

In the Sifra (a halachic midrash on Sefer Vayikra), we find the well-known statement of Rabbi Akiva to the Torah's mitzva of V'AHAVTA L'REI-ACHA KAMOCHA, Love your fellow as yourself. His comment - or words to that effect - This is a great rule of the Torah. ZEH K'LAL GADOL BATORAH.

The Maharal refers to the Ein Yaakov which states that Ben Zoma said that the 'great' pasuk in the Torah is SH'MA YISRAEL. To which Ben Nanas said, that V'AHAVTA L'REI-ACHA KAMOCHA is even greater.

Ben Azai is quoted by the Sifra as saying that even greater than that is ZEH SEFER TOL'DOT ADAM (which we won't explain here because it isn't our target. It is, BTW, the FPTL TTriddle).

Back to the Maharal who further quotes Shimon ben Pazi who said that we find an even greater K'lal in the Torah: ET HAKEVES HA'ECHAD TAASEH BABOKER... One of the two lambs shall be offered in the morning, and the second lamb shall be offered in late afternoon.

To which an unnamed scholar stood up and proclaimed that the halacha was like ben Pazi...

Thanks to RYMKO for the above sources, we have now arrived at the focus of this Lead Tidbit.

Remember, the 'winning' pasuk (so to speak) is held higher than SH'MA with its command to love G-d, and G-d's

command to love our fellow. At the top is the daily T'midim, the sacrifices that were brought every day, twice a day, every single day of the year. Weekday, Shabbat, Holidays, Yom Kippur. Every single day. Without fail.

Until it ceased. According to the mishna in Taanit, it was on the 17th of Tamuz that the Tamid ceased. It was resumed in the Second Beit HaMikdash, but the stopping of the daily sacrifices was such a calamity to the people of Israewl, that it is counted among the 10 calamities related to 17 Tamuz or 9 Av (five each).

So that is one of the events we mourn. And where do we find the command to bring the T'midim? In Parshat Pinchas, which always falls right before or after the 17th of Tamuz. (And in Israel, they actually co-incide once in a while.)

The point: Korban Tamid. Representative of Avodat Beit HaMikdash (Temple Service). More than representative. Maybe the highest offering because it is constant. Hence, ben Pazi's choice of K'lal Gadol BaTorah.

And what do we really want? The Geula Sh'leima, the third Beit HaMikdash and everything that goes with it? Or, the continuation and perpetuation of the causes of the Churban?

We are at the crossroads (again) of Parshat Pinchas and the Three Weeks. It's (partially) up to us to choose.