



Ki Tissa

(when you lift up)

Shemot (Exodus) 30:11-34:35

Where in the World is Moshe?

Shemot 32:1

1 Now when the people saw that Moshe delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aharon and said to him, "Come, make us elohim who will go before us; as for this Moshe, the man who brought us up from the land of Mitzrayim (Egypt), we do not know what has become of him."

The last time that the people saw Moshe, he was going up Mount Sinai. Now this may not sound too significant; but let us recall the specific circumstances of his trip up the mountain.

Shemot[Exodus] 19:16-18

16 And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled.

17 And Moshe brought forth the people out of the camp to meet Elohim; and they stood at the foot of the mount.

18 And Mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because YHWH descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

The people had all witnessed YHWH descend upon the mountain in front of them. The ground upon which they stood shook violently. And if anything will instill fear in mankind, it is a violent earthquake. There is nothing quite like it to make a person feel completely helpless, and that feeling of helplessness brings fear; fear of the unknown, fear of not being in control, just plain fear. These things made the people retreat.

Also, we see these verses.

Shemot [Exodus] 20:18, 21

18 And all the people perceived the thunders, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off.

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moshe drew near to the thick darkness where Elohim was.

This is the last time that the people saw Moshe as he ascended the mountain into the thick darkness of that cloud where Elohim had descended.

Now consider what YHWH had said to the people through Moshe.

Shemot [Exodus] 19:21

And YHWH said to Moshe, "Go down, charge the people, lest they break through to YHWH to gaze, and many of them perish."

YHWH had warned them that they could not approach the mountain beyond its boundaries that had been set. If they did, they would die. As far as they could tell, Moshe was a man just like them; and if they would perish, why wouldn't Moshe die as well?

After all, Moshe had been gone for forty days and nights and did not take anything to eat or drink with him. How could any man survive that long without food or water? Surely, Moshe was dead and they were without a leader! Let's be realistic here: who can blame them for thinking that Moshe had perished? I dare say, that if any of us were in similar circumstances today, in which someone we barely knew (and the truth is that most of these people had never even spoken to Moshe) came along to lead us back to the land for the second exodus, and we began following him and then he disappeared for forty days, I think that most of us would think that he was gone for good and was not coming back. In fact, most likely, many would be thinking this long before forty days had gone by.

So, I think that it is best if we don't be too harsh or judgmental for what is about to happen. While it was very wrong to make the golden calf, I wonder how many times we have done something that we later looked back on and thought, "How could I have been so stupid?"

Do What?

Shemot 32:2-4

2 Aharon said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."

3 Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aharon.

4 He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your elohim, Yisrael, who brought you up from the land of Mitzrayim."

Now most earrings are not all that big; but when you multiply one or two earrings by several million people you have a lot of gold. Now, if Aharon used all that gold to make this idol, it would not have been a small idol by any means!

But what was Aharon thinking anyway when he had all the people do this? He was pretty cunning, at any rate; because everyone who contributed gold had a part in making the idol. Now I suppose that when this offering was being taken, there might have been some who did not know what it was for. Maybe. But does that release them from their responsibility of knowing what they were supporting with their donations? I don't think so, do you? We might like to think that there was no responsibility on the giver's part; but if we do, it would most likely only be so that we could excuse our own lack of diligence in our giving of offerings.

It would seem that this passage of Scripture pretty well illustrates the need for us to make sure, that what we are giving an offering for, is within the boundaries of Torah and that it would be used in accordance with His commandments. We certainly would not want to be guilty of being a party to some form of idolatry, would we? I know I wouldn't want to be guilty of that!

But then, having come out of the church system which utilizes mixed worship (we will deal with this more below), I have already been guilty of this in the past, just like my forefathers in this passage. Ouch! Most likely, we are all in this same boat. It certainly is a good thing that we serve a loving and compassionate Elohim who bestows abundant mercy upon thousands (that's us) who don't really deserve it, but are certainly thankful that we have received it!

Adding to His Word

Shemot [Exodus] 32:5-6

5 Now when Aharon saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aharon made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to YHWHH."

