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### **Semichah**

All communal sacrifices do not require *semichah* (the owner places his hands on the head of the sacrificial animal before it is slaughtered and leans on it with all his weight), except for the bull that comes for any of the *mitzvos* (the communal-error bull) and the goat sent to Azazel (on Yom Kippur). Rabbi Shimon says: Even the goat for communal idolatry.

All individual sacrifices require *semichah* except for *bechor*, *ma’aser* and the *pesach* sacrifice.

An inheritor performs *semichah*, brings the libations and can effect *temurah* (by substituting another animal for this one). (92a)

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: All communal sacrifices do not require *semichah*, except for the bull that comes for any of the *mitzvos* (the communal-error bull) and the goat for communal idolatry; these are the words of Rabbi Shimon. Rabbi Yehudah says: The goat for communal idolatry does not require *semichah*. And what should replace it? It is the goat sent to Azazel. The *Gemora* notes that some offering must replace it, for Ravina had stated that there is a tradition that there are two communal offerings which require *semichah*. Rabbi Shimon said to him: *Semichah* is performed only by the owner, and this one (the goat sent to Azazel) is performed by Aaron and his sons (and since this offering provides atonement for non-Kohanim, they cannot be regarded as its owner; it thus cannot be considered an ordinary *semichah*). Rabbi Yehudah replied: This goat

provides atonement for Aaron and his sons (and therefore, they are regarded as its owners).

Rabbi Yirmiyah said: They follow according to their own reasoning, for it was taught in a *braisa*: And he shall atone for the Holy of Holies - this means (for any “*tumah*” sin committed in) the Holy of Holies; and the Tent of Meeting - this refers to the Sanctuary; and the altar - this is to be understood in its literal sense; he shall atone - this refers to all “*tumah*” sins committed in the Courtyard. The *braisa* continues by saying that the full list of atonement enumerated by the verse – *al hakohanim* – to the *Kohanim*; *kol am hakahal* refers to the whole nation; he shall atone – this means the *Levi'im* - teaches that they are all equally atoned for general transgressions by the goat sent to Azazel (but not for the transgressions of entering the *Mikdash* while impure, for the bull *chatas* atones for the *Kohanim* and the inner *chatas* atones for the non-*Kohanim*); these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. [Accordingly, he says that the *Kohanim* are regarded as the owners of the goat sent to Azazel, for it provides atonement for the *Kohanim*.] Rabbi Shimon says that just as the blood of the “inner” goat (whose blood applications are performed inside the Sanctuary) provides atonement for Israelites for all *tumah* sins of the Temple and its holy things, so does the blood of the bull provide atonement for the *Kohanim* for all *tumah* sins of the Temple and its holy things; and just as the confession of sin pronounced over the goat sent to Azazel provides atonement for Israelites for other sins, so does the confession of sin pronounced over the bull provide atonement for *Kohanim* for other sins. [Accordingly, the *semichah* performed by the *Kohanim* on the goat sent to Azazel cannot be the regular



*semichah, for they do not receive atonement by it, and cannot be regarded as its owner.]*

The *Gemora* explains that Rabbi Shimon says that the verse lists all together – *Kohanim* and non-*Kohanim* – since all are atoned for, but by different parts of the service.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* (regarding the communal error bull): *The elders of the congregation shall lean their hands on the head of the bull.* This teaches us that this bull requires *semichah*, but the goat for idolatry does not require *semichah*; these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Shimon says: The bull requires *semichah* by the elders, but the goat for idolatry does not require *semichah* by the elders, but rather, it is done by Aaron (*a Kohen*).

The *Gemora* asks a contradiction from the following *braisa*: It is written (regarding the goat sent to Azazel): *The live goat.* This teaches us that the live goat requires *semichah*, but the goat for idolatry does not require *semichah*; these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Shimon says: The live goat requires *semichah* by Aaron, but the goat for idolatry does not require *semichah* by Aaron, but rather, it is done by the elders.

Rav Sheishes said: And do you think that the first *braisa* is correct? Did Rabbi Shimon not teach us the rule that *semichah* must be performed by the owners (*and not by a Kohen*)? Rather, the *braisa* should be understood as follows: *the bull (the communal error bull)* teaches us that this bull requires *semichah*, but the goat for idolatry does not require *semichah*; these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Shimon says: The live goat (*the one sent to Azazel*) requires *semichah* by Aaron, but the goat for idolatry does not require *semichah* by Aaron, but rather, it is done by the elders. And this is actually what Rabbi Shimon said to Rabbi Yehudah: The goats offered for the sin of idolatry require *semichah*, for if you have heard that they do not require *semichah*, you must have heard it only in regard to Aaron (that the *Kohen* does not do *semichah*; rather, it is done by the elders).

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* (as the source for R' Shimon that the goat offered for the sin of idolatry requires *semichah*): *And he shall lean his hand on the head of the goat.* This includes Nachshon's goat; these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Shimon said: It includes the goats of idolatry, for Rabbi Shimon used to say that every *chatas* whose blood was brought inside the Sanctuary required *semichah*. (92a – 92b)

### DAILY MASHAL

In the times of the Beis HaMikdash, a person who sinned at least had the comfort of knowing that he could bring a sacrifice to complete the atonement process prescribed by the Torah. In the absence of this option, how can a person in our times fully repent and cleanse the effects of his transgression?

The Mabit offers us a tremendous consolation. He writes that in the times of the Beis HaMikdash, when Hashem's presence could be tangibly perceived, the ramifications of a sin were correspondingly greater, thus necessitating the offering of a sacrifice to fully purify oneself from its spiritual damage. Since its destruction, we have been living in an era in which Hashem's Providence is subtly hidden.

Reb Oizer Alport adds: While this makes it more difficult to feel and recognize His constant presence, it also effected a change in the amount of destruction caused by sin. Because the transgression doesn't cause as much damage as it once did, the bringing of a sacrifice is no longer required to effect complete atonement. Atonement may now be fully accomplished through the other steps of the repentance process, namely correcting one's ways, confessing the sin, and accepting upon oneself never to do so again.