

Apis the Golden Calf

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And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD (YHWH).– Exd. 32:3-5

They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molded image. Thus they changed their glory into the image of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt, Wondrous works in the land of Ham, Awesome things by the Red Sea. Therefore He said that He would destroy them, Had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, To turn away His wrath, lest He destroy *them*. – Psalm 106:19-23

Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. – I Kings 12:28-29

It was likely Israel, being in bondage and thus influenced by Egypt that some, who were not fully dedicated to YHWH (Adonai the God of Israel) or simply did not fully understand Him or know how to properly worship Him, worshipped Him via Apis the Egyptian god of strength and fertility, whom the bull was a symbol of. Apis was also the herald or spokesperson to other higher gods, a mediator if you will. You see, monotheism was a strange concept to Near East peoples of that time and even if you were dedicated to one god out of a pantheon, you used other gods in order to worship and serve your patron deity. This can be seen in Exodus 32:3-5 where Aaron called the calf, “gods” who brought you out of Egypt. And then in verse 5 He proclaims a feast to YHWH in association of the worship of the golden

calf. So, to put this into perspective, Aaron was saying the lesser gods, represented by the Apis style calf, assisted the Great God YHWH in freeing them from Egyptian bondage.

Apis was worshipped through the image and form of the form of a bull. Being slaves and having your male offspring killed off by Pharaoh, such a people would need both fertility and strength in order to survive and overcome. Now being in a harsh environment of the desert you would need strength and fertility even more.

Later we see God sets them straight that He is incomparable and that He is above all other gods and He alone is to be worshipped.

Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. – Lev. 26:1