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כ' אדר ב' תשע"א

פרשת שמייני - פרה

Candle Lighting 7:16 PM

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**Dvar Torah - The Responsibility of Leadership** by Rabbi Yehuda Alber



In פרק ט, פסוק ב עגל, Hashem commands Aharon to bring an קרבן חטאת as a חטא העגל. Rabbeinu Bechaya explains that it served as an atonement for his sin of the חטא העגל. He then cites a *medrash* which states that because of Aharon's involvement with the עגל, he was in danger of losing the כהונה. In פסוק ז, Hashem then commands *B'nei Yisroel* to bring an עגל as a חטא העגל, also as a כפרה for the חטא העגל.

Rabbeinu Bechaya asks: "Why did Aharon need to bring an עגל as a חטאת, while *B'nei Yisroel* brought an עגל as an עולה?" He answers that an עולה is brought for a sin that is done willingly, whereas a חטאת is brought for an unintentional עבירה. Aharon's involvement in the חטא העגל was totally לשם שמים, as he only participated to protect *B'nei Yisroel* from sinning further. His thoughts were pure; therefore he only required a חטאת. *B'nei Yisroel*, on the other hand, willingly wanted the עגל הזהב and required an עולה to achieve forgiveness.

This seems quite puzzling. We can understand that despite the fact that Aharon had no sinful thoughts, he still needed to bring a קרבן חטאת, similar to one who does a sin בשוגג. But how could the *medrash* state that he was in danger of losing the כהונה for such a sin? That appears to be too extreme.

Perhaps the explanation is as follows. Rabbeinu Bachaya adds that through the bringing of the קרבן, the purity of Aharon's intentions would become clear. Apparently, there were some skeptics who doubted the sincerity and real motivation of Aharon in his involvement with the עגל. When *B'nei Yisroel* would see that Aharon only needed to bring a חטאת, that indicated to everyone that indeed his intentions were pure. Had he not brought this קרבן to gain the firm respect of the entire nation, he would have needed to relinquish his rights to the כהונה, having lost the basis of leadership.

Aharon was a great *Tzadik*, most worthy of the lofty position of גדול. Together with Moshe, he led the *B'nei Yisroel* to freedom and the receiving of the Torah. Yet, retaining his position of גדול was placed in doubt due to the false perception of others. We see the awesome responsibility of a leader. In order to influence others, we must first gain their respect. We need to act properly and our actions must not be misunderstood. This is true of all leaders - a leader of a nation, a school, a classroom, a family, and even one's own peers. If we are not careful, we may lose their respect and place ourselves in danger of forfeiting the great זכות of bringing others closer to Hashem.

**Dvar Halacha - Proper Attire for Bircas Hamazon**

The recital of *Bircas Hamazon* is, in many ways, similar to the recital of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Therefore, one is required to be respectfully dressed when making the *bracha*.

One may not recite *Bircas Hamazon* or *Shemoneh Esrei* while wearing pajamas, or undergarments only. Similarly, one should not recite these *brachos* while wearing only a bathing suit.

Likewise, ordinarily, one should not recite *Bircas Hamazon* or *Shemoneh Esrei* while wearing a bathrobe unless he is ill. Rabbi Pinchus Bodner, in his *sefer* *ותן ברכה*, quotes Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l as having ruled that if one is at a pool, it is sufficient to don a robe for *Bircas Hamazon*, and he need not get fully dressed.

## YTC Spotlight

### The Weekly Quiz

Which Kohen Gadol brought the most recent Parah Aduma?

Answers or ideas for future questions may be submitted in writing to the Spotlight office or emailed to [Quiz@ytcteam.net](mailto:Quiz@ytcteam.net).

The first correct answer submitted will be announced in the next Spotlight. You need not be a student to participate.

Hatzlochah!

Answer to last week's question:

Q.. What was the name of Achashverosh's servant that read to him from the Sefer Zichronos?

A. According to the Targum Sheini, his name was Shimshai.

Yasher Koach to Akiva Sugerman for submitting the correct answer!

### Alternative Assessments - Going Beyond Paper and Pencil

In both *limudei Kodesh* and secular studies, our Yeshiva is proud to feature alternative assessments as a key component of our dual curriculum. The term "alternative assessment" is broadly defined as any assessment method that is an alternative to traditional paper-and-pencil tests. Alternative assessment requires students to demonstrate the skills and knowledge that cannot be assessed using conventional tests. It seeks to reveal students' critical thinking and evaluation skills by asking students to complete open-ended tasks that often take more than one class period to complete. While fact-based knowledge is still a component of the learning that is assessed, its measurement is not the sole purpose of the assessment.

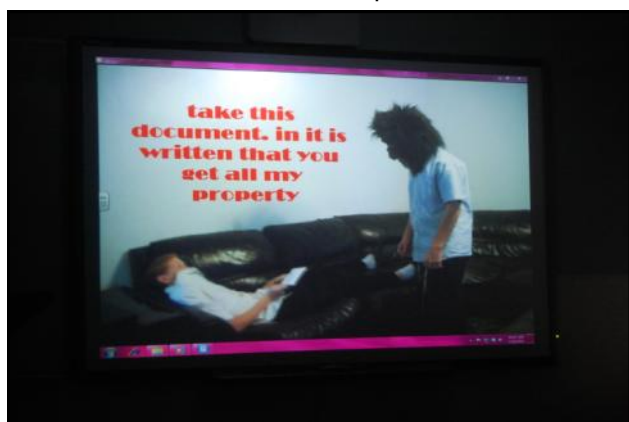
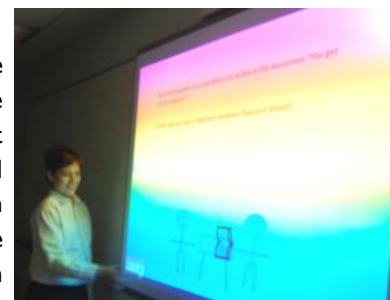
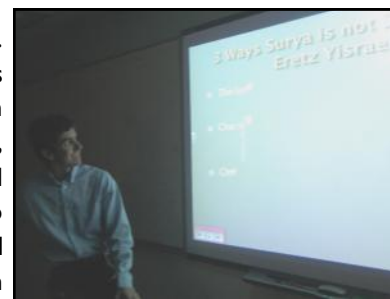
In Rabbi Kalter's *Navi* and *Bekiyus* classes, students dramatized events to better understand the *halachos*, *mussar* and history they were learning. In Rabbi Glazer's *Gemorah Havana* class, students prepared multimedia presentations dealing with many of the *sugyos* they had learned this quarter.



In Language Arts, Mr. Gillego's 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> graders designed their own marketing campaign, complete with printed brochures and video advertisements. His 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade created modern adaptations of a Shakespearian play.

Mr. Sumner's 11<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies class made intricate PowerPoint presentations of several World War II battles. Each presentation was the product of hours of research and design effort.

Faculty and students alike enjoy the added depth and greater understanding that these alternative assessments necessitate. Asher Furst, of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, said, "It's not just listening to a class; the presentations involved research and figuring out how to present it in a creative way. I remember the material better because I presented it."



An ad campaign designed by 11th Grader Max Baumgarten