

# Moshe's Recounting of the *Het ha-Egel*

Deuteronomy 9

ספר דברים פרק ט

Exodus 32

ספר שמות פרק לב

## I. DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES

<sup>8</sup>וּבַחֲרֵב הַקְּצַפְתָּם אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּתְאַנֶּף יְהוָה בְּכֶם לְהַשְׁמִיד אֹתְכֶם: <sup>9</sup>בְּעֵלְתֵי הַהָרָה לָקַחְתָּ לְוַחַת הָאֲבָנִים לְוַחַת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַת יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם וְאַשְׁבַּח בְּהָר אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹחֵם לֹא אָכַלְתִּי וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתִיתִי: וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֵלֵי אֶת־שְׁנֵי לְוַחַת הָאֲבָנִים כְּתוּבִים בְּאֶצְבָּע אֱלֹהִים וְעָלִיהֶם כָּכָל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ בְּיוֹם הַקִּהְלָה: <sup>10</sup>וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה נָתַן יְהוָה אֵלֵי אֶת־שְׁנֵי לְוַחַת הָאֲבָנִים לְוַחַת הַבְּרִית: <sup>11</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלֵי קוּם רֵד מֵהָר מֵזֶה כִּי שַׁחַתְתָּ עִמָּךְ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם סְרוּ מֵהָר מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָם עֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִסְכָּה:

<sup>8</sup>וַיֵּרָא הָעָם כִּי־בִשְׁשׁ מִשָּׁה לָרַדְתָּ מִן־הָהָר וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם עַל־אֹהֶרֶן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם | עֲשֵׂה־לָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ כִּי־זָה | מִשָּׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה־הָיָה לוֹ: <sup>9</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֹהֶרֶן פָּרְקוּ נְזָמֵי הַזֹּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי נְשֵׁיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם וְהָבִיאוּ אֵלָי: <sup>10</sup>וַיִּתְּפְּרוּ כָל־הָעָם אֶת־נְזָמֵי הַזֹּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֹהֶרֶן: <sup>11</sup>וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיַּצַּר אֹתוֹ בַּחֲרֹט וַיַּעֲשֵׂהוּ עֵגֶל מִסַּכָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלֹדָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: <sup>12</sup>וַיֵּרָא אֹהֶרֶן וַיְבֹן מִזְבֵּחַ לִפְנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֹהֶרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מִחָר: <sup>13</sup>וַיִּשְׁלִימוּ מִמַּחֲרָת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגְשׂוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיִּשָּׁב הָעָם לַאֲכֹל וּשְׂתוֹ וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק: <sup>14</sup>וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵּדַרְדֹּר כִּי שַׁחַתְתָּ עִמָּךְ אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: <sup>15</sup>סְרוּ מֵהָר מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָם עֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִסְכָּה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ־לוֹ וַיִּזְבְּחוּ־לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלֹדָה מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

<sup>8</sup>At Horeb you so provoked the LORD that the LORD was angry enough with you to have destroyed you. <sup>9</sup>I had ascended the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the Tablets of the Covenant that the LORD had made with you, and I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights, eating no bread and drinking no water. <sup>10</sup>And the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God, with the exact words that the LORD had addressed to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the Assembly. <sup>11</sup>At the end of those forty days and forty nights, the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the Tablets of the Covenant. <sup>12</sup>And the LORD said to me, "Hurry, go down from here at once, for the people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted wickedly; they have been quick to stray from the path that I enjoined upon them; they have made themselves a molten image."

<sup>1</sup>When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who shall go before us, for that man Moses, who brought us from the land of Egypt—we do not know what has happened to him." <sup>2</sup>Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." <sup>3</sup>And all the people took off the gold rings that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup>This he took from them and cast in a mold, and made it into a molten calf. And they exclaimed, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!" <sup>5</sup>When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron announced: "Tomorrow shall be a festival of the LORD!" <sup>6</sup>Early next day, the people offered up burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; they sat down to eat and drink, and then rose to dance. <sup>7</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, "Hurry down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have acted basely. <sup>8</sup>They have been quick to turn aside from the way that I enjoined

upon them. They have made themselves a molten calf and bowed low to it and sacrificed to it, saying: "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

## II. REFRAMING: REFLECTION OR MUSSAR?

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר רְאִיתִי אֶת־הָעַם הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה עִם־  
קִשְׁה־עֲרֹף הוּא: <sup>ט</sup> הָרַף מִמְּנִי וְאֲשַׁמְדֹם וְאִמְחָה אֶת־שִׁמְךָ  
מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אוֹתָךְ לְגוֹי־עָצוּם וְרַב מִמֶּנּוּ: <sup>י</sup> וְאַפֵּן  
וְאָרַל מִן־הֶהָר וְהֶהָר בְּעֵר בְּאֵשׁ וְשָׁנִי לִוְחַת הַבְּרִית עַל שְׁתֵּי  
יָדָי: <sup>י</sup> וְאָרָא וְהִנֵּה חֲטָאתֶם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם עֲשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם  
עֵגֹל מִסַּכָּה סִרְתֶּם מֵהָר מִן־הַדָּרָךְ אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם:  
**"וְאֶתְפֹּשׂ בְּשָׁנֵי הַלְחָת וְאֲשַׁלְּכֶם מֵעַל שְׁתֵּי יָדָי וְאֲשַׁבְּרֶם  
לְעֵינֵיכֶם:**

...

