“And Aharon shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for God and the other lot for Azazel.” — Vayikra 16:8

“And he put on the linen garments, the holy garments... And he did as God commanded Moshe.” — Vayikra 16:32,34

On Rosh HaShanah the Satan comes before God and accuses, “Your people, Bnei Yisrael, are thieves!” God pushes him away until Yom Kippur. Finally, on Yom Kippur, the Satan approaches again and claims, “Look at these Jews! They appear as the very ministering angels! They do not eat and they do not drink, and they wear no shoes.” In response, God turns Satan away with the goat for “Azazel”. — Midrash

This Midrash seems perplexing. The role of the Satan is to indict and to find fault. Once his initial attack is suppressed, we would expect that the Satan would be silenced. Certainly, his offering of constructive and helpful remarks on behalf of his adversarial target would seem to be inappropriate. Yet, suddenly, the Midrash portrays the Satan as advocating the cause of the Jews as he approaches God on Yom Kippur itself by professing that they are as holy and as worthy as the ministering angels.

In Ateres Mordechai on the Torah, Rabbi Mordechai Rogow explains that the Satan uses every strategy available to achieve his goal. When he realizes that he cannot malign the Jews directly, he shifts his focus and undermines their position with condemning adulation. All year long, we try to excuse our misdeeds by pointing out how our lives are fraught with difficulties which overwhelm us. We claim that we do our best, but there is only so much that can be expected from a people that has to endure such hardships and persecution. This excuse has merit, for, in fact, a conducive environment is essential for a person to accomplish his utmost.

When Yom Kippur arrives, the Jews rise to the level of the angels. We do not eat and we do not drink. We refrain from all physical indulgences. We stand together and proclaim “Baruch Shem Kvod Malchuso” aloud. The Satan seizes the opportunity and denounces, “We see that if they simply make the proper effort, the Jews can indeed achieve the level for which they aim. If they care to do so, they can overcome all distractions and pressures and can rise to the level of the angels, just as they are doing now! If they failed during the year, they have no right to blame it on their dire circumstances, for they were quite able to persevere and to even succeed, had they only tried.” In this manner, the Satan wishes to castigate us and have us remain fully accountable for those errors committed even under the extreme conditions of the burdensome exile.

This is said in praise of Aharon, for he put on the holy garments not for his own aggrandizement but to fulfill the commandment of the King. — Rashi, from Toras Kohanim 8:10

According to the Midrash, the Torah is praising Aharon for wearing the plain white garments for the sole purpose of fulfilling the command of Hashem, the King, with no element of intent to glorify himself with the clothing. If the clothes were exceptionally fancy or were made from rare and expensive materials, we could understand how Aharon would be tempted to pride himself in wearing such special raiments, and why his resisting this opportunity for personal advantage would be noteworthy. Yet, even though the Avodah on Yom Kippur was done with expensive garments, they were very plain and only white. How could he possibly have glorified
You shall keep My statutes and My ordinances, which, if a person does them he shall live by them; I am God.

Vayikra 18:5

Even though the Avodah on Yom Kippur was done with expensive garments, they were very plain and only white.

The king immediately informed him, “You realize, of course, that I am the king [and you will be treated accordingly].”

“I am Hashem” - I am trustworthy to provide proper reward. -- Rashi

Many of the commentators discuss the philosophical significance of the reward and punishment system which we find in the Torah. Many references in Scripture describe rewards and benefits in this world. In contrast, however, we do not find any explicit sources which tell of reward or punishment in the world-to-come.

The king immediately informed him, “You realize, of course, that I am the king [and you will be treated accordingly].”

A parable can be told of a king who instructed a craftsman to fashion a piece of furniture for his palace. Although the worker did not ask about his remuneration, the king immediately informed him, “You realize, of course, that I am the king [and you will be treated accordingly].” In these few words, it is evident that the king indicated that when the man would finish his work, he would be paid as is fitting for the personal worker of the king, who has control of the vast treasuries of the empire.

Many mitzvos in our holy Torah are assigned the confirmation “I am Hashem”. We are to understand, then, that the message is that the reward for proper fulfillment of the mitzvos is one that is commensurate with a scale of eternal proportions, which the Holy One, blessed be He, the King of the universe, is capable of providing.

THE KING IS TAKING CARE OF IT

Many varieties of theft

This parasha mentions many separate prohibitions against thievery, such as that against stealing secretly, robbing by violence, withholding money, and so on. Each variation is listed separately, although these prohibitions resemble each other, and some overlap. For example, the prohibition against taking advantage in money matters includes that against withholding a laborer’s wages.

By increasing the number of prohibitions against thievery, Hashem increased our potential reward.

In Tana d’vei Eliyahu Rabbah (14, 15), one of the sages related the following story. While wandering from one place to another, a man once addressed me as follows: “Rabbi, I wish to pose a question to you, but I am afraid that you will become angry.”

“My son,” I replied, “if you want information on a Torah subject, why should I mind?”

