YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

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**Yom Kippur - A Day of Atonement?**

**by Menachem Leibtag**

Is the 'Day of ATONEMENT' a precise translation for YOM KIPPUR? The word 'atonement' implies amends for a certain wrongdoing. In this sense, the 'Day of Atonement' implies expiation for transgressions which may have been committed over the course of the previous year. However, in Chumash we find numerous instances in which the word "kippurim" is used in a different context. In the following shiur, we examine the use of the shoresh k.p.r. in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the nature and significance of YOM KIPPUR.

THE SHORESH K.P.R. [chaf peyh reish] We begin our discussion by bringing several examples of the use of the shoresh - "k.p.r." - in Chumash.

\* A PROTECTIVE COATING In Parshat Noach, we find the first use of this shoresh: "And God said to Noach: Make an ARK out of gopher wood... - V'CHAFARTA alav - and you shall COAT IT from within in and from without with - KOFER - pitch (a PROTECTIVE COATING)." (Breishit 6:14)

The ark must be coated with a protective covering in order for it to withstand the mighty waters of the flood. This first usage of "k.p.r." indicates that this shoresh relates to a 'protective covering'.

\* A PROTECTION GIFT In Parshat Vayishlach, the shoresh "k.p.r." is used once again to describe a form of protection. Yaakov Avinu sends a gift to appease his brother Esav. Note how Yaakov explains the reason for sending this gift: "Maybe, - A'CHA'PRA pa'nav - I can APPEASE him - with this gift that I am sending..." (Br. 32:20) Yaakov is not asking Esav for forgiveness, rather he hopes that this gift will deter Esav from attacking him. The gift is intended to PROTECT Yaakov from Esav's anger.

\* A COVERING OF THE GROUND In Sefer Shmot, the shoresh "k.p.r." in used to describe the manner in which the 'manna' covered the ground: "And behold it was on the face of the wilderness thin and flaky - k'KFOR - like 'frost' on the land." (Shmot 16:14) [Note: The biblical meaning of KFOR is not quite clear, but it undoubtedly relates to a type of covering, such as frost which covers the ground. See Thilim 147:16 - "kfor k'efer y'fazer" (from daily davening).]

\* PROTECTION MONEY In Parshat Mishpatim (Shmot 21:30), the word "kofer" is used to describe a payment which can be made in lieu of punishment. This can be understood as PROTECTION from the punishment. Similarly, in Bamidbar 35:31 we find the prohibition of accepting "kofer nefesh" - payment in lieu of capital punishment.

SHORESH K.P.R. AND THE MISHKAN With this background, we now examine the use of the shoresh "k.p.r." in relation to the MISHKAN in Parshiot Trumah/Tzaveh.

\* THE KA'PORET Recall that the "aron" (the holy ark) was an open, gold- plated wooden box that contained the LUCHOT (Shmot 25:10-11,21). To PROTECT the "aron", Moshe is commanded to make a KAPORET (25:17-22). This KAPORET (again shoresh k.p.r.), a golden lid with two KRUVIM upon it, served as the COVER for that "aron", thus, PROTECTING the luchot. To emphasize the PROTECTIVE nature of this covering, this lid for the "aron" is NOT called a "michseh" (the hebrew word for a box cover/ see Breishit 8:13 & Shmot 26:14), rather it is called a KAPORET (shoresh k.p.r.). The placement of KRUVIM on the kaporet supports this interpretation. Just as the kruvim PROTECT the path to Gan EDEN (see Breishit 3:24), so too, the KRUVIM of the kaporet PROTECT the LUCHOT. [See shiur on Parshat Nitzavim.] [Note also that the PA'ROCHET (a related shoresh p.r.k) - the curtain which protects the "kodesh ha'kadoshim"- is also embroidered with "kruvim" (see Shmot 26:30).]

