

EPISODE NO. 75

Exo. 32:1-15,19

A Golden Calf

1 Now when the people realized that Moses was not coming down from the mountain right away, they gathered against Aaron and said to him, “Come on, make us a god to lead us! As for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him!”

2 Then Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold ear-rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” 3 So, all the people removed the gold ear-rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 He collected them and made the whole thing into a solid idol, cast into the shape of a calf. He used an engraving tool for the finishing touches.

Then they said, “O Israel, here is your god who brought you up from the land of Egypt!”

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf. Aaron made an announcement: “Tomorrow there will be a festival to Yahweh.” 6 So, they got up early on the next day, and they offered whole burnt-offerings and brought peace-offerings. After this, the people sat down to eat and drink. And then, they got up to have an orgy.

7 Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, “Get moving; go down! Because your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. 8 They have quickly turned aside from the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves an idol, cast in the shape of a calf. They have worshiped it and sacrificed to it. They have said: ‘O Israel, HERE is your god who brought you up from the land of Egypt!’ ”

9 Then Yahweh said to Moses, “I have observed these people closely. Listen, they are a stubborn people. 10 So, leave Me alone now, so that My anger may burn against them, so that I may completely destroy them! Then, from YOU, I will make a great nation.”

11 But Moses begged Yahweh, his God, saying, “O Yahweh, why does Your anger burn so much against Your people, whom YOU have brought out of the land of Egypt with such great power and a strong hand!? 12 Why should the Egyptians think this: ‘Yahweh brought them out of Egypt for harm, to kill them in the mountains and completely destroy them from the face of the earth!’? Turn away from Your fierce anger! Please, reconsider! Don’t cause this disaster against Your people! 13 Remember Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob, Your servants. You gave an oath to them by Your own Self, saying to them: 'I will greatly increase your descendants like the stars of the sky. I will also give all of this land, which I have mentioned, to your descendants. And they will have it as a permanent inheritance.' ”

14 (Later, the Always-Present One did reconsider the harm which He said that He would bring upon His people.)

15 Then Moses turned and went down the mountain. He had the two plaques of the Covenant in his hands.

19 When Moses got nearer to the camp, he saw the calf. And the people were dancing around. Moses became very angry. He hurled the plaques out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain!