



## Our ongoing challenge of TIKUN

We'll get to this week's Cheit HaEigel in a little while; first, let's look back at the recently celebrated Purim and Zachor which preceded it.

The Torah commands us to remember what Amalek did to Bnei Yisrael shortly after we left Egypt. And not to forget.

In addition to remembering the attack and its details, and G-d's command of TIMCHEH, and His promise of EMCHEH, and that the battle against Amalek recurs from generation to generation... and more - the Sefer HaChareidim adds another aspect to remember: The reason we were subjected to the attack from Amalek, namely that our mitzva observance was weak.

This idea can be seen in the Torah texts that immediately precede each of the Amalek portions. In B'shalach, we find the thirsty people demanded water from Moshe and expressed their feelings with bitter complains against G-d. It is if to say, speak like that to G-d and look what happens in its wake.

Parshat Zachor at the end of Ki Teitzei is preceded by the commands regarding even owning false weights and measures. Before that, the text is about people fighting with each other. Here too we can infer that Amalek is allowed to attack us (so to speak) when we do not keep the Torah properly - especially on an interpersonal level.

The mitzvot of Zachor and Lo Tishkach require more than remembering. They require TIKUN, repair. And this is not a one day or one Shabbat task. It is a year-round, 24/7 challenge.

Purim: same idea. Celebrating our being saved from being wiped out by Haman and his ilk, thanks to the cooperative venture of G-d (behind the scene) and Esther and Mordechai. But what got us into trouble in the first place? Commentaries say it was the Jews' attending and enjoying the parties of Achashveirosh. A sign of complacency and assimilation into the local culture. Aside from punishment, threat, t'shuva, forgiveness, and atonement, we need to do TIKUN.

Jews of today's exile (and to extent even we in Israel) are faced with Haman-like threats with similar causes behind them. Our challenge is NOT to repeat history, G-d forbid. In every generation - read that as, in our generation, we can effect a TIKUN by working to combat assimilation, intermarriage, and the trading of Torah values for cultural allures.

Which brings us to this week's sedra. Same story. A terrible sin. The golden calf. 3000 revelers were killed. The Jewish People in some way, were punished and continue to be so. T'shuva? For sure. Atonement? Hopefully - but our biggest challenge is TIKUN.

Eigel HaZahav is not a once-upon-a-time a long time ago story. We have golden calves today. Our TIKUN includes avoiding the short-sightedness of that generation. It consists of NOT sitting on the fence when fellow Jews are going down the wrong path.

Yes, Para Aduma is an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. But our improved commitment to Torah, Mitzvot, and Values is our continual challenge as individuals and as Klal Yisrael.