

Sacrifice and Scapegoat: The Twin Goats of Yom Kippur

Ms. Sarah Gordon

I. The Two Goats:

1. Leviticus 16

(5) And from the Israelite community he shall take two he-goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

(7) Aaron shall take the two he-goats and let them stand before ה' at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; (8) and he shall place lots upon the two goats, one marked for ה' and the other marked for Azazel. (9) Aaron shall bring forward the goat designated by lot for ה', which he is to offer as a sin offering; (10) while the goat designated by lot for Azazel shall be left standing alive before ה', to make expiation with it and to send it off to the wilderness for Azazel.

(20) When he has finished purging the Shrine, the Tent of Meeting, and the altar, the live goat shall be brought forward. (21) Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities and transgressions of the Israelites, whatever their sins, putting them on the head of the goat; and it shall be sent off to the wilderness through a designated agent. (22) Thus the goat shall carry on it all their iniquities to an inaccessible region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.

(30) For on this day atonement shall be made for you to purify you of all your sins; you shall be pure before G-d.

1. ויקרא טז

(ה) וּמֵאֶת עֵדֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקַּח שְׁנֵי־שְׁעִירִי עִזִּים לַחֲטָאת וְאֵיל אֶחָד לְעֹלָה:

(ז) וְלָקַח אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים וְהִעֲמִיד אֹתָם לִפְנֵי ה' פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: (ח) וְנָתַן אֹהֶרֶן עַל־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים גִּרְלוֹת גּוֹרֵל אֶחָד לַה' וְגּוֹרֵל אֶחָד לַעֲזָאזֵל: (ט) וְהִקְרִיב אֹהֶרֶן אֶת־הַשְּׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגּוֹרֵל לַה' וַעֲשֵׂהוּ חֲטָאת: (י) וְהַשְּׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגּוֹרֵל לַעֲזָאזֵל יַעֲמִד־חַי לִפְנֵי ה' לַכֹּפֶר עָלָיו לְשַׁלַּח אֹתוֹ לַעֲזָאזֵל הַמִּדְבָּרָה:

(כ) וְכֹלָה מִכֹּפֶר אֶת־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהִקְרִיב אֶת־הַשְּׁעִיר הַחַי: (כא) וְסָמַךְ אֹהֶרֶן אֶת־שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עַל־רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁעִיר הַחַי וְהִתְוַדָּה עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־כָּל־פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־חַטָּאתָם וְנָתַן אֹתָם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁעִיר וְשַׁלַּח בְּיַד־אִישׁ עֵתִי הַמִּדְבָּרָה: (כב) וְנִשָּׂא הַשְּׁעִיר עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתָם אֶל־אֶרֶץ גִּזְרָה וְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הַשְּׁעִיר בַּמִּדְבָּר:

(ל) כִּי־בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהֳרָה אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' תִּטְהָרוּ:

II. The Problem:

2. Talmud Bavli, Yoma 67b

The phrase: **And you shall keep my statutes**, is a reference to **matters that Satan** and the nations of the world **challenge**. **They are**: The prohibitions against **eating pork**; **wearing** garments that are made from **diverse kinds** of material, i.e., wool and linen; performing the **ḥalitza** ceremony with a **yevama**, a widow who must participate in a levirate marriage or **ḥalitza**; **the purification ceremony of the leper**; **and the scapegoat**. **And lest you say these have no reason and are meaningless acts**, therefore **the verse states**: “**I am the Lord**” (Leviticus 18:4), to indicate: **I am the Lord, I decreed these statutes and you have no right to doubt them**.

2. תלמוד בבלי, יומא סז:

“את חוקותי תשמרו” – דברים שהשטן משיב עליהן, ואלו הן: אכילת חזיר, ולבישת שעטנז, וחליצת יבמה, וטהרת מצורע, ושעיר המשתלח. ושמה תאמר מעשה תוהו הם, תלמוד לומר: “אני ה’”, אני ה’ חקקתיו, ואין לך רשות להרהר בהן.

