

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Achrei Mos 5784

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The Yom Kippur service is described.

**וַנָּתַן אַהֲרֹן עַל-שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים גִּרְלוֹת גִּרְלוֹת גִּרְלוֹת לַיהוָה וְגִרְלוֹת אֶחָד לְעִזָּאֵזֶל:**

“And Aharon shall place a lottery upon two goats; one lottery for Hashem and one lottery for Azazel.” (Vayikra 16:8).

What do we learn from this lottery? What or who or where is Azazel?

This offering of the twin goats is unique in the Torah. The requirement for the goats here is that they be twins, almost. Not necessarily biological twins but the same age, animal type, and appearance. This is learned out of the other place where identical animals are paired for offering. The Torah says, **וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי-שָׁנָה שְׁנַיִם לַיּוֹם תָּמִיד:** “And this is what you shall do upon the mizbeach, yearling lambs, two of them, each day continually.” (Shmos 29:38). There it says, two male lambs, a year old. Here it says **שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים.** While the Torah does not require the goats to be any particular age, except obviously older than a year and male (they are goats not kids), the “two” here can be inferred to mean the same as the “two” Similar in appearance. As the Mishne learns, **שְׁנֵי אֶחָד** “Two male goats on Yom Kippur, it is a commandment that they be alike in appearance, place raised, their value, and be purchased together.” (Mishne Yoma 6:1). The lottery goats and the tamid lambs have that aspect in common.

The tamid lambs are tied to each other. One was given in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Yet, the Torah calls it one korban. It was given “tamid” or perpetually. The lambs connected the morning service to the afternoon service and the afternoon lamb capped the day’s service in holiness. The two lambs were designated together. Just as the tamid lambs were tied to each other, so too, the lottery goats were tied to each other. They were one korban but went in two different directions.

While the tamid offering was about continuous and consistent devotion to Hashem and His service, the lottery goats showed dichotomy in forgiving the people. One was offered on the mizbeach (Vayikra 16:24) and one sent to the wilderness outside the camp (and later, outside of Jerusalem) (ibid 16:22). Yet, the one that goes upon the mizbeach is offered without confession, but its blood is sprinkled. (Ibid 16:15). The goat sent to the wilderness is used for confession before it is sent. (Ibid 16:21). The two goats, together, would serve one purpose. Blood would be sprinkled, its body offered as a burnt offering, and used for confession. Two goats had to do one job.

Why the two goats and why was one sent out? Also, where was it sent to? A precise reading of the pasuk shows that both goats get a lottery. It is not that one option is picked and then the other is assumed to be the other option – Kohen picks “for Hashem” so we assume the other is for Azazel. No, the kohen picks both. He picks one for one goat and

again – even though its fate is now determined – for the other one. Even after picking “for Hashem” for the one goat, he still reaches into the box and picks out a token for the other one and designates it. This shows equality. While the one on his right side does choose first, the other is not implicitly given a destiny but is actively given a lottery choice, too (again, even though it is a foregone conclusion). The two goats have equal task. One will have its blood sprinkled and meat offered, the other will have confession made upon it.

The Torah does not seem to explicitly say what happens to the Azazel goat. “It is sent with a designated agent to the wilderness.” (Ibid 16:21). After confession, the Torah says, וְנָשָׂא הַשְּׂעִיר עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתָם אֶל־אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה וְשָׁלַח אֶת־הַשְּׂעִיר בַּמִּדְבָּר: “And the goat shall carry on it all of the iniquities to a land of separation, and he shall send the goat into the wilderness.” (Ibid 16:22). Land of separation can mean a designated land, like the word for decree *gezira*. It can also mean cavernous or openness like the word *gizra*. There is also a land called Gazra, in the territory of the Philistines. The Azazel goat is to carry with it all the iniquities and sins it received in confession and then to disappear. The Torah does not explicitly say it dies or is thrown down a cliff. That was the custom at the time of the Beis HaMikdash. (Mishne Yoma 6:6). After sending it out to the wilderness, the Torah speaks no further about it.

The term Azazel is not repeated in the Torah. The word appears three times, only here in this parsha. אֶזְזֵל can be broken down into עֵז “goat” and אָזַל “goes.” It is the goat that goes, that is sent, literally. To note, the term שְׂעִיר (seir) is used for a goat for offering while “eiz” means goat. The Torah says, “And do not sacrifice further sacrifices, that you shall stray after them, goats for foreign offerings....” (Ibid 17:7). Again, *seir* is used because the goat is used for an offering. Thus, Azazel can actually be explaining that this *seir* is a goat that is sent. One is “for Hashem” and one is “goat that is sent.”

The term לעֵז also means strange or foreign tongue as in this pasuk, בְּצִאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעֵז: “...the House of Yaakov from a nation of a foreign language.” (Tehillim 114:1). אָזַל is used throughout Tanakh to mean go to or move to directly. (see Devarim 32:36, Daniel 2:17, 6:20). Thus, it could mean it goes toward a foreign language. While this may elicit or conjure up images of offering the goats to demons, that may not be so far from the reason for the word. This was still a people that believed in foreign spiritual powers. The Torah can be teaching Aharon and the kohanim, and the people, that once this goat is designated, by seemingly random lottery, to be confessed upon and then sent to the wilderness, it is now a goat that belongs nowhere near the camp. Let it be cast out to the wilderness to disappear in the place of superstition, howling winds that carry strange voices, and home to creatures that can survive with the scarcest resources. This goat is cast out. Its death is not as important as the fact that it takes the confessed sins and it carries the iniquities of the people far away. It leaves the camp never to return. The sins are cast out and never heard from again. It combines with the holy ritual of slaughter, blood sprinkling, and flesh burning, to expiate and forgive all the people. The people’s sins should not be put on the mizbeach to be a רִיחַ נְיָחִים “pleasant smelling offering” to Hashem. The sins are carried far away as if they are foreign and do not belong. That is how the two goats combine to be one korban that forgives the people.