

# Shvilei Pinches

## Parshas Acharei

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### **“One Lot to Hashem and One Lot to Azazel”**

### **Let Us Sanctify the Name of Heaven as a Goat to Hashem And Not Chas V'shalom as a Goat to Azazel**

In one of the Parshas we read this week, parshas Acharei Mos, we learn about the holy Yom Kippur service involving the two he-goats—one designated to Hashem and the other to Azazel. The possuk reads (Vayikra 16,8):

**“ולקח את שני השעירים והעמיד אותם לפני ה' פתח אהל מועד, ונתן אהרן על שני השעירים גורלות גורל אחד לה' וגורל אחד לעזאזל, והקריב אהרן את השעיר אשר עלה עליו הגורל לה' ועשהו חטאת, והשעיר אשר עלה עליו הגורל לעזאזל יעמד חי לפני ה' לכפר עליו לשלח אותו לעזאזל המדברה.”**

Rashi comments: Aharon shall place lots upon the two he-goats; he has one stand to his right and one to his left; he puts his two hands into a lottery box and draws a lot in the right hand and the other lot in his left hand; he puts the lots on the goats—the one whose lot says “to Hashem” is sacrificed to Hashem, while the one whose lot says “to Azazel” is sent to Azazel.

From the teachings of our blessed sages, we have learned that it was a tremendous merit for Yisroel if the lot for the goat to Hashem came up in the Kohen Gadol's right hand. The Gemorah states (Yoma 39.): **“תנו רבנן ארבעים שנה ששמש שמעון הצדיק היה גורל עולה בימין, מכאן ואילך פעמים”**—during the forty years that Shimon hotzaddik served, the lot always came up in his right hand; thereafter, it varied between right and left. It also states (ibid.): **“תנו”** **“רבנן ארבעים שנה קודם חורבן הבית לא היה גורל עולה בימין”**—during the forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the lot never came up in the right hand.

The Pardes Yosef provides a wonderful explanation on this subject in the name of the holy gaon, the author of the Avnei Nezer. He explains that the purpose of the service involving the goat to Azazel was to rid Yisroel of the filth that had soiled them due to their sins. This is why that goat was not sacrificed to Hashem but was, rather, sent off into the wilderness to Azazel. Concerning this, the possuk reads (16,22): **“ונשא השעיר עליו את כל עונותם אל ארץ גזרה ושלח את השעיר במדבר”**—it clearly states that the goat to Azazel will carry away all of their sins. Furthermore, we have learned in the Mishnah (Yoma 67.): **“ודחפו לאחוריו והוא מתגלגל ויורד ולא היה מגיע לחצי ההר עד שנעשה”**

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“אברים אברים—he would push the goat backwards and it would tumble down the cliff, and it before it even reached halfway, its limbs were thoroughly torn apart.

In contrast, the he-goat designated to Hashem, which was sacrificed to Hashem, was meant to bring Yisroel closer to their Father in heaven—that is the true meaning of “קרבן לה”. Seeing as transgressions act as a barrier, separating Yisroel from the Holy One—as it is written (Isaiah 59,2): “כי אם עוונותיכם היו מבדילים ביניכם לבין אלקיכם” —and the he-goat designated to Hashem served to atone for their sins, the result was that it brought them closer to their Father in heaven.

Lastly, we have learned in the Gemorah (Sotah 47.): “תנו רבנן לעולם תהא שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת” —the Rabbis taught that the left hand should always be used to push away, while the right is used to bring things close. This teaching explains nicely why it was more fitting that the lot on the goat designated to Hashem should come up in the Kohen Gadol’s right hand—since that goat served to bring Yisroel closer to Hashem, “ימין מקרבת”. On the other hand, it was more fitting that the lot on the goat designated to Azazel, come up in the Kohen Gadol’s left hand—since that goat served to rid Yisroel of their filth and contamination, “שמאל דוחה”. This is the essence of his holy words.

### “Everything Hashem Made Was Made for His Sake Even the Evildoer”

As Torah is elucidated in seventy different facets, we will explore an alternative explanation for why the lot to Hashem needed to come up on the right side while the lot to Azazel needed to come up on the left. First let us understand the lofty lesson we are to learn from the Yom Kippur service involving the two he-goats. Even though, we are in exile due to our transgressions and lack the Temple and the sacrifices, we are still obligated to study the protocols of the sacrifices and seek their holy lessons regarding our service of Hashem.