3. Vayikra 17:3-7

(3) if anyone of the house of Israel slaughters an ox or sheep or goat in the camp, or does so outside the camp, (4) and does not bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to present it as an offering to ה', before ה's Tabernacle, bloodguilt shall be imputed to that party: having shed blood, that person shall be cut off from among this people. (5) This is in order that the Israelites may bring the sacrifices which they have been making in the open—that they may bring them before ה', to the priest, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and offer them as sacrifices of well-being to G-d (6) that the priest may dash the blood against the altar of ה' at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and turn the fat into smoke as a pleasing odor to G-d; (7) and that they may offer their sacrifices no more to the goat-demons after whom they stray. This shall be to them a law for all time, throughout the ages.

3. ויקרא יז: ג-ז

(ג) איש איש מבית ישראל אשר ישחט שור או־כשב או־עז במחנה או אשר ישחט מחוץ למחנה: (ד) ואל־פתח אהל מועד לא הביאו להקריב קרבן לה' לפני משכן ה' דם יחשב לאיש ההוא דם שפך ונכרת האיש ההוא מקרב עמו: (ה) למען אשר יביאו בני ישראל את־זבחייהם אשר הם זבחים על־פני השדה והביאם לה' אל־פתח אהל מועד אל־הכהן וזבחו זבחי שלמים לה' אותם: (ו) וזרק הכהן את־הדם על־מזבח ה' פתח אהל מועד והקטיר החלב לריח ניחח לה': (ז) ולא־יזבחו עוד את־זבחייהם לשעירים אשר הם זנים אחריהם חקת עולם תהיה־זאת להם לדורתם:

III. The Parallels:

4. Dr. Noga Ayali-Darshan, The Scapegoat rituals and its Ancient Near-East Parallels

An Eblaite Goat Ritual

The most ancient example of a sending away ritual was uncovered in the Ebla archives (Tell Mardikh in Modern Syria) from the twenty-fourth century B.C.E. A tablet describes a ritual in which an animal is sent away in order to purify the house of the dead prior to a royal wedding:

We purify the mausoleum before the entrance of (the gods) Kura and Barama. A goat, a silver bracelet (hanging from) its neck, towards the steppe of Alini we let it go. (ARET XI, 12, 39-40)

Here the goat is sent out, dressed up in a decorative silver bracelet, and carries with it the impurity, allowing the gods, and later the king and queen, to enter the mausoleum as part of the wedding ceremony.

An Ugaritic Goat Ritual

In the latter half of the second millennium B.C.E., Ugarit (Ras Shamra in Modern Syria) had the following comprehensive wording for, apparently, the same practice of sending away an animal when a danger threatens the city and its citizens:

If a city is captured (or) if the people die, (all) the people shall take a goat and lead it far off. (KTU 1.127)

5. Leviticus 14

(1) ה' spoke to Moses, saying: (2) This shall be the ritual for a leper at the time of being purified. When it has been reported to the priest, (3) the priest shall go outside the camp. If the priest sees that the leper has been healed of the scaly affection, (4) the priest shall order two live pure birds, cedar wood, crimson stuff, and hyssop to be brought for the one to be purified. (5) The priest shall order one of the birds slaughtered over fresh water in an earthen vessel; (6) and he shall take the live bird, along with the cedar wood, the crimson stuff, and the hyssop, and dip them together with the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the fresh water. (7) He shall then sprinkle it seven times on the one to be purified of the

5. ויקרא יד

(א) וידבר ה' אל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: (ב) זֹאת תְּהִיָּה תוֹרַת הַמִּצְוֶה בְּיוֹם טְהִרְתּוֹ וְהוּבֵא אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: (ג) וַיִּצָּא הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּרְאֶה הַכֹּהֵן וְהָיָה נֹרָא נֶגַע־הַצֹּרַעַת מִן־הָעָרוֹעַ: (ד) וַצֹּוֹה הַכֹּהֵן וְלָקַח לַמַּטְהָר שְׁתֵּי־צִפְּרִים חַיִּוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת וְעֵץ אֶרְזוֹ וְשֵׁנִי תוֹלַעַת וְאַזְבִּי: (ה) וַצֹּוֹה הַכֹּהֵן וְשָׁחַט אֶת־הַצִּפּוֹר הָאֶחָת אֶל־כָּל־יָחִיד עַל־מִים חַיִּים: (ו) אֶת־הַצִּפּוֹר הַחִיָּה יָקַח אֹתָהּ וְאֶת־עֵץ הָאֶרְזוֹ וְאֶת־שֵׁנִי הַתוֹלַעַת וְאֶת־הָאַזְבִּי וְטָבַל אוֹתָם וְאֹתוֹ הַצִּפּוֹר הַחִיָּה בְּדַם הַצִּפּוֹר הַשְּׁחֻטָּה עַל הַמַּטְהָר מִן־הָצֹרַעַת שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים וְטָהֲרוּ וְשָׁלַח אֶת־הַצִּפּוֹר הַחִיָּה עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה:

