

Ki Sisaw - Rabbi Lerner - February 13, 2011

Perek 33 Aftermath of the Chet Ha'Egel

Ramban: This parsha is difficult to digest without understanding deepest secrets of the Torah - Kabbalah.

32:34: *And now go and lead the nation to the promised place, my angel will go before you, and on the day that I will punish them, I will visit this sin upon them.* **Rashi:** Hashem tells Moshe that He listened to Moshe and will not wipe them out in one felled swoop, but whenever He will visit punishment upon them for their sins, He will give some small measure of punishment for this sin as well; there will be many small punishments given out for this sin over the years; there is no punishment visited on the Jewish people that will not have a small part of punishment for this sin as well. **Sforno:** when they will commit additional sins, as with the Meraglim, Hashem will punish them those times for this sin as well; when Hashem visits punishment upon them at a later time, the punishment will include punishment for this sin as well, and will therefore be much greater. As an example, the tribe of Levi was not involved with the sin of the Egel and were immune from this punishment; with the Meraglim we do not know if Levi was involved or not; they escaped the punishment of death in the desert because they were not guilty of the primary sin of the Egel; they did not get the greater punishment because they were not involved with the Egel.

33:1: Hashem tells them to ascend to the promised land.

33:2: He will send an angel before them to drive out the remaining six nations of Canaan (Girgashi had left on their own to avoid the Jewish conquest).

33:3: Hashem would not be going up with them because they are a stiff-necked people and He will destroy them on the way if they sin (if Hashem is right amongst them and if they sin despite his closeness anyway, He will be more offended and will destroy them immediately).

33:4: The people go into mourning after hearing this terrible news.

Ibn Ezra: Hashem threatens to punish them by not having them build a Mishkan for Him as a result of this sin - He will not dwell amongst them. This only makes sense according to those who hold like the Ramban rather than Rashi, that the Mishkan was not a tikun for the sin of the Egel. Rashi says the Mishkan was only required to be built as a consequence of the sin of the Egel - it was needed because the Jews felt a need to concretize their relationship with Hashem; they needed some physical icon to relate to God. **Ramban:** there always was an original plan to build a Mishkan - it was not a tikun for the Egel, but its purpose was to continue the relationship of Har Sinai, with Hashem dwelling amongst the people. The **Ibn Ezra** says that this plan was in jeopardy after the sin, where Hashem threatens not to dwell amongst them in the Mishkan because of the danger of annihilation of the people when they sin. In 33:12-15, Moshe argues with Hashem, wanting to know which angel was being sent and reminding Hashem that he found favor in God's eyes, and He was to make known His ways to Moshe; then Hashem says in 33:14 that My presence will go and provide you rest - Ibn Ezra says that this means that Hashem will show favor just to Moshe, not to the people. Moshe in 33:15 responds that he doesn't want that; Moshe insisted that it is must be Moshe and the nation together - God's presence has to be amongst the whole nation; they are the chosen people and Hashem must take up residence in their midst, not just with Moshe. In 33:17 Hashem finally agrees, and will not scuttle plans for the Mishkan. Moshe convinces Hashem that it is not just Moshe, and Hashem must re-establish His relationship with the entire people.

33:1: *Go up to this other place that was promised to the Avos.* **Sforno:** they should go up to the promised land; there is anger in Hashem's voice when He says Aley Mizeh - go up from this desolate place that does not sustain life, where miracles have to occur for you to survive because you are not deserving of it. In the desert Hashem has to provide miracles to protect them and sustain them, with food and water, protecting them from the harsh elements in the desert; Hashem wants them to ascend quickly to a land that does not require miraculous intervention - they are not deserving of a miraculous life; God would do this for those He loved, who follow Him - they betrayed Him and are no longer deserving and should just rapidly go into a land that can sustain them naturally, and He will no longer carry them anymore. With the future sin of the Meraglim, they are not even worthy of this lesser plan, and they all have to die in the desert.

