

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

1. In what form did Moshe originally receive the Torah on Mount Sinai?
2. After the people of Israel had heard directly from G-d not to fashion or worship idols, how could they have then created and worshipped a Golden Calf?
3. If the people of Israel were panicky simply because Moshe was missing why didn't they just appoint another leader in his stead?
4. Why did Moshe wait to break the tablets until he came to the encampment? He should have broken them immediately after he had heard that the Jews worshipped the Golden Calf!
5. Where were the broken tablets stored?

This and much more will be addressed in the tenth lecture of this series:
"Fall From the Heights: The Sin of the Golden Calf".

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind as you listen to the lecture and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

PLEASE NOTE: This outline and source book were designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it, as well, as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

This lecture is dedicated to the memory and *Li-ilui Nishmas*

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Rabbi Avraham Gardin of blessed memory

THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series XIV Lecture #10

FALL FROM THE HEIGHTS: THE SIN OF THE GOLDEN CALF

I. The Golden Calf

A.

(1) וַיֹּאמֶר ד' אֶל מֹשֶׁה כֹּה תֹאמַר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם כִּי מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם: לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן אֵתִי אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וְאֱלֹהֵי זָהָב לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם: שְׁמוֹת כִּי-ט-כ

And the L-rd said to Moses, Thus you shall say to the people of Israel, You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make with Me gods of silver, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold. **Exodus 20:19-20**

(2) אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם כִּי מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם צוּה שִׂיאֹמַר לָהֶם אַחֲרַי שִׂיאִיתֶם בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם וְאֲנִי הוּא הָאֵדוּן בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ, אֵל תִּשְׁתַּתְּפוּ עִמִּי אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וְאֱלֹהֵי זָהָב כִּי אֵין לָכֶם צוּרָךְ אֲתִי אֵל עֶזֶר אַחֵר, וְשִׁיעוֹר הַכְּתוּב לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן אֲתִי אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֱלֹהֵי זָהָב וְלֹדַעַתִּי פִירוּשׁוֹ לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וְאֱלֹהֵי זָהָב לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים אֲתִי, וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם כֻּלָּל, הַזְּהִיר מִן הָאֲמוּנָה בָהֶם, וְחֹזֵר וְהַזְּהִיר מִן הָעֲשִׂיָּה לְבַדָּה, כְּעַנְיִן וּפְסָל וּמַצְבָּה לֹא תִקְיֵמוּ לָכֶם (וּיקְרָא כו א) . . . רמב"ן, שם

You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven (Ex. 20:19): He commanded [Moshe] to tell [the people of Israel], "Since you had seen with your own eyes that I had spoken with [all of] you, and I am the One who is the L-rd of heaven and earth, don't make gods (images of angels) made of silver or gods made of gold in association with Me, because you have no need to seek any other help in conjunction with Myself." The verse is to be read as follows: Don't make together with Me gods (the image of angels) made of silver and don't make for yourselves gods (the image of angels) of gold. In my opinion the explanation is, "Don't make gods of silver or gods of gold to be gods with Me, and don't make them for yourselves at all." He admonished them against believing in them and he reemphasized [this warning] and admonished them not to make them at all, similar to the prohibition, "You shall make no idols nor graven image, nor erect a pillar." (Leviticus 26:1) **Ramban, ibid.**

(3) אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם כִּי מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם וְגו'. רז"ל אָמְרוּ (מְכִילֵתָא יִתְרוֹ פֶר' ה) שֶׁנִּרְאָה הַקַּב"ה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל הַיָּם כְּגַבּוֹר עוֹשֶׂה מִלְחָמָה וְעַל הַר סִינַי כְּזֹקֵן יוֹשֵׁב בִּישִׁיבָה. וְהִנֵּה הַגַּבּוֹר בְּמִלְחָמָה מוֹרָה עַל מִרְאֵה אֲדוּמָה כְּמ"ש (יִשְׁעִיָּה סג:ב-ג) מְדוּעַ אֲדוּם לְלִבּוֹשִׁיךְ וְכֹל בְּגָדֶיךָ כְּדוֹרֵךְ בְּגַת, פּוֹרָה דְרַכְתִּי לְבָדִי וְגו' וְיִזְ נִצַּחַם עַל בְּגָדֵי וְגו'. וְזֹקֵן יוֹשֵׁב בִּישִׁיבָה מוֹרָה עַל מִרְאֵה לְבִנָּה לְבוּשִׂיָּה כְּתִלְגַּ חִיוּוֹ וְשַׁעַר רִישִׁיָּה כְּעַמֵּר נָקִי (דְּנִיָּאל ז:ט) וְאֵם אוֹלֵי לְזַכֵּר זֶה תִּרְצוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת צוּרוֹת לְבָנוֹת מִן כֶּסֶף וְצוּרוֹת אֲדוּמוֹת מִן זָהָב כְּדִי לְהַמְשִׁיךְ עֲלֵיכֶם ע"י צוּרוֹת אֵלּוּ שֶׁפַע רִצּוֹן מִסְבָּה רֵאשׁוֹנָה יֵת', עַל כֵּן אָמַר אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם כִּי מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם. כְּזֹקֵן יוֹשֵׁב בִּישִׁיבָה וְכֹבֵר רְאִיתֶם בֵּים דְּמִיּוֹן הָאוֹדֵם ע"כ אֲנִי צָרִיךְ לְהַזְּהִיר אַתְּכֶם שֶׁלֹּא תַעֲשׂוּן אֲתִי אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וְאֱלֹהֵי זָהָב לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם: כְּלִי יִקְרָ, שֶׁם

You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven (Ex. 20:19): Our Sages said (Mechilta Yisro 5) that the Holy One, blessed be He, appeared to Israel at the [Red] Sea as a warrior and at Mount Sinai as an elder scholar who has a seat at the council of scholars. Now the color associated with a warrior is red, as it says (Isaiah 63:2-3), “Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who tramples in the wine press? I have trampled the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I have trampled them in my anger, and trampled them in my fury; and their blood was sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my clothing.” The color associated with a scholar who has a seat at the council of scholars. [As it says] (Daniel 7:9), “[While I looked, thrones were placed, and One who was ancient of days sat,] Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool; [His throne was like a fiery flame, its wheels like burning fire].” Perhaps as a memorial to this they wanted to create white images from silver and red images from gold in order to cause to flow through these images abundant good will from the Ultimate Cause. Because you saw that when I spoke to you from Heaven I appeared as an elder scholar who had a seat at the council of scholars and you saw Me at the sea in a red like form, I am therefore admonishing you not to make with Me gods (images) of silver and gods of gold shall you not make for yourselves. **Kli Yakar, ibid.**

B.

(1) וַיֹּאמֶר ד' אֶל מֹשֶׁה עֲלֵה אֵלַי הַהָרָה וְהִיָּה שָׁם וְאָתַנָּה לְךָ אֶת לַחַת הָאֲבָן וְהַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתִּי לְהוֹרֹתֶם: וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה וַיְהוֹשֶׁעַ מְשָׁרְתוֹ וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה אֶל הַר הָאֵל-לְהִיָּם: וְאֵל הַזִּקְנִים אָמַר שְׁבוּ לָנוּ בְּזֶה עַד אֲשֶׁר נָשׁוּב אֵלֵיכֶם וְהִנֵּה אֶהְרֵץ וְחֹזֵר עִמָּכֶם מִי בַעַל דְּבָרִים יִגַּשׁ אֲלֵהֶם: וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָהָר וַיִּכַּסּ הָעֲנָן אֶת הָהָר: וַיִּשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹד ד' עַל הַר סִינַי וַיִּכְסְהוּ הָעֲנָן שְׁשֶׁת יָמִים וַיִּקְרָא אֶל מֹשֶׁה בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִתּוֹךְ הָעֲנָן: וּמְרָאָה כְּבוֹד ד' פָּאָשׁ אֲכָלֶת בְּרֹאשׁ הָהָר לְעֵינַי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיָּבֵא מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הָעֲנָן וַיַּעַל אֶל הָהָר וַיְהִי מֹשֶׁה בְּהָר אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה: שְׁמוֹת כְּדִיב-יח

And the L-rd said to Moses, Come up to Me into the mount, and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the Torah, and commandments which I have written; that you may teach them. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua; and Moses went up into the mount of G-d. And he said to the elders, Wait here for us, until we come again to you; and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; if any man have any matters, let him come to them. And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the L-rd abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day he called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the L-rd was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the people of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights. **Exodus 24:12-18**

(2) והתורה. פירשו חז"ל בברכות ד"ה זה מקרא. וכ"ה בירוש' שם פ"ו ה"א ר"א בר כהנא בשם ר"א מנין לכל המצות שטעונין ברכה שנא' ואתנה לך את לחת האבן והתורה והמצוה איתקיש מצוה לתורה מה תורה טעונה ברכה אף מצות טעונין ברכה. הרי דמפרשי תורה ממש. אכן ע"כ אינו כמו שהיא כתובה לפנינו. שהרי לא נשלמה עדיין אלא כמו שהיתה כתובה לפני ד' כולה שמותיו של הקב"ה שבהם ברא שו"א. וע"ז אמרו בס' ע"ז ד"ג ג' שעות ראשונות של יום הקב"ה יושב ועוסק בתורה. ומביא על כל המאמר מקרא יומם יצוה ד' חסדו ולא נתבאר מה זה חסד במה שהקב"ה עוסק בתורה אלא הכונה דהקב"ה מזכיר שמותיו ית' ומחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מע"ב. וברור שמחדש באופן שברא מתחלה היינו בשמותיו הקדושים וכלשון המשנה באבות פ"ד שהתורה נקרא כלי חמדה שבו נברא העולם. והן הן גופי תורה שבכתב ומש"ה נקרא זה העסק חסד כאמור לעשה אורים גדולים כל"ח וכ"ז ניתן למשה בסיני אלא שלא נתפשט שמותיו על צורה שניתנה לנו אלא פרשיות

פרשיות בכל משך ארבעים שנה עד מות משה והתורה הלז היינו שמותיו של הקב"ה היו כתובים על הלוחות הראשונות כמש"כ להלן ל"ב ט"ו בשם הירו'. וגם בלוחות השניות כמבואר בל"ד א' וכ"ז: והמצוה. פרש"י תרי"ג מצות והיא דעת הירו' ברכות פ"ו הנ"ל אבל אנן לא קיי"ל הכי. אלא כדאי' בתלמוד דילן ברכות ד"ה והמצוה זו משנה היינו דברי קבלה וכ"כ הרמב"ם ז"ל בהקדמת ספר היד וכ"כ הראב"ע. העמק דבר שמות כד:יב