6 So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

The Scripture places Aharon as the person directly responsible for the making of this golden calf idol. Verse five may indicate that Aharon had other men do that actual work in making this idol. However, when he saw the finished product, he immediately began to add to Torah. How did he do this? He added a feast day which YHWH did not command. Now this may not seem like too big a deal, but this action led the people directly away from keeping His Torah commandments. And the truth is, that all such actions will always have this very same result: to lead those so adding to or taking away from His Torah, away from obedience to His Torah commandments.

So let's recap what is happening up to this point.

Moshe had been up on the mountain approaching forty days and nights. The people were beginning to think that something had happened to him, and that they were without a leader. Worse still, they began to grumble to one another, and things got out of hand, as we will see.

The people put a delegation together and sent them to Aharon to voice their concerns.

It is at this point, that Aharon shows that he was not totally and completely sold out to YHWH, for he immediately directs the people back into pagan practices.

He may have been trying to be comforting and consoling, but it was with tragic consequences that the Nation went in that direction. Anytime that a leader is focused upon the "needs" of the Nation (catering to their desires), rather than listening to His Voice, there will always be dire consequences. People will get hurt and people will die, if not physically, then certainly in a spiritual sense.

Aharon takes up a collection of gold and from that collection fashions a calf. This calf was one that they were used to seeing in Mitzrayim, so they were all very familiar with it.

The problem was, that the entire Nation had just recently witnessed this false elohim devastated by the fifth plague delivered upon Mitzrayim by YHWH; but yet, here was Aharon making a golden calf and putting forth the false teaching that this golden calf was the elohim responsible for their deliverance. To further the deception upon the people, Aharon even named this idol "YHWH."

This was an obvious lie, since this golden calf was actually made after their deliverance. Yet, the people made a choice to follow this lie, rather than the truth. This is one of the consequences of having a Nation without a leader; they will not follow the truth, for they will do whatever seems right in their own eyes. This also illustrates what happens when His people attempt to have a leader not of YHWH's choosing, but one who is either self-appointed or chosen by the people. This will pretty much result in the same tragic events of leading the people away from YHWH.

Then Aharon made matters even worse by erecting an altar in front of the golden calf, and made the most telling statement of all in this whole mess.

Aharon declared that tomorrow there would be a feast (chag) to YHWH.

So far here is the problem:

- 1) idolatry,
- 2) changing the appointed days,
- 3) erecting an altar of false worship,
- 4) calling the golden calf "YHWH," and
- 5) mixed worship.

Idolatry in the Camp

Shemot [Exodus] 32:7-10

7 Then YHWH spoke to Moshe, "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Mitzrayim, have corrupted themselves.

8 "They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, ' This is your elohim, Yisrael, who brought you up from the land of Mitzrayim!'"

9 YHWH said to Moshe, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.

10 "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."

To really grasp the significance of what was happening in the camp of Israel at this very moment, we need to comprehend YHWH's reaction to this idolatry. He was ready to kill them all, every last man, woman, and child. This should indicate to us just how seriously YHWH viewed this sin. In turn, it should then teach us that we should be extra careful to guard against doing any of those things which had put our forefathers under the penalty of death.

The interesting thing, is that this death sentence also included the Levites, who later were to purge the camp with their swords. We will discuss this more below.

It cannot be stressed strongly enough, the seriousness of these sins of which Israel was guilty at this time. The sad thing is, that it is these very same sins that caused Ephrayim (the ten northern tribes) to be carried away into captivity into Assyria. It is these very same sins that have caused Ephrayim to remain in the Diaspora to this date. It is these same sins that hinder Ephrayim from being gathered together as a nation and taken

back home right now, today. Ephrayim loves his idolatrous ways! Ephrayim has bred these idolatrous ways into his children from one generation to the next.

