

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmani zy" a, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



אמרות שמשון

How it was possible for Aharon to bring a calf as a sin offering for the sin of the Golden Calf, if "the accuser cannot become the defender"

"And he said to Aharon: 'Take for yourself a bull-calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and bring them near before Hashem.'" (Vayikra 9:2)

Rashi explains: "[This was] to make it known that HaKadosh Baruch Hu grants him atonement through this calf for the deed of the calf that he made." One must analyze why he uses the expression "to make it known," for he apparently should have said simply: "a calf, to atone for the sin of the calf."

Furthermore, it is difficult to understand why Aharon brought a calf as a sin offering (Korban Chatat), while Israel brought a calf as a burnt offering (Korban Olah).

This can be explained according to what is mentioned in the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 26a): the High Priest does not enter the Kodesh HaKodashim (Holy of Holies) to offer the incense wearing golden vestments because "the accuser cannot become the defender", as entering with gold recalls the Golden Calf.

If so, it is difficult: how could Aharon offer a calf as a sin offering? Would he not be awakening an accusation against himself for the sin of the Golden Calf?

However, precisely from here is deduced the greatest proof that Aharon did not sin. What he did was only indirect, by error or by coercion. For if he had truly sinned in the matter of the calf, then by bringing a calf there would be an element of accusation, and it could not become a defender; in that case, he would not have been able to offer it as an atoning sacrifice.

From this, it is clearly understood why Aharon was commanded to bring a calf as a sin offering, while Israel brought it as a burnt offering: in the case of Aharon, who did not sin, the problem of the accuser becoming the defender does not exist. In contrast, Israel could not bring the calf as a sin offering for atonement because they did sin with the Golden Calf, and the accuser cannot become the defender. (Zera Shimshon, Parashat Shemini, Art. 1)

Explanation of what Moshe said to Aharon: "Why are you ashamed? For this you were chosen"

"And Moshe said to Aharon: 'Draw near to the Altar, and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and atone for yourself and for the people...'" (Vayikra 9:7)

When the time came to offer the Korban Chatat and the Korban Olah, Aharon hesitated and doubted to perform said service. For he thought that if he had made the Golden Calf with which the Children of Israel sinned, how could he be the one to offer the korbanot that atone? Rashi comments: "This teaches that Aharon was ashamed, which prompted Moshe to say to him: 'Why are you ashamed? For this you were chosen.'" One must analyze what exactly the expression "For this you were chosen" means.

It can be explained in the following way: it appears that the reason Aharon made the calf was because he knew that in the hearts of Israel there were thoughts of idolatry. Aharon thought that if those thoughts remained within them, they would not perform proper teshuvah (repentance), considering that the sin of thought is not as grave.

But if they reached the point of actually making the calf and materialized that thought into a real action—which is an actual transgression—then, Aharon knew, they would certainly repent with a complete repentance.

It turns out that by making the calf for them, he caused them to perform a proper teshuvah and be ashamed of their sin; and through that shame, they obtained forgiveness, as our Sages said

(Berachot 12b): "Anyone who commits a sin and is ashamed of it, all his sins are forgiven."

When he said to him, "Why are you ashamed?", Moshe's intention was: "Why are you ashamed of the act of the calf? By being ashamed, it seems as if you truly committed a sin by giving the Children of Israel the Golden Calf. But it is quite the opposite! You caused them to be ashamed of having worshiped the Golden Calf and to return to their Creator.

"Therefore, precisely for this you were chosen—meaning, specifically because of this act, in which you led them to the sin with the intention that they perform a complete teshuvah, you were chosen. Because your intention was for good and for the sake of Heaven.

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הרה"ח יעקב ב"ר אליהו ז"ל נלב"ע כ ניסן תשפ"ו הרה"ח אלימלך ב"ר יעקב אריה ז"ל נלב"ע כב ניסן תשע"א וקדש על ידי בנו והלנו גילה חל מוקטנטא לזכרה והגולה לכל טוב סלה

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ישועות וברכות

ברוך צבי ניסים בן שושנה לאה שיצלה עמקס"ו ב"ל בגל ומזה יסוירו כל המתחסים והנוכחים ויובל לפרוץ יום קדוה צננה ונגבה ב"ל בגל וב"ל שדה קדוה דוד מרחק רות

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מרדכי בן רחל לישועה והצלחה בכל הענינים ב"ראות איתנה פרנסה בשפע מתוך מנוחה והנף והנפש ב"ל כיום הפרעות ורדיפות שיהישר כבודות טובות בקרוב משם

שרה שרון בת סופיה יוכבד גזבנה בת מירב תמר חיימה בן סופיה אוראל משה בן לימור שלום בן לילי שיבו ליוזם הנו מרחק אשר הנה ושמחה בקרוב משם

“And indeed, through your actions, you caused them to be ashamed, to perform teshuvah correctly, and to reach atonement. And as it is the way of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* to reward measure for measure, it is appropriate that you be the High Priest in the service of the *Mishkan*, and continue atoning for the sins of Israel by offering their sacrifices.”

