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IN MEMORY OF DEVORAH BAS YAAKOV

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Two Goats

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פרשת אחרי מות

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Two Goats

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Part I. Eisav in Our History

The Most Unusual Kaparah

In *Parshas Acharei Mos*, we come to the special subject of the *Sa'ir La'azazel*, the unique goat offering of Yom Kippur. It's a very unusual *kaparah*, this *Sa'ir*. Its procedure is unlike all other *kodshim*. Although it's a goat, one of the animals that is typically brought as a *korban*, nothing else about it is typical. The primary *avodah* of the *Sa'ir* doesn't even take place in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Instead, it is taken far away from *Yerushalayim* to the desolate area of *Harei Yehuda*. And the procedure that takes place there doesn't appear to be that of a *korban* altogether.

The *Sa'ir La'azazel* you don't slaughter, and you don't sprinkle its blood. And nothing at all is offered up on the *mizbeyach* to Hashem. All you do is lead the *Sa'ir* to a precipice, a high cliff, and you give it a shove; you push it over the edge and watch it roll down the rocky mountainside,

crashing against the rocks. By the time it reaches the bottom, it's smashed to little pieces. הוא מתגלגל ויורד... ער שנתעשה אברים אברים. That's how we bring this offering to Hashem! It's a remarkable thing!

The Powerful Goat

And yet, this goat that doesn't seem to be a *korban* at all – it has none of the characteristics of a *korban* – achieves what no other *korban* can achieve. It's so potent that it has the power to be *mechapeir*, to atone, even for people who sin *b'meizid*, intentionally. And what's more, the *Sa'ir La'azazel* brings you atonement even if you didn't do *teshuvah*! It's unbelievable. No *korban* is *mechapeir* unless a person does *teshuvah* beforehand.

It's a remarkable thing that you're hearing now. A man sins *b'meizid*; he shaves his beard with a razor, let's say, and he doesn't do *teshuvah*; he's not even *meharheir b'teshuvah*. And now, just because a goat is thrown off a cliff, this sinner becomes purified; he's a clean man now. The Rambam says that in *Hilchos Teshuvah*. It's remarkable! It's the one exception in the Torah where such a thing is found.

Now, it's true, it won't be *mechapeir* for everything; *chayavei krisos* it won't be *mechapeir* for. But it's *mechapeir* on all *esin* and *lavin* – that's a lot of *aveiros*! And so, something like this, a *korban* that is so different from all other *korbanos*, needs a good explanation.

Studying the Ceremony

Now, I'm not capable of explaining Hashem's reasons, but when we study the *Sa'ir La'azazel* we should keep in mind the words of the Rambam: “These ceremonies are of a symbolic nature, and they are intended to teach certain ideas and to induce men to repent” (*Moreh Nevuchim* 3:46). So we understand that some of the lessons are so self-evident that we are expected to study them.

The first thing we must ask is: What's so special about this goat that it brings such a *kaparah*? And for the answer to that question, we turn to a *medrash* (*Bereishis Rabbah* 65:15) that says as follows: “הַשְּׂעִיר זֶה עִשָּׂו – Who is this goat, this *Sa'ir*, that is being led out to the mountain? It's *Eisav*.” Now, that's a cryptic statement – *Eisav* is a goat? What does that mean? So we think back to our days in *cheder* when we learned *Chumash* and remind ourselves that we once had an uncle *Eisav* who was compared to a *sa'ir*.

You remember when Eisav was born, it says about him: “וַיֵּצֵא הָרֵאשׁוֹן – *And the first one came out covered all over k’aderes sei’ar, like a hairy coat.*” (Bereishis 25:25). Eisav was exceptionally hairy, and he was well-known for that. “הֵן עָשׂוֹ אָחִי אִישׁ שְׂעָר – *My brother Eisav is a hairy man,*” said Yaakov (Bereishis 27:11). Sa’ar means hair, and sa’ir is a goat because the goat is a very hairy animal. And Har Se’ir is the land where Eisav, the hairy man, dwelled.

