

## Insights from the Meshech Chochma

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### פְּרִשְׁת וַיִּקְרָא תִשָּׁפ"ו

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אֲשֶׁר נָשִׂיא יִחְטָא וְעָשָׂה אַחַת מִכָּל מִצְוֹת ה' אֲלֵקִיּוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲשִׂינָהּ... וְהֵבִיא אֶת קִרְבָּנוֹ שְׂעִיר עִזִּים... וְשָׁחַט אֹתוֹ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט אֶת הָעֹלָה לִפְנֵי ה' חֲטָאת הוּא. (פרק ד' כב-כד)

*When a ruler sins and commits one from among all the commandments of Hashem, his G-d, that may not be done... ..he shall bring his offering, a male goat... ..and he shall slaughter (the goat) in the place he would slaughter the olah offering before Hashem; it is a sin-offering.*

These pesukim introduce us to the Parsha of the חֲטָאת קִרְבָּן brought when the ruler/king transgresses unintentionally. Rashi, quoting Midrash Toras Kohanim, explains that חֲטָאת הוּא is teaching us that throughout the entire sacrificial procedure, the one who is officiating must intend that he is bringing the offering for its sake i.e., in this case, with the intention that it is a חֲטָאת. If during part of the service he thought that it was some other type of offering, it becomes invalid. As Rashi tells us, לְשִׁמּוֹ כְּשֶׁר, שְׁלֹא לְשִׁמּוֹ פְּסוּל. This is in fact a major discussion with several Tanaic opinions in the opening Mishna of מְסַכֵּת זְבָחִים: "All sacrifices that were slaughtered לְשִׁמּוֹ (and this includes any of the three other major parts of its עֲבוּדָה), are valid i.e., it is 'kosher' in the sense that its offering is completed-the blood is thrown on the Altar, the sacrificial parts are burned on the Altar, and the meat is eaten. However, they *do not* satisfy the obligation of the owner, who is required to bring another קִרְבָּן with the proper intention." The Tana Kama continues to tell us that if a חֲטָאת or פְּסוּל offering is slaughtered with the intent for another type of offering, not only does the owner fail to fulfill his obligation with this sacrifice, but it is invalidated i.e., its עֲבוּדָה may not be continued. Consecutive Tanaim broaden or modify this group of קִרְבָּנוֹת and all of them have Scriptural sources for their positions.

Rav Meir Simcha questions the exegesis of Toras Kohanim as follows: As just mentioned, the Mishna tells us of other types of קִרְבָּנוֹת which fall under the rubric of לְשִׁמּוֹ כְּשֶׁר, שְׁלֹא לְשִׁמּוֹ i.e., the פְּסוּל and according to some, the אֲשָׁם. Why did Toras Kohanim pick the חֲטָאת קִרְבָּן specifically to learn the שְׁלֹא לְשִׁמּוֹ rule from? Furthermore, if it felt that the חֲטָאת should be the source, why the שְׂעִיר חֲטָאת נָשִׂיא, a *korban* which was likely brought very infrequently, as the Jewish king was usually a righteous and noble person? Why not the more unfortunately common חֲטָאת יָחִיד, which is discussed later in our Parsha? Interestingly, his answer takes us to a Gemara which in pasuk לא, he uses to also explain why the Torah applied *only* רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לָהּ if one offers a שְׂעִירָה, a female goat, as his חֲטָאת קִרְבָּן but not if the חֲטָאת יָחִיד is a בִּבְשָׂה, a female lamb. In סוּטָה ל"ב, R' Yochanan in the name of R' Shimon ben Yochai tells us: "For what reason did חַז"ל institute that prayers should be said in a whisper? It is so as not to embarrass transgressors, who confess their sins while praying. This is alluded to since the Torah did not distinguish between the place in the Beis HaMikdash where a חֲטָאת קִרְבָּן is slaughtered, and the place where a חֲטָאת עֹלָה is slaughtered-both are performed in the northern section of the

*Azarah* i.e., so that people observing will not be able to identify the offering as a חֲטָאת, thus sparing the sinner additional embarrassment...” The Gemara continues and asks: “But isn’t there a visibly obvious difference between the two offerings, as a חֲטָאת is female and an עֵלָה is male? That is not a problem, because the female organ is covered by the animal’s tail so that the gender of the animal is not plainly evident. Therefore, people will not realize that it is female.” The Gemara counters: “That is fine if the offeror brings a כִּבְשָׂה, as its long tail covers its organ. However, if one brings a שְׂעִירָה, which does not have such a tail, what can be said?” The Gemara answers: “If one brings a שְׂעִירָה, it is he who embarrasses himself, as he should have brought a כִּבְשָׂה.” And as Rashi explains that if he did not want to suffer humiliation, he should have brought the כִּבְשָׂה, whose gender is concealed. To this degree, it is therefore not necessary to be concerned about his embarrassment.

Returning to our pesukim, Rav Meir Simcha points out that the חֲטָאת נְשִׂיא is brought from a שְׂעִיר, a male goat. There is no other option. He believes that this is because just as the Torah went out of its way to preserve the dignity of an individual Jew who has sinned, even more so for the king, who represents all Klal Yisrael! Not only does the חֲטָאת נְשִׂיא get slaughtered in the northern section-as does the עֵלָה-but he also brings the same animal as the עֵלָה, a שְׂעִיר. All of this to camouflage the fact that the king sinned. One might think then that we can let the performing Kohen’s intention also be for an עֵלָה and thereby only Hashem and the king would know the truth?! It is for this reason that Toras Kohanim wanted to derive the rule of לְשִׂמוּ כְּנִשָּׂה, נְשִׂיא לְשִׂמוּ פְּסוּל, specifically from the חֲטָאת נְשִׂיא written by the שְׂעִיר חֲטָאת נְשִׂיא, to teach us that even with regards to this קִרְבָּן, intention is essential and the wrong one invalidates the entire עֲבוּדָה!

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לזכר נשמת אמי מורתני רחל בת ר' אלחנן אביגדור ע"ה  
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