

# עֵטְרַת הַשָּׁבוּעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת כי תשא  
ט"ז אדר א' תשס"ה

February 26, 2005

Candle Lighting:	5:24
First זמן קריאת שמע:	8:46
Second זמן קריאת שמע:	9:21
Latest שחרית:	10:17
Earliest הבדלה:	6:26

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אהרן משה בן שלמה ע"ה

## INKLINGS OF KNOWLEDGE

Reuven Davies, 12th Grade

Mitzvos and *aveiros* are the heart of this week's parsha. Parsha Ki Sisa tells of Hashem giving Moshe the *Luchos*, which unfortunately was followed by the sin of the *eigel*. Our precious tablets were then broken, and atonement led to the giving of the second *Luchos*, thus wrapping up this week's *sedra*.

The Torah describes Moshe Rabbeinu when descending the mountain, as having a glowing face. "And Moshe descended from Har Sinai and he held the tablets in his hands, and he did not know that light shone from his face [לד:כט]." This *pasuk* depicting Moshe's descent from Sinai is not only a famous point in history but also the pinnacle of a famous mistake. The word *keren* is used here to describe the light on Moshe's face. *Keren* translated normally means 'horns', which obviously does not apply to this phrase. The use of this word compared to '*oh*' is in order to teach us something very special.

Rashi explains that when Hashem 'touched' Moshe's face it became suffused with this pure light. The Yalkut Shimoni brings a different view supported by Rav Nachman who explains that when Moshe wrote the Torah,

there was some ink left over. This ink was dropped on Moshe's face causing the terrific beams of light. For the most part, many people attribute Moshe's light to his holiness from seeing the *Shechina*. The light from Moshe's face was indeed remarkable, to the point that he wore a mask to shield it. What then does this explanation of excess ink have to do with anything and how does it relate to us? To understand this, we must look at the difference between the first and second *Luchos*.

When Moshe Rabbeinu came close to the encampment with the first *Luchos*, he saw, along with Yehoshua, the sin of the *eigel* taking place at that very moment. The Medrash as well as the *gemara* both explain that the *eigel hazav* is not all that Moshe saw. Furthermore, they bring down that the destruction of the *Luchos* had an ulterior factor. The Medrash says Moshe saw the letters flying off the face of the

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## IF ONLY. . .

Binyomin Agular, 10th Grade

I once overheard someone having a discussion, in which the speaker expressed, "What do you mean, we aren't allowed to discuss business on Shabbos? Of course we are! When else is there going to be time to discuss it?"

The person who asked this question is probably not the only one who has contemplated this concept of speaking on Shabbos. "Is discussing 'weekday-topics' really such a terrible thing to do on Shabbos - and if so, why?" Indeed, the question is an important one, and as we go through this week's *sedra*, a source of keeping to this sanctity comes to light.

In this weeks *parsha*, the Torah states, [לד:כא] "ביום השביעי תשבת" *ביום השביעי תשבת*, *And on the seventh day you shall rest, in the plowing and in the reaping you shall rest.*"

The *Mayana Shel Torah* quotes the Noam Miggadim and explains that the latter half of this *pasuk* is not speaking of the general reaping and plowing. Rather, plowing refers to preparing for business and discussing innovative business ideas. Reaping, says the Noam Miggadim, tells us that even the benefits of the past week's deals - or even the latest secular studies magazines - should not be discussed on Shabbos. Chazal say that

the words a person speaks on Shabbos should not be the same as those that one speaks during the week. This in fact is the *psak* (ruling) of the *Shulchan Aruch*. [For further specifications regarding what is

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# IN~DEPTH FOCUS ON GREATNESS

by Avi Lieberman

HARAV YEHUDAH MEIR SHAPIRO  
Rav of Lublin

7 ADAR 5647 / MARCH 3, 1887 - 17 CHESHVAN 5694 / NOVEMBER 6, 1933

- Yehudah Meir was born in Lublin on a Thursday on the *yazrtzeit* of Moshe Rabbeinu in 5647 to Reb Yaakov Shimshon, a prominent *talmid chacham* who once served as the Rav and Av Beis Din of Shatz.
- Meir descended from a long line of renowned *gedolim*. From his father, he was a great-grandson of the *chassidic rebbe* Reb Pinchas of Koretz. His mother, Rebbetzin Margulya was a daughter of Reb Shmuel Shorr; the Manestricher Rebbe, who himself was a direct descendant of the Bach and the Taz.
- Rebbetzin Margulya devoted herself to ensure that her son would become a *gadol B'Yisroel*. She reminded her child every single day that a day without *Talmud Torah* is a day wasted.
- When young Meir began to learn *chumash* at the age of four, his mother prepared a beautiful *seudah* for the rabbonim of the town, thus declaring her *ahavas Torah*.
- At that *seudah*, Meir presented a one half hour Dvar Torah that kept the audience of respected Rabbanim spellbound.
  - ~ One of those present at the *seudah* who heard the *vort* from young Meir was Reb Chaim Brody, whose brother had been appointed rav of Levov. After listening to Meir's *drasha*, he told the other rabbonim, "If this *bachur* was a little older, he could have become the next rav of Levov instead of my brother."
- By the age of eight, he had memorized most of Shas with Tosfos.
  - ~ It was at this age that Meir's health began to suffer as a result of the long hours he spent toiling in Torah. His doctor insisted that he spend less time involved in learning, and as a result, Meir would take walks with a close friend as they



- would discuss the *gemaros* he had memorized.
- When Meir was 9, his fame and prominence had spread throughout Poland and Galicia, granting him the title of "The *illuy* of Shatz." Rabbonim from all over would come to test the young *chacham* who knew *Yoreh Deah* by heart.
  - ~ One time Meir's grandfather; the Manestricher Rav, came for a visit and took his son along to the town rav. They two older *gedolim* were steeped in discussion of a certain *sugya*, of which they were unable to resolve a difficult question. 9 year old Meir quickly explained the intricacy.
- At the age of 14, young Meir traveled to Manestritch to learn under his grandfather. He sat next to his *zeide* as he *paskened* questions brought to him, gaining a deeper understanding of practical *halacha*.
- In Shevat 5763 (February 1903), Meir's grandfather passed away. Meir returned to Shatz, having gained during his one-and-a-half years a greater understanding of Jewish life in Galicia – a perception that would help him greatly in years to come.
- Meir spent his next three years in the sanctity of Torah.
- At the age of 19 in 5666 (1906), Reb Meir married the daughter of Reb Yaakov Beritman of Tarnipol.
- Shortly after his marriage, Reb Meir published his first *sefer* on Parshas HaShavua, titled *Imrei Daas*.
- At the youthful age of 23, Reb Meir became the Rav of Gilna, a town near Levov with a population of over 2,000 Jews.
- With great vigor, Reb Meir succeeded in rebuilding and restoring full sanctity to Gilna, transforming it into a center of true *Yiddishkeit*. He was especially pleased with Yeshivas Bnei Torah which he established for the youth of the town.

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BINYOMIN AGULAR (continued from page 1)

considered forbidden secular topics for discussion on Shabbos, please refer to [ש.לחן ערוך אורח חיים, סימן ש"ז].

At initial glance, these *pesukim* seem very hard to understand. Firstly, why does Hashem not want us to talk about *limudei chol* (secular studies) on Shabbos? Why do we go so far to preserve the sanctity of Shabbos, as to not even discuss weekday matters? Secondly, why does the *pasuk* use such a strong language; such as plowing and reaping, when telling us about this concept? If the *pasuk* hadn't compared the two, would we have compared business talk to performing *melacha* on Shabbos?!

The answer to these two questions may very well lie in another *pasuk* of this week's *sedra*. Earlier in the *parsha*, the Torah states, "If only my Shabbos they will keep, for it is a sign between my sons and their sons, for future generations to know that I am Hashem Who makes you holy [ל.א:יג]."

The Dubno Maggid asks what the *pasuk* means by beginning with the words, 'If only'. Additionally, why would a person come to recognize that Hashem makes us holy by performing the mitzvah of Shabbos, rather than any of the other mitzvos?

In order to answer, the Dubno Maggid brings a moshel. A father once purchased extremely fine material to use in making a new suit for his son. The tailor made each piece in the suit one at a time with exact precision. What a suit it was going to be! The entire order was a cap, a vest, pants, a jacket, and an overcoat. When the young son finally had the cap, vest pants, and jacket he went to show his friends his new outfit. The saying goes "boys will be boys", and sure enough the young boy, along with his friends, was soon in a wild wrestling match, and returned home to his father with a muddy and slightly torn suit. The boy's father was not too happy at his son's behavior and carelessness, and reprimanded the child accordingly. However, a few days later the father came home with an overcoat for his child. "My son," he said "I can forget your carelessness with your other clothes. However, please be careful with this coat. It is beautiful, new, and it fits you perfectly. Please keep it in good condition so that you will have at least some reminder of the suit I once gave you."

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REUVEN DAVIES (continued from page 1)

**Luchos.** The Tablets were made of solid hewn stone which probably weighed much more than any normal human could carry, and without the blessing of Hashem's words written on them, the *Luchos* suddenly became very heavy and were smashed to the ground.

The Beis HaLevi offers another amazing explanation to the matter. He explains that the first *Luchos* secretly contained in written format all of the Torah's *pesukim*. The *mishna* and the *gemara* were also included and held every *shailah* (question) that could or would be asked, along with its appropriate answer. If we would have not sinned with the *eigel*, we would not have gone into *galus*, and there wouldn't have been a danger of us falling into the hands of the gentiles. Furthermore, the nations would never be able to question our beliefs with complex questions, and we wouldn't need any complex answers, meaning there would be no need for an Oral Law. It all would be included in the Written Law. With the *cheit ha'egel*, the course of history changed drastically. We would need trials and tests to correct the sin's effect on us in order to return to that original level. We would

now need an exile. The entire Torah could no longer be only in written form. Part would be written and the rest would be transmitted orally. Now with exile on the way, Moshe held the *Luchos* before a confused Klal Yisroel and at that moment all that which had been written and now needed to be oral, those letters came flying off. All that remained in Moshe's hands was the plain written Torah. A Torah filled with questions. What are *tefillin* - what do they hold? How are they written? What are they placed in? What are *tzitzis* - how are they made? When must they be worn? The Written Law without the Oral Law was incomprehensible. "Shaky". It couldn't be held. . . it was too heavy. The *Luchos* crushed to the ground.

For the next forty days, Moshe davened to Hashem to give the Torah to the Jews again, and He finally conceded. Moshe again proceeded up *Har Sinai*, in order to receive the second pair of *Luchos*. The difference here was the first *Luchos* had contained the entire Torah. It was a complete, self-sufficient piece. Now it was split in two and along with it our role had changed. We the Bnei

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IN-DEPTH FOCUS ON GREATNESS (continued from page 2)

He incorporated many revolutionary ideas, such as providing the rebbeim with a monthly salary and having an organized curriculum.

- Reb Meir also began a *yeshiva gedolah* for the older boys interested in continuing their learning. He slowly but surely became a teacher and father to these youngsters, who responded kindly to the warmth and kindness shown to them.
- Everyone was so impressed by the new renovations Reb Meir brought into Gilna, that four years later in 5674 (1914), he was appointed at the age of 27 to head the chinuch department of the Agudas Yisroel's East Galicia sector.
- All of Reb Meir's projects came to a halt during WWI, when Reb Meir and his wife were forced to flee to Tarnapol. The Russians destroyed his home, burning all his possessions as well as a private library that included an entire edition of his *sefer, Imrei Daas*.

~ Even as a refugee, Reb Meir continued to serve as a leader and activist for his fellow brethren. When the Russians began recruiting the Jewish men of Tarnapol into forced labor brigades, Reb Meir approached the commander and guaranteed to pay for a better non-Jewish labor force if the Jewish men would be allowed to return home.