Pushing Eisav Off the Cliff

And so when we lead the Sa’ir La’azazel out to the desert, we understand now that it’s Eisav we are taking out. And we note that Eisav doesn’t just go out the wilderness unencumbered. “וְנִשָּׂא הַשְּׂעִיר – *The goat carries*” something out to the desert. When we push the Sa’ir off the cliff, with him a heavy load goes tumbling down. And what is in that load that goes over the cliff with Eisav? וְנִשָּׂא הַשְּׂעִיר עוֹנוֹתָם. And the Medrash says, “וְנִשָּׂא הַשְּׂעִיר – *Eisav carries away on his back, עוֹנוֹתָם, עוֹנוֹתָם – the word avonosam, ‘their sins,’ should be read ‘avonos tam,’*” the sins of the ‘tam,’ the ish tam – that’s Yaakov. On the back of Eisav we load all of our sins, even sins b’meizid, and we lead them away to a high rocky cliff.

And when we get to the tzuk, to that precipice where the kaparah takes place, it’s Eisav we are pushing off a cliff. That’s it; that’s the whole ceremony! We throw Eisav off a cliff and we have a kaparah! It’s a remarkable concept! Throwing the goat that represents Eisav off a mountain cliff should bring such a powerful atonement for the Am Yisrael?!

Blaming Eisav

Now, we wouldn’t be wrong if we asked a question: Is that fair? Why should Eisav be blamed to suffer for the sins of Yaakov? And that’s a big question – at least, I think it’s a big question. Why is it Eisav’s fault that the Am Yisrael sinned? We throw Eisav off a cliff, and our sins go down with him? Where is the yosher here?

And the answer is, it’s all yosher. Because if you want to know the reason for almost all the sins of Yaakov, it’s because there’s an Eisav around. Now, I don’t mean to blame only our Uncle Eisav; Eisav is a mashal for the goyim, for all the nations of the world. It’s the goyim who bear the responsibility for all those Jews who were misled by their false ideas. The shortcomings and imperfections of the Am Yisrael are almost always traced back to the umos ha’olam.

You know, it was only seventy years ago [1905] that in the small towns, and even the big towns, most Jews put on *tefillin*, and most of them kept Shabbos, ate kosher, and learned Torah every day. The Jews used to keep everything! It used to be easy to resist the blandishments of the *goyim*. Let's say you lived in old Cracow, and the *satan* came over to you and said, "Take off your hat," so you'd put up a big fight, because to walk bareheaded in Cracow meant that you were liable to get a broken head! To be a Jew meant you had to act like a Jew — there were no two ways about it.

The Way It Was

The whole atmosphere of a Jewish community was different when the influence of Eisav was kept far away. Cracow was a town where children in the street babbled *divrei Torah*. It's not what I say; Graetz, the *sonai haTorah*, said that. A fact, a verifiable truth like that, even an enemy of Torah couldn't dispute. He said that children babbled *divrei Torah* in the street! Even women spoke Gemara *lashon* because that was the language of the people. Every third word in Yiddish is a Gemara word. When the people weren't busy with gentile ideas, when they lived in a pure environment, they were able to remain the nation of the *ish tam*.

Now, why did they leave that environment? When was it broken up? It was Eisav who disrupted the Jewish communities, communities that had existed for hundreds of years, with established ways.

Who broke up the yeshiva in Slabodka? The Russians! The yeshiva has just finished building a beautiful building; it was a very poor yeshiva and it had taken them fifteen years to gather together money to build the building. I was there at the *chanukas habayis*; it was a big *simchah*! And then, not long after I left, the Russians marched in. The Communists took it away from the yeshiva and they made it into some workers' place or something.

Who ruined the yeshivos? Who ruined Judaism in Russia? The *goyim*! Who ruined everything that we had built up so painstakingly, where all our traditions were observed? Eisav!

American Jewry Was Swallowed Up

So now these Jews came to America and there was no community, no organization. And there's a law in America that you must send your child to school. But to set up functional *yeshivos* you need money, and

they weren't experienced; nobody had done it here before. And so the majority of Jewish children went to public school, and that was the beginning of the ruination of American Jewry.