eruption and effect the purification; and he shall set the live bird free in the open country.

IV. Four Approaches to the Scapegoat Ritual:

Approach 1: Seeing ourselves as the goats

6. Mishnah Yoma 6:1

The mitzva of the two Yom Kippur goats, the goat sacrificed to God and the goat sent to Azazel that are brought as a pair, **is as follows: That they will both be identical in appearance, i.e., color, and in height, and in monetary value, and their acquisition must be as one, i.e., they must be purchased together. And even if they are not identical, nevertheless, they are valid. And similarly, if he acquired one today and one tomorrow, they are valid...**

6. משנה יומא ו:א

שני שעירי יום הכפורים, מצותן שיהיו שניהן שוין במראה ובקומה ובדמים ובלקיחתן כאחד. ואף על פי שאינן שוין, כשרין...

7. Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch (1808-1888, Germany), Vayikra 16:10

... Each one of us is a שעיר (goat). Each one of us has the power to resist, to be obstinate, the ability to oppose with firmness demands made on our will-power. It is on the way we use this power that the worthiness or worthlessness of our moral existence depends. We can use it in attachment to G-d... in being a 'שעיר לה' (a goat chosen for G-d). Or, we can use it in obstinate refusal of all compliant obedience to G-d, and to the demands of His holy laws of morality... here called לעזאזל (to Azazel)...

8. Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40a

The Sages taught: Always **a person should view himself as though he were exactly half-liable and half-meritorious.** In other words he should act as though the plates of his scale are balanced, so that if **he performs one mitzva he is fortunate, as he tilts his balance to the scale of merit. If he transgresses one prohibition, woe to him, as he tilts his balance to the scale of liability, as it is stated: "But one sin destroys much good"** (Ecclesiastes 9:18),

8. תלמוד בבלי, קידושין מ.

תנו רבנן: לעולם יראה אדם עצמו כאילו חציו חייב וחציו זכאי. עשה מצוה אחת – אשכיו, שהכריע עצמו לכף זכות, עבר עבירה אחת – אוי לו, שהכריע את עצמו לכף חובה, שנאמר: "וְחֹטֵא אֶחָד יִאָבֵד טוֹבָה הַרְבֵּה" – בְּשִׁבִּיל חֹטֵא יְחִידִי שֶׁחֹטֵא אוֹבֵד מִמֶּנּוּ טוֹבוֹת הַרְבֵּה.

which means that due to one sin that a person transgresses he squanders much good	
--	--

Approach 2: We are not defined by our sins

9. Rav Uriel Eitam, “[The Service of the Goats - Repair of the sin of the tree of knowledge - Part 1](#)”, VBM.

... At the start, the two similar goats reflect the simple attitude toward man's sins over the course of the year. Throughout the year, the individual and the people as a whole accumulate good and bad deeds, mitzvot and transgressions, merits and liabilities. At first glance, it seems that different sides and different actions are equal parts of cohesive personalities, just as the two goats that will be sent, one in and one out, are similar to each other at the outset... Separating the goats on Yom Kippur reveals a deeper perspective than that of the rest of the year. According to this perspective, evil does not define identity and is not an integral part of a person. The goat that Israel offers to God and is brought in before Him expresses belonging to God, while the goat that is sent out to Azazel with the people's sins expresses the fact that sins are not part of human identity, but rather external. As the Gemara states: "A person does not commit a transgression unless a spirit of folly enters into him [from the outside]" ([Sota 3a](#))...