KIPPURIM & THE SEVEN DAY MILUIM CEREMONY The first use of the word KIPPURIM is found in the commandment to perform a seven day dedication ceremony for the Mishkan, better known as the MILUIM. During those seven days a special korban CHATAT was offered, whose blood was sprinkled on the MIZBAYACH (see Shmot 29:1,12). At the end of the parsha, the Torah refers to this procedure as KIPPURIM: "And each day [of the MILUIM] you shall bring a PAR CHATAT for the KIPPURIM... (Shmot 29:36)

In a similar fashion, the KOHANIM also required KAPARA. During this seven day ceremony, the blood of the AYIL, an additional korban brought for this purpose (see Shmot 29:1,19- 21), was sprinkled on the earlobes, thumbs, and toes of the kohanim. This procedure is also referred to as KAPARA: "This [meat of the korban] shall be eaten only by [the kohanim] - asher KUPAR bahen - who had KAPRA from them [from the blood of this animal]... "(Shmot 29:33) [See also parallel account in Vayikra 8:1-36, see 8:34]

Thus we find that the primary purpose of the seven day MILUIM ceremony was to perform KAPARA on the MIZBAYACH and on the KOHANIM. What was the purpose of this "kapara"? Was it necessary for the atonement of any specific sin? Even if one would suggest that the KOHANIM need atonement for "chet ha'egel" (the sin of the Golden Calf/ even though the Torah does not record this event until the next Parsha), surely the MIZBAYACH did nothing wrong. Why does it need a KIPPURIM procedure? Based on our understanding of the shoresh k.p.r. above, it would seem this KAPARA procedure was necessary to PROTECT the MIZBAYACH and the KOHANIM. Why would they need protection?

PROTECTION FROM THE SHCHINA Recall from our shiurim on Sefer Shmot that the primary purpose of the Mishkan was to create a site where the God's SHCHINA (His Divine Presence) could dwell: "And they shall make for Me a sanctuary - v'SHACHANTI b'tocham"- that I may dwell among them." (Shmot 25:8) [See also Shmot 29:45-46]

The presence of SHCHINA in the MISHKAN creates an environment similar to MA'AMAD HAR SINAI (see Ramban Shmot 25:1). As was the case at Har Sinai, the presence of SHCHINA results in immediate punishment for any transgression. [See previous shiur on the 13 MIDOT.] Because the KOHANIM are to work in the MISHKAN, and the MIZBAYACH is designated to become the site where the SHCHINA will descend and consume the KORBANOT which Bnei Yisrael will offer (see Vayikra 9:24), PROTECTION is necessary. [For example, on the very next day, Nadav and Avihu made one small mistake and they received immediate punishment!]

Thus, this entire KIPPURIM ceremony could be understood as symbolic, for it reflects the nature of the Divine encounter which takes place in the Mishkan. Performing this procedure teaches Bnei Yisrael that encountering the SHCHINA requires not only preparation and readiness, but also protection from its consequences.

THE MIZBACH KTORET The word KIPPURIM is mentioned once again at the end of Parshat Tzaveh, when the MIZBACH KTORET [the incense alter] is first introduced (Shmot 30:1-10). Here, to our surprise, we find the first reference in Chumash to YOM KIPPUR itself!: "v'CHI'PER Aharon al kar'no'tav - Aharon must KAPARA [sprinkle blood] on its corners ONCE A YEAR from the blood of the CHATAT HA'KIPURIM. Once a year y'CHA'PER a'lav - he must do KAPARA on it..." (Shmot 30:10)

Here, the Torah only tells us that this special procedure must be performed once a year, however it does not tell us on what day. In Parshat Acharei Mot (Vayikra 16:1-34) we find the complete details of this CHATAT HA'KIPPURIM, including the precise date - the tenth day of the SEVENTH month. [See also Bamidbar 29:11.]

In Parshiot Trumah/Tzaveh, two aspects are unique to the MIZBACH KTORET: 1) It is the only vessel which requires this special CHATAT KIPPURIM. [Note: In Acharei Mot we see that also the PAROCHET and KAPORET need to be sprinkled with the blood of the CHATAT HA'KIPPURIM, however it is mentioned in Sefer Shmot.] 2) It is LEFT OUT of the primary presentation of the Mishkan and its vessels. [Scan Shmot chapters 25->29/ note that 25:8 and 29:44 form 'bookends' which include almost all the vessels of the Mishkan, except for the mizbach ktoret which is left out until the very end (30:1-10/ note that this ends the "dibur" which began in 25:1). See previous shiur on Parshat Tzaveh.]

