

## "And at Taveirah and at Masah and at Kivros Ha'Taavah you made Hashem angry." (9:22)

In *Pirkei Avos 5 Chazal* enumerate the ten trials with which *Bnei Yisrael* "tested" Hashem in the desert. It is interesting to note that Moshe interrupted his admonishment of *Bnei Yisrael* concerning the Golden Calf in order to mention the above sins as well as to mention the sins of the meraglim, spies. Why specifically does he mention these four sins?

*Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin z.l.* asserts that this interruption is deliberate. Its purpose is to dispute the notion that *Bnei Yisrael* sinned with the Golden Calf as a result of their panic at the temporary absence of Moshe, their leader. The common Jew, feeling alone, lost without direction, chose a replacement. Indeed, even Aharon did not "seem" to protest their behavior! Why then did Moshe say to them, "*From the day that you left Egypt... you have been rebellious with Hashem (7: )*"?

The *Torah*, therefore, describes those places in which a sin related to idol worship took place despite Moshe's presence. In these four places, *Bnei Yisrael* could no longer vindicate their malevolent behavior by placing the onus of guilt on Moshe's inaccessibility. While Moshe was present as a leader, they still tested Hashem. *Horav Sorotzkin* explains that idol worship is at the essence of each one of these sins.

This was Moshe's rebuke to *Bnei Yisrael*: "You attempt to justify the sin of the Golden Calf with the fact that I was not there. Why, then, did you commit these other sins in my presence?" As long as one is not willing to search for and ultimately confront the root of his sin, he will not be able to repent.