

ימי עיון בתנ"ך תשפ"ד

Title : **The Golden Calf - Idol worship; Idle worship; or Ideal worship?**

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A. Discussion - The classic opinions

Rashi - Idol worship / Ramban - Idle worship

B. What were the people expecting? / What were they promised?

Shmot 3:16-17

טז לך ואספת את-זקני ישראל, ואמרת אליהם... ויאמר, אעלה אתכם מעני מצרים, אל-ארץ הפניני וְהַחֲתִי, וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַפְּרִזִי וְהַחִיטִי וְהַיְבוּסִי--אֶל-אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב, וְדָבָשׁ

Shmot 23:20-28

כ הנה אנכי שלח מלאך, לפניך, לשמרך, בדרך; ולהביאך, אל-המקום אשר הכנתי.

20 Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

כא השמר מפניו ושמע בקלו, אל-תמר בו: כי לא ישא לפשעכם, כי שמי בקרבו.

21 Take heed of him, and hearken unto his voice; be not rebellious against him; for he will not pardon your transgression; for My name is in him.

כב כי אם-שמוע תשמע, בקלו, ועשית, כל אשר אדבר-- ואיבתני, את-איביך, וצרתני, את-צריך.

22 But if thou shalt indeed hearken unto his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

כג כי-יילך מלאכי, לפניך, והביאך אל-האמרי והחתי, והפרזי והפניני החוי והיבوسی; והכחדתיו.

23 For Mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, the Hivite, and Jebusite; & will cut them off.

Compare with their request from Aharon 32:1 -

א ויגרא העם, כי-בשש משה לרדת מן-ההר; ויקהל העם על-אהרן, ויאמרו אליו קום עשה-לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו-כי-זה משה האיש אשר העלנו מארץ מצרים, לא ידענו מה-היה לו.

1 when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him: 'Up, make us a god who shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out the land of Egypt, we know not what became of him.'

Re: "Elokim"- see Breishit 1:2 - the spirit of God or a 'powerful wind' -see Shadal!

רוח אלוקים" ואפשר שמר אותו לאלהים לפי שהייתה חזקה -כי כן מנהג הלשון, כשירצה להגדיל הדבר Radak

C. Where was Moshe- see Shmot chapter 24

יד ואל-הזקנים אמר שבו-לנו בזה, עד אשר-נשוב אליכם; והנה אהרן וחור עמכם, מי-בעל דברים יגש אליהם.

14 And unto the elders he said: 'Tarry ye here for us, until we come back unto you; and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whosoever hath a cause, let him come near unto them.'

טו ויעל משה, אל-ההר; וימראה כבוד ה', פאש אקלת בראש ההר, לעיני בני ישראל.

15 And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud covered the mount....

יח ויבא משה בתוך הענן, ויעל אל-ההר; ויהי משה, בהר, ארבעים יום, וארבעים לילה. {פ}

18 And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

D. The Golden Calf - Did the people ask for a 'god', or a 'leader'?

Or possibly something else - to help conquer the Land

Discussion: what was the last war they fought / Topic of "shirat ha'Yam"!

How many other battles have they witnessed?

What was the key to all their miraculous victories?

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See Shmot 17 - War with Amalek

ט וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּחַר-לָנוּ אַנְשִׁים, וְצֵא הִלָּחֵם בְּעַמְלֵק;
מָחָר, אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב עַל-רֹאשׁ הַגְּבֵעָה, וַיִּמָּטֵה הָאֱלֹהִים, בְּיַדִּי. 9 And Moses said unto Joshua: 'Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.'

יא וַהֲיָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר יָרִים מֹשֶׁה יָדוֹ--וַיִּגְבֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל... 11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

Review the previous mentions of the "mateh Elokim" & Moshe's hand

Shmot 4:1-4;17-20 7: 15-20 - then compare with 17:3-6

Note "mateh" & "yad" (the interchange) in first 3 plagues, and in plagues 7 thru 9

See chapter 7 again and then see Shmot 9:22-23; and 10:12-13 & 14:15-21 !

E. What was Aharon thinking? [Shmot chapter 32]

שמות ל"ב: ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, אֶהְרֹן, פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזָּהָב, אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשִׁיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם; וְהָבִיאוּ, אֵלַי. Shmot 32:: 2 And Aaron said unto them: 'Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.'

ד וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם, וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט, וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ, עֵגֶל מִסַּכָּה; וַיֹּאמְרוּ--אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. 4 And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf; and they said: 'This is thy god, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.'

ה וַיִּרְא אֶהְרֹן, וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו; וַיִּקְרָא אֶהְרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר, חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר. 5 And when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said: 'To-morrow shall be a feast to the LORD.'

ו וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ, מִמָּחָר־תְּלַת, וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת, וַיִּגִּשּׁוּ שְׁלָמִים; וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וּשְׂתוֹ, וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק. {פ} 6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to make merry. {P}

- A symbol of God's power leading the battle?

- See Bamidbar 10:31-36

Note how a 'golden image' leads the nation in battle

Why was Hashem so disappointed?

ז וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה : לָךְ-רָד--כִּי שָׁחַת עַמְּךָ, אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. 7 And the LORD spoke unto Moses: 'Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have dealt corruptly;

ח סָרוּ מִהֶרַח, מִן-הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָם--עָשׂוּ לָהֶם, עֵגֶל מִסַּכָּה; וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ-לוֹ, וַיִּזְבְּחוּ-לוֹ, וַיֹּאמְרוּ, אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. 8 they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said: This is thy god, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.'

** See Breishit 6:11-13 re "hashchata" & Breishit 17-19 re: "derech Hasehm"

F. A parallel celebration / compare Shmot 24:3-11 to 32:3-6

Note the "mizbayach": "olot", "shlamim", eating & drinking

Note also what's missing (torah); and what's 'extra' ("tzchok")

[See Yechezkel 1:4-7, & Shmot 24:10 / noting description of God's feet]