In America itself, hundreds of thousands of Jewish families have disappeared. They moved out, settled among the gentiles and went lost; many intermarried — a tragedy of tragedies. Until the *gedolim* came from Europe and founded *frum* communities, American Jews were being swallowed up, devoured by the ways of Eisav.

Now, are the Jews such a disloyal nation? No, there's no nation as loyal as we are. Jews wouldn't be *michaleil Shabbos* and throw away their *tefillin*; we're not a wicked people! So who deserves the blame for this great desolation, the great ruination of Jews who forsook the whole Torah? The blame must be laid squarely on the shoulders of Eisav. It's only due to the effort of Eisav, who would never let us alone, that so many Jews have become ruined. Eisav is the one who broke up the communities. They physically smashed up our lives; they exiled us, driving us from town to town, from country to country. And in our new homes, we had to start building all over again from scratch. It was Eisav who ruined the Jewish communal life in Cracow and Slabodka and forced us to rebuild anew.

The Spanish Goats

And the truth is, what were Jews doing in Cracow and Slabodka, anyway? They didn't belong there; they had been in Spain. In Spain there were old, organized, prestigious communities. But Eisav threw them out. Ferdinand and his wonderful wife Isabella, *y'mach sh'mam v'zichram*, threw them out. The persecution in Spain broke up the established Jewish communal life.

And looking further back, how did they end up in Spain? They should have been in Bavel where they had been for a thousand years. A thousand-year-old community, now *that's* a settled community, where everybody kept everything. So why didn't they remain there? Eisav again!

And what were they doing in Bavel? They should have all been in Eretz Yisrael, with the Beis Hamikdash, organized under the *chachmei haTorah* who were in charge. Every little detail of Jewish life was under the supervision of the Sanhedrin. You couldn't just do whatever you pleased when the Sanhedrin was in charge!

The Roman Goats

So who abolished the Sanhedrin? It was Gabinius, the Roman governor of Syria. He abolished it. And whose orders was he following? Antipater, the father of Hordus, who didn't want the Sanhedrin in his way. Antipater, where did he come from? He was an Edomi, from Eisav. And Rome is also Eisav. So these two minions of Eisav got together and abolished the Sanhedrin.

So who broke up the Am Yisrael's established system of *avodas Hashem*? Who destroyed our communities of *kedushah*? Who broke us down and drove us out among the *goyim* with their polluted ideas, which polluted us? Eisav! And so, it's Eisav who has to carry our sins upon his shoulders *because he is the one to blame*.

Of course, we have *bechirah* – no question about it. We have the free will to resist. But suppose someone comes and disturbs your good intentions; he's *rodeif* you, and then he tempts you, and pressures you, and now you yield. Is he innocent? You're to blame for not fighting back hard enough, but if he deliberately tempted you then *he's* the guilty one here. He's the one who has to go over the cliff.

Part II. Eisav in the Present

We Want to Do Your Will

In Mesichta Brachos (17a) the Gemara says that the Jewish nation declares to Hakadosh Baruch Hu: “רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם רְצוֹנֵנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ” – *Ribono Shel Olam, we want to do Your will*.” By nature, the *Am Hashem*, the holy nation, desires to do the will of Hashem. “אֵלֶּא מִי מַעֲכָב” – *But what prevents us?*” *Something* is hindering us. Take a look around on the street and you'll see that *something* is wrong; a great many Jews are very far from doing Hashem's will. And even for the *frummeh*, it's not so easy; we're not always doing the *retzon Hashem*. But we want to! “רְצוֹנֵנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת” – *Hashem, we want to do whatever You want!*”

So what is it that prevents us? asks the Gemara. And the answer given there is that one of the most pressing *ikuvim* is *shibud malchuyos*, the fact we are subject to the whims of the nations.

