

"And Hashem was very angry with Aharon to destroy him. And I prayed for Aharon also the same time." (9:20)

Rashi explains that *ushnavk*, "to destroy him," refers to the destruction of children. During the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem dictated that Aharon was to be punished by the death of his children. Only through Moshe's entreaty on his behalf were two of his sons spared, although two did die. The *Mizrachi* derives from *Rashi's* statement that Nadav and Avihu died as a result of Aharon's involvement in the Golden Calf. This idea, however, is inconsistent with *Rashi* in *Shemos 24*, where he states that they died as a result of beholding the glory of Hashem while they were in an unsanctified state. Their deaths were delayed until the day of *Chanukas Ha'Mishkan*, dedication of the *Mishkan*, so as not to mar the sublime joy of the giving of the *Torah*.

Horav Y. Salant, z.l., clarifies these conflicting statements in the following manner. Hashem's form of retribution is unique in that it only affects the individual who deserves punishment. In fact, if anyone else is afflicted, it is because they are also culpable. Hashem weighs every situation, and He will refrain from punishing the guilty party if an innocent person will be needlessly affected. Nadav and Avihu sinned and merited immediate retribution. Aharon, however, would have needlessly suffered. Consequently, their fate was delayed. When Aharon became involved in the Golden Calf, the previously delayed punishment became effective. Only through Moshe's prayers were two of Aharon's sons spared. We should be ever retrospective in searching for the hidden message in every situation which confronts us. Every event which we experience has a purpose and a meaning behind it.