- After the war, Reb Meir accepted the position of Rav in the large city of Sonik, Galicia. Despite his health, he immediately went about improving the city's standards of *kashrus* and *shemiras hamitzvos*.
- Reb Meir worked vigorously to upgrade the town's educational system by organizing a *cheder* and *yeshiva*. Hundreds of young *talmidim* came from nearby towns to learn under Reb Meir, who was then a well known master educator.

~ Reb Meir loved his *talmidim* and would not permit interruptions when teaching Torah. One time, a wealthy and prominent person in the town entered the Beis Medrash while Reb Meir was teaching, and while apologizing profusely, insisted that he come to his home right away to discuss a certain important matter.

Reb Meir refused to leave his *talmidim*, but the man still insisted he needed Reb Meir to come with him. Reb Meir finally turned to him with a wry smile and invited him to join him for a meal.

"What?" shouted the bewildered man. "Why would I come to eat *now*?"

Reb Meir replied, "The *gemara* states that if someone stops learning Torah to get involved in a conversation, he is fed the burning embers of a broom fire [מסכת חגיגה יב]. Why should I eat alone? Come and join me."

- He often insisted that the *yeshiva* accept boys with limited religious background. He offered to learn privately with them, and even paid for tutors. Many *talmidei chachomim* eventually came out from these young *bachurim*.
- In 1921 he represented Eastern Galicia at the first Agudas HaRabbonim convention held in Warsaw.
- The following year, Reb Meir was elected president of Agudas Yisroel. At first he refused the honor, as he was already involved in the building of many Torah institutions. He only agreed to accept this position after the Imrei Emes of Ger personally insisted he accept.
- In 5684 (1924), he accepted the position of Rav and Av Bais Din in the city of Piotrkov.
- Just like he did by his other positions, Reb Meir immediately set out to strengthen the community's standards of *Yiddishkeit*. He began this by establishing an educational system for the city's youth.

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R' Pinchas Menachem Alter (present Gerer Rebbe), R' Ruderman zt'l, R' Yaakov zt'l, R' Shach at Knessia Gedolah, 1980

Yisroel played an even more important part by being the vessel into which the Torah was placed and carried, a comparison to the way we place the *Luchos* into the *Aron Kodesh*. The unwritten Torah was now being passed on orally and we the Jewish People became the *klaff* upon which the *mishna* and *gemara* were written. Just as the parchment and the letters together form the Written Law, The Bnei Yisroel and the oral teachings as one formed the Oral Law.

Each person, according to the effort invested, merits his or her share of the Oral Law. Only Moshe absorbed all that was humanly possible. This explains the meaning of the leftover ink. The Oral Law had originally been written on the first *Luchos*, and wasn't going to be written on the second *Luchos*. Therefore, the extra words; i.e. the leftover ink left the *Luchos*! Where did it end up? On Moshe's mind! He became

the parchment with all of its holiness, and a beam of light emanated from his face. After Klal Yisroel repented, Moshe through his own lips spread the oral Torah throughout Klal Yisroel and placed its drops over every person as oral law. No longer were the Jews only the guardians of the Torah, but also the bearers and wearers of the Torah.

Today we are handed the Torah from our rabbeim as Moshe handed it to the Bnei Yisroel. It is up to each and every person to accept as much ink as he can from the glowing faces of their rabbeim. Whenever we feel lost and dejected in our studies, we must remember that we each have a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu inside of us. Hopefully with Hashem's help we will be able to learn the

Torah in its entirety and rise through these tests with a shining countenance, able to receive the *Luchos* again with the coming of the final Beis HaMikdash, *bimheirah biyameinu amen*.

thousands of people learn the Daf Yomi.

~ People who needed to earn a living became as scrupulous about attending their daily Daf Hayomi shiur as they were about putting on tefillin. As soon as they knew that

the shiur was about to begin, they would drop everything and join their friends to learn the daily *daf*. Unlearned laymen slowly turned into *talmidei chachamim*, while *talmidei chachamim* widened their range of learning.

