

תלמוד-תורה ביחד ממרחק
TORAH-STUDY TOGETHER FROM AFAR

March 06, 2021



"The answers we receive, the interpretations we develop, are all dependent on the questions we ask; the experiences we bring; and the preferences we have."

– Amy-Jill Levine & Marc Zvi Brettler

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסּוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

Parashah Stats

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Weekly Portion:</u> | <i>Ki Tissa-Parah</i> |
| <u>Consists of:</u> | Exodus 30:11-34:35 |
| <u>Sequence—</u> | |
| <u>in annual Torah cycle:</u> | 21 st of 54 |
| <u>in Book of Exodus:</u> | 9 th of 11 |



- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Exodus 32:1-8a

Context: *Exodus, second of the Five Books of the Torah, is an account of how God liberated the Israelites from Egypt and entered into a Covenant with us at Mount Sinai, and a record of the legislations they undertook for the conduct of the society they were to establish in the Promised Land.*

Content: *This week's portion details the disastrous aftermath of the making of the Sinai Covenant. During the forty days Moses is communing with God atop of the Mountain, finalizing the details of the Israelite Constitution and the specifications for the portable shrine which will be the Abode of the Divine in the midst of the Israelite camp, the restless people grow tired of waiting and make a god to pray to: a calf molded of gold.*

We touch on a selection from that Torah portion only en passant, on the way to a discussion of the special Torah and Haftarah selections that are also assigned to today by virtue of its being "Shabbat Parah," the ceremonial and conceptual prologue to Passover.

| Ritual pattern | Torah portion | Special designation |
|----------------|---|---|
| this Saturday | - Shabbat " <i>Ki Tissa'</i> " | " <i>Parah</i> " |
| next Saturday | - Shabbat " <i>vaYaq'heil</i> " | " <i>haChodesh</i> " (announce New Moon of Nissan) |
| two weeks | - Shabbat " <i>P'qudel</i> " | |
| three weeks | - Shabbat " <i>vaYiqra</i> " | " <i>haGadol</i> " (immediately before Passover) |
| four weeks | - Shabbat " <i>Chol haMo'eid</i> " (intermediate Shabbat of Passover) | |

- more follows

I) from this Week's *Parashah* – Exodus 32:1-8a -

32:1] - Now when the people saw that Moses was so long **in coming back down** from the Mountain, the people ganged up on Aaron and demanded of him: “**Arise**, and **make us gods** who **will go** before us. Because that Moses guy, who **brought us up** out of the land of Egypt— we don't know what happened to him.”

וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי-בִשֵׁשׁ מִשָּׁה לָרְדָתָהּ מִן-הַהָר וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם עַל-אֶהֱרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם עֲשֵׂה-לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לְפָנֵינוּ כִּי-זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מָה-הָיָה לוֹ :

| | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------------|
| Genesis 1:1 | בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים | verb - singular |
| 3x in TaNaCH | וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים | pronoun - common singular |
| 23x in TaNaCH | וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים | |
| Exodus 20:2 | אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם | |

32:2] - Aaron told them: “Break out the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives and sons and daughters, and bring them to me.” [32:3] - So all the people withdrew the golden earrings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. [32:4] - Accepting it from them, he formed it and finished it with a chisel to make it into a molded calf. [Seeing which,] **they declared**: “**These are** your gods, O Israel, which **brought you up** out of the land of Egypt!”

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלֶהֶם אֶהֱרֹן פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשֵׁיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם וְהָבִיאוּ אֵלָי וַיִּתְּפְרוּ כָל-הָעָם אֶת-נְזָמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל-אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּקַּח מֵיָדָם וַיַּצַּר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסַּכָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם :

32:5] - Seeing this, Aaron built an altar before it. Then Aaron proclaimed: “Tomorrow is **a feast day to The Eternal One**.” [32:6] - So they all woke early the next day to offer burnt-offerings and to present celebration offerings. Then the people sat to eat and drank, after which **they arose** to have an orgy.

וַיֵּרָא אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֶהֱרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר : וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ מִמָּחָרֶת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׂוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וּשְׂתוּ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק :



צַחֵק | I / קָל / simple “laugh; sport; play”
 צַחֵק | III / פִּיעַל / intensive “play around”

The Israelites Worship the Golden Calf
 by Nicholas Poussin, c. 1635

32:7] - The Eternal One declared to Moses:
 “Go, **get back down there**— for your people,
 whom you **brought up** out of the land of Egypt,
have completely screwed things up.

וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּךְ-רָד כִּי
 שָׁחַת עִמָּךְ אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ
 מִצְרַיִם:

| Homophonic verb roots | |
|-----------------------|--|
| ש-ח-ט “slaughter” | ש-ח-ת “spoil; ruin; violate; corrupt; pervert” |

[32:8a] - They have quickly **turned aside**
 from the way which I have instructed them.”