Now, *shibud malchuyos* means a lot of things. It's a *sheim hakollel* for a lot of what we suffer from the nations of the world. I mentioned already the *shibud* of being moved from one place to another and the

breakdown of our communities. And they didn't move us gently. No, they did it with Crusades, pogroms, and Inquisitions. They did it with yellow stars and crematoria. And because of that, they will bear eternal responsibility for preventing us from doing the will of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The Danger of Liberty

However, there's another *shibud* that has wreaked even more havoc on the Am Yisrael than that. Because a few hundred years ago, into the world came a very great *sakanah*, the era of tolerance. Napoleon — and others as well — broke down the walls that the Church had erected around us, and the removal of those barriers did even more damage to us than the forced destruction of our communities in the past. The Enlightenment — tolerance, freedom, and equality — has been one of the worst of all tests in our history.

Here in America, we're free; we have liberty. We have almost a hundred percent freedom, and we have to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for that. After all, America is a good country. We came from countries where we were persecuted, and this country gave us all the rights.

I would say we should kiss the ground of America for all that it gave us. I was in Europe for some time; I learned in Slabodka. And when I came back, I saw even more that this was a blessed country; it's a gift from Hashem to us. Shouldn't we appreciate it? Of course, we pay taxes; of course, we keep the laws. I even say that a Jew should hang out the flag on the Fourth of July. I won't say you're a sinner if you don't, but I think it's a good thing to hang out the flag. It's not a contradiction to being a *frum* Jew by any means. We hang out the flag from this shul on the Fourth of July. Certainly, you should be loyal to your country.

The Mabul in America

So you'll ask me, what's the problem, then? Freedom, liberty! It's all good; what's the *shibud*?! And the answer is that that itself is the worst *shibud*! There's nothing worse than being free to follow the ways and attitudes of the *goyim*. הַשְׁתָּא עֲבָרֵי — To a certain extent, we are slaves today — *we're slaves to our environment*. You're not really free if you live among gentiles, because the worst slavery of all is being enslaved to gentile influence.

More people have been lost in the crematoria of tolerance than were destroyed in the Holocaust. This spiritual Holocaust has no equal.

I remember in 1930, when you couldn't find a *frum* girl to marry. A *frum* girl was impossible to find. A *frum* boy was also a rarity. There was only one yeshiva in America.

The *shibud malchuyos* of being enslaved to the influence of the *goyim* is still our most dangerous enemy today. The whole *sevivah*, the whole environment, is trying to drown out our ideals. We're being inundated on all sides by *apikorsus*, *ta'avos*, *shtus*, *avodah zarah*; there's wickedness all around us. And it's flooding our homes, most of us are being affected.

On all sides you see gentiles and gentile ideals. Money, clothing, sports, entertainment, movies, *leitzanus*, atheism, evolution. In the winter seasons, you're inundated with season's greetings, signs of the holidays – of course it's all business; it's not genuine; it's all for money. But still you can't help yourself from being drawn along. The atmosphere is *avodah zarah* and atheism and materialism on all sides.

Goyishe Bar Mitzvahs

You pass by a yeshiva today, and you see things going on. *Tayereh* boys, precious boys – and yet, *they're behaving like goyim*. Their games are *goyishe* games. Their sports are *goyishe* sports. The way they speak, and what they speak about – it's words of Eisav. When you go to a bar mitzvah, a lot of the dancing is *goyishe* dancing. It's gentile ways. Jews should have other ways of doing things. And instead, they're thinking in *goyishe* ways, with *goyishe* thoughts.

Baruch Hashem, we're happy with them. I'm happy with them. *Kein yirbu*. And *kein yigdelu*. I love them! *Tayereh* boys, a thousand times better than the best *goyim*. And yet, they don't realize that they're being influenced by the outside world tremendously.

“וְעַבְדֶתֶם שָׂם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים – And there, in *galus*, you will serve strange gods” (Devarim 4:28). Now, you won't actually bow down to *avodah zarah* there, but being among the gentiles is like serving strange gods – you can't help yourself. The attitudes of Eisav are being pounded into your head day and night, and you're bowing down to gentile ideas. Some of us less, some of us more, but everyone is being affected.

