

Berachot 32b:15-19

[15] ותאמר ציון עזבני ה' וה' שכחני". היינו עזובה, היינו שכוחה? אמר ריש לקיש: אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבוננו של עולם, אדם נושא אשה על אשתו ראשונה, זוכר מעשה הראשונה. אתה עזבתני ושכחתי.

The Gemara cites a midrash on the following verse from Isaiah, relating to the sin of the Golden Calf and Moses' supplication for forgiveness: **“But Zion said: The Lord has forsaken me and the Lord has forgotten me.** Can a woman forget her suckling baby, that she would not have compassion for the child of her womb? These may forget, but you I will not forget” (Isaiah 49:14–15). The Gemara seeks to clarify: **Forsaken is the same as forgotten.** They are synonymous; why repeat the same idea twice? **Reish Lakish said: The community of Israel said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, even when a man marries a second wife after his first wife, he certainly recalls the deeds of his first wife.** Yet **You have not only forsaken me, but You have forgotten me** as well.

[16] אמר לה הקדוש ברוך הוא: בתי, שנים עשר מזלות בראתי ברקיע, ועל כל מזל ומזל בראתי לו שלשים סיל, ועל כל סיל וחיל בראתי לו שלשים לגיון, ועל כל לגיון ולגיון בראתי לו שלשים רהטון, ועל כל רהטון ורהטון בראתי לו שלשים קרטון, ועל כל קרטון וקרטון בראתי לו שלשים גסטרא, ועל כל גסטרא וגסטרא תליתי בו שלש מאות ושלשים וחמשה אלפי כוכבים פנגד ימות החמה. וכולן לא בראתי אלא בשבילך, ואת אמרת “עזבתני” ו”שכחתי”?!

The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Israel: **My daughter, I created twelve constellations in the firmament, and for each and every constellation I have created thirty armies, and for each and every army I have created thirty legions [ligyon], and for each and every legion I have created thirty infantry division leaders [rahaton], and for each and every infantry division leader I have created thirty military camp leaders [karton], and for each and every military camp leader I have created thirty leaders of forts [gastera], and on each and every leader of a fort I have hung three hundred and sixty-five thousand stars corresponding to the days of the solar year. And all of them I have created only for your sake; and you said the Lord has forsaken me and the Lord has forgotten me?**

[17] “התשכח אשה עולה”, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: כלום אשכח עולות אילים ופטרי רחמים שהקרבת לפני במדבר?! אמרה לפניו: רבוננו של עולם, הואיל ואין שכחה לפני כסא כבודך, שפא לא תשכח לי מעשה העגל? אמר לה: “גם אלה תשכחנה”.

The verse goes on to say: **“Can a woman forget her suckling baby, that she would not have compassion for the child of her womb? These may forget, but you I will not forget.”** The meaning of this verse is that **the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the community of Israel: Have I forgotten the ram offerings and firstborn animals that you offered before Me in the desert?** The community of Israel replied to Him: **Master of the Universe, since there is no forgetfulness**

before the Throne of Your Glory, perhaps you will not forget my sin of the Golden Calf? God responded to Israel: “These [elu] too shall be forgotten.” “These” is a reference to the sin of the Golden Calf, regarding which Israel said: “These [elu] are your gods.”

[18] אָמַרְהָ לְפָנָיו: רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, הוֹאִיל וַיֵּשׁ שִׁכְחָה לְפָנַי כְּסֵא כְבוֹדְךָ, שָׁמָּא תִשְׁכַּח לִי מַעֲשֵׂה סִינַי? אָמַר לָהּ: “וַיִּשְׁכַּח לָא אֵשְׁכַחְךָ.” .

The community of Israel **said before Him: Master of the Universe, since there is forgetfulness before the Throne of Your Glory, perhaps You will also forget the events** revolving around the revelation at **Sinai? God said to Israel: I [anokhi] will not forget you** the revelation at Sinai, which began with: “I [anokhi] am the Lord your God.”

[19] דָּאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר רַב אוֹשְׁעִיָּא: מַאי דְכָתִיב “גַּם אֵלֶּה תִשְׁכַּחְנָה” — זֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הָעֵגֶל, “וַיִּשְׁכַּח לָא אֵשְׁכַחְךָ” — זֶה מַעֲשֵׂה סִינַי .

The Gemara notes: **That** is what **Rabbi Elazar said** that **Rav Oshaya said: What is** the meaning of that which is **written: “These too will be forgotten”?** **That is the sin of the Golden Calf.** And what is the meaning of **I will not forget you? Those are the events** that transpired at **Sinai.**

From William Davidson Talmud (Koren – Steinsaltz)