

# SICHA POEM

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



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## Devarim, Sicha 1

— By Rabbi Mottel Friedman, Coral Springs, FL

Right before passing away, the Torah does tell  
 Moshe explained the whole Torah to the Bnei Yisroel  
 And to make sure that all the Jews were thoroughly Torah-educated  
 Into seventy languages the Torah he translated

Later in our history Torah was translated again  
 When King Ptolemy had it translated by five rabbis, righteous men  
 Chazal say that day is one the saddest that the Jewish people have  
 “It is difficult as the day the Yidden made the Golden Calf!”

A few questions to ponder to help us understand:  
 If it was so bad to translate Torah at Ptolemy’s command  
 Because it could lead to misunderstanding and confusion could be sewn  
 Why did Moshe translate Torah voluntarily and on his own?

A second question we must ask to help make things clear:  
 The sin of the Golden Calf was one of the worst and most severe  
 And most damaging experiences our nation has ever had  
 Could translating the Torah really be as bad?

And finally the Gemara says that the day Hillel was forced  
 To sit like a student in front of Shammai was one of the worst  
 “As difficult as the day the Eigel was made” Chazal tell us sadly  
 But could it really be as bad? That’s question number three

The answer is: the Gemara chooses its words with thought and care  
 And we must take the time to examine precisely what's written there:  
 Those days aren't as bad as when the Jews served the Eigel and prostrated  
 Rather, they're as bad as the day the Eigel was simply created

When the calf was made, there was still room to believe  
 That Aharon would keep the Jews from sin and there'd be no call to grieve  
 The calf created the possibility that it would be a terrible day  
 But until they actually sinned it could have ended a different way

The same is true of translating the Torah and its teaching  
 People might misunderstand with negative results far-reaching  
 So it's "like the day the calf was made" because of what might be  
 It was something that had the potential to end in catastrophe

And the same holds true of Hillel being forced to be humbled and sit in his place  
 Although the halacha follows Hillel in almost every other case  
 Making him sit like a student before Shammai might compel  
 People to start ruling like Shammai in other cases as well

Now despite the possibility, these concerns never came to be  
 Because the Torah was translated wisely and with sensitivity  
 And Hillel's sitting before Shammai actually led to something good  
 In some cases Shammai ruled more leniently than he normally would

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