

# THE VULNERABILITY OF EMOTIONAL DOUBT

*by Rabbi Pinchas Winston*

With respect to Chanukah it is clear that the weekly Torah readings are in sync with the holiday. The story of Yosef and his brothers is one of the central themes of Chanukah, and there are many hints to Chanukah in the parshios themselves.

Not so Purim. With respect to Purim, it seems as if the parshios have little to do with the time of year, so to give them some relevance, we change the Maftir to another section of Torah referred to as the ArbaParshios—the Four Sections—whose themes are connected to this time of year.

Or so it may seem. The reality is that these parshios have everything to do with Purim. For example, the four areas of the Mishkan correspond to the four mitzvos of Purim, and the journey from outside the Tent of Meeting to the Holy of Holies is representative of the journey from themitzvah of Megillah to the Mishteh—drinking feast—and what it is supposed to help us accomplish.

Just as significant is the fact that the third of the four special readings—Parah—can end up on the same Shabbos that we read about the golden calf. It's like getting sick and going to the medicine cabinet and finding exactly the medicine you need to take to get better: the Red Heifer is the cure for the golden calf.

Years back I pointed out something interesting (it was to me) to do with the entire episode of the golden calf, which in Hebrew is eigel hazavah, whose gematrios—numerical values—are 103 (Ayin-Gimmel-Lamed) and 19 (Heh-Zayin-Heh-Bais) respectively. Coincidentally (though we don't believe in coincidences), the Twin Towers mysteriously collapsed in 103 minutes after 19 terrorists (the 20th just happened not to make it on time), flew two commercial jets into their sides on September 11, 2001.

At the time, the point I was making was part of a much larger presentation that eventually became my book, *The Equation of Life: Making Your Life and History Add Up*, which you can still buy on line ([www.thirtysix.org](http://www.thirtysix.org)). Basically, the destruction of the two towers, which, incredibly, were in the shape of an eleven, could be seen as a message of the direction history was going at that time, and what it meant for the Jewish people.

I still hold by that message, but I would like to add to it at this time. Why now, so many years after the world has left behind the tragedy? Because, a friend of mind just sent me a link to a presentation called 9/11: Experts Speak Out that demands that we re-examine and re-think our understanding of the events of that time.

Well, not me. I have always held that the destruction of the buildings was not the result of the planes themselves, but the result of a controlled implosion. As an architect student who, during my time in university, went on a field trip to New York that included a tour of the World Trade Center, I knew from the start that airplanes could not bring those buildings down, and certainly not that fast. We were told that explicitly by the guide, and the plans of the building made that clear.

Who was responsible for the implosion? I have my theories, as do many other conspiracy theory advocates, especially given what happened immediately after the attack. However, that is not my focus at this time, after watching the presentation just mentioned, which was produced and presented by some of the top architects, engineers, and chemists in the States.

Basically, they confirmed what has always been known, and they are now demanding new answers for what occurred on 9/11. The science does not add up, meaning that the forensics points away from the official government explanation as to why the buildings collapsed so totally and so quickly, and in the direction of a man-made massive explosion instead. What really happened on 9/11, they are asking, and suggesting other Americans ask as well.

What does all of this have to do with this week's parshah and ParashasParah? This time, it has to do with the reaction of the people to the video presentation, such as one mentioned by an expert regarding her brother's reaction to watching it. She was saying, "Don't mess with my comfort, don't mess with my life, etc." or something to that effect, and quite common amongst millions upon millions of people around the world.

I particularly enjoyed the picture of the United States being turned upside down, an important Purim issue, representative of reality if, as the person was saying, his own government was responsible for the attack and cover-up. The implications of such a truth would be staggering, not just for American citizens, but for all citizens around the world.

However, the bigger question might not be, "How can a government justify and carry out such a horrific and criminal act on its own people?" which can easily be answered (though not necessarily easily believed). The larger question is, "How can so many people be confronted with so many indisputable facts that the jetliners did not bring those three towers down (including Building Seven, which wasn't even hit by a plane), and not want to know what really happened?"

How can their desire for a pleasant life override their desire to know the truth about it?

It is this very question that links the video and people's reaction to it to the events in this week's parshah, its special Maftir, and the story of Purim.

It is one of the most bizarre events of history. That people acted licentiously is nothing new. That people threw off the yoke of Heaven just after putting it on is also not so unusual, especially if the religious change came quickly. However, that both could happen at the base of Mt. Sinai, within 40

days of actually hearing God Himself speak is already bizarre.

Granted, the Erev Rav—Mixed Multitude—was the main instigator of the sin, and the vast majority of Jews did not get involved, just under three thousand Jews (close to the number of people who died in the Twin Towers attack), who were later executed by Moshe Rabbeinu and the Tribe of Levi for their involvement. However, the rest of the nation was still held responsible for at least not stopping it from happening and, as Rashi points out, we're still paying for that each time we are punished for something else.

When it comes to animal minds, if there is a threat of danger, the animal will not let his guard down until it knows, or at least thinks, that the danger is gone. He is not capable of being presented with the potential for danger and ignoring it. An animal can be starving, almost to death, and it will still pass up some food if taking the food presents a clear and present danger.

This is because animals do not have emotions. But humans do, and they are capable of generating enough excitement that the warnings of the brain can be drowned out, at least temporarily. They can push people to create heinous sins and, as a result, bring the world to the threshold of terrible danger before pushing mankind over it.

The Erev Rav was not born yesterday. They knew, as does every good marketing firm, that in order to get people to overcome the wisdom of their minds they have to instigate the emotions to make more noise than the intellect does. They had to create a scenario that would talk to the emotions, excite them, make them even scream out in ecstasy just long enough to sin before people sober up to what they have actually done.

For them, that was the golden calf, which represented unbridled emotions, or what many call passions. However, the Red Heifer was neither young nor gold. It is grown up, and red, as in the color of blood, as in the symbol of mortality. It is the sobering answering to the drunken impact of the gold calf.

Recently I became involved in discussion with someone I consider to be highly intelligent regarding the evidence for the planned destructive of the World Trade Center. He neither had watched the video nor had read anything about the people behind it, but, nonetheless, he was prepared to discount it completely. Only after some pushing did he agree to screen the material.

Amazingly, it was clear to anyone else listening in that he had not rejected the information based upon fact. Rather, he had been incredulous, unable to believe that the buildings had been destroyed and almost 3,000 people had died because of "friendly fire." Within 20 seconds, I showed why intellectually, that was not a question, emotionally, he still had doubt, emotional doubt.

Nothing makes a person, and society, more vulnerable than emotional doubt.

Text

Copyright © by [Rabbi Pinchas Winston](#) and Project Genesis, Inc.

Rabbi Winston has authored many books on Jewish philosophy (Hashkofa). If you enjoy Rabbi Winston's Perceptions on the Parsha, you may enjoy his books. Visit Rabbi Winston's [online book store](#) for more details! [www.thirtysix.org](http://www.thirtysix.org)