10. Maharal (Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, 1526-1609, Prague), Sermon for Shabbat Shuva, p. 83:

Because the souls of Israel are holy and pure in themselves, their sins do not stem from their very souls, for their souls in themselves are holy and pure. For were this not so, it would be unbefitting to bring the blood into the Holy of Holies. However, these sins do not stem from the souls of Israel, but only from Satan's incitement of Israel, from which come the sins. Therefore, the Torah says, since Israel have pure souls and they have an offering to bring in the innermost chamber, the sins committed by Israel are from the evil inclination, which is Satan, and not from themselves – to the point that Satan, namely, the evil inclination, has a part in Israel, that is, the sins that stem from the evil inclination. Therefore, the Torah says

10. מהר"ל דרוש לשבת תשובה עמ' פג
החטא בישראל אחר שנפשם קדושה וטהורה מצד עצמם אינו מצד עצם הנפש, שהרי נפשם מצד עצמם קדושה וטהורה, שאם לא כן לא יהיה ראוי להביא הדם במקום קודש הקדשים. אבל החטא הזה אינו מצד נפש ישראל רק הוא בשביל גרוי השטן אשר הוא מתגרה בישראל ומצד הזה בא החטא. ולכך אמרה תורה כי מצד שישראל יש להם נפש טהורה ויש להם קרבן להקריב לפני ולפנים, אם כן החטאים שישראל עושים הוא מיצר הרע שהוא השטן לא מצד עצמם, עד שיש לשטן הוא היצר הרע חלק בישראל הם החטאים שהם מצד היצר הרע, ולכך אמרה תורה שיתן עונות ישראל על השעיר השני וישלח השעיר במדבר עד שיקח חלקו מן ישראל אשר יש לו אצלם.

that the high priest should put the sins of Israel on the second goat and he should send the goat into the wilderness, so that it may take that part of Israel that he has in them. (Translation: Rav Uriel Eitam)

11. Rav Uriel Eitam, “The Service of the Goats - Repair of the sin of the tree of knowledge (part 2)”, VBM.

...The most fundamental feature of the wilderness is the absence of water...It follows from this that the treatment of impurity on Yom Kippur is done in the opposite way of the usual purification process. Usually the impure person undergoes a purification process, this being done by way of immersion in water. On Yom Kippur, the goat that bears upon it the sins of Israel, considered like impurity, does not undergo a purification process; rather, it is sent to a place that is the very opposite of the fundamental elements of the purification process – to the wilderness... The impurity of sin is taken outside to the place of death, where there is no water, and the person is left inside, pure of sin. The Mishna describes what is done with the goat in the wilderness: "And he pushed it from behind, and it went rolling down, and before it had reached half its way downhill, it was dashed to pieces" (Yoma 6:6)... The dashing of the goat to pieces can also be seen as a parallel of immersion in water: Just as with immersion, all of the person's limbs come into contact with the living water, so too with throwing the goat off the cliff and dashing it into pieces, all of the goat's limbs come into contact with the surface of the wilderness, which kills.

This is the Torah's sharp way of expressing the uniqueness of Yom Kippur. Throughout the year, sins are regarded as part of each person, requiring treatment. On Yom Kippur, sin is separate from the people, something that enters from the outside and that must be sent to a place, the nature of which stands in opposition to the living space of the nation.

Approach #3: A “Bribe” to the Yetzer Hara (evil inclination)

12. Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, 1194 - 1270, Spain), Vayikra 16:8

...It is explained more clearly in the Chapters of the great Rabbi Eliezer: “The reason why they would give Sammael [i.e., Satan] a conciliatory gift on the Day of Atonement, was so that he should not annul [the effect of] their offerings... When Sammael saw that he could find no sin on the Day of Atonement amongst them [the children of Israel], he said to the Holy One,

12. רמב"ן ויקרא יז:ח

...ומפורש מזה בפרקי רבי אליעזר הגדול (פרק מו) לפיכך היו נותנין לו לסמאל שוחד ביום הכפורים שלא לבטל את קרבנם שנאמר גורל אחד לה' וגורל אחד לעזאזל...ראה סמאל שלא נמצא בהם חטא ביום הכפורים אמר לפני הקב"ה רבון כל העולמים יש לך עם אחד בארץ כמלאכי השרת שבשמים...והקדוש ברוך הוא שומע עדותו של ישראל מן הקטיגור שלהם ומכפר על

blessed by He: 'Master of all worlds! You have one people on earth who are comparable to the ministering angels in the heavens.... And the Holy One, blessed be He, hears the testimony concerning Israel from their prosecutor, and He atones for the altar and for the Sanctuary, and for the priests and for all the people of the assembly...

...Now this is the secret of the matter. They used to worship "other gods," namely, the angels, bringing offerings of a sweet savor to them... Now the Torah has absolutely forbidden to accept them as deities, or to worship them in any manner. However, the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded us that on the Day of Atonement we should let loose a goat in the wilderness, to that "prince" [power] which rules over wastelands.... Now the intention in our sending away the goat to the desert was not that it should be an offering from us to it – Heaven forbid! Rather, our intention should be to fulfill the wish of our Creator, Who commanded us to do so. This may be compared to the case of someone who makes a feast for his master, and the master commands the person making the feast, "Give one portion to that servant of mine," in which case the host gives nothing [of his own] to that servant, and it is not to show him honor that he acts in that way to him, but everything is given to the master and it is the master that gives a gift to his servant; the host only observes his command and does in honor of the master whatever he commanded him to do. The master, however, out of his own compassion for the host, wanted all his servants to derive some enjoyment from it [the feast], in order that they may all speak of his [the host's] praise and not of his shortcomings.

המזבח ועל המקדש ועל הכהנים ועל כל עם הקהל...

...זה סוד הענין כי היו עובדים לאלהים אחרים הם המלאכים עושים להם קרבנות והם להם לריח ניחוח... והנה התורה אסרה לגמרי קבלת אלהותם וכל עבודה להם אבל צוה הקב"ה ביום הכפורים שנשלח שעיר במדבר לשר המושל במקומות החרבן... ואין הכונה בשעיר המשתלח שיהיה קרבן מאתנו אליו חלילה אבל שתהיה כונתנו לעשות רצון בוראנו שצונו כך והמשל בזה כמי שעשה סעודה לאדון וצוה האדון את האיש העושה הסעודה תן מנה אחת לעבדי פלוני שאין העושה הסעודה נותן כלום לעבד ההוא ולא לכבודו יעשה עמו רק הכל נתן לאדון והאדון נותן פרס לעבדו ושומר זה מצותו ועשה לכבוד האדון כל אשר צוהו ואמנם האדון לחמלתו על בעל הסעודה רצה שיהיו כל עבדיו נהנין ממנה שיספר בשבחיו ולא בגנותו

זה טעם הגורלות כי אילו היה הכהן מקדיש אותם בפה לה' ולעזאזל היה כעובד אליו ונודר לשמו אבל היה מעמיד אותם לפני ה' פתח אהל מועד (ויקרא ט"ז:ז') כי שניהם מתנה לה' והוא נתן מהם לעבדו החלק אשר יבא לו מאת השם הוא הפיל להם גורל וידו חלק להם... ולכך לא נשחוט אותו אנחנו כלל...

This then is the reason [for having someone] who casts the lots [on the two goats]. If the priest were to dedicate them merely, by word of mouth [without casting the lots], saying, "one for the Eternal" and "one for Azazel," that would be like worshiping [Azazel] or taking a vow in its name. Rather, the priest set the two goats before the Eternal at the door of the Tent of Meeting, for both of them were a gift to G-d, and he gave to His servant that portion which came to him from G-d. It is he [i.e., the priest] who cast the lots on them, but it is His hand that apportioned them... That is the reason why we do not ourselves do any act of slaughtering [of that goat, as this would imply that it is a proper offering which requires slaughtering]...

