



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

To Soar, We Need Wings!

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Director

"And to the children of Israel, you shall speak, saying, 'Take a he goat as a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb...' (9:3)

In the opening verses of this week's Parsha, Moshe instructs Aharon regarding a series of offerings that are to be brought on behalf of the Jewish nation. The Midrash explains that a goat offering was necessary to atone for their earlier sin when they "slaughtered a goat." (Bereishis 37:31) This refers to how Yosef's brothers, after selling him to Egyptian traders, dipped Yosef's coat in the blood of a goat and presented it before their father, Yaakov, as if Yosef had been mauled by a wild animal. The purpose of the calf offering was to atone for the Golden Calf.

We can readily understand why it was necessary for the people to atone for the Golden Calf, but why would they need to atone for the sale of Yosef and why specifically now? Furthermore, why would that atonement be achieved through repentance over the goat that they slaughtered to deceive Yaakov? That detail of the story seems incidental to the actual sale of Yosef.

In order to resolve these issues, Rav Yosef Salant elucidates another Midrash from the beginning of the Parsha. *Rabbi Akiva said: The Jewish people are comparable to a bird. Just as a bird cannot fly without wings, so too the Jewish people cannot act without their elders.* Rav Salant suggests that the metaphor of a bird seeking to fly is very specific. It is particularly when we are looking to fly – to elevate ourselves by innovating new methods to connect with Hashem, that we must first consult our Torah leadership. It was a failure in this regard that led to the worshipping of the Golden Calf. According to many commentaries, the people initially had good intentions in creating the Golden Calf. They sought to create an abode for Hashem's Presence. Moshe, however, had left them with instructions: *If you have questions, approach Aharon and Chur.* (Shemos 24:14) The people did not seek the advice of their leaders, and even killed Chur when he tried to protest. This led them to create the Golden Calf and even to worship it.

The sale of Yosef came about through a similar error. Yosef's brothers thought they were doing the right thing to get rid of him. The Sages teach us that they convened a *Beis Din* (court) to decide justly what his fate should be. They should not, however, have taken such drastic measures without first consulting their leaders, Yaakov and Yitzchak (who was still alive). This lack of deference was accentuated by the coverup job perpetrated through the slaughtering of the goat.

Insofar as the root cause of the sin of the Golden Calf was a failure to seek guidance from their Torah leaders, the Jewish people were perpetuating the error of their ancestors, the sons of Yaakov, and therefore were required to atone for that sin as well. This was accomplished by bringing a goat offering that recalled the goat that had been used to deceive Yaakov, which was the greatest expression of this failing.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Point to Ponder

A fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them... (10:2)

Moshe told Aaron, "Aaron, my brother. I knew that the consecration of the Mishkan would cost the lives of one of those close to Hashem. I thought it would be you or me. Now I know that your sons were greater than us (Rashi).

Moshe and Aaron were walking and Nadav and Avihu were walking behind them, with Bnei Yisrael walking in the back. Nadav and Avihu said to each other, "When will these two old people die, and we will rule in their place." This is the reason why they died (Tanchuma Acharei Mos 6).

Were Nadav and Avihu greater than Moshe and Aaron? Did their greatness cause their death, or was it their improper speech?

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

How can one miss counting the day of the Omer and still be able to count with a bracha the next night?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What food item that we abstain from on Rosh Hashana does the Talmud (Arvei Pesachim) say to eat at the Seder?

Answer: Nuts

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Shemini*, following its account of Nadav and Avihu's deaths, the Torah relates (10:6-7):

Moshe said to Aharon and his sons Elazar and Isamar: "Do not leave your heads unshorn and do not rend your garments ... and your brethren the entire House of Israel shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem ignited. Do not leave the entrance of the Tent of Meeting ... for the oil of Hashem's anointment is upon you" ...

The Talmud states (*Moed Katan* 14b-15a):

It is prohibited for a mourner to receive a haircut. This is derived from the fact that **the Merciful One states to the sons of Aharon: "Do not leave your heads unshorn."** It was prohibited for them to let their hair grow long during their period of mourning over the death of their brothers, Nadav and Avihu. **By inference, it is teaching that for everyone else, i.e., non-priests, it is prohibited to cut their hair during the period of mourning.** ...

A mourner is obligated to rend his garments. This is derived from the fact that **the Merciful One says to the sons of Aharon: "do not rend your garments,"** which proves **by inference that everyone else, all other mourners, are obligated to rend their garments.**

Elsewhere, the Talmud states (*ibid.* 24a):

A mourner who did not let his hair grow wild and did not rend his garments is liable to receive the death penalty at the hand of Heaven, **as it is stated** following the deaths of Nadav and Avihu concerning the surviving sons of Aharon: **"Do not leave your heads unshorn and do not rend your garments."** They were instructed not to mourn, so as not to interfere with the dedication of the Tabernacle. From here it may be deduced **that any other mourner who did not let his hair grow wild or rend his clothes is liable to receive the death penalty.**

The Tosafos maintain that this prescription of the death penalty should not be taken literally, and the Talmud's exegesis is mere *asmachta* (non-authoritative interpretation). The Ramban goes even further and maintains that the obligation upon a mourner to rend his garments is merely Rabbinic and not Biblical, "for we do not find rending explicit in the Bible, but only alluded to by an *asmachta*," although he acknowledges a dissenting view that does understand the obligation as Biblical (*Toras ha-Adam*, cited in *Beis Yosef* YD 340).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am for the covenant.
2. I was for the consecration.
3. I am for an extra Yomtov.
4. I name this week's.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I don't measure weight.
2. I am fishy business.
3. I am a sign of purity.
4. I am not for climbing a cliff.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Hallel (My half is almost complete, At night I am for some, I am an Orderly split, Don't confuse me with sleeping on the roof.)

#2 Omer (I make the new old, I make you count, I am a korban, I am not "saying.")

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