He then questioned me regarding the following point: “Hashem provides sustenance for all living beings, as it says (Tehillim 136:25), ‘He gives food to every
flesh’, and (ibid. 147:9) ‘He gives to the animal its food.’ Why then could He not have provided sustenance for mankind, too? Why do we have to undergo so much strain and distress to make a living?”

“Are you not aware, my son”, I replied, “that if not for Hashem’s blessings from above, all of man’s endeavors would be fruitless?”

“That is true,” the man said, “but this does not answer my question. I wish to understand why man has to exert himself more than other creatures.”

The sage explained as follows: “My son, you realize that if someone cannot take care of himself, Hashem provides for him. For example, there are many people who are alive and well although they are intellectually disabled and incapable of earning a living. Since they lack intelligence, Hashem sees to it that they are provided for. In truth, He could have done the same for all human beings. The reason why He caused man to have to work for a parnassa is that a person is constantly being tested by Hashem, and earning a living is a major testing ground. For example, a person must decide whether he will work or be idle, how much time he will devote to work and how much to Torah study, and other life decisions. He must resist the urge to transgress the prohibitions against withholding wages, theft, etc. By obeying Hashem’s wish in this area, he can earn himself great reward.”

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THE SHIELD OF SHAME

“With righteousness shall you judge your fellow.” - [This is to be understood] just as it sounds. Another meaning is [that when the nature of another person’s conduct is questionable] judge toward the scale of merit [and give him the benefit of the doubt]. – Rashi

Always viewing others in a favorable light and seeing only the benefit and good in people is not only advantageous to the one being judged. There is also a distinct benefit which this outlook provides for the person who is making the evaluation. This perspective leads the viewer to become more cautious in his own conduct and helps him avoid sin.

Our sages have emphasized the advantages of the trait of being sensitive to shame. On the one hand, anyone who is sensitive to shame will be slow to sin (Nedarim 20a), while, on the other hand, one who displays insolence and is stubborn will eventually sin (Sota 4b). Shame serves as a shield which deflects the tendency to sin. Insolence breaks through all barriers which lead the way to sin. Yet, these traits do vary in their effect, depending upon circumstances.

Maharil Diskin explains that every person is a member of a social setting. When he sins, he not merely compromise his own conduct, but he also sets a tone of insensitivity and carelessness which others invariably notice. The door has been opened for them, as well, for when they are confronted with their own challenges and temptations, they will be less reluctant to sin. It will be easier for the next person to overcome any compunction toward sin, for the fence has already been breached. In turn, the next one to sin further lowers the level of intolerance, and the cycle continues until the last one will not even hesitate when sin comes his way. The trait of insolence has caused his abhorrence to sin to disappear, and the tendency to be ashamed to act in such a manner has been lost.

What can a person do in order not to fall within this downward spiral that leads to sin? “One must judge his fellow man favorably.” (Avos 1:6) If a person looks upon other people as being righteous and meritorious, he will view them as possessing the trait of abhorrence to sin. As a result, he himself will not be exposed to any lapse in his fear of heaven, and he will remain filled with shame. The trait of caution and sensitivity will be intact, and he will be saved from sin.

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RISE FOR THE WISE

Onkelos translates “You shall rise up before the old” as “You shall rise up before one who studies Torah”, and Chazal (Kiddushin 32b) explained that when the Torah says “and honor the face of an old man” it means “one who has acquired wisdom”. Why does the Torah express the concept of a Torah scholar by the term “an old man”? It is because a young Torah scholar sees through his wisdom what an old man sees through the multitude of his years.
Sefer HaChinuch explains that the main point of man’s having been created in the world is for the sake of wisdom, so that he will become aware of his Creator. It is therefore fitting for a man to honor one who has attained it. As a result, others will be stirred by it. Therefore, Issi ben Yehuda explained (Kiddushin 32b) that even an uneducated old man - one who is not wise - is included in this mitzvah. It is proper to honor him because in his great number of years he has seen and recognized a bit of the workings of Hashem and His wonders. Therefore he is deserving of esteem. Yet, this rule holds only on condition that he is not a confirmed sinner, for if he is, he has deprived himself of honor.

Because in his great number of years he has seen and recognized the workings of God and His wonders.

Halachic Corner

Pirkei Avos Ch. 3

Zmanim for Parshas Acharei Mos-Kedoshim 5780

According to the Gaon of Vilna

Kriat Shema - Sat. 9:17, 10:27
Terilin - Sat. 8:41, 10:03
Sunset 7:49, 5:45

According to the Magen Avraham

Sunrise 9:17, 10:27
Sunset 7:49, 5:45

Reciting berachos is very important because when one says a brachah he shows that he believes that there is a God in the world and that everything belongs to Him, and that one must ask permission from God to eat His food. Chazal tell us that a person who enjoys anything without a brachah is like one who steals from Hashem. (Berachos 35a) The table where we eat is also holy, for as long as the Beis HaMikdash was in existence, the altar atoned for Klal Yisrael. Now, the table of man atones for him. Therefore, it says that a person should say a Dvar Torah or sing some mizmorim over his food when he is sitting at the table, in order to bring holiness into the eating of the food. The Torah, when it says “וכל אוכל ושתה כי אם נפשך” – “when you shall eat and be satiated, then you shall bless” (Devarim 8:10), is commanding us to bless Hashem with Bircas HaMazon after we eat. In this pasuk we have the key to understanding the foundation of blessings. One should say the Bircas HaMazon with concentration, for by reciting a blessing over a food, one is showing that he is not simply satisfying his desires but is eating in order to be strong in serving Hashem.

