

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Achrei Mos-Kedoshim 5786

D. Mordechai Schlachter

Hashem commands that a korban shlomim not be eaten on the third day.

וְאִכְלוּ עֹנֵוּ יִשָּׂא כִּי־אֶת־קֹדֶשׁ הַתֵּלֵל וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מֵעַמִּיהָ:

“And he who eats it [on the third day] shall raise up his sin because a Hashem’s holy was profaned. And his soul shall be cut off from his nation.” (Vayikra 19:8).

Every korban has a timeline of when it has to be eaten. Generally, korbanos are slaughtered, butchered, and offered up that same day, the blood is sprinkled that same day, but the timeline to eat the meat of the korbanos differ – from an olah that is not eaten because it is completely burned to a well-being offering (shlomim) that has two days and a night to eat it. Any portion left over the third day must be consumed by fire.

What does the Torah mean by “lifts up” the sin? The term is used also by the Azazel goat. During the Yom Kippur service, there is one bull (ibid 16:3) and two goats (ibid 16:5) that offer atonement. The bull is used for confession for Aharon and all the kohanim. (Ibid 16:11). Then the two goats are auctioned. (Ibid 16:9). One goes to Azazel – to be driven into the wilderness – and one gets slaughtered. (Ibid 16:10). The slaughtered goat is used to atone for the Mishkan (and later the Mikdash), Ohel Moed (Kodesh and Kodesh Kadashim), and mizbeach, from the sins of Klal Yisroel. (Ibid 16:16). The Kohen Gadol then confesses for the sins of klall Yisroel on the live goat, the one sent to the wilderness. (Ibid 16:21). When the live goat is sent out to the wilderness, the Torah says, “And the goat will lift up upon itself all the sins to the decreed land.” (Ibid 16:22). What does it mean to lift up the sin?

The goat, clearly, does not carry all the sins with it into the desert. Yom Kippur is a day of atonement; it is a gift that the day itself – along with the service – affects atonement. However, there is no such thing as a goat carrying sins upon its back, as if it were to deposit it in some far away wilderness. The Torah is clear that a person is responsible for his own sins. (Shmos 20:5). When one repents for sins, the revealed ones remain for him and his children. (Deuteronomy 29:28). In the thirteen midos of Hashem, however, it says that Hashem lifts up sin. (Ibid 34:7). Clearly, Hashem does not sin. What does it mean Hashem lifts sin? And if it means that Hashem removes the sin or carries the burden, how does the Azazel goat do the same?

The Torah says that a person shall not take up Hashem’s name for no gain. (Shmos 20:7). This does not mean to swear falsely using Hashem’s name as that is a different pasuk. (Vayikra 19:12). The word sisa is from the same root as noseh, lift up. Shav means equal. All things being equal, do not lift up Hashem’s name. Yes, one has to elevate Hashem’s name, but elevating it for naught is actually a desecration. Only use it to gain something – during prayer and blessings. And in actuality, it was only used by the Kohen Gadol during the Yom Kippur, during his confessions.

Lift up is used during all the censuses. "Lift up the heads of the sons of Gershon...." (Bamidbar 4:22). Lifting up means it makes something important. Nasi, from the same root, means a leader or a president. When the Torah means to convey that a person purposefully looked around or noticed something, it says "he lifted up his eyes." Avraham (Bereishis 18:2), Lot (ibid 13:10), Yitzchok (ibid 24:63), and Yaakov (ibid 33:1) are good examples. They all decided to lift up their eyes, paid attention to their eyes, and raised them above the rest of their functions. The Torah is teaching that it is only when one is looking for something important that one can find it.

It is not just eyes, but voice also that can be lifted. Hagar (ibid 21:16) and Esav (ibid 27:38) both lifted up their voices and cried. Yaakov also raised up his voice and cried, when he met Rochel. (Ibid 29:11). In these examples, the individual was so overwhelmed by an emotion circumstance that they made their voices above all else in their bodies, and cried out in prayer. Hagar, Esav, and Yaakov all were from Avraham's household and knew that prayer is only directed to the One on High. Later, after the incident with the scouts, the Torah says, "The entire congregation lifted up, and they gave to their voices, and wept." (Bamidbar 14:1). A careful reading shows they did not lift up their voices, but they lifted themselves up. This means the entire congregation lifted up their own personal emotions and fears and gave into crying. They did not daven nor did they try to comfort each other. Each individual's emotions took over and made him and herself more important than the entire klall.

Hagar was answered. The malakh told her, "Get up, and lift up the youth." (Bereishis 21:18). She had to get up out of her despair and raise the child from the depths of hopelessness because he was to become a great nation. Esav was answered by a brocho that all of a sudden Yitzchok was able to give (ibid 27:39). After saying he had no more (ibid 27:37). Yaakov is answered as Lavan took him in and eventually (and reluctantly) gave him two daughters as wives.

When Avraham discussed the fate of Sodom with Hashem, he asks, "Even for that number [fifty] will You not raise up the place?" (Ibid 18:24). Could Hashem not lift up Sodom from its depths of sin and despair – from its conclusive fate – if there were fifty righteous there. Cayin complains to Hashem, after he is cursed for causing Hevl to die, "Great is my sin from lifting." (Ibid 4:13). He acknowledges that he has to carry the too heavy burden of his sin wherever he goes. (Ibid 4:14).

Lifting up means to exalt it from its present state. Hashem lifts up sin off a person and He cleanses the person. A person who eats a korban too late, he is being commanded to lift up the sin, remove it! Remove it from the korban, and atone for it. This way he can avoid kores. When it comes to Yom Kippur live goat, the goat lifts the sins, but not literally. It is a metaphor for the sins being removed from Bnei Yisroel and then being carried off to the wilderness. It is an allegory for the nation to see and finalize their repentance. With their repentance and with the Kohen Gadol's avoda, and the day itself, the sins are removed from the nation and carried away. Hashem removes them and atones for the people. The goat acts as a symbolic gesture meant to elicit repentance and hope. Lift up what is important and release yourself from unnecessary burdens.