We have learned in the Mishnah (Avos 6,11): “כל מה שברא הקב”ה בעולמו לא ברא אלא לכבודו” —everything the Holy One, blessed be He, created in this world, He did not create except for His glory. The Yismach Moshe (Reeh) raises an obvious question. There are many evil people in the world, leading evil lives; they seem to be doing the opposite of serving His glory. So, how can the words of the Mishnah be true? He provides the following answer:

“כי בודאי לא נעדרה כוונתו יתברך בשום אופן, כי אף מאנשי רשע ופשע מתרבה כבוד שמים, כי כשהקב”ה נפרע משונאיו, שמו יתגדל ומתקדש ונורא על כל סביביו... רק ההפרש כי בצדיקים שמו מתגדל ומתקדש בשעת קיומן, כי תהלתו בקהל חסידים, כבוד מלכותך יאמרו וגבורתך ידברו, ומאנשי רשע נצמח כבוד שמים בשעת אבודן ולא בשעת קיומן.”

Indeed, when the wicked are punished, the Glory of Heaven is similarly served, with one important difference—the righteous sanctify His name while they are alive, while the wicked do so when they perish.

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The Yismach Moshe adds, in conclusion, that this is also the message of the wisest of men, Shlomo homelech, when he says (Mishlei 16,4): **“כל פעל ה' למענהו וגם רשע ליום רעה”**—everything Hashem made, He made for His sake, even the evildoer for the day of retribution. In other words, even the wicked sanctify Hashem, **“ליום רעה”**—when their just punishment is meted out.

There is, however, a huge difference between how the tzaddik sanctifies Hashem versus how the roshah does so. The righteous sanctify Hashem in a desirable fashion, by utilizing the tools and the life force the Lord gave them to serve Him while they are alive. By contrast, the wicked abuse these gifts leading lives of devastation and perversion; they, inevitably, fulfill **“כל פעל ה' למענהו”** in a less than desirable fashion, by receiving Hashem’s punishment and perishing from the world.

We find this same idea expressed by the Chasam Sofer in Toras Moshe (end of Va’erah). He expounds the verse **“כל פעל ה' למענהו וגם רשע ליום רעה”** and uses it to explain the formula found in our prayers (U’va l’tzion goel): **“ברוך אלקינו שבראנו לכבודו”**—may Heaven be sanctified and glorified by our deeds--**“והבדילנו מן התועים”**—but one might wonder, since Heaven is also sanctified by the wicked, in the manner of **“וגם רשע ליום רעה”**—it seems that they, too, were created to glorify Him. In reply, the prayer continues **“ונתן לנו תורת אמת”**—the Holy One gave us the Torah and its commandments to fulfill while we are still alive, and in so doing, **“וחיי עולם נטע בתוכנו”**—our very lives give our Creator pleasure—as opposed to the wicked, whose lives serve no purpose, for only their deaths and downfall serve to sanctify Heaven.

In Drashos Chasam Sofer (part 1, page 84, column 3), he continues to elaborate on the formula of the prayer: **“למען לא ניגע לריק ולא נלד לבהלה”**—we should not have to be like Pharaoh or the wicked Haman, whose sole purposes for being born into this world was **“לבהלה”**, to create panic and alarm—to alarm people and awaken them to repent by witnessing their deaths and downfall.

We can suggest that this is the interpretation of the possuk (Devarim 30,15): **“ראה נתתי לפניך היום”** **“את החיים ואת הטוב ואת המות ואת הרע”**. In other words, **“ראה נתתי לפניך היום”**—behold, I have presented you with two distinct paths with which to sanctify Heaven in this world—either, **“את החיים ואת הטוב”**—the path of the righteous, who sanctify Heaven during their lifetime by their good deeds—or, **“את המות ואת הרע”**—the path of the wicked, who sanctify Heaven only by their deaths. Therefore, the Holy One advises us: **“ובחרת בחיים למען תחיה אתה וזרעך”**—choose the path of life for your benefit and the benefit of your descendants.