13. Rav Tzadok HaCohen of Lublin (1845-1895), Tzidkat HaTzadik, 40

The main part of repentance is that G-d opens your eyes so that your intentional sins seem as merits (see [Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b](#)). Meaning, you should understand and comprehend that everything that you sinned was also the will of G-d... and since G-d wanted this to happen, therefore they (the intentional sins) are all merits, and you are worthy of complete atonement on Yom Kippur. And this is the secret of the scapegoat, that if a person did this ritual on their own, he would be worshiping actual idol worship... but since the goat is commanded by G-d, and he is commanded to send it, then it is a Mitzvah and not a sin... and see the commentary of the Ramban on Parshat Acharei Mot, that the fact we give a portion to Azazel, who is evil, is only because G-d commands us to give it to him, and this makes the sin a Mitzvah.

13. רבי צדוק הכהן, צדקת הצדיק, פרק מ
עיקר התשובה הוא עד שיאיר ה' עיניו שיהיו זדונות כזכויות. רצה לומר: שיכיר ויבין שכל מה שחטא היה גם כן ברצון ה' ית'... ומאחר שה' ית' רצה כן, הרי הכל זכויות, וזוכה לכפרה גמורה שביום הכיפורים. שזה סוד השעיר לעזאזל, שאילו עשוהו האדם עצמו - היה עובד עבודה זרה גמור... רק שהשעיר הוא על ידי רצון ה' ית', שהוא מצווה לשלחו לו - נעשה עוד מצוה ולא עבירה... ועיין ברמב"ן פרשת אחרי, שאנו נותנים חלק לעזאזל - שהוא הרע - מצד מה שה' ית' צוה לתת לו, ונמצא העבירה - מצוה.

14. Rambam (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, 1138-1204, Spain/Israel), Laws of Repentance, 5:1

Free will is granted to all men. If one desires to turn himself to the path of good and be righteous, the choice is his. Should he desire to turn to the path of evil and be wicked, the choice is his...

14. רמב"ם הלכות תשובה ה:א

רשות לכל אדם נתונה. אם רצה להטות עצמו לדרך טובה ולהיות צדיק הרשות בידו. ואם רצה להטות עצמו לדרך רעה ולהיות רשע הרשות בידו...

Approach #4: Bringing us back to ספר בראשית / Sefer Breishit

15. Breishit 21

(10) She said to Abraham, "Cast out that slave-woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." (11) The matter distressed Abraham greatly, for it concerned a son of his. (12) But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed over the boy or your slave; whatever Sarah tells you, do as she says, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued for you. (13) As for the son of the slave-woman, I will make a nation of him, too, for he is your seed." (14) Early next morning Abraham took some bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He placed them over her shoulder, together with the child, and sent her away. And she wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

15. בראשית כא:

(י) וַתֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָהָם גֵּרֶשׁ הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־בְּנָהּ כִּי לֹא יִירֶשׁ בְּנֵי־הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת עִם־בְּנֵי עַם־יִצְחָק: (יא) וַיֹּרֶעַ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵי אַבְרָהָם עַל אוֹתָת בְּנוֹ: (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֲל־יִרְעַ בְּעֵינֶיךָ עַל־הַנָּעַר וְעַל־אִמָּתְךָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלֶיךָ שָׂרָה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ כִּי בִי־צָחֵק יִקְרָא לָךְ זָרַע: (יג) וְגַם אֶת־בְּנֵי־הָאִמָּה לְגוֹי אֲשִׁימֶנּוּ כִּי זָרַעָךְ הוּא: (יד) וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם וַיִּבְקֹר וַיִּקַּח־לָחֶם וַחֲמַת מִים וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַגֵּר שָׁם עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ וְאֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַיְשַׁלְחָהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּתֶעַ בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁבְעָ:

16. Rav Yonatan Feintuch, "The Two Goats of Yom Kippur", Machon Herzog, Yeshivat Har Etzion.

At first, it can be said that the ritual of the goats is a symbolic act, in which the people of Israel ask God to remember His choice of Israel and the merit of the Patriarchs, in whose name He chose them over their brothers, so that He might be appeased and forgive the people for all their sins. Yet, it seems that there is more here than simply recalling the past, for the casting of lots

