



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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Parshat Ki Tisa, of course, contains the tragic episode of *Chait HaEgel*, the Golden Calf, and its aftermath.

In the *pasuk*, which is familiar to us as the opening verse in the *Kriat HaTorah* for a *Taanit Tzibur* (Public Fast Days), we read these well known words:

וַיַּחַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־פָּנָיו ה' אֱלֹקָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה ה' יַחַר אַפֶּךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּכַח גְּדוֹל וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה

And Moshe pleaded (**vayechal**) before Hashem “Why let your anger, Hashem, be directed toward Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand.

The word for “pleaded” - *vayechal* - is an unusual word to be used in this context.

Chazal (Gemara, Brachot 32a) offered several interpretations as to why this particular word, *vayechal*, is used to describe Moshe's prayer on behalf of the Jewish People.

“And Moshe pleaded [**vayechal**] before Hashem” : *Rebbi Elazar said: It teaches that Moshe stood in prayer and exhausted himself before HaKadosh Baruch Hu, until it made him ill [hechelahu] ...*

According to *Rebbi Elazar*, *vayechal* shares the same root as *choleh* (sick). Moshe davened so intensely on behalf of Klal Yisrael that he became ill.

It was taught in a beraita: Rebbe Eliezer HaGadol said: This term teaches that Moshe stood in prayer before HaKadosh Baruch Hu, until he was overcome by achilu. What is the meaning of achilu? Rebbe Elazar said that achilu is eish shel atzamot-fire in the bones...

Rav Kook zy'a, offered the following insight in interpreting our *gemara*.

Moshe Rabbeinu became totally consumed with his effort to plead the case of *Am Yisrael* before *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. He was overcome with an *eish shel atzamot* - a fire in his bones. The word *etzem* can mean both bone, as well as essence.

At this important juncture, as he pleaded on behalf of the entire Jewish People, *Moshe* experienced a revelation of a fire from within, a fire of compassion, a fire that essentially defined who indeed he truly was! In his essence, he was not only inextricably bound to every member of *Klal Yisrael*, but also desired to do everything within his power on their behalf! At this critical moment, *Moshe* was able to channel that inner fire, and advocate for all of *Klal Yisrael*.

Yehi Ratzon, as we continue to navigate our current challenges, may each of us likewise be blessed to find our own inner fire, to feel that inseparable bond with every member of *Klal Yisrael*, and be inspired to do everything we possibly can to help one another face and overcome challenges together and to grow and succeed. ■

Mazal Tov to **Sara & David Bedein**
on the marriage of their daughter
Ruhama Leah to Itamar Pollak,
son of **Naomi & Eliezer Pollak**