

1. Sanhedrin 102a

אמר ר' יצחק אין לך כל פורענות ופורענות שבאה לעולם שאין בה אחד מעשרים וארבעה בהכרע ליטרא של עגל הראשון שנאמר (שמות לב, לד) וביום פקדי ופקדתי עליהם חטאתם

Rabbi Yitzhak says: You have no punishment that comes to the world in which there is not one twenty-fourth of the surplus of a litra of the first calf. (When weighing a substance, there would often be a disparity of up to one twenty-fourth of its weight. The point is that a minuscule portion of the sin of the Golden Calf is added to every punishment imposed upon the Jewish people), as it is stated: "On the day when I punish, I will punish their sin upon them" (Exodus 32:34), (indicating that atonement for that sin is incomplete, and the Jewish people will continue to suffer for it.)

2. Avoda Zara 53b

אלא מדפלחו ישראל לעגל גלו אדעתיהו דניחא להו בעבודת כוכבים

Rather, since the Jewish people worshipped the Golden Calf, they revealed their intentions and indicated that they were amenable to idol worship.

3. Tehillim 106: 19-21

יַעֲשׂוּ-עֵגֶל בְּחֶרֶב וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לַמַּסֶּכֶה:

They made a calf at Horeb and bowed down to a molten image.

וַיִּמְירוּ אֶת-כְּבוֹדֵם בְּתִבְנִית שֹׁר אֲכָל עֵשֶׂב:

They exchanged their glory for the image of a bull that feeds on grass.

שָׁכְחוּ אֵל מוֹשִׁיעֵם עֲשֵׂה גְדִלּוֹת בְּמִצְרַיִם:

They forgot God who saved them, who performed great deeds in Egypt

4. Pirkei D'Rebi Eliezer 45

וכשקבלו ישראל את התורה ר"ל עשרת הדברות לאחר ארבעים יום שכחו את אלהיהם ואמרו לאהרן המצריים היו נושאים את אלהיהם ומשוררין ומזמרין לפניו ורואין אותם

לפניהם קום עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו כשקוץ המצריים ונראה אותו לפנינו שנ' קום עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו.

When Israel received the commandments they forgot their God after forty days, and they said to Aaron: The Egyptians were carrying their god, and they were singing and uttering hymns before it, and they saw it before them. Make unto us a god like the gods of the Egyptians, and let us see it before us, as it is said, "Up, make us a god" (Ex. 32:1).

5. Sanhedrin 63a

א"ר יוחנן אלמלא וי"ו שבהעלוך נתחייבו רשעיהם של ישראל כלייה

Rabbi Yohanan says: Were it not for the vav in the term: "Which brought you up [he'elukha]," giving it a plural form, the haters of the Jewish people, (a euphemism used to refer to the Jewish people themselves), would have been sentenced to destruction for their idol worship. (Since they recognized that God had taken them out of Egypt, and thought that He had merely made the golden calf His partner, the Jewish people were spared)

6. Shabbos 89a

לסוף ארבעים יום בא שטן ועירבב את העולם. אמר להן: משה רבכם היכן הוא? אמרו לו: עלה למרום. אמר להן: באו שש, ולא השגיחו עליו. מת, ולא השגיחו עליו. הראה להן דמות מטותן

After forty days, Satan came and brought confusion to the world by means of a storm, and it was impossible to ascertain the time. Satan said to the Jews: Where is your teacher Moses? They said to him: He ascended on High. He said to them: Six hours have arrived and he has not yet come. Surely he won't. And they paid him no attention. Satan said to them: Moses died. And they paid him no attention. Ultimately, he showed them an image of his death-bed and an image of Moses' corpse in a cloud.

7. Guide to the Perplexed 3:32

It is, namely, impossible to go suddenly from one extreme to the other: it is therefore according to the nature of man impossible for him suddenly to discontinue everything to which he has been accustomed....

the nature of man is never changed by God by way of miracle.

8. Nechama Leibowitz Studies in Shemot 555-556

Therefore we should not be astonished at the fact that the generation which had heard the voice of the Living God and had received the commandment "thou shalt not make other gods besides Me" descended to the making of the golden calf forty days later. One single religious experience, however profound, was not capable of changing the people from idol worshippers into monotheists. Only a prolonged disciplining in the precepts of the Torah directing every moment of their existence could accomplish that. The all embracing character of the Torah's observances regulating the individual's relations with himself, family and society constitute the surest guarantee against moral relapses.

9. Rabbi Menachem Leibtag Ki Tisa: Chet HaEgel and the 13 Midot of Rachamim OU Torah.org

Assuming that Moshe is not returning, Bnei Yisrael must do something - but what are their options?

To remain stranded in the desert? Of course not! They have waited for Moshe long enough.

To return to Egypt? "chas ve-shalom" / (of course not!). That would certainly be against God's wishes; and why should they return to slavery!

To continue their journey to Eretz Canaan? Why not! After all, was this not the purpose of Yetziat Mitzrayim - to inherit the Promised Land

Shemos 23:20 הִנֵּה אֲנִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָךְ לִפְנֶיךָ לְשַׁמְרְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְלְהַבְיֵאךָ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הִכְנֵתִי:

I am sending an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have made ready.