Questions for Thought and Study

1. Why were the laws of the service of Yom Kippur taught to Aharon during the inauguration of the Mishkan and not before Yom Kippur, which was months later?
   See Chizkuni 16:1

2. How was Aharon’s conduct different regarding the Holy of Holies as opposed to all future Kohanim? Which words indicate this?
   See Ha’amek Davar 16:2

3. Why does the Torah need to tell us that the undomesticated animal and the bird were “trapped” and then their blood must be covered? What difference does it make how they were caught before the slaughter?
   See Ohr HaChaim 17:13

4. Why is the commandment to honor one’s parents written after the warning to Bnei Yisrael to avoid immorality?
   See Ohr HaChaim 19:3

5. What special benefit did a person receive when he brought a sacrifice in the Mishkan?
   See Meshech Chochmah 19:5

6. What advice does the Torah give if one does not receive his wages?
   See Ba’al HaTurim 19:13

This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

- Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Shmuel Schuman on the birth of a grandson, born to Raizy & Velvel Cook; and to Rabbi & Mrs. Chaim Twerski on the birth of their grandchildren: Avraham Yaakov, born to Shalom & Sara Feige Twerski, Elchanan, born to Ahron Yoel & Chaya Rochel Kushner, and Yisroel Boruch, born to Shmuel & Yachi Twerski.

- Hebrew Theological College mourns the loss of Sara Lee Kanter,wife of Rabbi Dr. Albert Milton Kanter., for their generosity for endowing the William and Lillian Kanter School of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro is not meeting in the restaurant, so we are bringing Torah to you. Please join Rabbi Dr. Zev Eleff over Zoom on Thursday, May 7, at 12:30 PM. Topic: “What's Mine and What's Yours is Hers: Rabbi Akiva's Mantra in America”. Zoom info will be emailed and posted on HTC’s facebook page.

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By the Gassel and Cooper families in loving memory of our dear mother, bubbi and great-bubbi,

By the Lifsics / Farr / Pickholtz / Blisko / Belsky family in loving memory of their father,

In loving memory of our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Sarah Miller,

By Ronald & Shira Abrams and Rabbi Abraham & Rosalyn Cooper and families in memory of

In loving memory of our beloved grandmother, great-grandmother, Goldie Abrams,

Betty Kaufman, on the occasion of her eighth yahrtzeit on 9 Iyar. It's hard to believe it's so long. We deeply miss her love, warmth and care every day. Just tried their brand new menu items of Emmakins (fresh fried donut holes) – 2 flavors, and their Flat Breads – 4 different flavors, at great intro pricing! I tried all these fantastic items and they brought everything right to my car! - Ezra.

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By the Marshak and Carron families, in loving memory of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Dorothy Marshak,

On the occasion of her twentieth yahrtzeit on 9 Iyar. It's hard to believe it's so long. We deeply miss her love, warmth and care every day. She was a true eishes chayil. May her memory be for a blessing.

In memory of Rabbi Moshe Stern, on his 34th yahrtzeit on 8th May, by his family and the members of the Kehilla, Congregation Shevet Achim at Buckingham Pavilion Rehabilitation & Nursing Center, 2625 Touhy.

By the Lifscies / Farr / Pickholtz / Blisko / Belsky family in loving memory of their father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Irving Farr,

On the occasion of his fifty-fourth yahrtzeit on 12 Iyar. Through his humility he lived a life of Torah, chesed, and maasim tovim. May his memory be for a blessing.

By the Galss and Cooper families in loving memory of our dear mother, bubbi and great-bubbi, Esther Gassell, on her yahrtzeit on 12 Iyar.

Likelui Peshatim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lillian Klein, May their memory be for a blessing.

Answers:
1. After seeing Aharon’s sons die because they entered the Mishkan improperly, Hashem taught Aharon that Yom Kippur was a time that he could enter the Holy of Holies.
2. The word אָרָא (your brother), used specifically regarding Aharon, indicates that he was allowed to enter the מֵאָרָא on any day provided he did the proper seven-day preparation. Other Kohanim in the future could only enter on Yom Kippur.
3. This is to teach us that it is forbidden to deliberately trap non-kosher animals. If a non-kosher animal is "trapped" unintentionally with other kosher animals, then its blood must be covered upon slaughter.
4. This is to show that one can avoid sinning in an immoral way by visualizing the image of one’s father. (According to the Midrash, this is what happened when Yosef refused to sin with the wife of Potiphar.)
5. Bnei Yisrael were not allowed to eat meat while in the wilderness. If one brought a non-kosher animal, he could eat the meat as part of the procedure.
6. By placing the prohibition of cursing מֵאָרָא immediately after the sin of withholding wages, the Torah indicates that one should not curse his employer, but should bring him to court to adjudicate his claim.

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