סָרוּ מֵהַיָּם הַדְּרֹךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִם

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>A) Exodus 8:22 -</p> <p>הֲוֹ נִזְבַּח אֶת-תּוֹעֵבֹת מִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִסְקְלֵנוּ</p> <p>Look, if we sacrifice in their presence what the Egyptians consider to be blasphemous, will they not stone us?</p> | <p>B) Exodus 12:6-7 -</p> <p>וְשָׁחַטוּ אֹתוֹ כָּל קְהַל עֲדַת-יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּין הָעַרְבִּים וְלָקְחוּ מִן- הַדָּם וְנָתְנוּ עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזֹת וְעַל- הַמִּשְׁקוּף</p> <p>The entire assemblage of the cohort of Israel are to slaughter it, tak- ing some of its blood and putting it on the lintel and the two door-posts.</p> | <p>C) Deuteronomy 16:2 -</p> <p>וְזָבַחְתָּ פֶסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ צֹאן וּבָקָר בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה לְשִׁכְּוֹ שְׁמוֹ שָׁם</p> <p>You are to sacrifice the Passover offering to The Eternal One— whether from the flock or the herd— in that place which The Eternal One will have chosen.</p> |
|---|--|--|

לֹא-יְהִיֶּה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פְּנֵי
 D) Exodus 20:3-5 - You may have no **other gods** besides Me.
לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת
וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ
You may not make yourself an idol (nor any other kind of image) of anything in the
heavens above, nor on the earth below, nor in the waters below the earth;
לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם
you may not bow down to any such, nor may you worship them.

סָרוּנוּ מִמִּצְוֹתַיִךְ וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים וְלֹא שָׁוָה לָנוּ.
 E) *Viddu'i* (Confessional) for Yom Kippur Afternoon – **We have turned aside** from
 Your good commandments and ordinances. Yet doing so has availed us nothing.
וְאַתָּה צְדִיק עַל כָּל הַבָּא עָלֵינוּ, כִּי אָמַת עָשִׂיתָ וְאַנְחָנוּ הָרָשָׁעִינוּ.
You are righteous in all that befalls us; for You have been steadfastly true, while we
have done wantonly.
 מֵה נֹאמַר לְפָנֶיךָ יוֹשֵׁב מְרוֹם, וּמֵה נִסְפַּר לְפָנֶיךָ שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים.

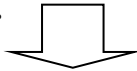
What, then, shall we say before You, dwelling On High; what could we declare in Your Presence, abiding in Heaven?

הלא כל הנסתרות והנגלות אתה יודע.

Do You not already know both every concealed and every revealed thing?

וביום פקדי ופקדתי עליהם חטאתם

F) Exodus 32:34 – On the day of My accounting, **I shall take this, their sin, into account.**



עתה שמעתי אליך מלכלותם יחד ותמיד תמיד כשאפקוד עליהם עונותיהם ופקדתי עליהם מעט מן העון הזה עם שאר העונות

G) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) on Exodus 32:34 - [God is telling Moses here:] “For the moment, I am responding to your request not to destroy them altogether. But continually hereafter, whenever I take stock of their transgressions, I will enter into the ledger at the same time a piece of this sin, combined with their other misdeeds.”

ואין פורענות באה על ישראל שאין בה קצת מפרעון עון העגל

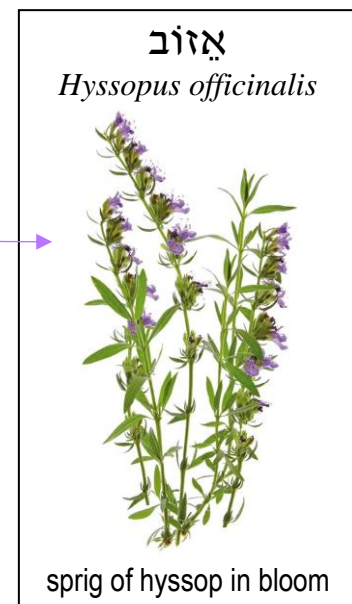
So it is that there is no punishment that has ever come upon Israel that does not contain within it a little of the penalty for the sin of the Golden Calf.



II) unassociated – special Torah assignment for “*Shabbat Parah*,” this week before Shabbat “*haChodesh*” - Numbers 19:1-22 [excerpt] -

Instruct the Israelites to bring you a **red heifer— unblemished, and on which no yoke has ever been lain**— and give it to the Priest El’Azar. It is to be taken outside the encampment, and slaughtered in his presence.

The Priest El’Azar is to sprinkle some of its blood seven times in the direction of The Tent of Meeting, after which the heifer is to be incinerated whole— including its hide, flesh, blood, and dung— together with cedar wood, **hyssop**, and wool dyed crimson [as agents of ceremonial purification - cf. Leviticus 14:4-6].



