks.

Each group has an affinity with each other, and they are all based upon the original incidents brought in the Torah, namely *Chet Ha'Eigel* and *Chet HaMeraglim*. We will endeavor to explain how the other four episodes are derivatives and outgrowths of the original events.

The first episode of the *Shiva Assur b'Tammuz* list is in fact *Sheviras haLuchos*. The *Chet Ha'Eigel* isn't even mentioned. What is the *hagdara* of *Sheviras HaLuchos* being the original calamity? In order to understand this, we must first understand what exactly the *Chet Ha'Eigel* was.

When Moshe came back down to the camp, *Shevet Levi* rallied to his call as they were completely clean of any involvement in the *Eigel*. Moshe instructed them to seek and kill any and every member of Klal Yisroel who served *avoda zara* in public. The Torah tells us that this number came to a grand total of 3,000 people. Moshe then chopped the *Eigel* up, mixed it with water, and made Klal Yisroel drink it as a test. Those who were *oved avoda zara b'machshava* (not publicly, rather just in their minds) died from this water. While the Torah never tells us the number of those who fell in this *mageifah*, it is clear that the amount of people who made the *Eigel* into an *avoda zara* was a miniscule portion of Klal Yisroel.

Despite this fact, the Torah tells us that there is no punishment that comes to Klal Yisroel which does not include some measure of punishment for the *Eigel*. The question is what was the *Chet Ha'Eigel* that encompassed the whole of Klal Yisroel which causes us to continue to receive punishment for it on a national level? Clearly this *chet* continues to affect us *ad hayom hazeh*.

I believe we see from *Chazal* that while the overwhelming majority of Klal Yisroel did not actually serve the *Eigel*, they did think that Moshe Rabbeinu was not coming back. Therefore, they needed to create something else to serve as the intermediary between Klal Yisroel and *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. This was their *kavana*. The *Baalei Kabalah* understand the reason why the *Eigel* was chosen as the particular *cheftzah* to be the intermediary came from the *merkava* of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. We know that it has four faces on it: human, ox, lion, and eagle. They thought that Moshe Rabbeinu represented the *keshet* to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* through the *bechina* of *pnei adam*. Thinking that the *pnei adam* was gone, they figured to create something which represented the *keshet* through *pnei shor*.

What was the *avlah* in this? They simply wanted to have a connection to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. The *avlah* was that Klal Yisroel created that so-called connection. That was a terrible mistake. Why? Because the *Ribono Shel Olam* made Moshe Rabbeinu, not them. The relationship between *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* and us must be created by Hashem, not by the people.

By the way, the *nashim* did not fall into this mistake. As *Chazal* tell us, the *nashim* refused to contribute anything to the construction of the *Eigel*. Their husbands forcibly took their jewelry away from them for it. One might mistakenly feel that they were simply being greedy and selfish. We know this to be false because when it came to donating to the *Mishkan* Building Fund, the women were first in line with their gold, silver, and materials. Rather, the reason why they did not participate in the *Eigel* was because of something *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* told Moshe Rabbeinu at *Ma'amad Har Sinai*.

Hakadosh Boruch Hu told Moshe Rabbeinu to "speak to the *nashim* first, that which they can hear." *Chazal* explain this as meaning that Hashem changed his approach from when he spoke to *Adam haRishon*. There, he spoke only to *Adam* and left *Adam* to deliver the message to *Chava*. At *Har Sinai*, Hashem wanted to deliver the message directly to the *nashim* in order that they shouldn't [*chas v'shalom*] be involved in anything parallel to *Chet Adam HaRishon* (which of course *Chet Ha'Eigel* is). Because of this "כה תאמר לבית יעקב," the *nashim* did not play any part in *Chet ha'Eigel*.

What was wrong with Klal Yisroel's choice to make the article of relationship to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*? It is this choice which begins the slippery slope to *avoda zara*. Indeed, the idea that people can create that which they consider their *keshet* to the *Ribono Shel Olam* is really the underpinning of Christianity. They created *Yushke*. This is the *avlah* of *Chet Ha'Eigel*.

This is why *Chet Ha'Eigel* expressed itself in *Shviras haLuchos*. The *Luchos haRishonos* represented *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* creating the relationship to Klal Yisroel. He made the *Luchos haRishonos* in their entirety. With them, we would fully understand all of the Torah (*shel ba'al peh* included) in its entirety, with immense clarity and devoid of any *shichecha*. We would have had the Torah as a *matana* from *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* because this was the establishment of the relationship with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* that He created for us.