### **“He Desires the Deeds of the Righteous”**

Come and see that this lofty idea of the Chasam Sofer’s and the Yismach Moshe’s, is alluded to by our blessed sages in the Midrash on the verse (Bereishis 1,2):

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“והארץ היתה תהו ובהו, אלו מעשיהן של רשעים, ויאמר אלקים יהי אור, אלו מעשיהן של צדיקים, אבל איני יודע באיזה מהם חפץ, אם במעשה אלו ואם במעשה אלו, כיון דכתיב, וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב, הוי במעשיהן של צדיקים חפץ ואינו חפץ במעשיהן של רשעים.”

The commentators puzzle over this Midrash. It seems unimaginable to entertain the possibility that Hashem might desire the deeds of the wicked, who rebel against Him, as much as or more than the deeds of the righteous. Yet, the Midrash has to find a proof from the scriptures to actually prove that Hashem prefers the deeds of the righteous: “וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב”—G-d describes the light, representing the deeds of the righteous, as being good. The Yefas Toar addresses this problem in his commentary on this Midrash:

“כי לא יאמר האדם, הלא נודע ה' בארץ כשיעשה משפט ברשעים כמו שנודע בעת שגומל טוב לצדיקים, ולכן סלקא דעתך שישוו לפניו מעשי הרשעים כמעשי הצדיקים [כי משניהם מתקדש שמו של הקב"ה], לזה אומר כי לא יחפוץ ה' במות רשע כי אם בשובו מדרכיו וחייה, וטוב לו אם יהיו הכל צדיקים.”

He quotes the verse which specifically states that Hashem does not desire the death of the evildoer, but would rather see him change his ways and repent; He would be pleased if everyone was righteous.

We might add a tidbit to explain why our sages compared the deeds of the righteous to the light and the deeds of the wicked to the darkness. Upon reflecting on the difference between light and darkness, we find that light serves a purpose in its own right. One can use the light to choose a correct path; similarly, one uses light whenever performing an action requiring clear sight. Darkness, however, does not serve any definite purpose of its own, for it does not allow one to see what he is doing.

This would lead us to question why the Almighty created darkness, which, at first glance, does not seem to serve any purpose. We can answer that He created darkness, so that man would recognize the value of the light, and thank Hashem for the light. Had He created only the light without the darkness, mankind would not realize the great kindness that Hashem has done for us by illuminating the world with light for us to use.

So, we find that the light inherently serves a purpose—mankind uses it for all sorts of activities. On the other hand, the sole purpose of darkness is served by its absence—when it leaves and the light arrives, we appreciate the tremendous value of the light. This relationship holds true as well to explain the difference between the righteous and the wicked.

The tzaddikim have intrinsic value; they sanctify Heaven while they are alive in this world. Conversely, the reshaim have no intrinsic value and only cause harm in this world; their sole purpose is served when they perish from the world, when they are, finally, absent. Due to this parallel, the Midrash likens the deeds of the tzaddikim to the light, since both possess inherent purpose, and the deeds of the

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reshoim to the darkness, since neither possesses an inherent purpose—rather, they serve their purposes when they disappear from the world.

### He Should Be Like a Tree Deeply Rooted Alongside Brooks of Water

This concept provides us with a better understanding of Dovid homelech's words in the first mizmor of the book of Tehillim: **“אשרי האיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים ובדרך חטאים לא עמד ובמושב”**—praised be the man who refrained from following the path of the wicked and, thus, did not fulfill **“למענהו”**—everything Hashem created serves His purpose—as the wicked do. Rather than sanctify Heaven as he perishes from this world, he is praised for sanctifying Heaven with his very life, his good deeds and his diligent Torah study.

The mizmor goes on to explain the great purpose served by choosing to sanctify the name of Heaven as the righteous do and not as the wicked do: **“והיה כעץ שתול על פלגי מים”**—for then he will be likened to a fruit tree planted along brooks of water—its purpose is served only while it is alive and connected to its roots. **“אשר פרו יתן בעתו ועלהו לא יבול”**—who yields its fruit in the proper season and whose leaf never withers. Similarly, the tzaddik, by serving this great purpose and sanctifying Heaven while he is alive, yields fruit and merits reward in his lifetime; **“וכל אשר יעשה יצליח”**—and all that he does will succeed.