וְיִדְבֵר עַל-הָעֵצִים

H) I Kings 5:13 - [Solomon] used to expound upon the entire plant kingdom,

מִן-הָאֶרֶז אֲשֶׁר בְּלְבָנוֹן וְעַד הָאֶזוֹב אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא בְקִיר
from the mighty cedar of Lebanon to the lowly **hyssop**
that sprouts from [the cracks in] the wall.

This is a sin-offering. A person who is currently not in a state of ritual impurity is to **gather up the ashes** from the burning, and to store them in a clean place outside the encampment **to use for making purification-water**

- more follows

[מִי נְדָה]. **Some of the ashes** from the fire of cleansing are to be taken, and **added to water** in a container. A person who is currently not in a state of ritual impurity is then to **take a sprig of hyssop** [as a ritually “sterile” applicator - cf. Exodus 12:22]; **dip it into the water; and to sprinkle some** on the tent and all it contains, and on the persons who were within it—sprinkling them again on the third day, and then again on the seventh, thereby cleansing all as of that seventh day.

II) unassociated – special Haftarah assignment for “Shabbat Parah,”
this week before Shabbat “*haChodesh*” - Ezekiel 36:16-38 [excerpt] -

The Word of The Eternal One came to me: “O mortal, **when the House of Israel dwelt on their own soil, they defiled it with their ways and deeds.** So I poured out My wrath on them, for the blood which they had shed on their land and **for the fetishes** with which they defiled it. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the peoples; thereby did I punish them in accordance with their ways and their deeds.

“But when they came among those peoples, it caused a profanation of My Holy Name— in that [those nations] said: ‘These are the people of The Eternal One, yet they had to leave His land!’ Therefore I am concerned for My Own Holy Name, which the Israelites have caused to be diminished and defiled.

“Say accordingly to the House of Israel: ‘thus declares the Lord, The Eternal One: “I will act, O Israel— not for your sake, but for My Own Holy Name, which you have caused to be profaned among the nations among whom you have come. I will take you, from among the nations, and will gather you from all the numerous peoples, and I will bring you back to your own land.

““I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and **from all your fetishes.**

וְזָרַקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מִיַּם טְהוֹרִים
וַיִּטְהַרְתֶּם מִכָּל טִמְאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל-
גְּלוּלֵיכֶם אֲטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם :

““I will give you a new heart and a put a new spirit within you. I will remove that heart of stone from your body, and give you a heart of flesh. I will restore My Spirit within you. Thereby will I bring you back to following My laws and faithfully observing My rules.

““Then you shall dwell securely in the land which I gave to your forebears; you shall be My People; and I shall be your God. **When I have cleansed you of all your iniquities, I will populate your cities;** the ruined places shall be rebuilt; and the empty land, after lying waste as wayfarers passed by, shall be tilled once more.



The Return to Zion
by Efrayim Moshe Lilien, 1902

““Then the surrounding nations which are at present all around you shall know that I, The Eternal One, have rebuilt the ravaged places and replanted the desolate land. I— The Eternal One!— have spoken, and will act””.

- more follows

| | <i>Parashah</i> | Extra Torah | Extra <i>Haftarah</i> |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Consideration | worship molded Calf עֲגֹל מִסֶּכֶה | sacrifice Red heifer פָּרָה אֲדָמָה | revered “fetishes” גִּדּוּלִים |
| Concept | defiling the covenant כִּי שִׁחַת עֲמִדָּה | water of purification מִי נִדָּה | God purifies defilement וְזָרְקָתִי עֲלֵיכֶם מִיָּם |

exodus εξοδος
“the way out”



יציאת מצרים
“the departure from
the narrow place”

The Running Start to the Exodus

In the Torah - Exodus 12:2, 12:6

בַּעֲשֶׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם אִישׁ
שֶׁה לְבַיִת-אָבֹת שְׁה לְבַיִת

On the tenth day of this month they are to take themselves a sheep, one sheep for each paternal household.

וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת עַד אַרְבָּעָה
עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וְשָׁחֲטוּ אֹתוֹ
כָּל קְהַל עֲדוֹת-יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּין הָעֶרְבָּיִם

Keep watch over it until the fourteenth day of this same month—and then let the entire assemblage of the cohort of Israel slaughter it at dusk.

In Our Calendar Every Year

Shabbat “*Sh’qalim*”



Shabbat “*Zachor*,” and Purim



Shabbat “*Parah*”



Shabbat “*haChodesh*”



Shabbat “*haGadol*”



Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread



Seven-week count to Shavuot

Towards a Higher Consciousness

H) Deuteronomy 25:17

זָכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה
לְךָ עַמְלֵק

Remember what the
‘Amaleqites did to
you....

I) Exodus 13:3

זָכוֹר אֶת-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
אֲשֶׁר יָצָאתָ
מִמִּצְרַיִם

Remember this day, on
which you went forth
from Egypt...

J) Exodus 20:8

זָכוֹר אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת
לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

Remember the Shabbat
day, to consecrate it.

לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת-יּוֹם צֵאתְךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ

K) Deuteronomy 16:3 - ...in order that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt, **all the days of your life.**