

## **Do Not Shame Another**

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**Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer**

*Parshat Tzav*

**The sin offering shall be slaughtered in the very same place as the burnt offering; it is most holy.** (Leviticus 6:18)

With the destruction of the Temple over nineteen centuries ago, the sacrificial system was ended and we “graduated” to the service of prayer. Even though we no longer bring the sacrifices, however, we can still learn from the rituals of our ancestors.

One who had committed a transgression was obligated, as part of the repentance process, to bring a “sin offering.” But bringing a sin offering publicly would signal to all and sundry that the individual was a transgressor, and fear of that public admission of guilt might have inhibited the transgressor from entering the repentance process.

The Torah goes to great lengths to avoid embarrassing a repentant transgressor. There was no holier place (save, of course, the Holy of Holies, entrance to which was permitted only to the High Priest and only once a year) than the place on the Altar where the burnt offering was slaughtered. Yet it was this very place where the sin offering was also slaughtered. To the casual observer, there would be no difference between one who brought a burnt offering and one who brought a sin offering! Only the priest administering the offering had to know, and there was no embarrassment.

May we all soon learn to avoid publicly embarrassing others, whatever the reason and whatever the cause! As the Talmud (*Baba Metzia* 58b) teaches, “One who publicly shames another has no place in the World to Come.”

Shabbat Shalom.

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