

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

by Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky

Sefer Devorim begins with Moshe rebuking the Jews for their shortcomings during their 40-year trek through the desert. **In an effort to preserve the honor of the Jews, Moshe Rabbeinu hints to some of their past sins by mentioning only the location of the place where they sinned,** "The Red Sea, between Paran and Tofel and Lavan and Hazeroth." These words refer to places where the Jews sinned in the desert. **But then Moshe adds one more place, "Di Zahav."**

Rashi explains that this is a reference to the sin of the Golden Calf, and "Di Zahav" means "Enough gold." The Gemara in Brachos tells us that Moshe, in an effort to defend the Jews, told Hashem that the Jews were not completely at fault for the sin of the Golden Calf because "You gave them so much gold, until they said 'enough.'" The abundance of gold caused them to sin.

There is still a troubling detail. We know the famous adage of the sages, "One does not die with even half of his desires fulfilled," and "One who has one hundred desires two hundred." **How is it that the Jews in the desert were satisfied with the gold they received?** Why did they say, "Enough"?

A grandson of Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz zt"l, a Rosh Yeshiva of Ponovezh in Bnei Brak, bought a gift for his grandparents - a beautiful mirror nameplate for their front door, completely customized with the Hebrew name "Lefkowitz" engraved - a standard household ornament in Israel. However, a few weeks went by and the front door remained bare. Rav Lefkowitz did not put up the nameplate.

He finally approached his grandfather and asked him why he is not using the nameplate. Rav Lefkowitz hesitated before finally admitting the truth. "Our apartment is old," he began, "And the front door has seen better days. If I put up the nameplate, it is only a matter of time before someone will suggest that I replace the door. After all, the nameplate must match the décor of the apartment. Once the door is replaced, someone will suggest that the interior walls need to be repainted. One thing will lead to another, and before long, I will be living in a completely redecorated apartment! I'd rather live a much simpler life with the least amount of distractions, and serve Hashem with all my abilities."

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, zt"l offers the following explanation. **Before the evil inclination, yetzer horah, became a part of man's inner being, man was pure.** He was able to withstand the pressure and desires for physical pleasure and possessions. But after Adam sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, the evil inclination became part of him, and the infamous daily struggle of man began.

When the Jews received the Torah at Mount Sinai, and Hashem revealed Himself with all his glory, they reached such a lofty spiritual level, that their impurity ceased ("paska zuhamasan"). The evil inclination left their bodies, and only affected them externally. **When they took the Egyptians' gold and riches from the shores of the Sea of Reeds, they were able to control controlled themselves.** They took what they needed and then said, "Enough!"

During the time when we mourn the two Batei Mikdash - both destroyed on Tisha B'av, we too can look around at the world we live in, and see how fortunate we are to have what we need. At this point in history, when Hashem is not dwelling in His Beis Hamikdash, do we really need one more golden nugget? We can also sacrifice for Hashem, and say, "Enough"

Good Shabbos!