כבאופן ראשוני ניתן לומר, שמעשה השעירים הוא מעשה סמלי, שבו מבקש עם ישראל להזכיר לקב"ה את בחירתו בעם ישראל ואת זכותם של האבות, שבשם בחר על פני אחיהם, כדי שיתרצה וימחל לעם על כל חטאותיו. ברם, נראה שיש כאן יותר מהזכרת העבר בלבד, שהרי הטלת גורל בין השעירים אינה גורל ליד המקרה, אלא מסירת

between the goats is not a matter of chance, but rather the transferring of the decision into the hands of God. In this way, the act reenacts the very process of chosenness: the goat chosen to be offered to God represents the people of Israel, and the other represents the opposite. This idea fits well with the meaning of Yom Kippur, the holy day when God forgives the people of Israel and the greatest closeness between them is achieved.

ההחלטה לידי הקב"ה. בכך ניתן לראות שחזור של מעשה הבחירה, כאשר השעיר שנבחר לעלות קרבן לה' מייצג את עם ישראל, ולהפך. רעיון זה משתלב היטב בתוכני יום הכיפורים, היום הקדוש שבו הקב"ה מוחל לעם ישראל ורבו נוצרות הקרבה הגדולה ביותר ביניהם.

17. Midrash Breishit Rabbah, 65:14

"Fetch me from there two good kids of the goats" ([Bereishit 27:9](#))... 'Good' - good for you, and good for your descendants, because by them they are cleansed on Yom Kippur, one to the Lord and one to Azazel."

17. מדרש בראשית רבה סה:יד

"ולקח לי משם שני גִּדְי עִזִּים טָבִים..." "טָבִים", רַבִּי חֲלָבוֹ אָמַר טוֹבִים לָךְ, שֶׁעַל יָדָן אֶת נוֹטֵל אֶת הַבְּרָכוֹת. וטוֹבִים לְבָנֶיךָ, שֶׁעַל יָדָן הוּא מִתְּכַפֵּר לָהֶם בְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים, דְּכָתִיב (ויקרא טז, ל): כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר וגו'.

18. Rav Elyakim Krumbein, "Ya'akov, Esav, and the Yom Kippur Ritual", VBM.

...For example, Ya'akov's entrance to his father's room, waiting for a blessing, reminds us of the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) entering the Holy of Holies. Moreover, Ya'akov wears special clothes for the occasion, just as does the Kohen Gadol, and Yitzchak notes "the smell of my son," which may parallel the incense. Small wonder, therefore, that the Midrash completes the picture by comparing Ya'akov's gift to his father to the two goats of Yom Kippur, which make it possible for the Kohen to enter the Kodesh...

...So both Ya'akov and Esav are like two goats, only one of which will enter the Kodesh - their father's room - and receive a blessing. The twin brothers become so similar physically, that even their own (admittedly blind) father cannot recognize the one from the other - just as the Halakha requires the two goats to be equal in height and appearance ([Yoma 62a](#)). And like the two goats, the brothers' fates hang on a thread: only one will receive the blessing (sacrificed to the Lord), and the other one will be cast out (to the Azazel)...

Ya'akov meets Esav again in [Bereishit 32-33](#), and even there one might find parallels to Avodat Yom Ha-kippurim. Ya'akov needs to pacify his brother with gifts, comprised of herds of animals. The scapegoat sent to the wilderness is often viewed as a "gift" to the "se'irim," so it should not surprise us to find that Ya'akov's first gift to Esav is a flock of goats...

**19. Rav Yonatan Feintuch, "The Two Goats of Yom Kippur",
Machon Herzog, Yeshivat Har Etzion.**

Every choice expressed in the book is a difficult process, accompanied by the suffering of the rejected side, and usually also of the chosen side. In the process of choice, local injustices were sometimes done to those who were rejected, which, although justified within the overall course, may in themselves require atonement. These things are especially striking in the writings regarding Jacob and Esau. Esau's outcry over the loss of the blessing from his beloved father, and Jacob's need to flee from the wrath of his brother, develop into consequences that extend for many generations and require justification for the choice. Despite the justification behind the choice, and even if all the actions of the patriarchs were the only way to bring it about, still, according to some, atonement is required in and of itself.