(Zera Shimshon, Parashat Shemini, Art. 1)

The Righteous Ask Not to Have Children if They Are Destined to Father Wicked Children

“And Moshe said to Aharon: ‘This is what Hashem spoke, saying: “Through those near to Me I will be sanctified...”’, and Aharon remained silent.” (Vayikra 10:3)

Rashi comments that Moshe said to Aharon: “Aharon, my brother, I knew that the House would be sanctified by those closest to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and I thought it would be either through me or through you; now I see that your two sons are greater than us.”

A difficulty arises: Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aharon who died at the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, had no children. Our Sages said (*Berachot* 5b) that one who has no children does not experience “afflictions of love” (*yissurin shel ahavah*—sufferings sent from Heaven out of love for the person). It would then seem that they received sufferings that were not out of love (or sufferings as a severe punishment). If that is the case, how can it be said that they were greater than Moshe and Aharon?

This can be explained according to what we find in the Sages (*Bereshit Rabbah* 44:9): sometimes the righteous plead before Hashem that if their children are destined to be wicked, it is preferable that they not be born at all. That is to say, when a person is perfectly righteous and Hashem has chosen him, if he is destined to have children who provoke anger before Hashem, then Hashem performs a great kindness for him by not granting him children.

This is what Moshe said to Aharon: “Now that I see Hashem chose to sanctify His Name through them, they are necessarily greater than us. And the fact that they had no children is because Hashem foresaw that such children would not be worthy.”

There is no contradiction with the Sages' statement that not having children is not an “affliction of love,” for that refers to ordinary people; but in the case of the righteous, precisely because of their righteousness, when it is known that their children would be wicked, they are spared that suffering.

(Zera Shimshon, Parashat Shemini, Art. 3)



Hillel says: “You must be among the disciples of Aharon [the Kohen], who loves peace and pursues peace”.

How should one be a lover of peace?

We must understand why Hillel elaborated so much in his words, since the very definition of being a disciple of Aharon [the Kohen] is to love peace and pursue peace. At first glance, it would have sufficed for him to say: “You must be among those who love peace and pursue peace.”

This can be explained by saying that Hillel came to teach us two things: 1. That it is permissible to bend [the account of events] for the sake of peace (*Yevamot* 65b); 2. That this permission is granted only to a prominent individual — someone who is assumed to always speak the truth — and only if what he bends is something that cannot be found out; and only when there is no other path available, and only done once. But if even one of these conditions is missing, it is forbidden to lie, even for the sake of peace, so as not to become accustomed to lying.

This is why Hillel began by saying, “You must be among the disciples of Aharon [the Kohen],” and only afterward, once you are considered a man of truth, he added, “[You must be among those who] love peace and pursue peace.” Only then may you also bend the truth for the sake of peace and harmony.

It can also be clarified that had Hillel simply said, “You must be among those who love peace and pursue peace,” we might have misunderstood and thought these efforts [to maintain peace] should only be directed toward a righteous individual and not toward a sinner. Therefore, he began by saying, “You must be among the disciples of Aharon,” to teach us that we must not completely distance ourselves from sinners. On the contrary, we must be like Aharon, who cared for them in the same way he cared for everyone else and thereby brought them back to the right path, as is explained in the *Midrashim*.

One must pursue peace

A difficulty may be raised: what is the meaning of the expression “pursue peace”? The term *rodef* (“pursuer”) is generally used in a negative context, especially referring to someone who chases after his enemy. So how can a person be both a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace at the same time?

To understand this issue, we should first cite what the *Midrash* (*Bereshit Rabbah* 8:5) says: when *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* wanted to create the world, the ministering angels disagreed among themselves as to whether the world should be created. The same was true with the various *Midot* (Divine attributes). The Attribute of *Chesed* (Kindness) said the world should be created, since it would include acts of kindness. But the Attribute of Peace argued that it should not be created, because the world would be full of strife and conflict.

In light of this, we understand how someone who loves peace is also called a “pursuer of peace”: because he opposes and chases after the very Attribute of Peace, which had claimed the world should not be created due to its contentious nature. By the very act of loving peace, one is in fact pursuing that Attribute and proving that its reasoning was mistaken — thus, he becomes its “pursuer” in the sense of refuting it, since its argument was baseless.

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