Once again, the meaning of the shoresh k.p.r. can help us understand why. The ANAN KTORET (cloud of smoke created when burning the ktoret) in the Ohel Moed acts as a BUFFER between the SHCHINA in the Kodesh Kdoshim and the MIZBAYACH in the AZARA (courtyard), thus protecting Bnei Yisrael. [Note parallel to the ANAN on Har Sinai.] Because the MIZBACH KTORET protects Bnei Yisrael each day when the ktoret is offered, it requires a yearly CHATAT HA'KIPPURIM!

YOM HA'SHMINI - THE EIGHT DAY DEDICATION CEREMONY An additional link between Yom Kippur and our interpretation of "kapara" can be found by examining the korbanot of the YOM HA'SHMINI ceremony (the eighth day/ read Vayikra 9:1-24), the first day in which the MISHKAN began to function. Once again, special korbanot are offered for the purpose of "kapara". From the psukim describing these korbanot, one could suggest that this KAPARA is necessary to protect Bnei Yisrael from the SHCHINA which is to appear on this day: "This is the procedure which you must do, and God's glory (KVOD HASHEM) will appear unto you... Go near the mizbayach and offer your chatat and olah - v'CHA'PER - on your behalf and on the behalf of the people..."( 9:6-7) It should come as no surprise that the korbanot offered at that inauguration ceremony are almost identical to the korbanot offered yearly on YOM KIPPUR. In each ceremony, there is a special CHATAT & OLAH offered both by AHARON and by the PEOPLE. The following table summarizes this parallel between Vayikra 9:1-3 and 16:1-5:

YOM HA'SHMINI YOM KIPPUR NOTE -------------- ----------- ----- AHARON Chatat Egel\* Par An EGEL is a baby PAR Olah Ayil Ayil

AM YISRAEL Chatat Seir Seir Olah Egel + Keves Ayil A Keves is baby Ayil In each case Aharon offers a PAR CHATAT and AYIL OLAH (an EGEL is simply a baby PAR/ this change most probably relates to chet ha'egel). Likewise, Am Yisrael offers a SEIR CHATAT and AYIL OLAH (a keves is a baby ayil). Despite these minor differences, they are basically the same type of korban. [See article by Rav Yoel Bin Nun in Megadim Vol. #8]

YOM KIPPUR - A YEARLY "YOM HA'SHMINI" The above parallel indicates that Yom Kippur can be considered as a 'yearly repetition of the korbanot of the Mishkan's inauguration ceremony on YOM HA'SHMINI. This parallel underscores the very nature of YOM KIPPUR. It suggests that the primary purpose of the "avodat Kohen Gadol" is to PREPARE the Mikdash for the FORTHCOMING year, just as the korbanot of YOM HA'SHMINI prepared the Mishkan for its original use. Likewise, the "kapara" can be understood in a similar fashion. Once a year, it is necessary to perform a procedure which will PROTECT Am Yisrael from the consequences of HITGALUT SHCHINA. This KAPARA process, which enables Bnei Yisrael's encounter with the SHCHINA in the MISHKAN, must be 'renewed' once a year. Parshat Acharei Mot alludes to this concept in the pasuk which completes the commandment to sprinkle the blood on the KAPORET: "v'CHI'PER - And he [the kohen] shall do KAPRA [sprinkling the blood] on the KODESH, from the uncleanliness of Bnei Yisrael... and thus he must do to the Ohel Moed - ha'SHOCHEN iy'tam - He who dwells among them, EVEN WHILE THEY ARE 'TAMEY' [spiritually unclean]..." (Vayikra 16:16)

EVEN THOUGH Am Yisrael may become TAMEY (due to their sins), the SHCHINAH can remain in their midst! However, Bnei Yisrael require KAPARA to PROTECT them from the SHCHINA. [Note: Vayikra 18:24-27 shows the relationship between TUMAH & sin.]

ATONEMENT or PROTECTION In Sefer Shmot we find an additional use of the shoresh k.p.r. when Moshe ascends Har Sinai to ask God to forgive Bnei Yisrael for their sin at chet ha'egel: "And Moshe told the people, you have committed a terrible sin, and now I will go up to God, possibly - A'CHAPRA [I can achieve KAPARA] - for your sins." (Shmot 32:30)

When reading this pasuk, we usually understand A'CHAPRA as asking for forgiveness. However, one could understand that Moshe is asking God to PROTECT Bnei Yisrael from the punishment which they deserve. Undoubtedly, this protection from punishment leads to ultimate forgiveness. This explains why later in Chumash, the word "chapara" may actually imply forgiveness. The classic example is found in Parshat Vayikra in relation to the korban CHATAT & ASHAM (4:1-5:26). Note that each type of korban concludes with the phrase: "v'CHI'PER alav ha'Kohen, v'NIS'LACH lo..." (see Vayikra 4:21,26,31,35; 5:10,13,18,26)

