



Yom Kippur

Shmuz by Rabbi Shimon Max

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This week's Parsha tells us about the Avodah in the Beis Hamikdash on Yom Kippur. One part of the Avodah was the goat sent to Azazel, down a very dangerous steep mountain with sharp stone, to its death. **What was the purpose of this seemingly strange service?** The Ramban gives a novel Interpretation. that it signifies giving a gift to the spiritual Sar (officer) appointed over blood, demons and all types of destruction. Now, of course we would not give anyone other than Hashem a Korban, a sacrifice, because that would be idol worship! **Rather the Ramban explains that the intent when the goat is sent down the mountain, is solely to serve HaShem who is our creator and to show how fortunate we are to fulfill His commandments and specifically the sending the goat down the mountain, l'azazel.**

The Ramban continues and says that it's analogous to one who makes a feast for the king, and the king asks him to also make a plate for his servant. While he's handing the plate to the servant, of course he's only doing so for the honor of the King and to obey his command and he is not doing for any benefit to the servant he is serving and the person who made the meal is not even hoping for any benefit from the servant, although it's the intention of the king that the servant should think well of the host. The same is true in regard to the service of the goat going down the mountain, Hashem tells us to send a goat to Azazel so that the Sar gets pleasure and he will not want to harm us in the future.

We can surmise that the Ramban brought the parable to explain that one can do something for someone and even derive benefit from that person who the gift was given to and yet that is not the intent at all of the giver. The givers' intent was only to follow the king's orders.

But what is difficult is to understand is why the Ramban, as described above, says that at the service of the goat sent to Azazel it's important that while it is being performed one feels love towards HaShem to serve his creator and realize the tremendous opportunity to fulfill his commandment.

It seems that latent in the Ramban's words are, that in order to perform the service with single minded intent without thinking about benefiting the Sar even though the Jewish people will derive much benefit from the gift given to him, it must be done with feelings of intense love of HaShem and appreciate the great opportunity of fulfilling His commandment.

It seems that even at a time when there is such a personal and communal benefit by performing the Mitzva we can still serve HaShem with supreme heavenly intent with no ulterior motives, by deeply feeling close to HaShem and realizing the awesome opportunity to serve him. **It therefore seems also that this power to lovingly connect to HaShem is within every Jew to accomplish and we can use these lofty feelings that we all have within our holy Yiddisha Nishama to help us serve Hashem L'shaim Shomayim for only Heavenly motives.**