<sup>כ</sup> וְאֶתְנַפֵּל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֵת אַרְבַּעַיִם הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־אַרְבַּעַיִם  
הַלַּיְלָה אֲשֶׁר הִתְנַפַּלְתִּי כִּי־אָמַר יְהוָה לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם:  
<sup>כ</sup> וְאֶתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה וְאָמַר אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה אֶל־תִּשְׁחַת עַמֶּךָ  
וְנַחֲלֶתְךָ אֲשֶׁר פָּדִיתָ בְּגִדְלֶךָ אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד  
חֲזָקָה: <sup>כ</sup> זָכַר לְעַבְדֶּיךָ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלְיַעֲקֹב אֶל־תִּפְּן  
אֶל־קִשֵׁי הָעַם הַזֶּה וְאֶל־רִשְׁעוֹ וְאֶל־חֲטָאתוֹ: <sup>כ</sup> פֶּן־יֹאמְרוּ  
הָאֲרָץ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבְּלִי יְכָלֶת יְהוָה לְהַבִּיאֵם אֶל־  
הָאֲרָץ אֲשֶׁר־דָּבַר לָהֶם וּמִשְׁנֵאתוֹ אוֹתָם הוֹצִיאֵם לְהַמְתִּים  
בַּמִּדְבָּר: <sup>כ</sup> וְהֵם עִמָּךְ וְנַחֲלֶתְךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ בְּכַחַךְ הַגָּדֹל  
וּבְזַרְעֶךָ הַנְּטוּיָה:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה רְאִיתִי אֶת־הָעַם הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה עִם־  
קִשְׁה־עֲרֹף הוּא: וְעַתָּה הִנֵּיחָה לִי וַיַּחֲרֵאֶפִי בָהֶם וְאֶכְלָם  
וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אוֹתָךְ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל: <sup>ט</sup> וַיַּחֲלֵ מֹשֶׁה אֶת־פָּנָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו  
וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה יְהוָה יַחְרֵה אַפְּךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם בְּכַח גָּדוֹל וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה: <sup>י</sup> לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר  
בְּרָעָה הוֹצִיאֵם לְהָרֵג אֹתָם בְּהָרִים וְלִכְלֹתָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי  
הָאֲדָמָה שׁוֹב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהִנָּחֵם עַל־הָרָעָה לְעַמֶּךָ: <sup>י</sup> זָכַר  
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדֶּיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לָהֶם בְּיַד  
וְתַדְבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֲרַבְּהוּ אֶת־זִרְעֶכֶם כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל־  
הָאֲרָץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֵתֶן לְזִרְעֶכֶם וְנַחֲלוּ לְעַלְמֵם:  
<sup>י</sup> וַיִּנָּחֵם יְהוָה עַל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר לַעֲשׂוֹת לְעַמּוֹ: <sup>י</sup> וַיִּפֹּן  
וַיֵּרַד מֹשֶׁה מִן־הֶהָר וְשָׁנִי לְחַת הָעֵדֻת בְּיָדוֹ לְחַת כְּתָבִים  
מִשְׁנֵי עֶבְרִיָּהֶם מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתָבִים: <sup>י</sup> וְהִלַּחַת מֵעֲשֵׂה  
אֱלֹהִים הַמָּה וְהַמְכַתֵּב מִכְּתָב אֱלֹהִים הוּא חֲרוֹת עַל־  
הַלְחָת: ... <sup>י</sup> וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הָעֵגֹל  
וּמַחֲלַת וַיַּחֲרֵאֶף מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלַךְ מִיָּדוֹ אֶת־הַלְחָת וַיִּשְׁבֵּר אֶתְּם  
תַּחַת הָהָר:

<sup>13</sup>The LORD further said to me, “I see that this is a stiff-necked people. <sup>14</sup>Let Me alone and I will destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven, and I will make you a nation far more numerous than they.” <sup>15</sup>I started down the mountain, a mountain ablaze with fire, the two Tablets of the Covenant in my two hands. <sup>16</sup>I saw how you had sinned against the LORD your God: you had made yourselves a molten calf; you had been quick to stray from the path that the LORD had enjoined upon you. <sup>17</sup>**Thereupon I gripped the two tablets and flung them away with both my hands, smashing them before your eyes.**

...

<sup>25</sup>When I lay prostrate before the LORD those forty days and forty nights, because the LORD was determined to destroy you, <sup>26</sup>I prayed to the LORD and said, “O Lord GOD, do not annihilate Your very own people, whom You redeemed in Your majesty and whom You freed from Egypt with a mighty hand. <sup>27</sup>Give thought to Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and pay no heed to the stubbornness of this people, its wickedness, and its sinfulness. <sup>28</sup>Else the country from which You freed us will say, ‘It was because the LORD was powerless to bring them into the land that He had promised them, and because He rejected them, that He brought them out to have them die in the wilderness.’ <sup>29</sup>Yet they are Your very own people, whom You freed with Your great might and Your outstretched arm.”

<sup>9</sup>The LORD further said to Moses, “I see that this is a stiff-necked people. <sup>10</sup>Now, let Me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation.” <sup>11</sup>But Moses implored the LORD his God, saying, “Let not Your anger, O LORD, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand. <sup>12</sup>Let not the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that He delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.’ Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people. <sup>13</sup>Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, how You swore to them by Your Self and said to them: I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your offspring this whole land of which I spoke, to possess forever.” <sup>14</sup>And the LORD renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon His people. <sup>15</sup>Thereupon Moses turned and went down from the mountain bearing the two tablets of the Pact, tablets inscribed on both their surfaces: they were inscribed on the one side and on the other. <sup>16</sup>The tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing, incised upon the tablets. ... <sup>19</sup>As soon as Moses came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, **he became enraged; and he hurled the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.**