The Amerikahner Rebbe

It's the Rambam who says that: “וְנוהג בְּמנהג אֲנָשֵׁי מְדִינָתוֹ – A person will always behave like the people of the country where he lives.” It can't be helped! Even when the *tzaddikim* from Europe came to America, as

soon as they got off the boat they had to fight against the environment. That's why I always say that a *tzaddik*, even the biggest *tzaddik*, when he comes to America, is already an *Amerikahner*; he's already spoiled. The Satmar Rav, *zecher tzaddik livrachah*, as soon as he set foot down on the soil of America, had to fight back. All around him was the environment of Eisav, and everyone in America was filling their minds with American ideals.

I'm telling you right now – it's affecting all of us. It's happening this minute. If you're living here in America, you're going to be an American. It's impossible for a person to avoid the influence of the country in which he lives. It enters your ears, your eyes, and worst of all your mind. Don't fool yourself. It's happening in every part of your life. Just the fact that I'm speaking to you in English right now is a sign of our environment pressing down on us.

I remember many Jews in Europe who couldn't speak Lithuanian, or Polish. I saw many people who couldn't speak the language of the land, and it was a great barrier, a wall, between the Am Yisrael and Eisav. And the fact is they were proud of it. I remember the old generation. They were proud of the fact that they couldn't speak *goyish*.

The Yiddish Principle

You should know, the fact that I speak English here is against my will. I would never speak English in public! Only because this is a Syrian place – they don't speak Yiddish here, and I can't speak Syrian – so I have to speak English. In my shul I speak English, too, but that's business; it's *parnassah*, so I can't help myself. What you do for business is something else. But if I'm invited out to speak, it's only Yiddish. It's a principle of mine. In the house also – I speak only Yiddish to my children, since they were born. They answer me in English; what can I do? But I speak Yiddish; it's a principle.

Now, they must learn English in the schools; I'm not saying English is a bad thing to learn. But the problem is that you have to learn for the Regents. So they tell you to read books, novels. And you have to learn evolution, too. *Apikorsus* has to be taught in the yeshivos, in the *Beis Yankivs*. Of course the teacher says, "We don't believe in it; but when they ask you the question on the examination, you have to say this and this – you have to write this and this *apikorsus*." And of course, once you can read English, you have the opportunity to read all the filth of the

umos ha'olam. We need to know that this shibud malchuyos is hollowing out our nation!

Moshe Rabbeinu's Last Warning

And now we can begin to understand the words of Moshe Rabbeinu when he spoke to the B'nei Yisrael just before they entered the land of Eretz Yisrael. "You're coming now into Eretz Yisrael, and you're going to settle in your own land," he said. "But I must warn you." And he said as follows: "אַתֶּם יָדַעְתֶּם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבְּתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם – You know very well that you once lived in Mitzrayim, וַתִּרְאוּ אֶת שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם וְאֶת גִּלְלֵיהֶם – and you saw their abominations, you saw their ways, the wicked things that they did." So the question is: What about it? They were already forty years away from Mitzrayim and now they were going to their own land, into Eretz Yisrael. Who cares what they once saw?

And the answer is that once you see something, even if you saw it forty years ago, it's already in your mind. It's called mental assimilation. It's not only physical assimilation you have to worry about, that you're mixing among the *goyim*, it's also your mind that you have to be worried about. Your head is becoming assimilated. You could have *peyos* down to your belt, but what does it help if they're growing out of a gentile mind?! "פֶּן יֵשׁ בְּכֶם שָׂרֵשׁ פְּרָה רָאשׁ וְלַעֲנָה – There might be a poison root growing in your minds" (Devarim 29:17). What you see, what you hear, could bear poison fruit in your mind. All types of seeds are planted, and now you have a gentile jungle growing in your head.

וַתִּרְאוּ אֶת שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם – Once you saw with your eyes the gentile culture, their attitudes and ways, so the picture of those abominations remains in your mind. And that picture is a *sakanah*. It could very well be a root of poison, and it will grow in your mind; and who knows what dangerous fruit it might bear in the future.