**“לא כן הרשעים כי אם כמוץ אשר תדפנו רוח”**—not so the wicked, who are like the chaff of the straw, which serves no purpose while still connected to the ground; its purpose is served only when it is uprooted and is then suitable for kindling. **“על כן לא יקומו רשעים במשפט וחטאים בעדת צדיקים”**—therefore, the wicked shall not be vindicated in judgment, nor the sinful in the assembly of the righteous—for, although the wicked sanctify Heaven just as the righteous do, there is no comparison between the two.

**“כי יודע ה' דרך צדיקים”**—Hashem appreciates the way of the tzaddikim who are able to sanctify Heaven while still alive; **“ודרך רשעים תאבד”**—whereas, the way and purpose of the reshaim is solely **“תאבד”**—through their deaths and their doom—that is the only way they sanctify Heaven.

### One He-goat to Hashem and One He-goat to Azazel

Now, our eyes have been illuminated and our hearts gladdened to have gained a tiny insight into the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. His choice between the two goats is a clear allusion to the two choices all mankind has in serving and sanctifying Heaven, **“כל פעל ה' למענהו”**. Man has been given the choice to either sanctify Heaven in the manner of **“שעיר אחר לה”**, the he-goat designated to Hashem, by serving Hashem and sanctifying all of his two hundred and forty eight limbs and three hundred and sixty five sinews in the performance of Hashem's commandments. Alternatively, chas

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v'shalom, he may choose to transgress the Torah's commandments—in which case, his only means of sanctifying heaven is as **“השעיר לעזאזל”**, the he-goat to Azazel—and this will necessitate his downfall, as it is written: **“וגם רשע ליום רעה”**.

This is why the Holy One commanded us to bring two he-goats on Yom Kippur. The one to Hashem was meant to atone for those who chose to sanctify Hashem by observing Torah and mitzvos. The one to Azazel was meant to atone for those who willingly chose to violate the commandments of the Torah. Law would dictate that they suffer a harsh fate similar to that of the he-goat sent to Azazel; however, the Almighty in his abundant mercy and kindness provided them a path of repentance—the he-goat to Azazel served as a substitute to receive their due punishment.

This allows us a sweet elucidation of the verse: **“והשעיר אשר עלה עליו הגורל לעזאזל יעמד חי”** **“ועמד חי לפני ה' לכפר עליו לשלח אותו לעזאזל המדברה”**. The emphasis of the words **“יעמד חי לפני ה'”**—shall be stood alive before Hashem—needs to be explained. Based on what we have just explained, the verse is teaching us the purpose of the goat designated to Azazel—it provides atonement for the sinner, so that he need not sanctify the name of Heaven by his death but, rather, **“יעמד חי לפני ה'”**—he was, thus, provided a means of standing before Hashem and sanctifying His blessed name while alive.

We can also provide a better understanding of why, if the Kohen Gadol was worthy, the lot of the goat designated to Hashem came up in his right hand and the lot of the goat designated to Azazel came up in his left hand. It is well-known that the right hand represents the attribute of kindness, while the left hand represents the attribute of severity. The source for this is found in the Tikunei Zohar: **“חסד”** **“דרועא ימינא, גבורה דרועא שמאלא”**

Those that choose to sanctify Heaven through their observance of Torah and mitzvos during their lifetime, akin to the he-goat to Hashem, are treated by Hashem with the attribute of the right hand, divine kindness, and are protected from misfortune; therefore, it was only fitting that the lot for the goat to Hashem come up in the right hand. Those, however, who choose, chas v'shalom, not to serve Hashem and heed His will, are treated with the left-handed attribute, divine justice and severity; therefore, it was fitting that the lot for the goat to Azazel come up in the left hand—alluding to the fact that it atoned for those who should have been subjected to the attribute of judgment.

The bottom line is that it is incumbent upon us to review day and night the teaching of the Mishnah: **“כל מה שברא הקב"ה בעולמו לא ברא אלא לכבודו”**. This is why we beseech Hashem in our davening: **“ותן חלקינו בתורתך”**—the Holy One, blessed be He, should enlighten us and assist us to find our portion in His Torah, so that we may sanctify the name of Heaven in the world through Torah study and performance of mitzvos-- similar to the he-goat to Hashem-- and enjoy long, fruitful lives.