כל בחירה המובעת בספר היא תהליך קשה, ומלווה בסבל של הצד הנדחה, ובדרך כלל גם של הצד הנבחר. בתהליך הבחירה נעשו לפעמים עוולות מקומיות כלפי אלה שנדחו, שהן אמנם מוצדקות במהלך הכללי, אך יתכן ששלצעמן הן דרושות כפרה. הדברים בולטים במיוחד בכתובים לגבי יעקב ועשיו. זעקתו של עשיו על אבדן הברכה של אביו אוהבו מאד, והצורך של יעקב לברות לברוח מפני זעמו של אחיו מאידך, מפתחים נמשכים עד כמה דורות מחייבים את הצדקה של הבחירה. למרות הצדקה שמאחורי הבחירה, ואף אם כל מעשיהם של האבות היו הדרך היחידה להוציאה אל הפועל, עדיין, לדעת אחדים דרושים כפרה כשלעצמם.

20. Breishit 37

(19) They said to one another, "Here comes that dreamer! (20) Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we can say, 'A savage beast devoured him.' We shall see what comes of his dreams!"

(23) When Joseph came up to his brothers, they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the ornamented tunic that he was wearing, (24) and took him and cast him into the pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

(31) Then they took Joseph's tunic, slaughtered a kid, and dipped the tunic in the blood.

20. בראשית לז

(יט) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו הִנֵּה בָּעַל הַחֲלֻמוֹת הֹלֵךְ בָּא: (כ) וַעֲתָה לְכוּ וְנַהַרְגֵהוּ וְנִשְׁלַכְהוּ בְּאֶחָד הַבְּרוֹת וְאָמְרֵנוּ חַיָּה רָעָה אֲכָלָתוֹ וְנִרְאָה מִה־יְהוָה חֲלֻמֹּתָיו:

(כג) וַיְהִי כִּאֲשֶׁר־בָּא יוֹסֵף אֶל־אָחִיו וַיִּפְשְׁטוּ אֶת־יוֹסֵף אֶת־כְּתֹנֶתוֹ אֶת־כְּתֹנֶת הַפָּסִים אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו: (כד) וַיִּקְחוּהוּ וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אֹתוֹ הַבְּרֶה וְהַבְּוֹר רֶק אֵין בּוֹ מַיִם:

(לא) וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כְּתֹנֶת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ שְׂעִיר עִזִּים וַיִּטְבְּלוּ אֶת־הַכְּתֹנֶת בַּדָּם:

21. Machzor Ashkenaz for Yom Kippur, the 10 Martyrs

...If a man was found to have kidnapped one of his brothers, from among the Children of Yisrael; treating him as a slave and selling him."

They answered him: "The kidnapper should be put to death." He then exclaimed "Where are your fathers, who sold their brother and dealt him to a caravan of Ishmaelites for pairs of shoes."

You, therefore, must accept the law of God upon yourselves...

20. מחזור אשכנז ליום כיפור, עשרה הרוגי מלכות

...כי ימצא איש גונב נפש מאחיו מבני ישראל והתעמר בו ומכרו:

הם כָּעָנוּ לוֹ וּמַת הַגָּנֵב הָהוּא. נִם אִיהֶם אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲחִיהֶם מָכְרוּהוּ. לְאַרְחַת יִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים סָחְרוּהוּ. וּבְעֵד נַעֲלִים נִתְּנוּהוּ:

וְאַתֶּם קִבְּלוּ דִין שָׁמַיִם עֲלֵיכֶם...

Further reading:

- Rav Uriel Eitam, "[The Service of the Goats - Repair of the sin of the tree of knowledge - Part 1](#)" and "[The Service of the Goats - Repair of the sin of the tree of knowledge - Part 2](#)", VBM.
- Rav Elyakim Krumbein, "[Ya'akov, Esav, and the Yom Kippur Ritual](#)", VBM.
- Dr. Noga Ayali-Darshan, [The Scapegoat rituals and its Ancient Near-East Parallels](#)

• באר מרים סדרה לחגים - יום הכיפורים

• שני שעירי יום הכיפורים - יונתן פיינטוך (בתוך "וביום צום כיפור ייחתמו", מכון הרצוג, ישיבת הר עציון)