And the Torah (Ex. 24:12): Our Sages (Berachos 5a) explained that this refers to Scripture. There is a similar interpretation in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachos 6:5), “Rabbi Elazar bar Kahana in the name of Rabbi Elazar said: What is the source that all *mitzvos* need a *berachah* [to be made before performing them]? It says (Ex. 24:12), ‘I will give you tablets of stone, and the Torah, and commandments . . .’ The commandments are compared to Torah. Just like Torah needs a *berachah* [to be made before learning] so too *mitzvos* need a *berachah* [to be made before performing them].” Behold they explain the word Torah to actually mean the Torah (the Five Books of Moses). However, it was not in the same form as it is written now before us, as it was not as yet completed [in an accessible form]. Rather, it was in the same form as it was originally written before G-d, [all the words] representing the names of G-d with which He created heaven and earth. Regarding [this form of Torah] did they say (Avodah Zarah 3b), “The Holy One, blessed be He, is sitting and involved in the study of Torah in the first three hours of each day.” Regarding this does the Talmud quote the text (Psalms 42:9), “By day the L-rd will command His loving kindness, and in the night His song shall be with me.” It is not clear, though, how lovingkindness is connected to the Holy One, blessed be He’s involvement in the study of Torah. But the meaning is that the Holy One, blessed be He, mentions His blessed Names and through them does He renew every day, through His goodness, the acts of Creation. It is clear that He renews it in the same manner in which He created it originally, i.e. through His holy Names, as is evident from the language of the Mishneh in Avos in Chapter 4:14 in which the Torah is described as the precious instrument through which He created the world. This is actually the written Torah and for that reason is the involvement referred to as “loving kindness”, as it says (Psalms 137:7), “To Him who made great lights; for His loving kindness endures for ever.” All of this was given to Moshe at Sinai. The Divine names, however, were not disseminated to us in that original form, but rather they were given to us in the form of the various sections that were [written by Moshe] over the period of forty years until his death. The original Torah, however, was written on the first tablets, as I will elucidate further on (Exodus 32:15) in the name of the Talmud Yerushalmi (Shekalim), and also on the second tablets, as it is elucidated in my commentary (Exodus 34:1, 27). **And commandments (ibid.):** Rashi explains that it is referring to the six hundred and thirteen commandments. This is the opinion of the Talmud Yerushalmi in the sixth chapter which we quoted above. This is not the accepted opinion, however. We accept the opinion of the Talmud Bavli that interprets this term to refer to Mishneh, i.e. the oral tradition, as Rambam, of blessed memory, writes in his preface to his Yad HaChazakah. Rav Avraham ibn Ezra interprets this verse similarly. **Haamek Davar Ex. 24:12**

3 ויעל משה אל ההר. למעלה מעט: ויכס הענן. ונתכסה גם משה מהם: ויכסהו הענן. לפי הפשט קאי על כבוד ד' שהי' ענן וערפל סביבו לא נגלה גם למשה היושב בסמוך עד ויקרא אל משה ביום השביעי מתוך הענן שיבא מלפנים הענן. והדרשה תדרש מלשון ויכסהו, דלא מתפרש על גלוי שכניה כ"כ: העמק דבר, שמות כד:טו-טז

And Moses went up into the mount (Exodus 24:15): He went partially up. **And a cloud covered the mount (ibid.):** And Moshe also became covered with it. **And the cloud covered it (him - Him) (Exodus 24:16):** According to the simple meaning it refers to the Divine glory

which was surrounded by clouds and darkness. It was not even revealed to Moshe, even though he was sitting adjacent to it, until He called unto Moshe on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud to come within the clouds. The *derasha*, [that the covering was directly referring to Moshe] (see Yoma 4a-b) is based upon the use of the word *vayichaseihu* (and it covered him) which doesn't lend itself that well to be explained in terms of the revelation of the Divine presence. **Haamek Davar, Exodus 24:15-16**

C.

(1) וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי בִשֵׁשׁ מִשָּׁה לָרֹדֶת מִן הַהָר וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם עַל אֶהֱרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם | עֲשֵׂה לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ כִּי זֶה | מִשָּׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מָה הָיָה לוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֶהֱרֹן פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשֵׁיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם וְהָבִיאוּ אֵלָי: וַיִּתְּפְּרוּ כָל הָעָם אֶת נְזָמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל אֶהֱרֹן: וַיִּקַּח מֵיָדָם וַיַּצַּר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסֹּכָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָהּ אֱ-לֹהֵיךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיֵּרָא אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לִפְנֵי וַיִּקְרָא אֶהֱרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַד' מָחָר: וַיִּשְׁפִּימוּ מִמִּחֲרָת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׁוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וּשְׁתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצִחָק: שְׁמוֹת לֵב:א-ו

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said to him, Arise, make us gods, which shall go before us; and as for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what became of him. And Aaron said to them, Take off the golden ear rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me. And all the people took off the golden ear rings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received them from their hand, and fashioned with a graving tool a molten calf; and they said, These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the L-rd. And they rose up early on the next day, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. **Exodus 32:1-6**

(2) וַיֵּרָא הָעָם. הֵם דָּלֵת הָעָם מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מֵאֵז יֵצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם חֲשָׁבוּ שֶׁהֵם אֵינָם רְאוּיִם לַעֲמוּד בְּהִנְהָגָה עֲלִיוֹנָה זֹו שִׁיחֵיו מוֹשְׁגָחִים בְּפִרְנֹסָה מִמֶּנּוּ יֵת' וּמִשָּׁה לֹא רָצוּ לְצִאֵת כֻּלָּל. וְרַק מֹשֶׁה וְאֶהֱרֹן הוֹכִיחוּ בְּכָל הַמִּשְׁךְ הַזֶּמֶן אֶת הַהִמּוֹן וְלִקְחוּ לְבָבָם בְּדַבְרֵים כַּמִּשָּׁכ לְעִיל ט"ז ג' ע"ש. וְזֶה הָעָם חֲזָרוּ וְהֵאֱמִינוּ כִּי כָל עוֹד מֹשֶׁה חֵי עִמָּם יֵהִיו מוֹשְׁגָחִים בְּזִכְרוֹתָם לְמַעַלָּה מִה"ט כִּכְחוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה. אֲבָל לְאַחַר מוֹתוֹ הָרִי א"א שִׁיתְּפִרְנוּ אֵלָהּ בְּהִשְׁגָּחָתוֹ עַפ"י הַטֵּבַע וְזֶה א"א אֵלָהּ כְּבוֹאֵם אֶל אֶרֶץ נוֹשֶׁבֶת וְלֹא בְּמִדְבַר הַשָּׁמַיִם. וּמִשָּׁה נִתְּבַהֲלוּ וְחֲשָׁבוּ מִחֲשׁוֹבוֹת וּמֵהֶם הִגִּיעוּ לַע"ז מִמֶּשׁ כֹּאשֶׁר יְבוֹאֵר: כִּי בִשֵׁשׁ מִשָּׁה יִפֶּה כֹּתֵב הָרֵאב"ע אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּ מִתְּחִלָּה שֶׁלֹּא יָרַד מֹשֶׁה עַד אַחֲרֵי אַרְבַּעִים יוֹם. וְגַם מֹשֶׁה בְּעֲצֻמוֹ לֹא יָדַע טֵרֵם עֲלוֹתוֹ. ע"כ לֹא הֵאֱמִינוּ שֶׁהוּא חֵי שְׁמָה עוֹד בְּתוֹרַת הָאָדָם בְּאוֹפֵן שְׁעוֹד יָשׁוּב לָהֶם וַיִּנְהַלֵּם כֹּאשֶׁר עַד כַּה: קוּם עֲשֵׂה לָנוּ אֱ-לֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ. אִיזֶה כַּח שִׁיחֵי' מִנְהַגְנוּ בְּמִדְבַר בְּדֶרֶךְ הַטֵּבַע כִּפִּי כַּחֲנוּ: כִּי זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ. שֶׁנִּהְלָנוּ עַד כַּה לְמַעַלָּה מִה"ט וְלֹא לְפִי כַּחֲנוּ אֵלָהּ בִּימִין עוֹזוֹ. וְזֶהוּ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ. שֶׁהֶעֱלָה אֶת כַּחֲנוּ שֶׁנִּהְיָ רְאוּיִם לְיִצִּיאַת מִצְרַיִם וְהִנְהָגָה נְסִיית: לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מָה הָיָה לוֹ. אִם מֵת אוֹ נַעֲשֵׂה מִלֵּאךְ כְּמוֹ חֲנוּךְ וְעוֹד לֹא יָשׁוּב אֵלֵינוּ. וְאֵלוּ הָיוּ מִתְּנַהֲגִים בְּמִדְבַר בְּדֶרֶךְ הַטֵּבַע לֹא הָיוּ נְבוֹכִים גַּם אִם הָיָה מֵת מֹשֶׁה. שֶׁהָרִי כִּבֵּר הָרָאוּ לְדַעַת בַּעַת מִלְחַמַת עַמְלָק שֶׁהִקְב"ה בְּקִרְבַּי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהִשְׁגָּחָה נִסְתַּרְתָּ ג"כ וְכַמִּשָּׁכ שֵׁם. אֲבָל כֹּאשֶׁר כָּל חַיּוֹתָם בְּדֶרֶךְ נִסְ שֶׁבֵּא רַק ע"י מֹשֶׁה שֶׁהֶעֱלָם לְמַדָּה זֹו וְעַתָּה מָה נַעֲשֵׂה: הָעֵמֶק דָּבַר, שְׁמוֹת לֵב:א

And when the people saw (Exodus 32:1): This is referring to the most unrefined segment of the people of Israel who, from the time that they left Egypt, viewed themselves as incapable of being the recipient of direct Divine Providence in the fulfillment of their physical needs. It is for that reason that they initially didn't want to leave [Egypt] at all. It was only because Moshe and Aaron inspired the masses, during the whole period [of the plagues] and convinced them, as I explained previously (Exodus 16:3). It was this group of people who retracted and came to believe that as long as Moshe would be living amongst them through his merit, they would be the recipients of Divine Providence, just as Moshe was. But after his death, [they believed that] it was only possible to be supported through Divine Providence under the guise of the laws of nature. But that was only feasible after they would have arrived in a settled area, not in a desolate desert. For that reason they panicked and crafted different plans. Some of them actually sunk to actual idolatry, as we will explain. **That Moses delayed (ibid):** Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra beautifully explains that the people didn't originally know that Moshe wouldn't descend until after forty days and even Moshe himself didn't know this before he went up. For that reason they didn't believe that he was still alive there in human form, in a manner that he would return to them and guide them, as he had done up until this time. **Arise, make us gods, which shall go before us (ibid.):** Some [spiritual] power that will lead us through the desert in a natural way, befitting our [limited] abilities. **For this Moses, the man (ibid.):** who guided us up until now in a supernatural manner, not according to our limited powers, but through the might of his right hand. This is the meaning of the phrase, "who brought us out" - [literally - elevated us], for he elevated our powers that we would be worthy of leaving Egypt and be led in a supernatural manner. **We do not know what became of him (ibid.):** if he died or became an angel, like Chanoch, and wouldn't be coming back to us. Now if they would have been guided in a natural manner in the desert, they wouldn't have panicked, even if Moshe had died, because they were already convinced through the battle against Amalek that the Holy One, blessed be He, also works within the midst of the people of Israel through hidden Providence, as we wrote there. But since their whole survival was effected in a miraculous manner, as it only came through Moshe, who elevated them through this attribute, [they were confused as to] what they were to do now.

Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:1

(3) וירא העם כי בושש משה: כבר האריכו בזה חכמי קדם למצוא למוד זכות על ישראל אשר היו לשמצה בקמיהם, ואשר גם בעינינו יפלא איך אחר שראו בעיניהם את כל מעשה ד' הגדול אשר עשה לעיניהם, ואחרי שמעו קול א-להים חיים מדבר מתוך האש לא תעשה לך פסל וכל תמונה, השחיתו התעיבו מעלליהם וישתחוו לתבנית שור אוכל עשב, ויאמר הכוזרי כי באשר כל העו"ג בעת ההיא היו עובדים צורות וגם ישראל בצאתם ממצרים הלך ד' לפניו בעמוד אש וענן והיו משתחווים נכחו לא-להים, וכאשר עלה משה להר הבטיחם להביא לוחות האבנים ולעשות ארון הברית ששם ישכין ד' שכינתו בתוכם והם יקבילו נגדו לא-להים בעבודתם לא-להים, וכאשר בושש משה לבא ולא לקח עמו צדה וחשבו כי איננו, התקבצו ההמון מהם לבקש צורה מוחשת יכוננו נגדה לא-להים כמו שאנו עושים גם היום בשמים ובכל דבר שאנו יודעים שתנועתו בחפץ הא-להים מבלי טבע או רצון אדם, כמו שאנו אומרים שד' שוכן שמים והשמים מכון כסאו, ובכ"ז לא שכחו א-ל מוציאם ממצרים והיה רק מרי בקצת מצותיו וכו', וכ"כ הראב"ע שמ"ש קום עשה לנו א-להים הוא כבוד חונה בצורת גויה כמו ויסע מלאך הא-להים ההולך לפני מחנה ישראל וכחז"ל במדרש תנחומא אמרו שראו את המרכבה ושמו פני שור מהשמאל ועשו צורתו, וכונתם כי התבאר אצלי בפירוש מעשה המרכבה שיחזקאל ראה במרכבה הראשונה צורת שור מהשמאל, ובמרכבה שניה ראה תמורתו צורת כרוב, ובארתי שם כי יחזקאל ראה את החיות נושאי המרכבה שלפעמים ילכו ברגליהם ופעמים יעופו בכנפיהם, והיינו שבעת ינהגו את האופנים שהם המערכת ע"פ הסדר הטבעי זה יקרא הליכה, ואז

יקרו בשם חיות, כמו שהחיה אין לה בחירה במעשיה, רק תנועתה הוא לפי הטבע המוטבע בה, כן הנהגת הטבע היא מוכרחת לפי חוקות שמים בלא בחירה וחפשיית, אבל בעת ינהיגו את האופנים למעלה מן הטבע לפי ההשגחה והנס ולפי השכר והמעשה, אז יתרוממו למעלה וירומו האופנים עמהם וזה נקרא עפיפה, ואז יתראו ידי אדם תחת כנפיהם כי אז יפעלו ברצון ובחירה, כאדם שמעשיו בחיריים לפי השכל, ואז יקראו בשם כרובים שהכרוב יש לו פני אדם. וי"ל כנפים לעוף למעלה ולהתרומם מעל הארץ, ושם בארנו שבעת יעופו החיות בכנפיהם שהוא בעת ינהגו לפי הנס וההשגחה למעלה מן הטבע, ימשכו שפעם מן העולם שלמעלה מהם שהוא עולם הכסא, ואז כנפיהם ישירות לקבל השפע דרך הרקיע שעל ראשי החיות מן עולם הכסא, שראהו יחזקאל כמראה אבן ספיר דמות כסא, וכבר בארנו בפרשת משפטים שהיה הבדל השגה [בעת עלו הזקנים להר עם משה] בין הזקנים ובין יתר אצילו בני ישראל שהזקנים ראו את א-להי ישראל היינו שהשיגו את ההנהגה שמנהיג מצד שהוא א-להי ישראל, שמנהיג בדרך השגחה נסיית, והנהגה זו נמשכת מעולם הכסא, לפי המעשה והגמול והעונש, שלכן ראו תחת רגליו כמעשה לבנת הספיר, נמצא ראו את המרכבה כמו שהיא מושפעת מעולם הכסא כמו שראה ישעיה שרפים עומדים ממעל לו, אבל יתר אצילי בני ישראל לא הגיעו להשגה זאת רק ראו את הא-להים דהיינו שהשיגו אותו כפי שהוא מנהיג ההנהגה הכללית שאז נקרא א-להים סתם, לפ"ז אהרן וזקנים ראו החיות בצורת כרובים שצורה זו יש לה בעת העפיפה שהיא הנהגה הנסיית, ותחת פני שור ראו פני כרוב, אבל אצילי בני ישראל שלמטה מהם במדרגה ראו פני שור מהשמאל, וכבר ידעו ממש שהביא להם צורה מן המרכבה שעליו ישכון כבוד ד', רק היה עתיד להביא צורת הכרובים שתחת כנפיהם שכן ד' בקדש הקדשים וד' הזהיר לא תעשון אתי א-להי כסף שמפרש במכלתא שהוא אזהרה שלא יעשו הכרובים מכסף רק מזהב, וזה כבר הודיע משה לישראל וידעו שיביא צורה מזהב שעליו ישכון כבוד ד' והזקנים לפי השגתם השיגו האמת שיהיו צורת כרובים שזה מורה על ההנהגה שינהיג מצד שהוא א-להי ישראל בדרך הנסים והנפלאות, וההמונים שראו המרכבה בשפל המדרגה שנראית בצורת חיות ראו פני שור מהשמאל ואם היה עושה להם צורת כרובים סוככים בכנפיהם על ארון הברית לא היה חטא בזה רק מה שיקדימו העשיה קודם שהביא לוחות הברית שעליהם יסוככו כנפי הכרובים, וההמונים שעשו תחת זה צורת שור שזה מציין ההנהגה בעת יונהגו לפי המערכת ככל הגוים והיה זה חטא לפי האמת אבל יש בו למוד זכות לפי טעותם והשגתם המשובשת. מלבי"ם, שמות לב:א

And when the people saw that Moses delayed (Exodus 32:1): The scholars of old have already gone to great lengths to find some justification for the people of Israel for [doing such an act that caused them] “shame among their enemies” (Ex. 32:25). It is a mystery, even in our own eyes. How is possible that after they saw with their own eyes all of the [supernatural] acts of the great G-d and after they heard the voice of the living G-d who spoke from amidst the fire, “You shall not make for you any engraved image, or any likeness of any thing [that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth]” (Ex. 20:4), they acted in such a destructive and abominable manner by prostrating themselves to [the image of] “a grass eating ox” (Psalms 106:20). The Cuzari (R. Yehudah HaLevi), [answered this question by] saying that in that period all of the pagans of that era worshipped [tangible] images. Even Israel, when they left Egypt, were led by G-d by means of a pillar of fire and a cloud [pillar], in whose direction they prostrated themselves to G-d. And when Moshe went up to the mountain, he promised them to bring them tablets of stone and make an Ark of the Covenant where G-d would rest His Presence in their midst and in whose direction they would worship G-d. [Therefore,] when Moshe was late in coming, [especially in the light of the fact] that he hadn't taken with him any provisions, and they thought that he was no longer [alive], the masses (the group amongst them on the lowest spiritual level) gathered together to ask for a palpable image to which they could focus their attention towards G-d, just as we do, even today, as we relate [G-d to] the

heavens or anything that we know moves solely through the will of G-d, not through nature or the will of man. [This is evident] when we say that G-d dwells in Heaven, or that the Heavens are the place of His throne (see Psalms 103;19). Even though they had sinned, they still didn't forget that it was G-d who took them out of Egypt. [In other words, the creation of the Golden Calf] was an act of resistance against the acceptance of a [small] minority of the commandments [and not an act of total rebellion]. Similarly, Rav Avraham ibn Ezra explained the verse (Exodus 32:1), "Arise, make us gods (an image of angels or alternately - an image of G-d), which shall go before us," to mean that the glory (Shechina) of G-d would dwell within a physical form, just as it says (Exodus 14:19), "And the angel of G-d, who went before the camp of Israel, moved [and went behind them]." This is similar to what our Sages stated in the Midrash Tanchuma that they saw the Divine chariot and removed the face of an ox from the left [side of the Divine chariot] and [copied] its image. What they meant to say is, according to how I explained the Divine chariot in my commentary to the Book of Ezekiel, that [Ezekiel] saw, in his first vision of the Divine Chariot that [the angel] had an image of an ox at its left. In the second vision of the Divine Chariot, he saw a *Cherub* (an angel bearing the face of a child) in place [of the ox]. I explained there that Ezekiel saw that the *Chayos* (angels) who lifted up the Divine chariot traveled, at times, with their feet, and, at times, they flew with their wings. This meant that at times the [*Chayos*] directed the *Ophanim* (angels in the visionary form of the wheels that move the chariot), according to the system which is based upon the laws of nature. This is called *halicha* - traveling [by their feet]. At that time they are called *Chayos*. Just like a *chaya*, an animal, has no free will in its actions, it acts according to the nature that is implanted in it, so too, the natural system [of how the Divine Chariot moves] is based upon the laws of nature, and is not based upon the exercise of free will. However, when the *Chayos* direct the *Ophanim* in a supernatural manner, according to Divine Providence and miracles, based upon reward and punishment, then the [*Chayos*] lift themselves up and lift up the *Ophanim* together with them. This is referred to as, "flying". At that time, the hands of a person under their wings were visible [in Ezekiel's vision], indicating that the [*Chayos*] take action through desire and free will, like a person who exercises free will through his intellect. At that time the [*Chayos*] are referred to as *Cherubim*, for a *Cherub* has the face of a man and wings that let it rise above the earth. We explained [in our commentary to Ezekiel] that at the time the *Chayos* fly with their wings, which is at the time that they direct [the world] in a miraculous manner, beyond the laws of nature, they receive their power from the world that is above them, which is the World of the Divine Throne. At that time, their wings are in a straight up position which allows them to receive their Divine energy from the World of the Divine Throne through the firmament which is on top of the head of the *Chayos*. The image of the Divine Throne appeared to Ezekiel as if it were made of sapphire. We already explained in Parshas Mishpatim that at the time when the elders went up to Mount Sinai with Moshe, there was a difference between the perception of the elders and that of the other nobility of Israel. The elders, "saw the G-d of Israel," (Ex. 24:10), which means that they perceived how G-d directs the world as, "the G-d of Israel," which means when it is guided through Providence and miracles. This guidance or leadership flows from the World of the Divine Throne, according to one's actions, based upon reward or punishment. For that reason they saw "under His feet a kind of paved work of a sapphire stone, " (ibid.) for they saw the Divine Chariot when its powers flow from the World of the Divine Throne, just as Isaiah saw the *Seraphim* (angels of fire - Divine energy) above him. The other noblemen of Israel, however, did not reach this [lofty] understanding. They only "saw G-d" (*E-lohim*), which is the Divine name which refers to how He generally conducts the world. Accordingly, Aaron and the elders saw the *Chayos* in the form of *Cherubim*, which is at the time which they fly, which is the image of G-d's miraculous conduct within the world. Instead of an ox they saw the face of a *Cherub*. The other nobility of Israel, however, who were on a lower spiritual level, saw the face of an ox on

the left side [of the *Chayos*]. Now they already knew from Moshe that he would bring them an image from the Divine Chariot, upon which the Glory of G-d (Shechina) would rest. He, however, was destined to bring to them the image of the *Cherubim*, under whose wings G-d would dwell in the Holy of Holies. Now G-d had admonished them not to make, “with Me gods of silver,” which the Mechilta explains to refer to the prohibition of making the *Cherubim* of silver instead of gold. So this was already made known to them through Moshe that he would bring them an image of gold, upon whom the Glory of G-d (Shechina) would dwell. The elders, according to their understanding, grasped the truth, that the images would be of the *Cherubim* which is indicative of the direction which G-d takes as “the G-d of Israel”, which is through miracles and wonders. The masses, who saw the Divine Chariot in a lower lever, in the appearance of *Chayos*, saw the face of the ox on the left side [of the *Chayos*]. Now had they made an image of the *Cherubim*, extending their wings over the Ark of the Covenant, their only sin would have been that they preceeded in making them before he had brought the Tablets of the Covenant, for it is on them that the *Cherubim* stretched out their wings. The masses who fashioned the image of an ox, instead of [the *Cherubim*], which is indicative of the conduct that is based upon the natural system, which is the way [G-d] deals with all of the nations, truly sinned. However, there is some justification for their actions, based upon their erroneous and limited understanding. **Malbim, Exodus 32:1**