Based on our understanding of k.p.r. one could suggest that the sprinkling of the blood (the technical "kapara") by the kohen PROTECTS the owner of the korban from his due punishment for his transgression (the conceptual "kapara"). Then - v'NISLACH lo - God forgives him for that sin. Thus, the KAPARA 'process' enables the SLICHA 'effect'.

WHY ON THE 10th of TISHREI Although we have explained the necessity of offering a yearly CHATAT KIPPURIM in the Mishkan, we have not explained why it must be performed on the tenth of Tishrei. In fact, based on the parallel to YOM HA'SHMINI, the first of Nisan would seem to be a more logical date! Most probably this date was chosen for a historical reason. On the tenth of Tishrei, Bnei Yisrael received the SECOND LUCHOT and were thus forgiven for chet ha'egel. Due to His MIDOT HA'RACHAMIM, the essence of these LUCHOT, God agreed to allow His SHCHINA to remain with Am Yisrael, EVEN THOUGH they may not be worthy. [See Shmot 34:9, and last week's shiur on the 13 MIDOT.] On the anniversary of this event, the day on which Bnei Yisrael received the Torah at the level which they can maintain, we re-enact Ma'amad Har Sinai for it is a day of HITGALUT SHCHINA. Just like Moshe Rabeinu, we can neither eat nor drink (Dvarim 9:9), nor wear shoes (see Shmot 3:5). We must also prepare ourselves for this awesome day (See Yoma 2a). However, specifically BECAUSE this is a day of HITGALUT, Bnei Yisrael require PROTECTION from the SHCHINA. Therefore, the CHATAT HA'KIPPURIM must be offered, for we are privy to a relationship which we may not deserve. It is this HITGALUT which enables the forgiveness of our sins on this day, just as it enabled the forgiveness of chet ha'egel several thousand years ago.

YOM KIPPUR True atonement is accomplished only by teshuva. However, YOM KIPPUR allows for the special relationship between God and Am Yisrael to continue. By understanding the protective nature of the AVODAT YOM KIPPUR by the Kohen Gadol, we can better appreciate God's CHESED (kindness) in allowing us this special relationship, even though we may not deserve it. That understanding should encourage us not only to take advantage of the opportunity for atonement on this special day, but also to grasp any opportunity for spiritual growth during the course of the year to come. "Yhi ratzon" that God should enact His MIDOT HA'RACHAMIM on this Yom Kippur, and enable us to meet the many challenges that face our Nation this coming year.

Gmar Chatima Tova, lanu u'lchol beit Yisrael menachem

**FOR FURTHER IYUN**

A. Note that the parsha describing YOM KIPPUR in Chumash is presented in relation to the death of Nadav and Avihu which took place during that inauguration ceremony on YOM HA'SHMINI/ See 10:1-4, and relate to 16:1. 1. Based on the above sh, why do you think Nadav and Avihu thought it necessary to offer specifically ktoret, and specifically when they saw HITGALUT? 2. Were they wrong? If not, why were they punished? 3. Is there any other case in Chumash where ktoret is offered to protect Bnei Yisrael from punishment?

B. Note that on Yom HaShmini, also a Korban Shlamim was offered (see Vayikra 9:3-4) 1. Why is this korban not offered on Yom Kippur? 2. Can you relate this question to why the tzibur brings a korban shlamim davka, and only, on Shavuot (see shtei ha'lechem in Parshat Emor /see also previous shiur on Shavuot!)

C. Based on our shiur on Rosh Hashana, one could suggest an additional reason why this procedure in necessary in the SEVENTH month. After we request that God show His Providence over us on Rosh Hashana. If we ask for His special HASHGACHA on the land and the rainfall, we must be ready for its consequences. 1. Relate this to last week's shiur on Rosh Hashana and the nature of all CHAGEI TISHREI.

D. Sefer Shmot never states the specific day in which the SECOND LUCHOT were given. Read Dvarim 9:8-10:11 to understand how Chazal reach the conclusion that it took place of 10 Tishrei.

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