

Insights from the Meshech Chochma

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פְּרֻשַׁת הָאֲזִינוּ תשפ"ז

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יֵעָרֵף בַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי... בְּשִׁעִירִם עָלֵי דָּשָׁא... (פרק לב' ב)

(Moshe exclaims:) *May my teaching drip like the rain... like storm winds upon vegetation...*

Rashi explains that לִקְחֵי is referring to the Torah and that Moshe Rabbeinu is beseeching “the heavens and the earth to bear witness to the testimony that I say in your presence: ‘The Torah that I gave to כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל is life for the world just as rain is life for the world, when the heavens drip dew and rain.’”

Rav Meir Simcha's focus on our pasuk is the Sifrei's exegesis which begins with a statement from R' Eliezer ben R' Yossi HaGlili: "יַעֲרֹף יַעֲרֹף בְּמָטָר לְקָחִי" connotes 'killing', as is written with regards to the עֵרֹפָה, עֵגְלָה בְּנָחַל, וְעֲרָפוּ שָׁם אֶת הָעֵגְלָה בְּנָחַל, *And they shall axe the back of the heifer's neck in the valley*. Just as the עֵרֹפָה atones for the spilling of blood, so too do the words of Torah achieve absolution for *all* transgressions." Continues the Sifrei: "וְשִׁעִירם Just as בְּשִׁעִירם-Just as שִׁעִירם, קָרְבָּנוֹת, atone for certain חֲטָאוֹת, similarly, words of Torah achieve absolution for those חֲטָאוֹת." The difficulty with this Sifrei is obvious. If the first half of the pasuk is telling us that Torah study atones for *all* transgressions, even שִׁעִירם, as does the עֵרֹפָה then the second half, שִׁעִירם, which Sifrei expounded as "the words of Torah achieve absolution for חֲטָאוֹת" is totally superfluous, for this would have been included under the broader לְקָחִי בְּמָטָר יַעֲרֹף? Rav Meir Simcha explains and this was reviewed several years ago in *פְּרָשַׁת הָאֲזִינוּ תשפ"ג*, that Torah and the עֵרֹפָה cannot atone for the actual שִׁעִירם and most certainly, if the murderer was found later, he would be punished. What יַעֲרֹף בְּמָטָר לְקָחִי infers is that Moshe's comparing Torah study to the עֵרֹפָה (and Rav Meir Simcha brought supporting evidence for this, עֵינֵינוּ שָׁם) means that both can attain forgiveness for a דָּבָר **הַגּוֹרֵם לְשִׁפְיַת דָּמִים**.

How does Rav Meir Simcha understand the Sifrei's exegesis of כְּשִׁעִירָם עָלָי דָּשָׁא? His explanation begins with a tragic episode in שְׁמוּאֵל א' יד, where we read of the punishment pronounced on the family of Eli HaKohen Gadol for the brazen behavior of his sons, Chofni and Pinchas. Hashem tells Shmuel, "וְלֹכֶן בְּשִׁבְעָתִי לְבֵית עֲלִי אִם יִתְכַּפֵּר עֵינֹן בֵּית עֲלִי בְזָבַח"/*Therefore I have sworn concerning the house of Eli that the sin of the house of Eli would never be atoned for by sacrifice or meal-offering.*" In essence, the house of Eli will be destroyed and his כְּהוּנָה גְדוּלָּה lineage will be severed forever. Rava, in ראש השנה יח., tells us that "with sacrifice or offering the sin of Eli's house is not atoned, but it can be atoned through Torah study." Rav Meir Simcha boldly tells us that the חִידוּשׁ of the Sifrei's

exegesis of **עַלֵּי דָשָׁא בְּשַׁעֲרֵם** is that for sins which a **שַׁעִיר** would absolve, so too would Torah study-as he puts it, **עַל גּוֹף הַחֲטָאוֹת**. More than just **גְּרָמָא**. The power of Torah!

Continues Rav Meir Simcha: Lest one think that removing Eli's house from the **כְּהוֹנָה גְּדוּלָה** was a "total loss", there is a "silver lining" to the decree. In the Mishna discusses the duties of a **כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל** and tells us that the difference between a **כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל** anointed with the anointing oil i.e., a **כֹּהֵן הַמְּשׁוּחַ**, versus one consecrated by donning multiple garments i.e., **כֹּהֵן הַמְּרוּבָּה בְּבִגְדִים**, is only that the latter does not bring the **פֶּר הָעֵלִים דָּבָר**, the bull that comes for the (inadvertent) transgression by the **כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל** of any of the mitzvos. Rather, he brings a sheep or goat. The Gemara adds that R' Meir disagrees-even the **כֹּהֵן הַמְּרוּבָּה** brings the bull. The reason that a bull is the required **קָרְבַּן** is that when a person like the **כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל** commits an **עֲבֵרָה**, even unintentionally, there is an associated **חִילוּל הַשֵּׁם** -atonement for that requires more than a sheep or a goat, it needs a larger bull. Returning to the curse on the house of Eli, the sin of Chofni and Pinchas *included* **חִילוּל הַשֵּׁם**. Had the family remained **כֹּהֲנִים גְּדוּלִים**, they would never have been able to receive atonement for the sin of Chofni and Pinchas being that Hashem swore that **זֶבַח וּבִמְנַחָה** would not work but neither would Torah study, since according to Rav Meir Simcha's explanation of the Sifrei, Torah study is "only" on the level of **עַלֵּי דָשָׁא בְּשַׁעֲרֵם** but not on the level of a **פֶּר**. According to Rav Meir Simcha, Rava's remark in **ראש השנה יח.** that the sin of Eli's house can be atoned through Torah study applies only *after* the house lost the **כְּהוֹנָה גְּדוּלָה**! **עַל גּוֹף הַחֲטָאוֹת בְּשַׁעֲרֵם עַלֵּי דָשָׁא**.

Rav Meir Simcha ends this piece with a dramatic statement that should resonate within us during these **יָמִים נוֹרָאִים**: **טוֹבָה קָלָלְתוּ שָׁל הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יוֹתֵר מִבְּרַכְתּוֹ שָׁל בָּשָׂר וָדָם: יָמִים נוֹרָאִים**!

לזכר נשמת אבי מורי ר' ישראל מנחם בן ר' שלום ז"ל
לזכר נשמת אמי מורתי רחל בת ר' אלחנן אביגדור ע"ה
לזכר נשמת חמי מורי ר' יעקב נתן בן ר' ישראל שלמה ז"ל
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