33:4: *They do not don their jewelry - Edyo.* 33:5: *Hashem tells them to take off their Edyo from Har Sinai that they were wearing.* Their immediate reaction in the first pasuk was not to add to their appearance, but Hashem tells them to even take off what they were wearing.

Ramban: this Edyo is not just about jewelry, gold and silver. The Edyo, as Targum Unkelos says, means their weapons. At Har Sinai when they accepted the Ten Commandments, Hashem gave them a special ornament, something that had incredible spiritual and physical powers - it saves them from physical attacks, and even from the Angel of Death himself. There was freedom that came from the Luchos that are described as Charus, engraved - but that word can also be read as Cheirus, freedom - it was also freedom from danger, from the danger of the Malach Hamaves himself. Hashem tells them to take off this special protection, and they again accept upon themselves mortality, that they can once again die. This was the aveilus, that Hashem took back the gift of eternal life which could have stayed with us had we not deviated from the path.

33:7: *Moshe encamped outside of the assembly of people and sets it up distant from the camp and calls it Ohel Moed; those who wanted to seek out God had to leave the camp to see him in his tent.*

33:8-11: *The entire nation would watch him come and go; they would see the cloud descend upon the tent; they would all bow down when they saw this; Hashem would communicate with Moshe face to face; Moshe would then return and convey this to the nation; Yehoshua, the lad - Na'ar - (he is 56 at this time), would not depart from the tent.* **Ramban:** why is Yehoshua called a Na'ar? The **Ibn Ezra** says that he is so humble, he treats himself as a young lad, acting like a Na'ar to supply Moshe with whatever he needs; but the Ramban says Na'ar is not a put down having to do with age - it has to do with the relationship - whoever is not the top person is called a Na'ar - if you execute the orders of the top person, you are called a Na'ar - it is not a derogatory comment. It implies that he is a servant to Moshe.

When is this happening when Moshe is in his tent that is called an Ohel Moed? **Rashi:** Immediately after the sin, Moshe moves his tent outside the camp; Rashi explains that if a person is excommunicated by the master, should he not then be excommunicated by the student as well? Moshe is showing his displeasure at the people, just as Hashem did; he moved his tent away from the people to show his anger at them. **Ramban:** Rashi later explains in 33:11 where it says that Moshe returns to the camp, that Moshe taught what he learned to the elders; this all went on from Yom Kippur until Nissan when the Mishkan was erected; then the Ohel Moed, the meeting place, was back in the midst of the camp as the Mishkan. Rashi does not make sense - if it is after Yom Kippur, Hashem has forgiven the people and was no longer angry at them, so Moshe would have no reason to be angry at the people - the second Luchos were already given; Rashi does not make sense; Moshe cannot be separated from the camp after Yom Kippur because the people were forgiven and he was no longer angry at them. So when did this happen? After

Moshe breaks the Luchos following that first 40 days, he then ascends Har Sinai for 40 days to beg Hashem for forgiveness for the nation, and he then goes up a third time for 40 days to receive the second Luchos; so Moshe is away for 120 days, and maybe that is why Rashi and Ibn Ezra say that he moved his tent out after Yom Kippur, because it could not be during those 120 days. Another interpretation from the **Pirkei Rebbi Eliezer** that the first 40 days he was up on the mountain, and the second 40 days was actually in the camp - Moshe is trying to clean up the mess, has to burn the Egel, return the nation to its proper Hashkafah - this took time; then he goes up to the mountain again for the second set of Luchos - there was a huge amount of work necessary to fix what the people did, and he has to take his tent out to receive communication with Hashem who cannot talk to him if he were still in the midst of the people. But later on it says in the Torah that Moshe spent 40 days of fasting and praying on Har Sinai to get Teshuvah - this was the middle 40 days - so he could not be down with the people in his own tent outside the camp. The Ramban says therefore that it is difficult to understand.

Abarbanel: when Moshe went back and forth to his tent, the people show him tremendous Kavod to him because they see the schechina come down to his tent.