• Rav Meir Shapiro spent several years traveling to raise money to start Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, the first Yeshiva to provide dormitories and meals for its talmidim – something almost unheard of in those days.

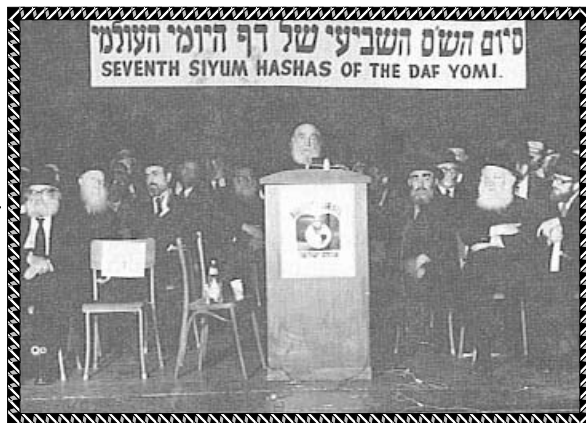
~ "I feel a sense of satisfaction about one thing," Reb Meir later told his talmidim. "In every town I visited and every talk I gave, I succeeded in rejuvenating *Yiddishkeit*. People were awakened to *ruchnius* and felt a need to reconnect with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Let this, at least, be my reward for my hard, relentless labor."

• The yeshiva opened on 28 Sivan, 5690 (June 24, 1930), and in the years to come, it produced the next generation of Gedolei HaDor.

~ The night before the opening ceremony, an endless stream of buses and taxis arrived in the city, overflowing with Bnei Torah from the surrounding regions. Every hour another train pulled in and hundreds of rabbonim and *talmidei chachomim* arrived. The streets were quickly crammed with throngs of Jews wanting to be on hand for this historic event.

• During the procession, Reb Meir stood on the balcony of the yeshiva between the Gerrer Rebbe and Tchortkover Rebbe. When he first made his appearance, the crowd below began to clap and cheer, "*Yechi*," "Long live."

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Reb Moshe Feinstein zt"l speaking at the *Siyum HaShas*

IN-DEPTH FOCUS ON GREATNESS  
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- Although Reb Meir was flodded with many different obligations, he still found the time to represent Orthodox Jewry in the Polish Parliament, as well as begin construction on Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin.
- Jews throughout the world would send their most difficult questions and complex problems to Reb Meir Shapiro for clarification. He compiled many of these *shailos* in his *sefer, Ohr HaMeir* in 5685 (1925).
- Although a well-known public figure, Reb Meir never lost his gentle sense of humor and inherent modesty.
  - ~ Reb Meir was once sitting with a group of politicians when a Jewish peddler selling socks approached to sell his products. Reb Meir handed the peddler a large sum of money, who in turn took out several pairs of socks and handed them to Reb Meir.
- "We don't need them," Reb Meir responded, in his usual calm manner. "We are all involved in politics which as you know is all lies and falsehood. It says in the *gemara*, '*Sheker ein lo raglaim*, Falsehood has no feet.' Since there are no feet in our business, we have no use for socks."
- Reb Meir was involved in politics for close to five years, thereafter leaving to devote himself to spreading Torah to Klal Yisroel.
- In 5685 (1925), at Aguda's first Knessia Gedola convention, Rav Meir suggested the idea of Klal Yisroel learning one Daf of Gemara a day. Daf Hayomi, a daily study of Gemara, united Torah Jewry throughout the world with *Talmud Torah*. Reb Meir calculated that with this program even a simple working Jew would be able to complete the entire Shas in seven years. This idea was implemented, and to this day

- The yeshiva only accepted *talmidei chachomim*, and in order to be allowed into the yeshiva, a person had to have mastered over 200 pages of *gemara*. Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin soon became a source of great *limud Torah*.
- As Reb Meir lay on his deathbed surrounded by his beloved talmidim who were scared of the imminent, Rav Meir forbade his talmidim from crying, and rather insisted they dance around his bed.