4 פרקו את נזמי הזהב. אהרן לשם שמים נתכוון אמר אם אומר להם כלב בן יפונה או נחשון בן עמינדב יהיה לכם לראש. כשיבא משה אם לא ירד מגדולתו תרבה קטטה ביניהם ויבא לידי שפיכות דמים. ואם לא אתן עליהם ראשים הם יתנו מעצמם ותרבה קטטה. ואם אומר אהיה לכם לראש שמא יקשה בעיני משה אעסיקם בדבר שאין בו ממש עד יבא משה ותתבטל הדבר מאליו. ולכך אמר פרקו נזמי הזהב אשר באזני נשיכם כי היה דעתו לאחר הדבר ע"י עכוב נשים שתהיינה מונעות לפרוק נזמיהן. וכל כוונתו של אהרן לטובה היתה: פירוש התוספות לשמות לב:ב

[And Aaron said to them,] **Take off the golden ear rings, [which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me]. (Exodus 32:2):** Aaron's intention was for the sake of Heaven. He thought to himself, “If I suggest to them that Caleb ben Yefuna or Nachshon ben Aminadav should be their leader, then, if Moshe doesn't step down from his position of leadership after he comes down, there will be contention between them which may [even] lead to bloodshed. And if I don't appoint any leader over them, they will do so on their own and this will create even greater strife. If I, myself, volunteer to be the leader, perhaps Moshe will find it hurtful in his eyes.” [He therefore concluded,] “I will involve them in something that has no real substance. As soon as Moshe comes down, it will automatically be done away with. For that reason, he told them, “Take off the golden ear rings, which are in the ears of your wives,” in order to delay the matter, as the women would naturally be reluctant to take off their ear rings. His whole intention was for the good. **Commentary of Tosephos, Exodus 32:2**

5 כל העם. אע"ג שלא הכל חטא בע"ז כמבואר להלן שלא נהרגו אלא ג' אלפי איש מכ"מ כל העם הסכימו למה שהסכים אהרן לפניהם והביאו נזמי זהב אשר באזניהם. העמק דבר שמות לב:ג

And all the people [took off the golden ear rings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron]. (Exodus 32:3): Even though they all didn't sin through idolatry, as is evident further on, for only three thousand men were killed, nonetheless, all of the nation agreed to the plan which Aaron presented before them and they did bring their golden ear rings. **Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:3**

(6) וישב העם. לא כל העם אלא איזה חבורה: ויקומו לצחק. בשמחה רבה שנפטרו מהשגחת הקב"ה שהוא מגיע ע"י תורה ועבודה דוקא ודבר זה היה קשה לקבל מתחלה כמו ביארנו לעיל י"ג ט' ע"ש. ועוד במעשה מרגלים היה כת כזה כמבואר בפ' שלח: העמק דבר, שמות לב:

And the people sat down to eat and to drink (Exodus 32:6): This is not referring to the entire nation but rather to a single group. **And rose up to play (ibid.):** With great joy, [for in their eyes] they were free from Divine Providence which only comes through Torah and Divine service. From the beginning, this thing was difficult for them to accept, as we explained above (Exodus 13:9). In the incident of the spies, [there arose] a similar group to this one, as we will explain in Parshas Shelach. **Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:6**

D.

(1) וידבר ד' אל משה לך רד כי שחת עמך אשר העלית מארץ מצרים: סרו מהר מן הדרך אשר צויתם עשו להם עגל מסכה וישתחוו לו ויזבחו לו ויאמרו אלה אלהיך ישראל אשר העלוך מארץ מצרים: ויאמר ד' אל משה ראיתי את העם הזה והנה עם קשה ערף הוא: ועתה הנניחה לי ויחר אפי בהם ואכלם ואעשה אותך לגוי גדול: ויחל משה את פני ד' א-להיו ויאמר למך ד' יחרה אפך בעמך אשר הוצאת מארץ מצרים בכח גדול וכיד חזקה: למך יאמרו מצרים לאמר ברעה הוציאם להרג אתם בקהרים ולכלתם מעל פני האדמה שוב מחרון אפך והנחם על הרעה לעמך: זכר לאברהם ליצחק ולישראל עבדיך אשר נשבעת להם בך ותדבר אלהם ארבה את זרעכם ככוכבי השמים וכל הארץ הזאת אשר אמרתי אתן לזרעכם ונחלו לעלם: וינחם ד' על הרעה אשר דבר לעשות לעמו: שמות לב:ז-יד

And the L-rd said to Moses, Go down; for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; They have turned aside quickly from the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, These are your gods, O Israel, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt. And the L-rd said to Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people; Now therefore let Me alone, that My anger may burn hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of you a great nation. And Moses pleaded with the L-rd his G-d, and said, L-rd, why does Your anger burn hot against Your people, whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Therefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For an evil intent did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce anger, and repent of this evil against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give to your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the L-rd repented of the evil which He thought to do to His people. **Exodus 32:7-14**

(2) סרו מהר – טעם מהר לפי ששכחו הנפלאות ההם שראו עיניהם במעמד הקדוש ועבדו ע"ז בעוד שהשכינה בהר סיני. רבינו בחיי, שמות לב:ח

They have turned aside quickly (Exodus 32:8): The meaning of “quickly” is that they forgot those miracles which they [had just] witnessed with their own eyes at that Holy Experience [of receiving the Ten Commandments] and they served idols while the Divine Presence (Shechina) was still at Mount Sinai. **Rabbainu Bachya, Exodus 32:8**

(3) וישתחוו לו ויזבחו. דרך הספור להוסיף ולהגדיל האשמה זה אחר זה. מש"ה החל ד' וישתחוו לו. ולא עוד גם ויזבחו לו. שהוא חמור מהשתחואה שישנו גם בהיתר למלכים ושרים משא"כ זביחה שאינו אלא עבודת אלוה. כן בפנים כן בחוץ: ויאמרו אלה וגו'. והוא לכאורה קל מזביחה שהוא במעשה. משא"כ דבור בעלמא מכאן למדו חז"ל דהאומר אלי אתה חייב מיתה וכרת משום דאתקושי איתקיש לזביחה כדאיתא בסנהדרין דס"ג א' ובפרש"י במשנה דס"א ד"ה והמקבלו. העמק דבר, שם

And have worshipped it (prostrated before it), and have sacrificed to it (Exodus 32:8): It is the way of the narrative to describe sins in steadily increasing levels. For that reason Hashem first began with, "[they] prostrated themselves to it," and continued on to [to the next level] "not only that but also 'they sacrificed to it'" which is more severe than prostrating, since prostration is allowed as a [show of respect] towards kings and nobility, whereas sacrificing is only done as a D(d)ivine service, whether it be done in the Temple or outside the Temple. **And said, [These are your gods, O Israel, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt].** This seems to be less severe than sacrificing which is an overt action, whereas this is merely speech. From here our Sages derived that if one says [to an idol], "You are my god" he is condemned to death by the courts and is condemned [by Heaven] to *karass* (premature physical death and spiritual death), as [saying, "you are my god" is compared to sacrificing, as it is stated in Sanhedrin 63a and in Rashi's commentary to the Mishna (Sanhedrin 61a - cf. *v'hamikablo*)] **Haamek Davar, ibid.**

(4) ועתה הניחה לי: הגם שאני ארך אפים לרשעים שמא יחזרו בתשובה אין תקוה לזה כי הם עם קשה ערף ולא ייטיבו מעשיהם, ולכן הניחה לי שלא תתפלל בעדם, ועתה יחר אפי ולא אהיה ארך אפים אבל כל תאמר לריק יגעתי, כי אעשה אותך לגוי גדול ושכרך לא יקופח: מלבי"ם, שמות לב:י

Now therefore let Me alone (Exodus 32:10): Even though I am slow to anger against evil doers, [hoping] that they repent, there is no hope for these people as they are stiff necked and will not improve. Therefore leave Me alone and don't pray on their behalf. **That My anger may burn hot against them (ibid.):** and not be slow to anger. However, you shouldn't say that you worked in vain, for **I will make of you a great nation (ibid.):** and your reward will not be repudiated. **Malbim, Exodus 32:10**

(5) וינחם ד'. מלעשות כליון גמור אבל עדיין הית' הגזירה להשמיד אותו הדור והבנים יבואו לא"י כמו שהיתה גזרת מרגלים. וע"ז הגזרה התפלל משה ארבעים יום עוד כאשר יבואו לפנינו בס"ד: העמק דבר, שמות לב:יד

And the L-rd repented of the evil which He thought to do to His people. (Exodus 32:10): [He repented His plan] to *totally* destroy them. But there was still a decree [in force] to destroy that generation, with their children coming to Eretz Yisrael, as it was in the decree that followed the incident of the spies. Regarding that [second] decree did Moshe pray an additional forty days, as we will explain. **Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:14**

E.

(1) ויפץ וירד מלשה מן ההר ושני לחת העדת בידו לחת כתבים משני עבריהם מזה ומזה הם כתבים: והלחת מעשה א'—להים המה והמכתב מכתב א'—להים הוא חרות על הלחת: וישמע יהושע את קול העם ברעה ויאמר אל מלחמה במחנה: ויאמר אין קול ענות גבורה ואין קול ענות חלושה קול ענות אנכי שמע: ויהי כאשר קרב אל המחנה וירא את העגל ומחלת ויחר אף משה וישלך מידו את הלחת וישבר אתם תחת ההר: שמות לב:טו-יט

And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand; the tablets were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d, engraved upon the tablets. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, There is a sound like war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of those who shout for mastery, nor is it the voice of those who cry for being overcome; but the sound of those who sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came near to the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing (flute); and Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets from his hands, and broke them beneath the mount. **Exodus 32:15-19**

(2) ויפן וירד. לעיל י"ט י"ד כתיב סתם וירד משה מן ההר. וכאן כתיב ויפן. והטעם דזה ברור שמשה חזר וירד אחורנית ופניו כלפי שכינה כדין היוצא מן הקודש. ולא ירא שמא יכשל באבן וכמו שסופר בגמרא יומא דנ"ג על רבא כד הוי מיפטר מרבי' הוי אזיל לאחורי' עד דמנגפן כרעי' ומיתווסן אסקופתא דבי רב יוסף דמא אבל כאן בתפשו את הלוחות בידו ירא שמא יכשל ויפול והלוחות יפלו מידי ח"ו ע"כ הפנה עצמו ומצדד פניו והולך לאחוריו: לחות כתובים משני עבריהם. לא היה מצד הפנים לבד אלא גם מפנים גם מאחור: מזה ומזה הם כתובים. נקראים מימין לשמאל ומשמאל לימין ואין זה אלא מעשה נסים. (עי' ירוש' שקלים פ"ו באורך). והנה כל השבח הכתוב על הלוחות. מקומם יותר לעיל בפסוק ויתן אל משה וגו' ולא במקום שבירתן. אלא בא הכתוב לבאר איך עשה משה כל הגדולות ליקח את העגל ולשרפו באש ולא עמד איש נגדו והרי את אהרן הכריחו עוד לעשות אלא משום שמשה התחכם ולא שבר את הלוחות בהיותו בהר כשומר לו ד' ממעש' העגל והוחלט אצלו לשברם וגם הבין כי כך רצונו ית' כמש"כ בס' דברים ט' י"ב והלאה. אלא משום שרצה משה לשבר את לבב העם ולהסעיר דעתם בראותם אשר משה משבר לעיניהם סגולה נפלאה כזו ויהיו נעצבים עד שלא ימצאו ידיהם למחות ביד משה על כל מה שעשה וכמו שמצינו בברכות רפ"ה דכי חזו רבנן דאייתא כסא דמוקרא בת ד' מאה זוזי וקתבר אעציבו. מכ"ש שנשבר לעיניהם סגולה שאין כמוה בעולם מש"ה סיפר הכתוב מה שהיה כדאי להסעיר לב העם ע"ז שהרי הלוחות היה כתובים משני עבריהם מזה ומזה והיו כל ישראל החונים מכל צד סביב ההר יכולין לקרותו: העמק דבר, שמות לב:טו

And Moses turned, and went down from the mount (Exodus 32:15): Above (Exodus 19:14) it is simply written, "And Moses went down from the mount," but here it is written, "[And Moses] *turned* [and went down from the mount].¹" The reason is that it is clear that Moshe went down backwards with his face towards the Shechina, just as one departs from the Sanctuary, and he wasn't afraid that he would stumble over a rock, as it is told regarding Rava (Yoma 53a) that as he departed from his Master and walked backwards, he banged his feet and the blood [from his feet] soiled the threshold of Rav Yosef. But now, as he was holding the tablets in his hand, he was afraid lest he stumble and fall with the tablets falling from his hands, G-d forbid. Therefore he turned his face to the side [to make sure that he saw where he was walking] and walked backwards. **The tablets were written on both their sides (ibid.):** It wasn't merely written on the inside surface but on both the inside and outside surfaces. **On the one side and on the other were they written (ibid.):** They were readable from right to left [on one side] and from left to right [on the other]. This is clearly a miracle. (See Talmud Yerushalmi, Shekalim Chapter 6) Now all of the praises that are written regarding the tablets should really have been written above, in the verse (Ex. 31:18), "And he gave to Moses, [when he finished talking with him upon Mount Sinai, two tablets of Testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of G-d]," and not [here] which is a description of their being broken. The explanation for this is that Scripture came to explain how it is that Moshe was able to accomplish all of these unusual acts, to take the Golden Calf and to burn it in fire, and yet no one stood up to oppose him. Behold these same people had [only recently] forced Aaron to make it. The reason is that Moshe acted with

forethought by not breaking the tablets while he was still on the mountain, when G-d told him about the Golden Calf, even though he had already, then, made up his mind to break them and he had understood that this was also G-d's will, as we explained (Deuteronomy 9:12). He wanted, however, to humble their hearts and to change their mindset by breaking this extraordinary treasure before their very eyes. [He realized] that they would be so depressed that they wouldn't be able to protest any of Moshe's actions. This is akin to what we find in Berachos, at the beginning of Chapter 5, that when the Rabbis saw how [Mar bar Ravina] brought an expensive cup of white glass and broke it before their eyes, they became depressed [i.e. more serious]. Most certainly that would have been the case when the people witnessed the breaking of such an unparalleled treasure, [as the tablets]. For that reason, Scripture relates why the [breaking of] tablets was able to turn around the hearts of the people. This was because the tablets were legible from both sides and the Jews from every side surrounding the mountain were able to read it. **Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:15**

(3) וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת קוֹל הָעָם בִּרְעָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל מֹשֶׁה קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בְּמַחֲנֵה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת גְּבוּרָה וְאֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת חֲלוּשָׁה קוֹל עֲנוֹת אֲנָכִי שָׁמַע: זֶה הַסֵּפֹר אִינוּ בּו דְּבַר לְעַנִּין הַעֲגַל לְפִי רֵאוֹת . . . אֲלֵא בֵּא לְלַמֵּד עַל מֵאֲמָרֵם הַנִּפְלֵא בִּס' ב"ב פְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה כְּפָנֵי חֲמָה פְּנֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כְּפָנֵי לְבָנָה. וּבֵאוּ בַּזֶּה הַמִּשְׁלַל לְבֵאֵר כִּי כִמוּ שֶׁאֵין בְּלִבָּנָה שׁוֹם אוֹר בַּעַת שֶׁהַחֲמָה מְזַרְחָת. וְאֵע"ג שִׁידַעְנוּ שֶׁגַם הַלְּבָנָה נִבְרָאָה לְהֵאִיר מ"מ בַּעַת שֶׁהַחֲמָה זּוֹרְחָת אֵינָה מִשְׁמֶשֶׁת כְּלוֹם בְּאוֹר. כִּךְ בַּעַת שֶׁהִיא מֹשֶׁה בְּאוֹרוֹ לֹא הִיא לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ שׁוֹם הָאָרֶז מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵע"ג שְׁנוּדַע הִיא שִׁיחִיהָ אוֹר הַמֵּאִיר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִרִי ע"כ עֲלָה עִם מֹשֶׁה לְהֵר מ"מ בַּעַת שֶׁזּוֹרַח מֹשֶׁה לֹא הִיא אוֹר לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ כְּלָל. עַד שֶׁהִיא מֹשֶׁה קְרוֹב לְמוֹת כְּמִש"כ בִּס' דְּבָרִים ל"א י"ד וְהֵלְאָה. וּבֵא הַכְּתוּב כֵּאֵן לְהֵרֵאוֹת אוֹתָנוּ אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִלְחָה לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ לְדַבֵּר לְפָנֵי מֹשֶׁה דְּבַר שִׁיחָה נוֹשֵׂא חַן אֵע"ג שֶׁהִיא מֹשֶׁה מִבֵּין בּוּ כִי הוּא מִשְׁכִּיל עַל דְּבַר לְאִשׁוֹר: הַעֲמַק דְּבַר, שְׁמוֹת לְבִיז

And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, There is a sound like war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of those who shout for mastery, nor is it the voice of those who cry for being overcome; but the sound of those who sing do I hear. (Exodus 32:17-18): This narrative doesn't seem to contain anything that is directly related to the incident of Golden Calf . . . It comes, however, to teach us about a [matter that is the subject of a]n extraordinary statement of our Sages (Bava Basra 75a): The countenance of Moshe was like that of the sun; the countenance of Yehoshua was like that of the moon. Alas, for such shame! Alas for such reproach! - With this analogy, our Sages wanted to explain to us that just as the moon was created to [serve us] with its illumination, and nonetheless, it doesn't provide us with illumination at the time when the sun is shining, so too, at the time when Moshe was giving off his illumination, Yehoshua wasn't provided by Heaven with any illumination, even though he was destined to become a luminary that would enlighten Israel. For that reason he accompanied Moshe as he went up to the mountain. Nevertheless, when the Moshe was giving off illumination, there wasn't any illumination given over to Yehoshua. It didn't occur until Moshe was close to death, as I wrote (Deuteronomy 31:14). Scripture is coming here to show us that Yehoshua wasn't successful in communicating to Moshe something that found favor in his eyes, despite the fact that Moshe knew that [Yehoshua] understood correctly that [which he was taught]. **Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:17**

(4) . . . היה סבור שעמלק בא עוד הפעם להלחם בישראל ואין זרעו של עשו נופל אלא ביד זרעה של רחל כדאמר פ' יש נוחלין, (בבא בתרא קכג:) ולכן היה ע"י יהושע שבא מאפרים בנו של יוסף, ויאמר משה כו' קול ענות אנכי שומע, שאתה לא שמעת רק אני שמעתי, ש"מ שבדידי תלוי הדבר ולכן התיצב כו' וישק את ב"י ודו"ק. ס' משך חכמה, שם

[Yehoshua] thought that Amalek was coming back again to do battle with Israel and [he knew] that the seed of Esau will only be defeated through the seed of Rachel, as it says in *Perek Yesh Nochlin* (see Bava Basra 123b). That is why [the first battle was waged] by Yehoshua who was descended from Ephraim, the son of Yosef. **And he said . . . the sound of those who sing do I hear (Ex. 32:18):** You didn't hear that sound, but it was I who heard it. Therefore, it is evident that the [resolution of the] matter is contingent upon my participation. Therefore [Moshe] stood fast and [broke the tablets, burnt the Calf, scattered its ashes over the water and] "made the people of Israel drink of it." **Meshech Chochma, ibid.**

(5) . . . הטעם כי משה אב בחכמה הוא ומכיר ניגוני הקולות, ואמר כי קול ענות הוא הנשמע אליו וכך אמרו בהגדה (במדרש רבה קהלת ט יא) שאמר לו משה מי שעתיד לנהוג שררה על ישראל אינו מבחין בין קול לקול והנה משה בענותנותו הגדולה לא הגיד הענין ליהושע, כי לא רצה לספר בגנותן של ישראל, אבל אמר לו כי קול שחוק הוא: רמב"ן, שמות לבי"ח

. . . The reason [that Moshe identified the sound] is that Moshe was an expert in all areas of wisdom and recognized the tone of sounds. This is why he said, "the sound of those who sing do I hear." This is what our Sages stated in the Hagadah (Midrash Rabbah, Koheles 9:11): Moshe said to Yehoshua: He who is destined to rule over Israel doesn't know the distinction between one sound and another! - Because of Moshe's great humility, he didn't want to relate to him [the information concerning this incident that had already been imparted to him by Hashem], because he didn't want to speak ill of Israel, but he did say that he hears the sound associated with levity (laughter). **Ramban, Exodus 32:18**

(6) וירא את העגל ומחולות ויחר אף משה. כשראה שהיו שמחים בקלוקל שעשו, כענין כי רעתכי אז תעלוזי ובזה התקצף ונואש שיוכל לתקן המעוות באופן שיחזרו לתמותם ויהיו ראויים לאותן הלוחות: ספורנו, שמות לבי"ח

He saw the calf, and the dancing (flute): (Exodus 32:19): He saw that they were overjoyed with the destruction that they had wrought, similar to [the verse] (Jeremiah 11:15), "You rejoice when you do evil." For this was he angry and despaired that he would be able to correct this perversion to the extent that their former state of purity would be restored and they would be worthy of [receiving] the tablets. **Seforno, Exodus 32:19**

(7) וירא את העגל ומחלת - מכל כלי זמר שהיו שם לא הזכיר אלא מחול, והטעם כי תמצא בכתוב שבעה מיני זמר שהם כנגד שבעה כוכבי לכת שצ"ח חנכ"ל, כנור כנגד שבתאי, תוף כנגד צדק, מחול כנגד מאדים, מנים כנגד חמה, עוגב כנגד נוגה, צלצלי שמע כנגד כוכב, תרועה כנגד לבנה, זהו שכתוב (תהלים קנ) הללוהו בתקע שופר הללוהו בנבל וכנור, הללוהו בתוף ומחול. הללוהו במנים ועוגב, הללוהו בצלצלי שמע הללוהו בצלצלי תרועה. והנה הם בין כלם תשעה מיני זמר כנגד תשעה גלגלים, ובעלי חכמת המוזיק"א יודעין לכוין כל מין ומין ממיני זמר הללו כנגד כל גלגל וגלגל, ושופר ונבל הנשארים בכתוב, השופר כנגד גלגל התשיעי המקיף, והנבל כנגד גלגל שמיני שבו הכוכבים, ומפני זה הזכיר במעשה העגל מחול יותר מכל שאר הכלים אשר היו שם, לפי

שהמחול כנגד כוכב מאדים כי היו במדבר במקום חורב שממה והכוכב הזה שולט עליו, וזהו שתמצא על הים (שמות טו) ותצאן כל הנשים אחריה בתפים ובמחלת כי היו שם נשים שלא היתה כוונתם לשמים, והתוף כנגד כוכב צדק, וזהו שכתוב (שם) ותקח מרים הנביאה אחות אהרן את התוף בידה, הזכיר אהרן וסמך לו את התוף לפי שאהרן היה כלו צדק כענין שכתוב (איוב כט) צדק לבשתי וילבשני: רבינו בחיי, שמות לבייט

He saw the calf, and the dancing (flute): (Exodus 32:19): Of all of the musical instruments that were there, the only instrument that was mentioned was the flute. The reason is that we find in Scripture seven types of musical instruments, each one corresponding to a different celestial body in our solar system, i.e. the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. The harp (*kinor*) corresponds to Saturn. The tambourine (*tof*) corresponds to Jupiter. The flute (*machol*) corresponds to Mars. The stringed instruments (*minim*) corresponds to the Sun. The pipe (*ugav*) corresponds to Venus. The sounding cymbals (*tzitzalei - shama*) correspond to Mercury. The loud clashing cymbals (*tziltzalei - terua*) correspond to the Moon. This is based on the verses in Scripture (Psalms 150:3-5), “Praise Him with the sound of the shofar! Praise Him with the harp and the lyre! Praise Him with the tambourine and dance (flute)! Praise Him with stringed instruments (organ) and the pipe! Praise Him with sounding cymbals! Praise Him with loud clashing cymbals (resonant trumpets)!” Now there are actually nine different instruments named, which correspond to the nine spheres (See Maimonides Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah Chapter 3:1) Scholars versed in the science of music knew the correspondence between each type of instrument and each individual sphere. The shofar and lyre, which remain without correspondence to the celestial bodies, correspond to the following: The shofar corresponds to the ninth sphere, [which moves all of the lower eight]. And the lyre corresponds to the eighth sphere which corresponds to the sphere which contains [all] the stars. For that reason, the flute was singled out from all of the other instruments that were there, since the flute corresponds to the planet Mars, for they were in the wilderness, a place of dryness and desolation, the place on earth where this planet dominates. For that reason, we find [after the parting of the Red] Sea (Exodus 15:20), “[And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand;] and all the women went out after her with tambourines and flutes (dancing), for there were women whose intention was not for the sake of Heaven [and relied upon the power of the flute, which corresponds to Mars]. The tambourine, however, corresponds to the planet Jupiter (*Tzedek*). For that reason it is written, Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand. Aaron was mentioned in conjunction with the tambourine as Aaron was the embodiment of *tzedek* - justice, similar to the verse (Job 29:14), “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a diadem.” **Rabbainu Bachya, Exodus 32:19**

(8) וישלך מידיו את הלחות. כבר נתבאר בס' דברים ט' י"ז שלא היה ההשלכה כמטה את ידיו ונופל מה שבהם אלא שלקחם בידיו והשליך בכח. וגם היה באופן שהבינו הכל שלא בדרך הטבע נעשה כך כמבואר שם: וישבר אותם תחת ההר. לא השליכם מידיו בהיותו במחנה אלא בחרי אף רץ בחזרה אל ההר ושם השליכם ושברם ולא היה בידם של ישראל למחות בו שהרי עוד לא מצאו לבכם לעבור הגבול והרי עוד לא משך השופר קולו וכדכתיב בס' דברים שם וההר בוער באש עד לב השמים וע"ש: העמק דבר, שמות לבייט

And he threw the tablets from his hands (Exodus 32:19): We have already explained (Deut. 9:17) that when he threw the tablets, he didn't just let go of his hands and let the tablets fall, but rather he took them in his hands and forcefully threw them down. It was also done in a way that was clear to all that it couldn't have been accomplished naturally, [without Divine assistance]. **And broke them beneath the mount (ibid.):** He didn't hurl them from his hands while he was

in the camp but rather he ran back to the mountain in extreme anger and threw them and broke them there. The people of Israel didn't have the power to prevent him from doing so, as they didn't have the temerity to cross over the boundary [and enter the confines of the mountain] and in addition, the sound of the shofar [to allow entrance to the area] hadn't sounded, as we wrote in our commentary to Deuteronomy, and the mountain was still burning with fire up to the heavens.

Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:19

F.

(1) וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָעֵגֶל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ וַיִּשְׂרֹף בְּאֵשׁ וַיִּטְחֵן עַד אֲשֶׁר דָּק וַיִּזֶר עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם וַיִּשְׁק אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל אַהֲרֹן מַה עָשִׂיתָ לָּךְ הַעַם הַזֶּה כִּי הִבֵּאתָ עָלֵינוּ חַטָּאת גְּדוֹלָה: וַיֹּאמֶר אַהֲרֹן אֶל יַחַד אֶף אֲדַנִּי אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ אֶת הָעַם כִּי בָרַע הוּא: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לִי עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ אֲ—לֵהִימ אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לְפָנֵינוּ כִּי זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה הָיָה לוֹ: וַאֲמַר לָהֶם לְמִי זֶהב הַתְּפָרְקוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ לִי וְאִשְׁלָכְהוּ בְּאֵשׁ וַיֵּצֵא הָעֵגֶל הַזֶּה: וַיִּרְא מֹשֶׁה אֶת הָעַם כִּי פָרַע הוּא כִּי פָרַע אַהֲרֹן לְשִׁמְצָה בְּקִמְיָהֶם: וַיַּעֲמֵד מֹשֶׁה בַשַּׁעַר הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מִי לַד' אֵלַי וַיֵּאֲסֹפוּ אֵלָיו כָּל בְּנֵי לִוִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם כֹּה אָמַר ד' אֲ—לֵהִי יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁימוּ אִישׁ חֲרָבוֹ עַל יָרְכוֹ עֲבְרוּ וְשׁוּבוּ מִשַּׁעַר לְשַׁעַר בַּמַּחֲנֶה וְהִרְגוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו וְאִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת קָרְבוֹ: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי לִוִּי כַדְבָר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל מִן הָעַם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּשְׁלֹשֶׁת אַלְפֵי אִישׁ: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֵלֹא יָדַעְתֶּם הַיּוֹם לַד' כִּי אִישׁ בָּבְנוּ וּבְאָחִיו וְלָתֵת עֲלֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּרָכָה: וַיְהִי מִמַּחֲרַת וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָעַם אַתֶּם חָטַאתֶם חַטָּאת גְּדוֹלָה וַעֲתָה אֵעֲלֶה אֶל ד' אוֹלֵי אֲכַפְרָה בְּעַד חַטַּאתְכֶם: וַיֵּשֶׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל ד' וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי חָטָא הָעַם הַזֶּה חַטָּאת גְּדוֹלָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי זָהָב: וַעֲתָה אִם תִּשָּׂא חַטַּאתֶם וְאִם אֵין מַחֲנֵי נָא מִסְפָּרָךְ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ: וַיֹּאמֶר ד' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא לִי אֲמַחֲנוּ מִסְפָּרֵי: וַעֲתָה לָךְ | נָחַה אֶת הָעַם אֶל אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ הִנֵּה מִלְּאֲכִי יִלְךְ לְפָנֶיךָ וּבַיּוֹם פָּקְדֵי וּפְקֻדָּתֵי עֲלֵהֶם חַטַּאתֶם: וַיִּגַּף ד' אֶת הָעַם עַל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶת הָעֵגֶל אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אַהֲרֹן: שְׁמוֹת לִבִּי—לֵה

And he took the calf which they had made, and burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it upon the water, and made the people of Israel drink of it. And Moses said to Aaron, What did this people do to you, that you have brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord burn hot; you know the people, that they are set on evil. For they said to me, Make us gods, which shall go before us; and as for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what became of him. And I said to them, Whoever has any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me; then I casted it into the fire, and there came out this calf. And when Moses saw that the people were unclothed; for Aaron had made them unclothed to their shame among their enemies; Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who is on the L-rd's side? Let him come to me." And all the Levites gathered themselves together to him. And he said to them, Thus said the L-rd G-d of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the Levites did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the L-rd, every man against his son, and against his brother; that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day. And it came to pass on the next day, that Moses said to the people, You have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up to the L-rd; perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned to the L-rd, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I beg You, from Your book which You have written. And the L-rd said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot from My book. Therefore now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, My Angel shall go before you; nevertheless in the day when I punish I will punish their sin upon them. And the L-rd plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made. **Exodus 32:20-35**

(2) וישק את בני ישראל – (יומא סו:) נתכוין לבודקם כסוטות שלש מיתות נידונו שם אם יש עדים והתראה בסייף כמשפט אנשי עיר הנדחת שהן מרובים עדים בלא התראה במגפה שנאמר ויגוף ד' את העם לא עדים ולא התראה בהדרוקן שבדקום המים וצבו בטניהם: רש"י שמות לב:כ

He made the people of Israel drink of it (Exodus 32:20): He intended to examine them like one examines a suspected adulteress. They were sentenced there with three different deaths: If there were witnesses and a warning, they were sentenced to die by [beheading by] the sword, similar to the sentence of those inhabitants of a condemned city, when the majority [worshipped idols]. If there were witnesses present, but a warning wasn't administered, then they died by plague, as it says (Ex. 32:35), "And the L-rd plagued the people." If there were no witnesses and no warning, then they were afflicted with dropsy, (swelling due to excessive accumulation of fluid in the tissues), for the water tested them and their stomachs swelled. (Yoma 66b) **Rashi, ibid.**

