

Shalom Bayis Newsletter Issue 37

Better than 20/20 Vision PART 1

Like a *kallah* who cheats on her husband right under the *chuppah*.



That is how Chazal describe the sin of the golden calf. No wonder, then, that Hashem's response is: they must be completely obliterated.

“What’s wrong with divorce?”, you may ask.

Well, the Gra explains that the entire existence of Klal Yisrael is only on a supernatural plane as the *kallah* of Hashem. His kingdom of ministers who bring his light into the world.

Remove that relationship and you're left with the natural order of the world. And in the natural order of the world, Klal Yisrael simply does not exist.

But Moshe picks up on the hint that Hashem dropped him in the words *hanichah li* and he pleads their case: “they made gods of gold for themselves”.

According to Chazal, that reads: Hashem, you caused this! You gave them so much gold, and everything else their heart could possibly desire... What could they possibly have done to not sin?!

It's like a prince, Chazal continue, whose father feeds him, gives him plenty to drink, has him all dressed up, hangs a purse full of money on him, and places him right in front of the entrance of a prostitution establishment. What can the son do to not sin?!

Hashem accepts Moshe's please and arguments and replaces the broken *luchos rishonos* with the *luchos shniyos*. But that's not all.

Moshe is also taught the *yud-gimmel middos ha'rachamim*.

Seems like a fortunate coincidence. Moshe happens to seize on a fantastic *eis ratzon* moment and winds up with a wonderful gift alongside the *luchos shniyos*.

But, obviously, it is not a coincidence.

Hashem accepting Moshe's prayers for Bnei Yisrael was, without a doubt, the ultimate expression of *middas ha'rachamim*. After all, by what other means could the *chassan* agree to continue living with his *kallah* who cheated on him under the chupah!

But wait a minute, isn't the *halacha* clear that an adulteress is as eternally forbidden to her husband as she is to the adulterer? So how **could** Hashem agree to stay together with Bnei Yisrael?

The answer is the other Chazal. It wasn't the *kallah* who did it! It was her maidservants!

But wait another minute, this is not exactly something that Hashem would miss. Not even a human being would miss it either. Did the *kallah* commit the dastardly deed or not? Was it only the *eirev rav* who worshipped the golden calf, or was it all of Bnei Yisrael?

Well, it depends on how you look at it. To understand this better, let's switch narratives for a moment.

Eliyahu ha'navi laments to Hashem, "Bnei Yisrael have forsaken your covenant, destroyed your altars, murdered your

prophets by the sword, **and I alone remain**, and they seek out my life to take it.”

Why is Eliyahu so worried about Izevel’s message, “tomorrow I am going to do to you what you did to them”?

After all, Eliyahu had a stunning, miraculous win over Achav and his false prophets of the *baal* on Mount Carmel. The entire nation cried out as one, “Hashem is the almighty! Hashem is the almighty!” They even followed Eliyahu’s order to have Achav’s hundreds of idolatrous false prophets executed!

Why is Eliyahu so distraught that he pleads with Hashem, “take my life!”?

Chazal tell us that Eliyahu ha’navi is none other than Pinchas. It would seem that even the opinion that maintains that Eliyahu was not literally the same person as Pinchas, he was cut from the same cloth.

Pinchas was the quintessential *kannai* who cannot brook any violations of morality and ethics. His reaction is absolute in its uncompromising nature: the violator must be obliterated. He was the embodiment of unadulterated *middas ha’din*.

How could Eliyahu say “I alone remain”? What of the hiding hundred prophets and their patron Ovadiah? What of the fact that when Yehu finally eradicates **all** the baal worshippers it could not have been more than a few thousand at most since it took only 80 men to do the job?

This, despite the exceedingly great power and influence of Achav and Izevel and their having brought all that weight to bear in promoting worship of the *baal*.

So why did Eliyahu indict the entirety of Klal Yisrael?

Because, explained Rav Yaakov Weinberg, they weren't fighting it. If you're not fighting it, you're tolerating it. If you're tolerating it, that means that you are kneeling to it.

Izevel's message, Rav Weinberg elaborated, was this: Eliyahu, sure you're the hero now and completely untouchable. But you know how long the impact of your great miracle will last? One day.

Eliyahu was distraught because he realized she's right. After all, didn't Bnei Yisrael sin with the golden calf while Moshe was still atop *Har Sinai*. If that miracle didn't last long, this one wouldn't either!

I've got nothing left in my arsenal. Hashem, please just remove me from this world. This request was granted, but not before Hashem revealed something to Eliyahu in the very same cave where Moshe stood when Hashem revealed to him the *yud-gimmel middos ha'rachamim*.

To be continued...



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Shalom Bayis, Chinuch, & Personal Safety

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