We think it's too much, too extreme, that Moshe Rabbeinu was making a big deal about nothing. But that's only because we've already assimilated gentile ideas. They're already a part of our lives, so they determine what we think is normal. But if you listen to Moshe Rabbeinu's words, you'll see how careful you must be. "פֶּן יֵשׁ בְּכֶם – You might have poison in your head!"

And so, we begin to see that in addition to the danger of being persecuted by the gentiles, there is the bigger danger of having our minds follow the attitudes and the ways of the gentiles – even from a distance. If you live in Long Island, in Westchester, or in West Orange, so

of course you have to beware; but even in Boro Park and Williamsburg and Lakewood, you're in grave danger.

Part III. Eisav is Destroyed

The Real Fight

It's a very important point you're hearing now. We're expected to fight back against the great influence of Eisav that fills the world, and the Sa'ir La'azazel is the *korban* that was designed to underscore this point. We're being told, "You know what the remedy to all this is? Take Eisav as a *korban*, but don't offer him on the *mizbeyach* — Eisav has no place in the Mikdash. Instead, take him far away — lead him as far as possible away from Yerushalayim — and throw him off a mountain; get rid of him so that you shouldn't be tempted again. And when you see him tumbling down the steep mountain, smashing to pieces, that's the atonement for your wicked ways.

If we wish to be rid of our sins, if we wish to achieve a *kaparah* for the wrong things we did, so one of the most important things that we have to do is to get rid of Eisav. Now, that doesn't mean that you should go out on the street and get rid of *goyim*. We're not going to take *goyim* and throw them off the roof. Leave them alone; that's not our business here. Don't fight with *goyim*!

You have to fight with the *goy* inside you — that's the toughest *goy* there is — and get rid of *him*. Once you find him and take hold of him, you'll find that he's a tenant that doesn't leave so easily. And the truth is that you love that tenant. You'll be surprised how much you love that *goy* inside of you — so much so that you refuse to part with him.

It's like a landlord who complains about his tenant and calls the marshal to evict him. But then, when the marshal comes, the landlord starts hemming and hawing, "No, I can't let him go. I want him." We want that tenant in us! That's the real problem here, the *goy* inside our heads — not the *goy* on the street.

The Atmosphere Creeps In

The Torah tells us a general principle: "לֹא תביא תועֵבָה אֶל בֵּיתְךָ" — Do not bring any abomination into your home" (*Devarim* 7:26). Of course, the plain meaning is that you shouldn't bring an idol into your home — even as a memento or souvenir. But the lesson here is that nothing

abominable, nothing of Eisav, should be brought into your home. And the Torah says why – because you're going to make your home abominable. What you bring into your home changes the nature of your home. You could have a beautiful home, and then you bring in something from Eisav and it's all ruined. It's like a delicious piece of steak that fell into the toilet. It's ruined!

And therefore, as much as possible you should keep the *goy* out of your home, and out of your thoughts. And that's a very big job today because the gentile attitudes are permeating our lives. The air is *tamei* and it's creeping under the door – and I'm sorry to say that in many homes the *goyim* are not just creeping in; the door is wide open and we *invite* them in.

Spread the Word About TV

Of course, you shouldn't have any TV, *chas v'shalom*. “לא תביא טי. בי.” אַל בִּיתְךָ – You shouldn't bring the abomination of television into your home.” Don't allow Eisav into your house, because his big mouth opens up and he pours out all of his *leitzanus* into your family room. Surely you wouldn't take the sewer main, with all the filth from people's toilets, and let it empty into your home.

If you have a wire bringing Eisav into your house, you can forget about it altogether because *ein lo cheilek l'Olam Haba*. No question about it. If הַקּוֹרָא בְּסִפְרֵי הַיְצוּגִיִּים אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, and this man brings them into his home every night – he sits and looks at their shows and their movies, surely he can forget about *Olam Haba*! No question about it *at all*; and spread the word, by the way. It's impossible to have a Jewish home with a television in it. There are no two ways about it; either you have a *mikdash* or you have a television. It can't be both.