Kepha Aleph [1st Peter] 1:18

knowing that you were redeemed from your futile way of life inherited from your fathers, not with what is corruptible, silver or gold,

What Kepha (Peter) alludes to in the verse above, is that what we have inherited from our fathers is not according to Scripture, but according to the traditions of man; and there are no redeeming virtues in these traditions of man. In fact, these traditions replace His set-apart days and times, so that Ephrayim no longer keeps His feasts, but the feasts and holidays not commanded by YHWH.

We need to be careful that we do not look down our noses at our forefathers, nor upon those still ensnared by these manmade traditions, realizing that we too, would still be there were it not for His grace that has rescued us from the grip of many generations of mixed worship. Let us show patience towards one another as He showed patience towards us when we were still locked into the traditions and thinking patterns that were not pleasing to Him. Yet, He was longsuffering towards us until we were ready to hear His Voice and begin the process of coming out of the mixed worship of Babylon.

YHWH Tests Moshe

Shemot [Exodus] 32:11-14

11 Then Moshe entreated YHWH his Elohim, and said, "YHWH, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Mitzrayim with great power and with a mighty hand?"

12 "Why should the Mitzrim (Egyptians) speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the Earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people.

13 "Remember Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yisrael, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'"

14 So YHWH changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.

Now, this problem was so severe, that YHWH came up with a solution that would fix the problem – permanently! He was ready to destroy the whole Nation except for Moshe, and start over and build a new Nation with Moshe as the father of that Nation. What a test that must have been for Moshe!

Let's see if we can boil the problem down as listed above, so we can get to the nitty-gritty.

The problem was idolatry. What is idolatry? Idolatry is saying something or believing something to be true about the Creator that is not true, and basing one's actions upon that false belief.

In this case, Aharon and the people of the Nation made a golden calf and called it YHWH. This was clearly false as YHWH was not that golden calf!

Shemot [Exodus] 20:4-5

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the Earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, YHWH your Elohim, am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.

Please take careful note, that in YHWH's eyes, a person guilty of idolatry is guilty of hating Him. This is very serious!

With our mouths we say that we love YHWH, but our actions truly show YHWH what is in our hearts.

In addition to idolatry, there was the changing of His appointed days.

Just how serious is it to change or add to the Moedim of YHWH? I would think that those who are reading this study, would be very careful not to add to His Written Word, and not to observe Christmas or Easter, or any other pagan holiday. However, please consider the following very carefully. In the example above concerning the golden calf, this new nation added a day of worship when they made the golden calf and declared a feast the next day.

Shemot [Exodus] 20:4-5

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the Earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, YHWH your Elohim, am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.

Notice that YHWH said, that included in the sin of idolatry, is a person serving false elohim. Those who serve false elohim are guilty of idolatry, and according to YHWH, those persons hate Him. Furthermore, without an intercessor (and a lack of repentance), YHWH will kill that person.

It is important to understand that we need to keep His appointed times, only. YHWH, and YHWH alone, has the authority to add to His Moedim; i.e., Purim and Chanukah.

Erecting an Altar of False Worship

Shemot [Exodus] 20:4-5

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the Earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, YHWH your Elohim, am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.

We truly need to have a set-apart place of worship. However, it needs to be a place that is clean and pure. When a person places before himself something that is not of YHWH and worships there, it becomes idolatry. In the example from Scripture cited above, this new Nation made a golden calf, and then set about to erect an altar before it to worship before this idol. Again, they were serving this false elohim; again, showing that this was an act of idolatry.

This is much more common in our day than might be expected. Perhaps the most common way in which this happens today, is in the form of doctrine. YHWH gave us Torah. YHWH gave us the Nevi'im (prophets). YHWH gave us the Ketuvim (writings). YHWH gave us the Brit Chadasha (New Testament). He gave us commandments *to do*. YHWH did not give us doctrines! Obeying His commandments brings us together with one purpose of heart and mind!

Doctrines are manmade! In their place, they are wonderful. But when these things get out of place, they take on a life of their own; so much so, that those who accept a given doctrine without question, begin to serve the doctrine. This can become so acute that the doctrine is placed above the welfare of other people or the relationships that we have with our neighbors! May I please submit to you that this is an act of idolatry? For when a person serves a doctrine, he is not serving YHWH; and that, brethren, is idolatry.

