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# א ביטל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

4/5/2024-ד תשפ"ד אדר ב

שמיני

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## חטא העגל Atoning for

By Eitan Orkaby

In this week's פרשה, אהרן is commanded by ה' to bring two different קרבנות, "עֵגֶל בֶּן־בָּקָר לַחֲטָאת וְאַיִל" (ויקרא ט:ב) These קרבנות are brought to atone for two different sins. The first of which, according to רש"י and many other פירושים, was to atone for the sin of the חטא העגל (golden calf), which is why it had to be an עגל. The second קרבן, suggests רבינו בחיי, was brought to atone for אהרן specifically, as he didn't do the actual חטא העגל, but was involved in the spiritual part of the חטא, which is why he had to bring an עולה, which goes completely to ה'. How is the calf supposed to atone for the חטא העגל? We already sinned with a calf, so why should we have any temptation to worship another one?

R' Baruch Epstein in תוספת ברכה, says there is actually another place where we receive atonement for the חטא העגל. When the כהן גדול wears gold, it is supposed to remind us of the sin that we committed. When the עֵגֶל בֶּן־בָּקָר is slaughtered, it annuls the memory of the חטא העגל, therefore atoning for the sin completely. However, חז"ל say that a חטאת, sin offering, is supposed to be brought in the same place as the עולה, burnt offering. This is to avoid embarrassing the one who brings the קרבן. The קרבן that was to be brought, to atone for the חטא העגל, was a קרבן חטאת, meaning shouldn't be too embarrassing for the one who brings the קרבן. The problem with this is that in order to have complete atonement there must be an embarrassing aspect to the atonement. If the קרבן is supposed to completely atone for בני ישראל's sins, then why shouldn't there be more embarrassment?

The חכמים on לב סוטה, understand this קרבן as a communal sacrifice, which would make the sacrificing of the חטאת as embarrassing in a different way than the normal חטאת. The embarrassment is in front of ה', and because ה' knows everything, it wouldn't matter whether the קרבן was in a different place, it would be just as embarrassing. That is why ה' commanded אהרן to bring the חטאת in public.

When we are going about our day to day lives, we have to be very careful not to embarrass anyone. We see this by the חטאת that is given for someone's personal sin. Even while extremely embarrassed that they committed a sin, we still are not allowed to embarrass them, even just a little bit more. May we be זוכה to never embarrass someone, whether by accident, or on purpose.

# נדב ואביהוא The Death of

By Binyamin Orkaby

In פרשת שמני, the בני ישראל and כהנים are commanded to bring קרבנות before ה'. During the process of bringing all the different קרבנות, נדב ואביהוא, the children of אהרן, bring a קרבן, and are killed for doing so. The פסוק teaches us that they were killed because they brought "אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֲתֶם" "a foreign fire which they were not commanded to bring." (ויקרא יא) It would seem, from the simple reading of the פסוק, that they died because they brought their own fire, rather than ה's. The מפרשים offer a myriad of other explanations as to the reason for נדב ואביהוא's death.

רש"י explains that the reason they were killed was because they had been drunk when they entered the משכן. Only a few פסוקים later משה tells אהרן that a כהן is not allowed to serve in the משכן if they are drunk. רש"י explains that this law was commanded immediately follows the death of נדב ואביהוא to show that they had died because they had been drunk.

The גמרא on סנהדרין נב. says that another reason for נדב ואביהוא's death was that they would say to one another, as they were walking behind משה and אהרן, "when are these old guys going to die so we can take their place?" Since they were so haughty they therefore were punished by ה', with death, to show them that they can't look to what will happen before it happens. נדב ואביהוא thought that they would be the ones to bury משה and אהרן, so ה' killed them and they were buried by משה and אהרן instead. ה' essentially taught the principle of not counting your chickens before they hatch.

הגמרא on עירובין סג. says that the reason נדב ואביהוא were killed was because they were רבי. מורה הלכה before their teacher and anyone who does so is punished by death. רבי explains that although the fire had come from ה' onto the מזבח, they thought that they should also bring some human fire as well.

All three of these answers, although attributing נדב ואביהוא's death to different causes, use a similar underlying theme for why נדב ואביהוא died. All three explain that נדב ואביהוא died because they acted in a way that wasn't befitting of a leader of בני ישראל. They were too focused on their own self worth and pleasure and as such they were killed. Drinking too much wine leads to a loss of self-control and to one acting in ways that they normally wouldn't. Being cocky, bragging and teaching a הלכה before your Rebbe, without his permission, are all acts focused on one's self-worth. This story of נדב ואביהוא teaches the importance of not being so self centered as to lose sight of what is important in the world. Being kind, respectful and in control of our actions allows us to leave a proper and healthy life. May we be able to always respect people other than ourselves.

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