Cleaning the Home

And if *chalilah* you're still living with Eisav in your home, so you should take that TV and throw it off a cliff. You don't live near a mountain? So throw it out your window. Make sure that nobody is walking on the sidewalk below. If the coast is clear, throw it over and watch it become *eivarim eivarim*, smashed to pieces. Your wife won't let? So give her some money to go shopping and when she's out spending your money, throw the TV out the window. It's worth all the money in the world to get that *to'eivah* out of your home.

Included in the abominations that we send out on the back of the *Sa'ir La'azazel* and throw over the cliff is the reading material of the *goyim*. Magazines, novels, even children's books. In the public library, there is no end of dirty books. Today, that's what they offer to children in the libraries; the library books are full of *tumah*. Once upon a time the libraries had good books; I know – they didn't let any immoral books into the library. The books weren't always so wise, but they were good books. They taught you to work hard and make a living, and how you can get rich with good character. That was the old-time books in the library. But today it's terrible what's available there, terrible.

Cleaning Out Your Head

Don't tell me it has no effect on you. It has an effect! It leaves over a bad smell. You can't have a nice home that smells like *tzo'ah* (excrement); it doesn't work. It smells up your house. Now, some people are so accustomed to the bad smell of *Eisav* that they think it's natural. If you have to have a book by *Eisav* – I'm not giving you a *heter*, but if for whatever reason you have something from *Eisav* in your home – so make sure to keep it in the bathroom, where the smell won't bother you. The bathroom, that's the *goyishe* library. Otherwise it will be *m'tamei* the atmosphere of the whole house. As much as possible, try to keep the ideas of *Eisav* out of your home.

And so this very important offering of the *Sa'ir La'azazel*, although it's not a *korban* on the *mizbeyach*, is *mechapeir* more than all the *korbanos*. Throwing the influence of *Eisav* off a mountain and smashing him to pieces, that's our *kaparah*. Getting rid of the influence of *Eisav* as much as possible, that's the true path to *teshuvah*. Because our faults, our sins, our indiscretions – they're all imitations of the *umos ha'olam*. *Eisav* and the *goyim* are to blame for our lapses and our dereliction of duty to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And therefore, “וּנְשָׂא הַשָּׁעִיר אֶת עֲוֹנוֹתֵם – *Eisav the Sa'ir carries away our sins*, אֶל-אֲרֶץ גְּזֵרָה – *to a desolate land*.”

Thinking Along with Hashem

In *Mesichta Avos* (2:4) we learn: “עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כְּרִצּוֹנִי – *Make the will of Hashem your will*.” What *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* considers important, that's what you should consider important. What *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* admires, that's what you should admire.

For instance, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* loves the *Am Yisrael*. He's *oheiv amo Yisrael*. He loves the Jewish people. It says that openly – again and again it's stated that He loves the *Am Yisrael* more than anything else. So

you should train yourself to think the way Hakadosh Baruch Hu thinks. You should also love the Am Yisrael. Become a patriot for the Am Yisrael. Love the Am Yisrael. That is making His will like your will.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves the places of Torah. אוֹהֵב הַשֵּׁם שְׁעָרֵי צִיּוֹן – Hashem loves the *she'arim hametzuyananim b'halachah*. So when you pass by a yeshiva where people are learning, practice loving that place. Even though you have no money to give them, love them anyhow. Have a feeling, “It’s a beautiful place, an excellent place. I love the people inside, all those who are learning Torah. Because Hashem loves yeshivos, I love the yeshivos, too.” Say it; it’s fine, nobody will hear you. Say, “I love this yeshiva; I love the people in the yeshiva.”

The Beis Hamikdash on Ocean Avenue

Now, once you’re doing that, little by little you begin to think the way Hakadosh Baruch Hu thinks. Like it says (Yeshayah 56:4), “וַיִּבְחָרוּ בְּאֲשֶׁר וַיִּבְחַרְתִּי – They should choose what I choose.” You can walk down the street in Flatbush and think, “I’d like to build yeshivos all over the world. I don’t have any money, but that’s what Hashem wants, so I want it, too.”

