



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

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Transgression - Internal or External

כְּלִי־חֶרֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תִּבְשֹׁלֵבּוּ יִשָּׁבֵר וְאִם־בְּכֶלִי נִחְשָׁת
בְּשִׁלָּה וּמֵרֶק וְשָׁטַף בַּמַּיִם: (ויקרא ו:כא)

An earthenware vessel in which it is cooked shall be broken, but if it is cooked in a copper vessel, it shall be purged and rinsed with water. (Vayikra 6:21).

The Torah details certain laws applicable to a *Korban Chatat* (קרבן חטאת), including that the vessel in which the sacrifice was cooked is to be dealt with differently depending on its substance. An earthenware vessel in which the *Korban* was cooked is to be broken and a copper vessel in which the *Korban* was cooked is to be rinsed with water.

Rashi explains that although the Torah specifically highlights the laws relating to what is done with different types of vessels in which a *Korban* is prepared in connection with a *Korban Chatat*, it is applicable to all sacrifices. והוא הדין לכל הקדשים.

The Kli Yakar derives an insightful lesson from the fact that the rules regarding vessels appear in connection with a *Korban Chatat* in particular, although they apply to vessels used for all sacrifices. A *Korban Chatat* is offered after one engages in a transgression, albeit even inadvertently. The Kli Yakar draws an analogy from the purification process of vessels to the purification process of man.

PURIFICATION PROCESS

Purification of vessels is similar in nature to the purification process of individuals. Just as certain vessels, like earthenware, absorb more of a substance and so they need to be broken, so too when certain individuals engage in a transgression it becomes “absorbed” within them, it becomes a part of them, and they need to be “broken” in order to atone for such transgression. Yet, there are others whose negative acts are not internalized and are easily changed and so they only need to be washed off or immersed in a *mikvah* in order to get purified.

TAHARA AND KAPARA

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik expresses a complementary idea in על התשובה. The Torah states:

כִּי־בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֹר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהָר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל
חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' תִּטְהָרוּ:

For on this day atonement shall be made for you to purify you of all your sins; you shall be pure before יהוה.

The pasuk above uses two terms with respect to the teshuva process. First Kapara (atonement) and then Tahara (purification). What is the difference between Kaparah and Taharah? Rav Soloveitchik suggests that when one is forgiven for a transgression and “freed” from the consequences of punishment for

committing that transgression it is referred to as Kaparah – atonement. Although such an individual may be protected from divine punishment, their personality remains contaminated, and this condition may be remedied only through 'tevila'- immersing in a mikvah. In other words - by wholehearted repentance. Without personal repentance- Taharah is unachievable. Engaging in a transgression taints our personality and we need to rid ourselves of that aspect of our character.

When we have shortcomings and engage in transgressions, we have to make sure we act like "copper" and not "earthenware". We cannot let negative traits become a part of our personality. We must be able to easily cleanse ourselves from such activity and regain our "purity" of thought and activity. ■

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