10. Sefer Hakuzari 1:97

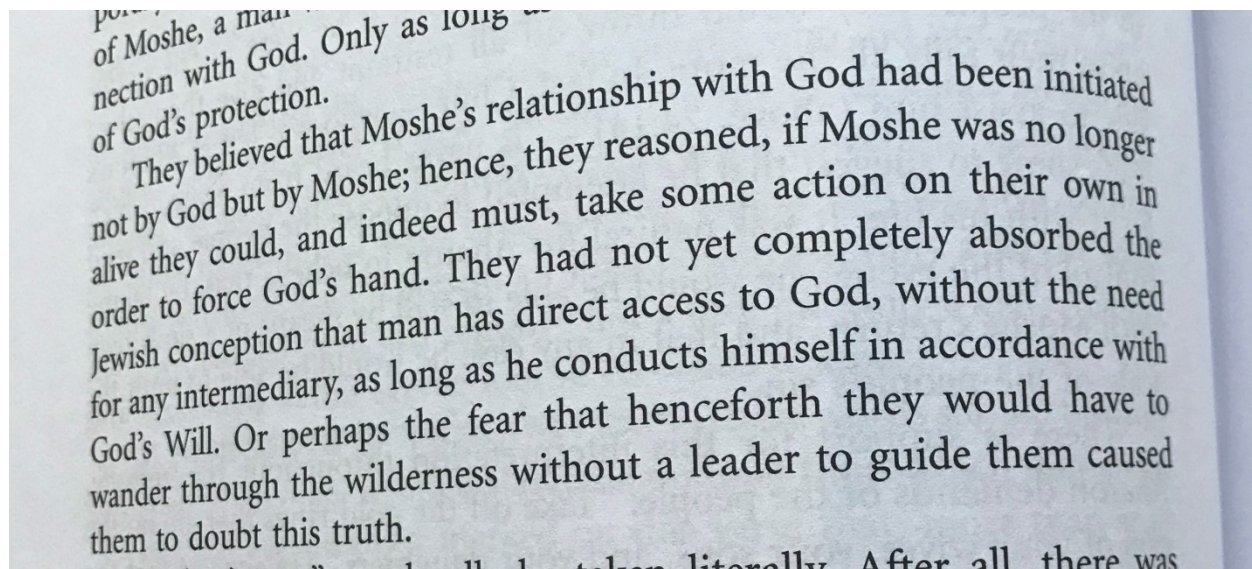
this was to be something to which they could point when relating the wonders of God, as the Philistines did with the ark when they said that God dwelt within it. We do the same with the sky and every other object concerning which we know that it is set in motion by the divine will exclusively, and not by any accident or desire of man or nature. Their sin consisted in the manufacture of an image of a forbidden thing, and in attributing divine power to a creation of their own, something chosen by themselves without the guidance of God. Some excuse may be found for them in the dissension which had broken out among them, and in the fact that out of six hundred thousand souls the number of those who worshipped the calf was below three thousand.

11. Radak Kings 1 12:28

למה עגל אמר להם הלא אהרן עשה לישראל עגל להשרות השכינה בו במקום משה שלא היה להם גם אתם עתה שאין לכם מקום השכינה שהוא ירושלם נעשה עגל במקומו להשרות שכינה בו

12. Rav Hirsch Shemos 32:1

Aharon did what — עשה לנו אלהים אשר ילכו לפנינו כי זה משה האיש וגו' — and the reason — אשר ילכו לפנינו — show clearly that this was not a case of idolatry in the usual sense, not a betrayal of God. What the people wanted Aharon to make was meant to take the place of Moshe, not to take the place of God. They presumed that Moshe had died in an accident; they therefore demanded of Aharon that he make for them a "Moshe" figure that would never be lost. But that they pinned their hopes for the future on the existence of a "Moshe" figure, and the erroneous notion that man can, may, and indeed should make for himself a "Moshe" figure — these are notions totally antithetical to the basic truths of Jewish belief regarding the nature of God and the mutual relationship between God and man. These truths had been made clear to the people by God's warning immediately after the rev-



13. Shemos 32: 6-7

(וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ מִמַּחֲרָת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּגִּשּׁוּ שְׁלָמִים וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וּשְׂתוֹ וַיִּקְמוּ לִצְחָק: פ)

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.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּךְ-רַדְּ כִּי שָׁחַת עַמְּךָ אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלִיתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם:

The LORD spoke to Moses, "Hurry down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have acted basely.

14. Shemos 33: 1-4

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּךְ עֲלֶה מִזֶּה אַתָּה וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלִיתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלַיַּעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר לְזֶרַעְךָ אֶתְנֶנָּה:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Set out from here, you and the people that you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your offspring will I give it' —

וְשָׁלַחְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ מַלְאֲךְ וְגִרְשִׁיתִי אֶת-הַכְּנַעֲנִי הָאֹמֶרִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהַפְּרִזִּי הַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי:

I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites—

אֶל־אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וּדְבַשׁ כִּי לֹא אֵעָלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ כִּי עִם־קִנְיָה־עֶרְפָּךְ אֶתָּה פֶּן־אֶכְלֶה בַּדֶּרֶךְ:

a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go in your midst, since you are a stiffnecked people, lest I destroy you on the way.”

וַיִּשְׁמַע הָעָם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַרָּע הַזֶּה וַיִּתְאַבְּלוּ וְלֹא־שָׁתוּ אִישׁ עֵדִין עָלָיו:

When the people heard this harsh word, they went into mourning, and none put on his finery.

15. Shemos 20: 15-16

וְכָל־הָעָם רֹאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִם וְאֵת קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר וְאֶת־הַהָר עֹשֵׂן וַיֵּרָא הָעָם וַיִּנָּעוּ וַיַּעֲמִדוּ מֵרָחֵק:

All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a distance.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר־אַתָּה עִמָּנוּ וְנִשְׁמָעָה וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים פֶּן־נָמוּת:

“You speak to us,” they said to Moses, “and we will obey; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.”