

דרכים בפרשה אחרי-קדושים

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וכפר בעדו ובעד ביתו ובעד כל קהל ישראל *He shall provide atonement for himself, for his household and for the entire Congregation of Yisroel*

The Rambam in Hilchos Avodas Yom Hakippurim (perek 4) discusses the laws and procedures of the day of Yom Kippur. At the end of the *perek*, he writes: ואחר כך מקדש ידיו ורגליו ופושט בגדי זהב ולובש בגדי עצמו ויוצא לביתו. וכל העם מלוין אותו *He then sanctifies his hands and feet, removes his golden garments, puts on his own clothes and goes home. All of the people then accompany him to his home. He would make a festive celebration because he departed from the holy place in peace.*

After the Kohen Gadol's *avodah* of Yom Kippur is complete, the Rambam describes how he changes his clothing and then goes home, whilst being accompanied by the people. After arriving home, the *kaparah* is now complete – whereupon a great festive celebration was made. We note that although the *pesukim* of the Torah make no mention of where he goes after the *avodah*, the Rambam does make it a point to mention that “he goes home, and the people accompany him.” If the Torah would mention this step, we would understand the Rambam's need to include this as it is now a part of the Kohen Gadol's instructions. However, the Torah does not. So, even if that was what would naturally happen afterwards, as a *halacha sefer*, the Rambam would generally not just give us the extra details.

Furthermore, the Mishnayos and Gemara in Maseches Yoma (perek 7) do mention that he was accompanied, but the Rambam notes that *he goes home, and they accompany him home*. Is this actually a *halacha*? Where else would he go if not home? Would the Kohen Gadol be allowed to stop along the way at his grandmother's home to see how she is fasting? Can he stop off in the local shul to learn his Daf Yomi? Why is what happens after relevant? (There is a discussion in the Rishonim if this was talking about after his own *avodah* was complete, i.e. in the afternoon, or after nightfall. Our question is still the same according to either interpretation.)

Perhaps the Rambam is teaching us that an integral part of the Kohen Gadol's atonement of Yom Kippur is “the day after”. What happens after all is said and done? The Kohen Gadol has just completed the holiest twenty-four hours of the year, rising up to the level of a *Malach*, reaching heights that are never accessible at any other time, and entering the holiest place in the world. He had to prepare for seven days prior to this moment to be able to achieve this elevated and lofty level. But now it is the day after – and what will that

look like? What does it look like the day after one experiences a great emotional or spiritual high?

The idea of reaching *kedushah* for the sake of *kedushah* is not enough. The question is what will happen after the high point. When coming back down to earth, will it be a rude awakening? Will he have the ability to rejoin civilization without looking down at others while still maintaining the valuable high levels he achieved? Is the day after Yom Kippur when we are “at home” back to business as usual, or did we manage to internalize some of the holiness of the day, and bring it with us?

The Gemara in Maseches Shabbos (33b) relates that Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai and his son Rabi Elazar hid in a cave from the Roman authorities for twelve years until the death of the emperor. During that time, they studied Torah day and night, while being nourished by a carob tree and spring of water which had miraculously appeared in the cave. (Our tradition is that The Zohar was written at that time as well). The Gemara continues the story by relating their reactions upon leaving the cave:

נפקו חזו אינשי דקא כרבי זרעי, אמרי: מניחין חיי עולם ועוסקין בחיי שעה. כל מקום שנותנין עיניהן מיד נשרף. יצתה בת קול ואמרה להם: להחריב עולמי יצאתם, חזרו למערתכם!

They emerged from the cave, and saw people who were plowing and sowing. Rabi Shimon bar Yochai said: These people abandon eternal life of learning Torah and engage in temporal life for their own sustenance. The Gemara relates that every place that Rabi Shimon and his son Rabi Elazar directed their gaze was immediately burned. A *bas kol* was suddenly heard, saying: “Did you emerge from the cave in order to destroy My world? Return to your cave!” It was only after another twelve months that they were able to exit and look at the world differently in a more positive light.

R' Avremel Ausband z”l once repeated the following thought from a *shmuess* of Rav Shlomo Wolbe z”l. The great *Mashgiach* was discussing the explosion of one of the space shuttles upon re-entering earth's atmosphere. He compared it to the *chassidim harishonim*. The Gemara relates (Brachos 32b): תנו רבנן: חסידים הראשונים היו שוהין שעה אחת, ומתפללין – שעה אחת, וחוזרין ושוהין שעה אחת – they would wait one hour prior to their *davening*; they would *daven* for an hour, and then they would wait for one more hour after their *davening* was complete. We can understand that one needs to prepare for *davening*, but what was the purpose of remaining after *davening* was already over?

Rav Volbe explained that after soaring to the greatest heights, there was still the *avodah* of how to come back down and get reintegrated into the day-to-day atmosphere.

We all have moments in our lives that we experience great emotional, physical or spiritual highs. The Rambam in Hilchos Yom Hakippurim is teaching us that it is not enough to reach that great peak! The day after is the great litmus test which proves the success of the previous day. Let's always remember that!

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפּפּעל