

And he made of it a molten calf. Then they said "these are your gods Yisroel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt." (32:4) - "And on the day when I remember, I will remember their sin against them." (32:34)

As we read the *Torah's* account of the sin of the Golden Calf, we only wonder in amazement at the rapid transformation of the Jewish people. Having reached the awesome plateau of belief in Hashem which they experienced at Mount Sinai, for them to then fall to such depths of degradation, is astonishing. However, as the commentaries explain, it was the *Eirev Rav* (mixed multitude) who came with them from Egypt who were actually the perpetrators of this terrible transgression. Those individuals who were involved in the actual sin of making and serving this makeshift idol were punished either by execution at the hands of the tribe of Levi, or in the ensuing plague that befell the people. Why then, does the *Torah* state that whenever Hashem punishes the Jewish people, there will always be an added fragment of punishment as a result of the Golden Calf? There must be some sin that affected the remainder of the Jews in such a way that there should continue to be additional punishments to the present time.

Perhaps their transgression was their own sense of indifference and apathy toward what the mixed multitude was conspiring to do. Their error was in assuming that mere non-involvement in this sin relieved them of any responsibility. This was a grave mistake. When we remain indifferent to others who brazenly perform such a sin, and openly flaunt their transgression, then we too are held guilty and are liable for this sin. Often we stand indifferent while unaffiliated and self-proclaimed leaders speak as representatives for our people. Whatever the reason we cannot permit ourselves this indifference and apathy. If we are helpful to those who sin even in the slightest manner we are also held accountable for their sins. This is why we are still being punished for the sin of the Golden Calf. Our lesson from history must be that there are always those few sinners who will attempt to influence others to follow their crooked ways. There are also self-proclaimed spokesmen who will play "both sides of the coin." It is our obligation to expose these people and to courageously take a position to uphold the dignity and honor of Hashem, as Moshe proclaimed to the tribe of Levi "*Whoever is on Hashem's side, let him come to me.*"