

## Rabbinic Models of Conversion

- Recall that last week we explored two different interpretations of the Covenant Ceremony (Ex. 24) when sacrifices were offered at the foot of Mt. Sinai after the revelation of the scroll of laws
  - Rabbi Akiva and Targum Onkelos – half the blood was sprinkled on the altar as atonement for the people
  - Abba bar Hanin/Rabbi Eliezer, and later, Rashi – half the blood was sprinkled on the people as an embodied symbol of entering into the covenant
- Now we will consider how *hazal* drew upon biblical precedent in order to construct a formal legal mechanism for what we usually call “conversion” to Judaism (גיור/גרות)

א. מתני' כריתות ב:א (ח,ב)

<p>There are <b>four</b> who are called: '<b>Lacking atonement.</b><sup>1</sup> And there are <b>four</b> who <b>bring</b> an offering <b>for an intentional</b> transgression in the same manner <b>as</b> they do for <b>an unwitting</b> transgression. And <b>these are</b> the four who lack atonement: A man who experiences a gonorrhea-like discharge [<i>zav</i>], a woman who experiences a discharge of uterine blood outside her normal menstrual period [<i>zava</i>], a woman after childbirth, and a leper [<i>metzora</i>].</p> <p>Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: A convert also lacks atonement until the priest sprinkles the blood of his offering on the altar on his behalf. And a nazirite lacks atonement with regard to drinking wine, and cutting hair, and exposure to corpse impurity, until his offerings are sacrificed.</p>	<p>אַרְבָּעָה מְחַסְרֵי כְּפֻרִים,<sup>1</sup> אַרְבָּעָה מְבִיאִין עַל הַזָּדוֹן כְּשֶׁנֶּגְהָ. אֵלּוּ הֵן מְחַסְרֵי כְּפֻרִין: הַזָּב, וְהַזָּבָה, וְהַיּוֹלֶדֶת, וְהַמְצָרָע. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן יַעֲקֹב אוֹמֵר: גֵּר מְחַסֵּר כְּפֻרִין, עַד שֶׁיִּזְרֹק עָלָיו הַדָּם. וְנָזִיר, וְיֵינוּ וְתִגְלַחְתּוֹ וְטָמְאָתּוֹ.</p>
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ב. גמ' כריתות ח,ב

<p>The Sages taught: A convert is precluded from eating sacrificial meat until he brings his bird nest, i.e., a pair of either pigeons or doves. If he brought one young bird in the morning, he may partake of sacrificial meat in the evening, and may bring the</p>	<p>תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: גֵּר מְעוֹקֵב לֹא כּוֹל בְּקֻדְשִׁים עַד שֶׁיָּבִיא קֵינוֹ, הַבִּיא פְּרִידָה אַחַת שְׁחִירִית -</p>
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<sup>1</sup> For many forms of serious impurity, even after daytime mikva immersion, certain aspects of the impurity remain in effect until nightfall (טבול יום *tevul yom* = 2° impurity). For specific even more severe forms of impurity, even after nightfall, certain aspects of the impurity remain in effect until certain sacrifices are offered on the persons behalf (*mehusar kappara* = 3° impurity).

second at a later time. Regarding <b>all</b> other cases <b>in the Torah</b> where <b>bird nests</b> are mandated, <b>one</b> is brought as <b>a sin offering</b> and the other <b>one</b> as <b>a burnt offering</b> ; but <b>here</b> , in the case of the convert, <b>both of them</b> are <b>burnt offerings</b> ...	אֹכֵל בְּקֻדְשִׁים לְעָרֵב. כָּל הַקִּינִין שֶׁבַתּוֹרָה - אֶחָד חֲטָאת וְאֶחָד עֹלָה, כָּאֵן - שְׁתֵּיהֶן עֹלוֹת ...
... As it is written: " <b>As you do, so he shall do</b> " (Numbers 15:14). From this verse it is derived: <b>Just as you brought a burnt offering and a peace offering, so too, a convert must bring a burnt offering and a peace offering.</b>	... דְּכַתִּיב: "כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה כֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה", מָה אַתָּם עֹלָה וּשְׁלָמִים <sup>2</sup> - אַף גֵּר עֹלָה וּשְׁלָמִים.

ג. גמ' כריתות ט, א

It is taught in another <i>baraita</i> : The verse states: "And if a <i>ger</i> sojourn with you, or whoever may be among you, throughout your generations, <b>and will offer an offering made by fire, of a pleasing aroma unto the Lord, as you do, so he shall do</b> " (Num. 15:14). I would <b>derive</b> that it means <b>any offering that is brought on the fire, even a meal offering</b> . Therefore, <b>the verse states: "As you do, so he shall do" – just as you entered the covenant with types of blood, so too must they, converts, bring types of blood.</b>	תִּנָּא אֵידֵךְ: "וַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר רִיחַ נִיחֻחַ לִי", שׁוֹמֵעַ אֲנִי כָל שְׁעוֹלָה לְאֲשִׁים, אֲפִילוּ מִנְחָה? תְּלַמּוּד לֹמַר: "כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה כֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה" - מָה אַתָּם מֵינֵי דָמִים, אַף הֵם מֵינֵי דָמִים.
If so, why not: <b>Just as you entered the covenant with a burnt offering and a peace offering, so too, they must enter the covenant with a burnt offering and a peace offering?</b> The <i>baraita</i> answers that <b>the verse states: "As you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord"</b> (Numbers 15:15). I <b>compared him to you, but I did not extend it to another matter</b> , i.e., that his offerings must be identical to <b>your offerings</b> .	אִי מָה אַתָּם עֹלָה וּשְׁלָמִים, אַף הֵם עֹלָה וּשְׁלָמִים! תְּלַמּוּד לֹמַר: "כְּכֶם בָּגֵר יִהְיֶה" - לְכֶם הַשְׁתִּיּוֹ, וְלֹא לְדָבָר אַחֵר, לְקַרְבָּנוֹתֵיכֶם.
<b>Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: "As you"</b> (Numbers 15:15) – <b>as your ancestors. Just as your ancestors entered the covenant only through circumcision and immersion in a ritual bath and the sprinkling of blood, so too they may enter the covenant only</b>	רַבִּי אוֹמֵר: "כְּכֶם" - כַּאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, מָה אַבּוֹתֵיכֶם לֹא נִכְנסוּ לְבְרִית אֱלֹא בְּמִילָה וּטְבִילָה וְהִרְצָאת