Because we were *kofer* in this idea, the original *Luchos* were destroyed and it is listed as the first tragedy in the list. In fact, the second pair of *Luchos* were brought to Hashem by Moshe Rabbeinu (...לך) and only then did He write the *Aseres HaDibros* upon them. And *Luchos Sheniyos* require our activity, our *ameilus* and *chazara*, to make ourselves into *Luchos* which *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* will engrave His Torah onto our *neshamos*. This is all an outcome of Klal Yisroel breaking the direct relationship to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*, receiving the Torah as a complete *matana*, by attempting to fashion the *cheftzah shel keshet*.

Therefore, the rest of the incidents listed by *Shiva Asar B'Tammuz* represent changes in our relationship with Hakadosh Boruch Hu. This is how the *tekufa* of *Bein HaMitzarim* begins- changes in our relationship with Hashem. The paradigm expression of our relationship through the *Avodas HaMikdash* was via the *Tomid*. This was discontinued on *Shiva Asar B'Tammuz* and changed the depth of our relationship. We are left only with *tefilla*, which is merely a parallel and not the actual *Tomid*.

When the walls of the city were penetrated, that too changed our relationship. No longer were the *nedarim* and *nedavos* able to be eaten in Yerushalayim. As well, *ma'aser sheni* was only able to be *nifdeh*, not consumed. *Kedushas Machaneh Yisroel* and *Kedushas ha'Ir* were broken which had these halachic ramifications.

The episode of Apostamos burning a *sefer Torah*, *rachmana litzlan*, which happened many times throughout the *Churban*, was symbolic of the *goyim* trying to take away from us the only aspect of our relationship to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* which remains for us in the world. Only the *daled amos shel halacha* are left for our connection to Him.

Finally, Menashe erecting a *tzelem* in the *Heichal*, being *mevazeh* and *mevatel* the *kedusha* of the *Kodesh* and *Kodesh HaKodoshim*, also demonstrates a change in our relationship to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*.

Has'chala l'Churban is comprised of incidents which change our relationship with *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. By *Tisha b'Av*, the *Mishna* starts off with the decree of *Dor haMidbar* not being able to enter *Eretz Yisroel*. This is obviously a reference to *Chet haMeraglim*, but what was the *mida k'neged mida* that they couldn't enter the land? Because they shed tears in vain and listened to the ten *meraglim* (instead of Kolev and Yehoshua) who said we could not go unless we could get it *b'derech hateva*. We don't want it if it can only be had *l'ma'aleh min hateva*. This too, is a *kefira* which is an outgrowth of the original error. They only wanted it if they could claim "*kochi v'otzem yadi asa li es hachayil hazeh*," as opposed to gaining it as a *matana* from the *Ribono Shel Olam*. Truthfully, we only have *Eretz Yisroel*, even until today, *l'ma'aleh miderech hateva*.

Therefore, each of the things which come out from the *b'chiya shel chinam*, the *bechiya l'doros*, are about *Eretz Yisroel*. The *Mishna* goes on to list the destruction of both *Batei Mikdash*, *Beitar's* capture and the termination of *Bar Kochba's* revolt (whom *Rebbe Akiva* thought was *Melech HaMoshiach* bringing the *geula*, but in fact turned out to be the *makeh b'patish* of the *Churban*), and finally *Yerushalayim* being plowed under. All of these things represent the *po'el yotzeh* of the *kefira* that manifested itself by the *Meraglim* and yielded the *gezeira* of not being let into *Eretz Yisroel*. The lesson being that if we do not want *Eretz Yisroel* the right way, we don't get it.

On *Tisha b'Av* not only do we commemorate the *shelaymus haChurban* of the *Bayis*, but everything that comes out from it. So many of the *kinnos* we say are on subsequent tragedies- *Gezeiras Ta"Ch V"Ta"Nu*, the *Crusades*, and the *churbanos* of Europe, including the most recent *Churban* of Europe. This is because we relate everything that has to do with our *galus* to *Tisha b'Av*, because we relate everything that happens to us in *galus* to this idea of our *bechiya shel chinam* being changed by *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* into real *bechiya l'doros*.

If we are *zocheh* to be *mis'abel* properly over the *Churban Eretz Yisroel* and the *Churban* of our relationship to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* which comes in this *tekufa* of *Bein HaMitzarim*, *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* should be *mezakeh* us to indeed be *zocheh* to see its *nechama*.