~ At this time, Rav Meir motioned to his wife not to cry. "Now there will be true *simcha*." He then instructed his talmidim to dress him in a new white shirt and arrange his *peyos*. As he was too weak to speak, Reb Meir then wrote for his talmidim present to drink a L'Chaim and sing the melody he had composed to the words '*Our fathers trusted in You.*'

As the talmidim sang, they began to dance like they never danced before. Tears rolled freely as they continued to '*tantz*' around their rebbe's bed, while hundreds of other bachurim stood in the next room reciting Tehillim.

As Reb Meir's last moments were upon him, he found the strength to utter his final words, "*Nor mit simcha*, Only with joy." As the dancing continued, HaRav Yehudah Meir Shapiro's *neshama* returned to its Maker at the young age of 46 on a Monday in Cheshvan, 5694.



At *Siyum HaShas* 1982 (l to r) R' Yaakov, Klausenberger Rebbe, Bluzhover Rebbe

- As this year's upcoming *Siyum HaShas* once again displays the fruits of Reb Meir Shapiro's toil and devotion to the spreading of Torah, may his visions and inspirational life be a source of merit to Klal Yisroel, and lead us to the final redemption. May it come speedily in our day.

BINYOMIN AGULAR (continued from page 2)

The Dubno Maggid explains that we often find *mitzvos* hard to keep and difficult to uphold. Just as "Boys will be boys", so too, "people will be people". Many times a person can feel inconvenienced, or have difficulty concentrating when doing a *mitzvah*. Yet it wasn't always this way. The Rambam writes in *Moreh Nevuchim* (Guide to the Perplexed) that before the sin of the *eitz hadaas*, people had no temptations or enticements. The entire "suit of *mitzvos*" that our Father gave us was pure. Once Adam and Chava sinned however, all the *mitzvos* became harder to fulfill since they were touched by man's desires, thereby changing nature. We were no longer in our pristine purity. We no longer had the beautiful suit. Only when Mashaich comes will we have our full strength and the full zest for our performance of *mitzvos*. However, there was one *mitzvah* that was not in existence at the time that Adam and Chava sinned. This was the final piece of our suit that our Father hadn't yet given us. . . the *mitzvah* of Shabbos. The sin took place on the sixth day of creation, and Shabbos had not yet come about. Therefore, when Shabbos was given it was pure and without bonds to worldly desires. It was made to fit people in the earthly world of *Olam Hazeih*. The concept Oneg Shabbos with its physical delights, the spiritual aspect of a *neshamah yeseira* (added soul), and the *mitzvos* of *shamor* and *zachor*, were all given to give us as a true taste of *Olam Haba*. This is indeed what Chazal tell us; "A

*Shabbos celebrated in perfect purity resembles Olam Haba.*"

This is the answer to our previous question, as to why the *pasuk* says, "*If only they will keep my Shabbos*". Our Father in Heaven is saying: "This *mitzvah*, Shabbos, is the only one of the *mitzvos* left that can be performed in purity. And when it is done in a state of *kedusha*, you will remember and truly see - more than by any of the other *mitzvos* which got "dirtied" by sin - that it is I Who makes you holy."

With this explanation we can now understand what the quandary with talking about business or secular matters on Shabbos is all about. Hashem gave us one *mitzvah*, with which we can have a taste of *Olam Haba* itself! How can we fill this Holy day of Shabbos by talking of trivial and earthly matters? These weekly matters are filled with temptations; the causes of our punishment, and often these matters are *part of our atonement* for eating from the *eitz hadaas*!

This is also the reason why Hashem compared weekday matters to reaping and plowing. To take such a gift from Hashem and waste it with matters pertaining to the rest of the week - days that are tainted with our original sin - is truly a disgrace to the Shabbos, and can even be compared to plowing and reaping. Let us be strong in this area, and preserve our words on Shabbos for expressions filled with *kedusha* and sanctity, thus truly meriting our return to the world that existed before transgression. May it come to pass speedily in our day.

