

## From the assembly of Bnei Yisrael he shall take two he-goats for a sin-offering. (16:5)

The Torah goes into great detail in describing the ritual of the two he-goats. One goat is “fortunate” to be selected as a *korban*, offering to Hashem. It is slaughtered by the *Kohen Gadol*, its blood sprinkled between the *Badei HaAron*, Poles of the *Aron HaKodesh*, on the *Paroches*, Curtain, and the *Mizbayach HaZahav*, Golden Altar. This represents a fairly impressive “end” to the life of an animal. The other he-goat does not seem to fare as well. It serves as the offering sent into the wilderness, bearing the nation’s sins. It is later flung off a cliff, falling to its painful death, a broken heap of skin and bones. **Ramban** writes that the *seh l’azazel* represents a sort of *shochad l’Satan*, bribe for *Satan*, to tone down his prosecuting endeavor, so that the Jewish People can achieve atonement without *Satan* advocating for their extinction. Indeed, after *Satan* has been satisfied, he himself discovers reasons to find merit for the Jewish People. It is incredible how far a little *shochad* will go to sway one’s subjectivity.

These two he-goats were similar in every way. Purchased together, their appearance was the same. They were of equal value. Indeed, everything about them screamed, “There is absolutely no difference between the two of us, other than the fact that one is used *l’Hashem* and one is sent *l’azazel*.” What lesson may be derived from this? **Horav Michael Peretz, Shlita**, suggests that the Torah is teaching us a crucial lesson to be implemented in our strategy to overcome the *yetzer hora* successfully. The most important point which we must acknowledge is to know the awesome power of our enemy. Make no mistake – the *yetzer hora* is crafty, filled with guile, unscrupulous, has no compassion, and takes no prisoners. The *yetzer hora* is bent on destroying us and has been given every possible means to do so. His arsenal is replete with every weapon for ensnaring us to do his bidding, thereby distancing us from our Maker. If we belittle the *yetzer hora*, if we think, “What can he do to me? He cannot sway me,” then we have already lost the battle. The *yetzer hora* is a formidable enemy, and the sooner that we accept this reality, the better our chances are for success against him.

By comparing the two he-goats – one representing the side of Hashem and the other symbolic of *Satan/yetzer hora/Malach Ha’Maves* – we are forced to acknowledge that the forces of evil are not pushovers. Indeed, on this holy day of *Yom Kippur*, we are relegated to offer a bribe to *Satan*. We must recognize that we are up against an indomitable opponent, whose powers are frightening: “Know thine enemy!” The two goats are equal, because we must learn to “respect” the powers of the *yetzer hora*. Only then will we fight in earnest and – with the help of the Almighty – triumph over evil.