



DVAR TORAH

PARSHAS KI SISA / PARAH



By: Rabbi Noach Peled

Parshas Parah- The Purim-Eigel Sandwich

I have always marveled at **the irony, that almost every year Purim is immediately followed by Parshas Ki Sisa** – the parsha of the Eigel Hazahav, the Golden Calf. It's almost like it's deliberately right there, waiting to sober us up, to put an abrupt end to our lightheaded fun. We drink and soar to the greatest heights only to be dragged right back down by the ugly reality of the **חטא העגל**.

Even more ironic is that **Purim and the חטא העגל are almost always sandwiched right in the middle of the four Mishkan construction parshios**, two parshas are before Purim and two after.

Not long ago, I “stumbled” upon something which laid all that irony to rest, and revealed the deep connection between Purim, the Mishkan, and the Cheit Ha'eigel.

In **שיר השירים** (a deep emotional dialogue between Klal Yisroel and Hashem, filled with love and yearning, see Rashi on first passuk) we praise Hashem for overlooking our treacherous **חטא העגל** which we committed “right in front of his face” at Har Sinai.

עד שהמלך במקסבו נרדי נתן ריחו. צרור המר דודי לי בין שדי ילון- איב-יג

Rashi explains;

“You bestowed good upon me, yet I repaid You wickedly, for while the King was still at his wedding banquet (Har Sinai, I betrayed with the golden calf).

“My beloved became to me as one who has a bundle of myrrh (מור), and says to his fellow “Here, take this bundle, which will give a more fragrant scent than the first one which you lost.”

“When the Shechinah was still at Sinai, I sinned with the Calf... The Holy One blessed be He excused the incident of the calf and found an atonement for their crime saying: Donate to the Mishkan, and **let the gold of the Mishkan atone for the gold of the calf**”

We praise and thank Hashem for his mercy and **forgiveness for that sin**, for which rectification was achieved through the **giving of gold for the Mishkan**.

But in the next passuk, we take it one step further.

אשכל הכפר דודי לי בכרמי עין גדי-א:יד

Rashi: I saw a midrash which relates that those vineyards (of Ein Gedi) produce fruits four or five times a year, symbolizing the many atonements and forgiveness that **Hashem forgave them for the many tests that they tried Him in the desert**.

Ok so Hashem forgave us for the עגל and other sins. And how does this all connect to Purim?

These pesukim teach us that Hashem loves the Jewish people a deep eternal love, and because of that love He forgives even the gravest of sins like the **עגל so long as we do teshuva and rectification**. All this is expressed in terms **of fine smelling fragrances**.

Chazal tell us (Chullin 139b) that **Mordechai is hinted to** in this week's parsha, **specifically in a passuk discussing fragrances**, most specifically within the word **מור**, one of the fragrances (the **primary** fragrance as per Rashi) in the pesukim above which **express Hashem's forgiveness**.

We may therefore suggest that Mordechai **knew** that although Hashem was angry with the Jewish people for their sins, nevertheless **even the cheit ha'eigel** and countless other sins found forgiveness through sincere teshuva and prayer. As such Mordechai knew that despite Haman's awful gezeira (decree) there is no reason to give up; through heartfelt prayer and teshuva (corrective behavior) our loving Hashem will forgive us.

And all this is learned from the cheit ha'eigel, and the mishkan donations which Hashem legislated to atone for that sin, and bring forgiveness - symbolized by **מור** fragrance.

Not at all surprising then, that Mordechai (מור) led our people on the true path of teshuva and tefilla, bringing Hashem's forgiveness and life-saving to our nation. **That's why Purim is sandwiched between all four Mishkan parshios, and almost always followed by our parsha of the חטא העגל**.



By: Rabbi Chaim
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HALACHA CORNER

BIRCHAS ILANOS



- What is the source to recite Birchas Ilanos?**
- When is the ideal time to recite the bracha?**
- What type of tree is ideal to recite a bracha on?**

ברכות מג:– אמר רב יהודה: האי מאן דנפיק ביומי ניסן וחזי אילני דמלבלבי אומר ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שלא חסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות ליהנות בהן בני אדם

The source is a Gemara¹ which teaches “one who goes out during the days of Nissan and sees fruit trees blossoming recites a bracha”.

Let’s analyze the wording of the Gemara word by word.

“One who goes out”- The Rambam² explains this to mean “one who goes out to a field”. Rav Chaim Palagi³ infers that ideally one should go out to a field to recite the bracha. However, he allows the elderly or weak to recite the bracha on trees in a courtyard. The Maasei Rokeach⁴ argues that the Rambam merely described a common scenario. Additionally, Rav Waldenberg⁵ records several Rishonim who record this halacha without any mention of one going out.

“During the days of Nissan”- The Ritva⁶ explains that Nissan is mentioned by way of example, since it is typically the first month trees blossom in the Northern Hemisphere. According to this view, the bracha may be recited whenever one first sees blossoms, even outside Nissan. However, the Halachos Katanos⁷ maintains that the bracha may only be recited during Nissan.

From a Kabbalistic perspective: The Chida⁸ writes that according to Kabbalah, the bracha should ideally be recited in Nissan. Whereas the Olas Shmuel⁹ cites the Arizal as not requiring it specifically in Nissan.

The Kaf Hachaim¹⁰ rules that being that there is a dispute amongst the halachic and Kabbalistic authorities, the halacha follows the rule of safek brachos lehakel whenever in doubt regarding a bracha take the lenient approach. Therefore, he concludes that one should only recite the bracha in the month of Nissan. However, Rav Ovadia Yosef¹¹ and Tzitz Eliezer¹² argue that we follow the majority halachic opinions who conclude that one may recite the bracha prior or after the month of Nissan as this month was merely chosen by way of example.

“Trees”- The Halachos Katanos¹³ writes that one should ideally recite the bracha upon seeing an abundance of trees. The Kaf Hachaim¹⁴ writes that while abundance is preferable, the minimum requirement is two trees. However, the Tzitz Eliezer¹⁵ cites the Chida that even one tree suffices, though two is preferable.

The Tur¹⁶ (Orach Chaim 226:1) writes that the bracha should be recited when blossoms appear, but once the fruit begins to form, it is too late. The Beis Yosef cites the Mordechai who permits reciting the bracha even after fruit has begun forming. The Bach reconciles: If one saw blossoms earlier and delayed, it is too late once fruit forms. Whereas if one’s first sighting is after fruit begins forming, the bracha may still be recited. The Shulchan Aruch rules stringently that once fruit forms, no bracha is recited. The Mishnah Berurah cites both views and appears to lean lenient in a case of first sighting. However, once the fruit ripens, it is certainly too late.

1. Brachos 43b
2. Brachos 10:13
3. Lev Chaim 2:44
4. Brachos 10:13
5. Tzitz Eliezer 12:20[1]
6. Rosh Hashana 11a
7. 2:28
8. Birkei Yosef 226:2
9. 37
10. O.C 226:1
11. Yechave Daas 1:1
12. 12:20[3]
13. 2:28
14. O.C 226:2
15. 12:20[7]
16. 226:1

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