**Mazal Tov to our beloved rebbe Rabbi Sholom Greenspan and his family upon the recent wedding of his son Aryeh Leib to Yehudis Shapiro**

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

ויהי כאשר קרב אל המחנה וירא את העגל ומחלת

ויחר אף משה וישלך מידו את הלחת וישבר אתם תחת ההר [לב: יט]

AND WHEN MOSHE DREW CLOSE TO THE CAMP, AND WHEN HE SAW THE CALF AND THE DANCING, MOSHE GOT VERY ANGRY, AND HE THREW DOWN THE LUCHOS, AND SMASHED THEM UNDERNEATH THE MOUNTAIN

Many of the *meforshim* are bothered by a question on this incident. Hashem had already informed Moshe of what Bnei Yisroel had done while he was still on *Har Sinai*. Why then did Moshe only get angry when he actually saw the goings on? Additionally, knowing what he did, why did Moshe bring down the *luchos* in the first place, only to break them a few minutes later?

The Abarbanel answers that Moshe had planned from the very beginning to break the *luchos* once he reached Bnei Yisroel. He nevertheless brought them down for demonstrative purposes. Moshe wanted Bnei Yisroel to see him break the *luchos*, so that they would understand the severity of their mistake. However, there is a question on this explanation. The *pasuk* states that it was only when Moshe got close to the camp that he became angry in the first place. This *pasuk* implies that he only destroyed the *luchos* due to this anger; as such, the breaking of the *luchos* was spontaneous, not planned.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l answers this question based on another question. Why was it necessary for the *pasuk* to mention the fact that Bnei Yisroel was dancing when Moshe arrived? Ostensibly, what angered Moshe was the creation of the *eigel*; as such, the mention of the dancing seems to be somewhat superfluous. Rav



R' Yaakov zt"l speaking at an Agudah Dinner

Yaakov answers, that at first, when Hashem told Moshe of Bnei Yisroel's crime, he tried to give Bnei Yisroel the benefit of the doubt. He assumed that Bnei Yisroel had merely succumbed to their fears of not having a leader, and had created the *eigel* as a substitute. This follows the *shitah* of the Ramban who maintains that Bnei Yisroel never asked for a "New God", but rather asked for someone who would replace Moshe, and show them the proper path to follow. Only later did things get out of control, with the creation of the *eigel*. Moshe had presumed that the construction of the *eigel* to replace Moshe had been a difficult step, one that Bnei Yisroel had been reluctant to take. However, when he saw the dancing going on around the *eigel*, he realized that Bnei Yisroel were joyful and celebrating the events that had happened. It was the *eigel* coupled with the dancing that angered Moshe to the point where he smashed the *luchos*.

Consequently, according to the Ramban, Moshe, on his way down from the mountain had no plans to break the *luchos*. Although Hashem had described Bnei Yisroel's actual sin, Moshe did not comprehend the *simcha* with which it had been done. It was only when Moshe saw the dancing combined with the *eigel* that he realized that Bnei Yisroel were not yet deserving of the *luchos*, at which point he smashed them.

In *Osios R' Yitzchak*, the author explains how the letter ם, *final mem*, and ם, *samech*, are similar in that both are completely enclosed. The *gematria* of these letters stand for the two parts of the Torah: ם equals 40, alluding to the Written Torah that was given to Moshe Rabbeinu during his forty days and forty nights in *shomayim*. ם equals 60, alluding to the Oral Torah which consists of sixty talmudic tractates.

The first letter of the *mishna* is the open מ (מאמתי) and its last letter is the closed ם (שלום). When a person begins to learn, he might think that all learning is "open" (i.e. accessible) to him. However, as his learning progresses toward the closed ם with which the Oral Torah concludes, he realizes that he is far removed from the totality of wisdom.

This thought is the basis for numbering the first page of each *masechta* of *gemara* as ב (2). The wisdom of Torah is infinite; no one can claim to have mastered it from beginning to end.

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**Franklin Printing**

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edition of the  
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