<sup>2</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת נְעָרֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת וַיִּזְבְּחוּ זִבְחִים שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה.

He sent the youths of Israel and they offered burnt-offerings and they slaughtered peace-offerings of bulls to the LORD. (Ex. 24:5)

<p><b>through circumcision and immersion and the sprinkling of blood</b>, which requires at least a bird offering.</p>	<p>דָּם<sup>3</sup> - אָף הֵם לֹא יִכְנסוּ לְבְרִית אֱלֹהִים בְּמִילָה וּטְבִילָה וְהִרְצָאת דָּמִים.</p>
<p>... <b>The Master said: Just as your ancestors entered the covenant only</b> through circumcision, immersion in a ritual bath, and the sprinkling of blood, converts must do the same. <b>Granted</b>, they underwent <b>circumcision</b> prior to entering the covenant, <b>as it is written: "For all the nation that left Egypt was circumcised"</b> (Joshua 5:5). <b>Alternatively</b>, it may be derived from here, <b>"And when I passed by you, and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said unto you: In your blood, live"</b> (Ezekiel 16:6). And granted as well, they entered the covenant through <b>the sprinkling of blood</b>, as it is written: <b>"And he sent the young men of the children of Israel"</b> (Exodus 24:5). <b>But from where do we derive that immersion</b> in a ritual bath was also part of the process of entering the covenant? <b>As it is written: "And Moses took half the blood...and sprinkled it on the people"</b> (Exodus 24:6-8), <b>and there is no sprinkling of sacrificial blood without immersion</b>.</p>	<p>... אָמַר מֶר: מָה אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם לֹא נִכְנסוּ לְבְרִית אֱלֹהִים כֹּה. בְּשִׁלְמָה מִילָה, דְּכֵתִיב: "כִּי מוֹלִים הָיוּ כָּל הָעָם הַיּוֹצְאִים", אִי נִמְי מִהֶכָּא: "וְאֶעְבֹּר עָלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶה מִתְבּוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמֶּיךָ וְאֹמַר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ חַיִּי וְגו'". הִרְצָאת דָּמִים, דְּכֵתִיב: "וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת נְעָרָיו בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל". אֱלֹהִים טְבִילָה מְנַלָּן? דְּכֵתִיב: "וַיִּשְׁחַח מֹשֶׁה חֹצֵי הַדָּם וַיִּזְרוֹק עַל הָעָם" - וְאִין הִזָּאָה בְּלֹא טְבִילָה.</p>
<p><b>If that is so</b>, that these three rituals are required by Torah law for a convert, then <b>now when there are no offerings</b>, we should not have the ability to <b>accept converts</b>. <b>Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov says: "And if a ger sojourn with you, or whosoever may be among you, throughout your generations"</b> (Numbers 15:14). This teaches that converts may be accepted even when there is no Temple and no sacrificial offerings.</p>	<p>אֱלֹהִים מַעֲתָה, הָאִידָנָא דְּלִיכָא קֳרָבָן לֹא נִסְבֵּל גָּרִים! אָמַר רַב אַחָא בַר יַעֲקֹב: "וְכִי יָגוּר אִתְּכֶם גֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְגו'".</p>
<p><b>The Sages taught: A convert in the present time is required to set aside a quarter of a dinar for his bird nest</b>, so that when the Temple is rebuilt he can purchase the offering with this money. <b>Rabbi Shimon says: Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai already assembled a panel of Sages who voted and nullified this ordinance, due to a potential mishap</b>. <b>Rav Idi bar Gershom says that Rav Adda bar Ahava says: The</b></p>	<p>תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: גֵּר בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה - צָרִיךְ שְׂנִיפְרִישׁ רֹבַע לֶקֶינֹו. אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן: כָּבֵר נִמְנָה עָלֶיהָ רַבָּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּאי וּבִטְלָה, מִפְּנֵי הַתְּקָלָה. אָמַר רַב אִידִי בַר גֵּרְשׁוֹם</p>

<sup>3</sup> Recall how we saw last week that the phrase דָּם הִרְצָאת may be translated as "presentation of sacrificial blood." Notably, although it usually refers to the blood being applied to the alter before God, at Mt. Sinai some saw the blood sprinkling on the people as the form of רִיצוּי we are concerned with.

<b><i>halakha</i> is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Shimon.</b>	אמר רב אדא בר אבהו: הלכה כרבי שמעון.
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