

לרפואה שלמה לרב פנחס בן בילה מחלה

ט' תשרי ה'תשע"ט

THE G.O.A.T...OR IS IT?

As we read through the *עבודה* of *יום הכפורים*, we come across, seemingly, a very strange *מעשה*. We see that the *כהן גדול* takes two goats, offers one as a *קרבן*, and pushes the other one off a cliff as a *כפרה* for *בני ישראל*. If this were true superficially, then the Jews in the times of the *המקדש* wouldn't have to do anything, as they had a magic goat on their side. However, as we know in Judaism, nothing is ever exactly what it seems. Rather, it is our *תכלית* to uncover the answers to our questions. What is the nature of this goat, and the nature of this whole *עבודה*? What lesson, or lessons, can we take from this?

The *רמב"ם*¹ says that the *שעיר המשתלח* atones for all *עבירות*, provided you did proper *תשובה*. However, even if you didn't do *תשובה*, you're still forgiven for the "*עבירות קלות*". These are sins are *ביטולי עשה* or doing a *לאו* which isn't *דין* *מיתת בית דין* or *כרת*. In *ספר סאלאייצ'יק*'s famous *ספר* entitled *ב סאלאייצ'יק*, he asks 3 questions which really hit the core of *תשובה* and *כפרה*. First off, how come for some sins you don't even need *תשובה*? Second, how could we say that *לאוין* are called "*קלות*"? Lastly, if *תשובה* is not required for the *שעיר המשתלח* to work, why are there limits? The *שעיר* represents *כפרת* *הציבור*, communal forgiveness.² In Judaism, we say that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. There is a certain *מעלה* to the *ציבור*. A common example of this is *תפילה במנין*. Nine men *דavening* are 9 men *davening*. By adding the 10th, it's not 10 people; it's 10 people *davening together*. Their *תפילות* now take on extra value.

When describing the punishment of *כרת*, the *פסוקים* use the *לשון* of "*ונכרתה הנפש ההיא מִישראל*", "*and he should be cut off from amongst the Jewish People*". We see that a *כרת* *חייב* removes one from the *ציבור*. Therefore, you can't benefit from their *כפרה*, which is brought about by the *שעיר*.

If the *שעיר* forgives other sins without *תשובה*, it would seem I can sin as often as I want and rely on the *שעיר* for *כפרה*! Why, then, is *תשובה* still required? *הקדוש ברוך הוא* promised that He will never let the Jews die out. Therefore, the *שעיר* forgives us on a national level. However, for each individual, they're not covered specifically by the national *כפרה*. Therefore, we all need to do our own *תשובה*. This idea manifests itself in the different *וידויים* we say throughout *יום כפור*. As we know, each *תפילה* has a *וידוי* inserted at the end of the *שמונה עשרה*. In *חזרת הש"ץ*, however, the *וידוי* is in the middle, right before *מודים*. When we do our own *וידוי*, we say it quietly. When we do it together, we sing out loud. In fact, the whole reason the communal *וידוי* has a *ניגון* is *דוקא* because we know we will be forgiven, so we sing *בשמחה*.

Another way to view the *שעיר המשתלח* as a national *כפרה* is the parallelism drawn between it and other cows mentioned in the *תורה*. (Yes, I am well aware that the *שעיר* is a goat. Just trust me.) Some other famous *מעשים* involving cows are the *עגל הזהב*, the *פרה אדומה*, and the *עגלה ערופה*. By every one of these cases except the Golden Calf, they were done specifically outside the *בית המקדש*. Even by the *עגל הזהב*, the Jews were offering *קרבנות* outside the *משכן*.³ While discussing the Golden Calf, the comparison that can be made between it and the *פרה אדומה* is that of a mother and child.⁴ When a kid

1 רמב"ם הלכות תשובה א.ב.

2 ויקרא טז.כא-כב

3 This is according to the *שיטה* that the *תורה* was written chronologically (*יש מוקדם ומאוחר*) (בתורה). However, those who say that the *תורה* isn't chronological say that because of the Golden Calf, we needed to build the *משכן*.

4 רש"י במדבר יט.כב

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makes a mistake, the mother comes in and cleans it up. The פרה אדומה was the mother, rectifying the sin the child (the עגל) caused. How does the שעיר, which is a goat, come into play? The first יום כפור was a national כפרה for the עגל. Every יום כפור in the times of the המקדש now had an allusion to the חטא, and the national כפרה.

Additionally, the יצחק seems to think that the 2 goats⁵ are described in the משנה as twins. Some of the most famous sets of twins in the תורה are יעקב and עשו, and קין and הבל. The פסוק⁶ describes the other goat as "for Hashem". עשו is sometimes known as שעיר, meaning goat, and יעקב was to Hashem. The other "nickname" עשו received was אדום, which is etymologically similar to אדומה (both meaning red). The famous fight between יעקב and עשו resulted in עשו threatening to kill יעקב. Therefore, יעקב had to run away to לבן. The משנה⁷ points out that the כהן גדול would tie a red string around the goat. If the Jews were forgiven, the red string would turn white. יעקב leaving the threat of עשו's murder to the house of לבן changed his "thread" from red to white. This is because he stopped over to learn for 14 years.⁸ The names אדום and לבן are an allusion to this.

We also see one twin seeking (and successfully committing) the murder of his fellow twin by the first brothers in history, קין and הבל. This story happened in a field, and when קין asked הבל about being responsible for the death of his brother, he answered rhetorically. Really, קין is responsible, yet chose to deny it. הבל told קין that הבל's blood is screaming to Him out of the ground.⁹

Finally, the last episode we see regarding brothers not getting along is that of יוסף and the שבטים. When the brothers wished to kill יוסף, they were standing in a field. To convince יעקב that יוסף died, the brothers used the blood of a goat. When יוסף was ready to reveal himself, he sent יעקב wagons, which are known as עגלות. This was meant as a sign to יעקב, as the last סוגיא he learned with יוסף was that of the עגלה ערופה.¹⁰ Not only was the message directed to יעקב, but the brothers as well. Even though they already knew that יוסף was in Egypt, he sent the עגלות as a reminder to them of the ערופה. Their reminder was that just like by the ערופה the עיר had to take responsibility, so too the brothers had to take responsibility for what happened. When יוסף warned פרעה about the upcoming famine, he could've suggested that Egypt kill off its enemies while in a weakened state. Instead, he sold everyone food, making Egypt the wealthiest country. This was a message to the brothers that even Egypt, which was the most immoral country at the time, could learn the moral values that יוסף grew up with in the house of יעקב, going back all the way to אבינו.

Although today we don't have the המקדש, the lessons of the המשתלח are timeless. As we go into the הדין, we have to realize that although we are part of a nation that will never die, that doesn't mean we don't take individual responsibility for our own actions. אם ירצה השם, this year should be a year of טובה וברכה, a year of מזל, and a year of tremendous growth. לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה. Everyone should have a יום כפור, a very meaningful and uplifting, and an easy fast.

5 עיין ויקרא טז.ה-ו

6 שם ח

7 יומא סז.

8 עיין מגילה טז:

9 בראשית ד.י

10 רש"י שם מה.כז