



דרכים בפרשה

אחרי מות



וסמך אהרן את שתי ידו על ראש השעיר החי והתודה עליו את כל עונת בני ישראל ואת כל פשעיהם לכל חטאתם ונתן אתם על ראש השעיר ושלה ביד איש עתי המדברה

And Aaron shall lean both of his hands [forcefully] upon the live he goat's head and confess upon it all the willful transgressions of the Bnai Yisrael, all their rebellions, and all their unintentional sins, and he shall place them on the he goat's head, and send it off to the desert with a timely man (16:21)

The parsha discusses the *avodah* of Yom Kippur performed by the Kohen Gadol. One of the more enigmatic rituals was the *sa'ir la'Azazel* – the “scapegoat” sent into the desert by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur.

In fact, there were two male goats featured in the *avodah* of Yom Kippur. Ideally, they would be similar in appearance, height and value, and purchased together in a single transaction (Mishnah Yoma 6:1). The first goat is brought as a *chatas* – a national sin-offering. The Kohen Gadol then says *vidui*/confession for Klal Yisroel on the second goat, which is then escorted out to the desert by a designated person (the “*ish iti*”) who pushes it off a cliff to its death.

The entire *avodah* defies easy explanation, and many *meforshim* discuss its meaning and what we are meant to learn from it.

According to the *Kli Yakar*, these two goats allude to the two goats prepared by Rivka for Yaakov, in order to receive the *brachos* from Yitzchak (Bereshis 27:9).

Similarly, the *Abarbanel* compares the two goats to Yaakov and Esav, signifying that two brothers can be raised in the same home with the exact same values, and

ultimately proceed on divergent paths in life depending on the choices they make. This parsha should serve as a warning that choosing the right path in life is not at all an easy task and requires vigilance (Rav Shmshon R. Hirsch notes that the *goral*-lottery by which each goat was selected for its chosen *avodah* alludes to the ability of man to choose between good and bad).

Another part of the *avodah* was the sending of the goat with the designated person (“*ish iti*”) who would then push it off a cliff to its death. This was done with great fanfare as the *ish iti* would be accompanied by the most important people of Yerushalayim (Yakirei Yerushalayim), pausing along the way from one *sukkah* to another.

It is interesting that these great people would accompany him on the holy day of Yom Kippur as if they had nothing better to do with their time. Wasn't this the most exciting day to be a spectator at the *Beis Hamikdash*? Only once a year could one see the way the Kohen Gadol ran to and fro, changing from one set of garments to the other and immersing in the *mikvah* five different times, the gold garments, and the

linen ones, the burning of the *ketores* and offering the *korban*; this was true glory and excitement happening in front of everyone's eyes that no one wanted to miss. Think of all the *hisorerus* that one could glean from such a sight! And yet, these people went to accompany the *ish iti* so that he should not go alone, thus underscoring the importance of chessed being greater than even witnessing the *avodah* on *yom Kippur*. The *sefer K'motzai Shalal Rav* points out that it is for this reason that these people were called the "Yakirei Yerushalayim".

As we now find ourselves during the time of *Sefiras HaOmer*, it is worthwhile to take this lesson to heart; the concept of putting others before ourselves. In the introduction to the *sefer Nefesh HaChayim*, *Rav Chayim Volzhiner's* son writes that his father constantly told him these words: כל האדם לא לעצמו נברא, רק להועיל לאחריו ככל אשר ימצא - *the creation of man was not for himself, but rather to help another to the utmost of his ability.*

There are a few more lessons to be learned from here. We can suggest that this person was called *ish iti* because he was designated for this purpose. This was his *tachlis*. These *Yakirei Yerushalayim* went along with him instead of watching the *Kohein Gadol* to teach us that any person that truly fulfills his mission can be just as great as a *kohein gadol* on *Yom Kippur* (respectively).

While it's true that *Reuven* may not possess *Shimon's* talents, but at the same time, he

must know that it is also not expected of him to accomplish *Shimon's* mission. As the famous story of the *Rebbe Reb Zeesha* goes: *Reb Zeesha* was on his deathbed, surrounded by his *talmidim*. He was crying and no one could comfort him. One *talmid* asked him: "Rebbe, Why do you cry? You were almost as wise as *Moshe* and as kind as *Avraham*." *Reb Zeesha* answered, "When I pass from this world and appear before the *Beis Din Shel Maalah* (Heavenly Tribunal), they won't ask me, 'Zeesha, why weren't you as wise as *Moshe* or as kind as *Avraham*,' rather, they will ask me, 'Zeesha, why weren't you Zeesha?' Why didn't I fulfill my potential, why didn't I follow the path that could have been mine? That is why I am crying."

One last *limud* from the *ish iti* is that while being accompanied by the others, he would make pauses along the way stopping from one *sukkah* to another. Perhaps this is can be a lesson to us for when we are ridding ourselves of something bad. Each step of the way, we must check to make sure that our motives are correct and that the mission will be accomplished without missing anything. Furthermore, sometimes the job is so dangerous that we must ask others to stay involved so that we don't become harmed along the way.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפּעל



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