

PTDT

PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Of Gold, Cows, Taanit Esther, and Crayons

When (or if) a Kohen Gadol sins B'SHOGEH, he brings a Korban Chatat. It is a bull, which is understood as a KAPARA for the sin of the golden calf, the son of the bull.

Similarly, the Para Aduma is considered to be a Kapara for the Para's son, the golden calf.

OTOH, the horn of a bull or cow is not valid to use as a Shofar on Rosh HaShana.

Gold is the main metal in the Mishkan and Beit HaMikdash. This too can be understood as a TIKUN for Cheit HaEigel - using good for the fulfillment of G-d's command to build the Mikdash (when gold is linked to Cheit HaEigel).

OTOH, the Kohen Gadol removes his gold garments when he enters Kodesh HaKodashim on Yom Kippur.

We don't eat or drink on Taanit Esther (partly) because the people attended the parties of Achashvei-

rosh, at which he arrogantly paraded around wearing the garments of the Kohen Gadol and showing off and using vessels from the Beit HaMikdash - declaring himself as superior to the God of Israel. Jews had no business attending and enjoying those parties. As a TIKUN, we have Taanit Esther.

OTOH, we eat a Seudat Mitzva on Purim and drink wine (to excess) on Purim. That too is a TIKUN.

So what's the story - yes cow; no cow. Yes gold; no gold. Yes, eating and drinking; no eating and drinking.

And having covered almost all the words of the title of this PTDT, what's Crayons doing in the title?

So I'll tell you a little story - a MASHAL that will help us understand what's going on.

Picture this: There is a boy who just turned 8 years old. His parents gave him something he had wanted for a while - the big 128 crayon box from Crayola - with a built-in crayon sharpener.

One day when his parents were out shopping, he spend a nice amount of time drawing beautiful pictures with his crayons - all over the kitchen walls.

When his parents came home and

saw what he had done, they were justifiably upset. In addition to yelling at him and giving him a bucket of water and sponges to clean the walls, they also confiscated the crayons and told him that he would not get them back for one whole month.

The next day, when the boy came home from school (and after he had done his homework), the mother sat him down at the kitchen table and gave him a stack of blank paper and his crayons. She instructed him to draw a dozen pictures which they would then bring to the local hospital's children's ward, where they would give them to the children to hang on the walls, in order to brighten their rooms.

And then she took the crayons back.

The kid was understandably confused - no crayons; yes crayons.

His parents explained: You did the wrong thing with your crayons. There are two ways we want to teach you the consequences of what you did. One is to take the crayons away from you. The other, is to have you put those crayons to good use. Both serve as repairs for your misdeed.

Gold and Calf are two things that were involved in the terribly sin of the golden calf. There are two seemingly opposite consequences of Cheit

HaEigel. One is to use cows and gold for a lofty purpose at G-d's commands. And the other is to be sensitized to the seriousness of the sin, by abstaining from gold and cows (the Shofar issue), also at G-d's command.

The key phrase in the previous paragraph is "at G-d's command".

Had the boy in the MASHAL taken his crayons without permission to use them to write an apology note to his parents, that would be wrong. They took his crayons away. And, OTOH, to say to his mother that he cannot draw pictures with his crayons because he lost the use of them because of his misdeed - that would also be wrong.

Eigel HaZahav was a big no-no. It violated the prohibition of making graven images and worshiping them. Plating the Aron with gold and making a kaporet of gold with K'ruvim of gold - that did not violate G-d's word. The opposite - it fulfilled G-d's command.

We don't call the shots in these cases. G-d does.

The kid in the MASHAL does not make the decisions about the crayons - his parents do.

Same for Taanit Esther and Purim. Have a good one! **PTDT**