“I’d like to have the Beis Hamikdash again and bring *korbanos*.” Work on creating that desire in your mind. At first you won’t mean it; you don’t desire the Beis Hamikdash. You desire maybe to eat in the restaurants of Eisav, or to put on the radio to hear Eisav speaking. You desire to sit in a stadium with thousands of Eisavs, watching Eisavs hit balls with a stick. Or maybe you’re more “sophisticated” than that, so you want to go see Eisav at the theatre. A lot of things you desire, but not the Beis Hamikdash, not to build yeshivos. But if you put effort in, if you begin to think along with Hashem and say the words, so little by little you begin to shape your thoughts to be like the thoughts of Hashem.

So you walk down Ocean Avenue and you say יהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ שְׂיִבְנֶה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, and you say it with a desire, a *cheishek*. Instead of looking around at the *goyim* – at their cars, and their billboards, and their advertisements in the store windows inviting you to come waste your money on things that one day you’ll have to send off on the back of the *Sa’ir La’azazel* anyhow; instead of all that – you’re filling your mind with Torah ideals, the attitudes of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Our True Desire

The lesson of the *Sa’ir La’azazel* is the lesson of what our great test in this world is – to fight back against the influence of the *umos ha’olam*.

The nations of the world are no accident of history. Hakadosh Baruch Hu put them in this world for our benefit, to give us the opportunity to fight back by filling our minds with His attitudes instead of the attitudes of the street.

And by means of this act of saying good riddance to Eisav the goat, by pushing him off a cliff and watching him smash to pieces, we internalize the necessity to rid ourselves of all gentile influence. And that's why it is the most powerful of all *kaparos*; it was an atonement that was unparalleled anywhere else in the Torah. “וְנִשָּׂא הַשְּׂעִיר אֶת עֲוֹנוֹתָם – The goat carries away *all* their sins,” because it is the influence of the *umos ha'olam* that has stifled our *ratzon* to do the will of Hashem.

And therefore, all year long – not only on Yom Kippur – we must take this *Sa'ir* and hurl him off the mountaintops. When you smash the influence of Eisav, when you get rid of the *hashpa'ah* of Eisav, that's the *kaparah*, that's the way to take away your sins. Because a very big part of our sins is on the head of the gentiles; most of our sins are their sins. And it's only when a person takes Eisav far away from the Jewish camp, away from Yerushalayim, and throws him off the cliff, that he is prepared now to achieve the greatness that Hashem brought him into this world to accomplish: “*Retzoneinu la'asos retzonecha* – Hashem, what we want in this world is to do Your will.”

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Eisav and His Influence

The influence of the *umos ha'olam* is the primary cause of our sins. This week, I will *bli neder* attempt to free myself completely of gentile influence. For one week I will stay away from all secular literature, news or entertainment and attempt to connect more with Jewish sources.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

4 - Shatnez and Azazel | **E-55** - Your Bchor You Redeemed
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

Is it possible to teach children to appreciate the world?

A:

And the answer is absolutely! That's when it *should* be taught. You should teach a child and tell him, "Isn't it beautiful that the sun is shining right now?" Explain to him the benefits of the sun. In the summertime, the sun warms you. Walk on the sunny side of the street and walk on the sunny side of life. And the sun gives you vitamins as it hits your skin. The sun gives you light. And it's all free energy! No landlord will send you a bill. Con Ed won't send you a bill for the daytime light. It's so beautiful, the sunlight.

It's a mashal of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The Gemara says the sun is a mashal of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Just like the sun floods the world with happiness and light and joy, so does Hakodosh Boruch Hu. And so certainly you can teach children to enjoy sun.

We have to teach ourselves too, by the way. Let's enjoy the sun. The biggest bracha that we make in davening is on the sun. Doesn't that show the hypocrisy among us? The longest bracha in davening is on the sun – יוצר אור – ה' יוצר אור and it concludes יוצר המאורות and the malachim are so excited over the sun that they say קדוש קדוש ברעש גדול; with great excitement they're praising Hashem – and we, we're the recipients of all this, and we're not interested. We're asleep.

So there's a lot of work to be done on children and on ourselves.

TAPE # 301

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In Honor of my wife Freeda Brown