(3) הבאת עליו חטאה גדולה. ששמחו בקלקול במחולות מפני שקבעת להם חג ליום המחרת, וזה הוא רע מן הפשע והמרד שעשו בעגל, ועל זה בקש רחמים יותר, כאמרו אתם חטאתם חטאה גדולה וכן בתפלתו אמר אנא חטא העם הזה חטאה גדולה וכן בסדר שלש עשרה מדות הזכיר עון ופשע וחטאה וכן בתפלתו שם וסלחת לעוננו ולחטאתנו, ולכן אמר אף על פי שנקהלו עליך להכריחך לעשות להם העגל, מה עשו לך שהוצרכת לקבוע להם חג ליום המחרת, שזאת היתה סבת המחולות שעשו לשמחת העגל שהיתה רעה מעשייתו: ספורנו, שמות לב:כא

You have brought so great a sin upon them (Exodus 32:21): for they celebrated through the destructive action of the dance (flute). This was as a direct result of your setting up a holiday for them on the following day. This was worse than the actual crime and rebellion of making the calf. For this [crime, Moshe] had to make a more intense request for Divine mercy, similar to his statement (Exodus 32:30), "You have sinned a great sin." Likewise, in his prayer he said (ibid. 31), "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin." Similarly [we find that] in the thirteen attributes of mercy He mentioned (Ex. 34:7), "Iniquity and transgression (rebellion) and sin." In the same vein, in his prayer, he said (ibid. 9), "Pardon our iniquity and our sin." Therefore, [he told Aaron,] even though they gathered about you to force you to make the calf, what did they do that made you feel compelled to set up for them a holiday on the next day, for this was the cause of the dancing (playing the flute) in celebration over the calf, which was a more serious crime than actually fashioning the calf. **Seforno, Ex. 32:21**

(4) ואמר להם למי זהב. לא יכולתי לעמוד נגדם ואך אמרתי דבר להשקיט רוחם ונעשה שוב במהירות נפלאה ויצא מה שיצא: העמק דבר, שמות לב:כד

And I said to them, Whoever has any gold (Exodus 32:24): I wasn't able to stand up against them. However, I told them something to quiet down their spirit. [Unfortunately,] it was made, with extraordinary speed and produced what it produced. **Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:24**

(5) כי פרוע הוא. מגולה ומפורסם לרוע בהתגלות לכו בזה: כי פרעה אהרן. גלה שאין ביניהם צדיקים, שאם היו שם צדיקים עוזרים לאהרן כאשר נקהלו עליו לא היה אהרן עושה העגל כלל: לשמחה בקמיהם. לשם רע בין אויביהם, שיאמרו עליהם שלא נאמנו בכריתם ושביניהם אין עושה טוב אין גם אחד, ושלא נשאו פני נביא ונשיא בתוכם. וזה כי אף על פי שלא כלם ולא רובם נקהלו על אהרן היו כלם לשמחה על שלא מיחו בקמים: ספורנו, שמות לב:כה

And when Moses saw that the people were unclothed (Exodus 32:25): They were exposed and widely known for their evil, as their hearts (inner thoughts) became exposed through this. **For Aaron had made them unclothed (ibid.):** He exposed the fact that they didn't contain within themselves righteous people, for had there been righteous people, they would have aided Aaron when the others banded about him, and Aaron wouldn't have made the calf at all. **To their shame among their enemies (ibid.):** i.e. creating a bad name for themselves amongst their enemies, for they will say that they were not faithful in upholding their covenant and that there is not one good person amongst them, as not one of them stood up for a prophet and leader who was in their midst. Now even though neither all of them nor even most of them banded about Aaron, they were all a source of shame, for they didn't protest against those that stood up [against Aaron]. **Seforno, Exodus 32:25**

(6) מי לה' אלי. אין הכוונה מי הוא שלא עבד עבודת כוכבים. שהרי רוב ישראל לא עבדו עבודת כוכבים. אלא מי יודע בעצמו שהוא אך לד' למסור נפשו וכל אשר לו לאהבת ד' וכבודו. העמק דבר, שמות לב:כו

[Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said,] **Who is on the L-rd's side? [Let him come to me.] (Exodus 32:26):** The intention was not to single out those who didn't worship idols, as most of Israel did not worship idols. Rather, [he meant to say] that he who knows that he is devoted solely to G-d and is willing to give up his life and all his possessions for His love and honor, [should come to him]. **Haamek Davar, Exodus 32:26**

(7) מלאו ידכם היום לד'. הקנו שלמות לידיכם היום שתהיינה מוכנות לעבדו במקדשו: כי איש בבנו ובאחיו. כי כל אחד מכם כבר הוקדש לד' בבנו, בענין המילה שעשיתם במדבר, ובאחיו, בהריגת היום ולכן מלאו ידכם בטוב הכונה והשלימו הכנתכם לד' לעבודתו: ספורנו, שמות לב:כט

[For Moses had said,] **Consecrate yourselves today to the L-rd (Exodus 32:29):** Acquire perfection for yourselves today, as you should be prepared to serve Him in His Sanctuary. **Every man against his son, and against his brother (ibid.):** For everyone of you has sanctified yourselves through your sons, through the circumcision which you performed in the wilderness, and through, "his brother," through killing this day. As a result, you have consecrated yourselves with goodly intentions and have completed your preparation for G-d and His service. **Seforno, Exodus 32:29**

G.

(1) וְאֶתְנַפֵּל לְפָנֵי ד' פְּרַאשְׁנָה אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לָחֵם לֹא אָכַלְתִּי וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתִיתִי עַל כָּל חַטָּאתְכֶם אֲשֶׁר חָטַאתֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינַי ד' לְהַכְעִיסוֹ: כִּי יִגְרַתִּי מִפְּנֵי הָאֵף וְהַחֲמָה אֲשֶׁר קִצַּף ד' עָלֵיכֶם לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם וַיִּשְׁמַע ד' אֵלַי גַּם בַּפֶּעַם הַהוּא: וּבְאֶהְרֹן הַתְּאֵנָף ד' מְאֹד לְהַשְׁמִידוֹ וְאֶתְפַּלֵּל גַּם בְּעַד אֶהְרֹן בְּעַת הַהוּא: וְאֵת חַטָּאתְכֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם אֵת הָעֵגֹל לְקַחְתִּי וְאֲשֶׁר אֶתוֹ | בָּאֵשׁ וְאָכַת אֶתוֹ טָחוֹן הֵיטֵב עַד אֲשֶׁר דַּק לְעַפֵּר וְאֲשַׁלֵּף אֵת עֲפָרוֹ אֶל הַנַּחַל הַיַּרְדֵּן מִן הָהָר: . . . וְאֶתְנַפֵּל לְפָנֵי ד' אֵת אַרְבָּעִים הַיּוֹם וְאֵת אַרְבָּעִים הַלַּיְלָה אֲשֶׁר הִתְנַפְּלִיתִי כִּי אָמַר ד' לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם: וְאֶתְפַּלֵּל אֵל ד' וְאָמַר אֲ-דָנִי יְ-הוָה אֵל תְּשַׁחַת עִמָּךְ וְנַחֲלֶתְךָ אֲשֶׁר פָּדִיתָ בְּגִדְלֶךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה: זְכֹר לְעַבְדֶּיךָ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלְיַעֲקֹב אֵל תִּפְּן אֵל קָשִׁי הָעַם הַזֶּה וְאֵל רִשְׁעוֹ וְאֵל חַטָּאתוֹ: פֶּן יֵאמְרוּ הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָנוּ מִשָּׁם מִבְּלֵי יָכֹלֶת ד' לְהַבְיֵאֵם אֵל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּר לָהֶם וּמִשְׁנֵאתוֹ אוֹתָם הוֹצִיאֵם לְהַמְתֵּם בְּמִדְבָּר: וְהֵם עִמָּךְ וְנַחֲלֶתְךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ בְּכַחַד הַגְּדָל וּבְזִרְעֶךָ הַנְּטוּיָה: בְּעַת הַהוּא אָמַר ד' אֵלַי פֶּסֶל לָךְ שְׁנֵי לוֹחַת אֲבָנִים פְּרַאשְׁנִים וְעֵלָה אֵלַי הָהָרָה וְעָשִׂיתָ לָךְ אֲרוֹן עֹץ: וְאָכַתְבָּ עַל הַלּוֹחַת אֵת הַדְּבָרִים

אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל הַלַּחַת הָרִאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ וְשָׁמַתָּם בְּאֶרֶץ: וְאֶעֱשׂ אֶרֶץ עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְאֶפְסַל שְׁנֵי לַחַת אֲבָנִים כְּרִאשׁוֹנִים וְאֶעֱלֶה הַהָרָה וְשְׁנֵי הַלַּחַת בְּיָדַי: וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל הַלַּחַת כַּמִּכְתָּב הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת עֲשֻׁרֵת הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ד' אֵלֵיכֶם בְּהַר מִתְּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ בְּיוֹם הַקְּהָל וַיִּתְּנֶם ד' אֵלַי: וְאֶפֶן וְאָרַד מִן הָהָר וְאָשַׁם אֶת הַלַּחַת בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי וַיְהִי שָׁם כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי ד': . . . וְאֲנֹכִי עֲמַדְתִּי בְּהָר כַּיָּמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה וַיִּשְׁמַע ד' אֵלַי גַּם בַּפֶּעַם הַהוּא לֹא אָבָה ד' הַשְׁחִיתֶךָ: דְּבָרִים ט:יח-כא, כה-כט, יא-ה, י

And I fell down before the L-rd, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I did not eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which you sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the L-rd, to provoke Him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, with which the L-rd was angry against you to destroy you. But the L-rd listened to me at that time also. And the L-rd was so very angry with Aaron that He was ready to destroy him; and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. And I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire, and crushed it, and ground it very small, until it was as small as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mount. . . . Thus I fell down before the L-rd forty days and forty nights, as I fell down; because the L-rd had said He would destroy you. I prayed therefore to the L-rd, and said, O L-rd G-d, destroy not Your people and Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not to the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin; Lest the land from which You brought us out say, Because the L-rd was not able to bring them into the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, which You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your stretched out arm. At that time the L-rd said to me, Cut two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me into the mount, and make an ark of wood. And I will write on the tablets the words that were in the first tablets which you broke, and you shall put them in the ark. And I made an ark of shittim wood, and cut two tablets of stone like the first, and went up to the mount, having the two tablets in my hand. And He wrote on the tablets, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the L-rd spoke to you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the L-rd gave them to me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as the L-rd commanded me. . . . And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the L-rd listened to me at that time also, and the L-rd would not destroy you.