Calling the Golden Calf “YHWH”

This whole Nation should have known that this golden calf was not YHWH. And in particular, Aharon should have known. Regardless of what they knew or did not know, they made a poor choice to do this, and it was an act of idolatry.

Shemot [Exodus] 20:4-5

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the Earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, YHWH your Elohim, am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.

Now, may I be so bold, as to point out a sin among those who are reading this study? There are many who refuse to repent of using the pagan names and titles of false Elohim. May I ask you, what is the difference between these people making a golden calf and calling it YHWH, and someone speaking to or about YHWH with a name or title that He has not commanded? Of course, there is no difference. Both are equally idolatrous. You say with your mouth that you serve YHWH, but with that same breath you attempt to call upon YHWH with the name of a false Elohim. Brethren, these things should not be so!

I do not want to seem unkind or uncompassionate at this point. I know that this is a difficult process to go through, to purge our vocabulary and our thinking in terms that we grew up with. After all, how could so many people be wrong? May I submit to you a theme that is common throughout all of Scripture: that it will only be a remnant that shall be saved? The question that you must answer for yourself is: are you willing to do what it takes to be a part of that remnant?

Mixed Worship

Mixed worship is when a person takes truth and mixes in error in the worship of YHWH our Elohim. The most common way that this is done in our day, is with the use of names and titles which YHWH has not commanded us to use, changing the appointed days of worship or set-apart gatherings, attempting to live outside the boundaries of Torah, and not obeying His Voice.

Shemot [Exodus] 20:4-5

You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the Earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, YHWH your Elohim, am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.

YHWH will not look with favor upon a person, nor will He turn a blind eye to the sin of idolatry, if a person is guilty of the sin of idolatry in any form. Returning to YHWH is our first duty. To do this we need to truly repent and remove from our lives those things that are not pleasing in His eyes. It is not what man says or thinks; rather it is what YHWH clearly states in His Word.

YHWH's Solution

Shemot [Exodus] 32:25-29

25 Now when Moshe saw that the people were out of control — for Aharon had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies —

26 then Moshe stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is for YHWH, come to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him.

27 He said to them, "Thus says YHWH, the Elohim of Yisrael, 'Every man of you put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.'"

28 So the sons of Levi did as Moshe instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

29 Then Moshe said, "Dedicate yourselves today to YHWH — for every man has been against his son and against his brother — in order that He may bestow a blessing upon you today."

The sin of idolatry must be removed from the camp. As our Nation is being brought back together, each one of us must work diligently to remove every vestige of idolatry that has been ingrained in us for many generations. If we do not do this difficult work, YHWH will remove those who do not remove idolatry from their lives, from the nation of Yisrael.

Make no mistake about it, no excuses will be valid. You cannot say, "Well, So-and-So teacher taught that I should not use the Name of YHWH", because we each have a copy (probably several copies) of the Scripture. We can read it and study it for ourselves. We also have available to us, the infilling of the Set-apart Spirit to teach us the Truth. If we choose not to utilize these things, then we will be excluded from Yisrael.

I grew up using a standard English version of Scripture with the true name of YHWH and Yeshua removed and hidden. But I still found the truth because I listened to His Spirit. Likewise, you may do the same!

Brethren, prove all things.

Basically, this portion in Scripture is quite plain; each one of us has a choice to make. That choice consists of the following two choices: 1) follow YHWH completely with a whole heart; or 2) be removed from Yisrael.

There is no middle ground.

The call is before us: brethren, come out! Come all the way out of the harlot Bavel (Babylon). Do not hang on to anything, and do not attempt to hang on to anything. Doing so will cost us our lives. Is that price worth it? Not to me, it isn't!

It is your choice.

Choose wisely!

ABBA YHWH, we desire to live completely for You and only You. We realize that we have failed miserably in the past, and we desire to do better now. Please increase our wisdom and understanding; and above all, fill us with Your Spirit that You may teach us Your way; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

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