Deuteronomy 9:18-21, 25-29, 10:1-5, 10

(2) וַתִּנְפַל לִפְנֵי ד' כְּרִאשׁוֹנָה אַרְבָּעִים וָגו'. הוֹסִיף מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹכִיחַ כִּי כִּמוֹ שֶׁהָיָה קִשָּׁה הַדְּבָר שִׁנְתָנוּ הַלּוּחֹת וְהָיָה נִצְרָךְ מ' יוֹם. כִּךְ הָיָה קִשָּׁה לִפְעוֹל שֶׁלֹּא יִתְבַטֵּל הַבְּרִית שֶׁהָיָה עִמָּכֶם לְגַמְרִי. כ"ז הוֹכַחָה גַּמּוּרָה שֶׁמִּדֵּה ד' קִשָּׁה לְבַטֵּל וְאֵינְךָ בִּטְחוֹן כַּמִּשְׁכָּח לְעֵיל. וּפִי כְּרִאשׁוֹנָה אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה אֵינְךָ הַכוֹוֹנָה שֶׁהַתְּפִלָּה בַּתְּמִידוֹת אַרְבָּעִים מַעֲלָע שֶׁזֶּה א"א בְּשׁוֹם אֹפֶן. וְגַם אֵינּוּ כְּרִאשׁוֹנָה שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה תְּפִלָּה אֲלֵא שְׁעָה קִטְנָה. וּבִס' שְׁמוֹת ל"ב ל' הַבְּאֵתִי פְּרָקִי דְר"א פִּמ"ו שֶׁבְּכָל אוֹתָם מ' יוֹם אֲמַצְעִים הָיָה לְמֹשֶׁה עֶסֶק בְּמַחְנֵה. וּכ"כ הַגְּר"א בְּפִי סֵע"ר אֲלֵא שְׁפִי כְּרִאשׁוֹנָה הֵינְנוּ שְׁעָלָה לְהָר בְּכָל יוֹם לְהַתְּפַלֵּל וְאַח"כּ יֵרֵד. וְלִי נִרְאָה דֵּה"פ כִּמוֹ בְּרִאשׁוֹנָה שֶׁאֲמַר לִי ד' לֶךְ רֵד מִגְּדוּלְתֶךָ. וְשֵׁנִיתִי דְרָכִי לְהַתְּפַלֵּל תְּפִלָּה מִיּוֹחַדָּת שֶׁל לְמַה ד' יַחֲרָה אִפֶּךָ בְּעַמְךָ וְגו' וּבַתּוֹךְ תְּפִלָּה קְבוּעָה דּוּקָא וּמִשְׁ"ה לֹא הַקְּדִים שֶׁבַח כִּמוֹ שֶׁעָשָׂה בַּתְּפִלָּה דִּפ' וְאַתְחַנֵּן וְכַדְאִיתָא בְּעִבּוּדָת כּוֹכְבִים ד"ח דְּכִךְ הַדִּין אֲלֵא מִשׁוֹם שֶׁהַתְּפִלָּתִי תְּפִלָּה קְבוּעָה שִׁישׁ בּוֹ שֶׁלֹּשׁ רִאשׁוֹנוֹת וְזֵהוּ שֶׁבַח כַּמִּשְׁכָּח שֶׁם בִּס' שְׁמוֹת בַּפְּסוּק וַיַּחַל מֹשֶׁה. כִּךְ בִּמ' יוֹם הִלְלוּ אֶע"ג שֶׁכִּבְר הַנְּחֵם ד' עַל הַכְּלִיּוֹן מ"מ הֵייתִי בִּירִידָה מִגְּדוּלְתִי. וְהַתְּפִלָּתִי בְּכָל יוֹם וְלִילָה תְּפִלָּה קְבוּעָה וְבוֹ תְּפִלָּה מִיּוֹחַדָּת הַכְּתוּבָה לְהִלֵּךְ פְּסוּק כ"ו וּמִשְׁ"ה גַּם כֹּאֵן לֹא הַקְּדִים שֶׁבַח. וְהָא שֶׁהַתְּפִלָּה

משה הרבה פעמים הוא משום דכל מה שמרבים בתפלה נשמעת יותר כדאיתא ביומא דף כ"ט א':
 לחם לא אכלתי וגו'. עוד הייתי בתענית כמו בעת צרה ונפיש ריתחא: העמק דבר, דברים ט"ז:

And I fell down before the L-rd, as at the first . . . (Deuteronomy 9:18): Moshe continued on to prove that just as it was difficult [for him] when he was given the first set of tablets, which demanded that he be there [on the mountain] for forty days, so too it was difficult for him to have effected [the continuation of the covenant,] and to prevent the total rescinding of the original covenant. All of this is a clear proof that it is difficult to revoke the [effects of the] attribute of judgement and there is no guarantee that it can be accomplished, as I have written before. The meaning of, "as at the first," refers to the time period of forty days and forty nights. It does not mean that he prayed for forty days and nights without stop. That is something that is totally impossible. It also wasn't similar to the first [period in regards to prayer] as [the first was] only devoted to prayer for a short period. In the book of Exodus (32:30) I quote from the Midrash Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer (Chapter 46) that during the entire middle period of forty days Moshe was involved in matters pertaining to the camp. So too does the Gaon of Vilna write in his commentary to Seder Olam Rabbah. He explains, however, that it was similar to the first period in that every day he went up to the mountain to pray and afterwards he descended. To me it seems that the [correct] interpretation is, that just as in the first period, when G-d told me, "Descend from your position of leadership (greatness)," I changed my normal pattern [of prayer] and prayed a special prayer (Exodus 32:11), "L-rd, why does your anger burn hot against your people etc." and I did this specifically in the middle of a regular prayer, (it is for that reason that Moshe didn't preface his request [for atonement] with words of praise, as he did when he prayed in Parshas V'Eschanan, as it is stated in Avodah Zara 8a, which is the proper thing to do, because he had already done so as part of the regular prayer, as I wrote in Exodus (Ex. 32:11)), so too, during the these forty days, even though G-d had recanted from totally decimating [Israel], nonetheless I was lowered from my position of leadership and when I prayed the regular daily prayer, I inserted the special prayer which is written in verses 26-29: [O L-rd G-d, destroy not Your people and Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not to the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin; Lest the land from which You brought us out say, Because the L-rd was not able to bring them into the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, which You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your stretched out arm.] It is for that reason that he didn't preface that prayer with words of praise, [as it was in the middle of a regular prayer that already had been prefaced with words of praise]. The reason Moshe prayed repeatedly was because prayer that is repeated is more effective. [R. Elazar said in the name of R. Binyamin b. Yapheth: Why is the prayer of the righteous compared to a hind? To tell you that just as with the hind, as long as it grows, its antlers form additional branches every year, so with the righteous, the longer they abide in prayer, the more will their prayer be heard. (Yoma 29a)] **I did not eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which you sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the L-rd, to provoke Him to anger (Deuteronomy 9:18):** In addition, I was fasting, as one does at the time of distress when there is much Divine anger. **Haamek Davar, Deuteronomy 9:18**

(3) את ארבעים היום וגו'. כבר נתבאר הכוונה בכל עת תפלה קבועה. ושעה אחת ביום מיקרי יום ושעה אחת בלילה מקרי לילה כמש"כ ס"פ צו: כי אמר ד' להשמיד אתכם. לא לכלות ולמחות את שמם כ"א להשמיד את הדור הזה כמש"כ לעיל: העמק דבר, דברים ט"ז:

[Thus I fell down before the L-rd] forty days and forty nights (Deut. 9:25): It has already been explained that this prayer was said in the middle of a regular prayer. [Also] one hour in the day is referred to as “day” and one hour at night is referred to as “night”, as I have written at the end of Parshas Tzav. **Because the L-rd had said He would destroy you (ibid.):** Not to utterly destroy and blot out their name, but rather to annihilate that generation, as I wrote previously. **Haamek Davar, Deuteronomy 9:25**

(4) בעת ההיא - בסוף ארבעים יום שהזכיר נתרצה לו ואמר פסל לך: ועשית לך ארון עץ - ואעש ארון תחלה ואח"כ ואפסל שני לוחות אבנים, כדי שיהיה לי מקום מזומן להניח כשארד עם הלוחות, שאם איני עושה ארון תחלה היכן אניחם. וקבלו ז"ל בארון זה שהוא הארון שעשה משה ולא הארון שעשה בצלאל במלאכת המשכן. הארון זה שעשה משה היה לשעה כדי שיהא מזומן לתת הלוחות לתוכו מיד כשירד מן ההר עד שנעשה ארון בצלאל הנעשה לדורות, זה של משה היה יוצא עמהם למלחמה, של בצלאל לא היו מוציאים אותו כלל אלא בימי יהושע בלבד הוא שהוציאוהו על פי הדבור, וכשהוציאוהו מעצמם בימי עלי לקראת פלשתים נענשו עליו ונשבה, ועליו חרדו פלשתים ואמרו (שמואל א ד) מי יצילנו מיד הא-להים האדירים האלה, כי לא היתה כזאת תמול שלשום. בארון זה של משה היו מונחין לוחות ושברי לוחות עד שנעשה הארון של בצלאל שנתן בו לוחות אחרונות בלבד, הוא שכתוב (שמות כה) ונתת אל הארון את העדות אשר אתן אליך, ומה שאמרו בבבא בתרא פרק קמא אין בארון רק שני לוחות וגו', אין מעוט אחר מעוט אלא לרבות שברי לוחות שמונחין בארון, זה היה אחר שנבנה ביהמ"ק, שהרי בביהמ"ק לוחות ושברי לוחות מונחין בארון שעשה בצלאל: רבינו בחיי, דברים י"א

At that time [the L-rd said to me] (Deuteronomy 10:1): At the end of the previous mentioned forty days, G-d accepted his plea and told him, “Cut [two tablets of stone].” **Make an ark of wood (ibid.):** i.e. “I first made the ark and afterwards I cut out the two tablets of stone in order that when I come down with the tablets there be a place already set up to put them. Because if I don’t first make the ark, where will I put them?” Our Sages, of blessed memory, have received a tradition that the ark which Moshe made was not the ark that Betzalel made as part of the work of the Mishkan (Sanctuary). The ark that Moshe made was temporary, in order to have a place already set up when he came down from the mountain to put away the tablets [and to use it] until the permanent ark that Betzalel would make would be available. The one that Moshe made would go out with them in battle. The one that Betzalel made never went out, except during the days of Yehoshua, and that was done because of a specific Divine communication. And when they took it out on their own, during the time of Eli, to meet the Philistines [in battle], they were punished and the ark was captured. [When it was taken out] the Philistines were very frightened, and said (Samuel I 4:8), “[Woe to us!] Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods?” This is because such a thing was totally unprecedented in the immediate past. In this [temporary] ark of Moshe’s, the [latter] tablets and the broken tablets were resting until the ark of Betzalel was made. Only the latter tablets were then placed in them. This is what is meant by the verse (Exodus 25:16), “ And you shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you.” If so, what is the meaning of the statement in Bava Basra, in the first chapter (14a-b), “What then do I make of the words (Kings I 8:9), “There was nothing in the ark except [the two tables of stone which Moses put there]”? This intimates [based upon the hermeneutic rule that a limitation following a limitation intimates the presence of something which is not mentioned (*ain miut acher miut ele l’rabos*) that the fragments of the [first] tablets were [also] deposited in the ark.”? This occurred after the Temple was built, for in the Temple, both sets of tablets were in the ark that Betzalel built. **Rabbainu Bachya 10:1**