

Holy Days, Holy Spaces #3

Where in the World is the Avoda?

Yom Kippur: An Outlier Among Holidays

וְהִיְתָה לָכֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בָּעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ תַּעֲנִי אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם וְכָל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ הָאֲזִיָּח וְהַגֵּר
הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם:

And this shall be to you a law for all time: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall practice self-denial; and you shall do no manner of work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. (VaYikra 16:29)

For this reason it is ordained for the children of Israel that they should afflict themselves on the tenth of the seventh month--on the day that the news which made him weep for Joseph came to Jacob his father --that they should make atonement for themselves thereon with a young goat on the tenth of the seventh month, once a year, for their sins; for they had grieved the affection of their father regarding Joseph his son. And this day hath been ordained that they should grieve thereon for their sins, and for all their transgressions and for all their errors, so that they might cleanse themselves on that day once a year (Book of Jubilees 34:23-25)

Yoma: An Outlier Among Tractates

The Sages taught [in the *Tosefta*:] An incident occurred where there were two priests who were equal as they were running and ascending the ramp. One of them reached the four cubits before his colleague, who then, took a knife and stabbed him in the heart: Rabbi Tzadok then stood up on the steps of the Entrance Hall of the Sanctuary and said: Hear this, my brothers of the house of Israel. The verse states: "If one be found slain in the land... and it be not known who had smitten him; then your Elders and your judges shall come forth and they shall measure...and it shall be that the city which is nearest to the slain man...shall take a heifer" (Deuteronomy 21:1–3).. But what of us, in our situation? Upon whom is the obligation to bring the heifer whose neck is broken? on the city, or upon the Temple courtyards, the entire assembly of people burst into tears. The father of the boy, came and found that he was still convulsing. He said: May my son's death be an atonement for you. But my son is still convulsing the knife, has not become ritually impure to teach you that the ritual purity of utensils was of more concern to them than the shedding of blood. (Yoma 23a)

of the House of Garmu did not want to teach the secret of the preparation of the shewbread of the House of Avtinas did not want to teach of the preparation of the

incense. Hugas ben Levi knew a chapter in the art of music, as will be explained, and he did not want to teach it to others. Ben Kamtzar did not want to teach a special act of writing. (Mishnah Yoma 3:11)

Holiday Prep

Seven days before the Day of Atonement, we sequester the High Priest from his house to the Palhedrin Chamber, and we prepare for him another priest in his place, [for] perhaps there will occur in him a disqualification. Rabbi Yehuda says: We even prepare another wife for him, [for] perhaps his wife will die; as it is said, "and he shall atone for himself and for his household" - his "household" is his wife. The Sages said: If so, there is no end to the matter. (Mishnah Yoma 1:1)

The Sages provided the High Priest with Elders selected from the Elders of the court, and they would read before him the order of the service of the day of Yom Kippur. And they would say to him: My Master, High Priest. Read with your own mouth, perhaps you forgot or perhaps you did not learn. On Yom Kippur eve in the morning, the Elders stand him at the eastern gate of the courtyard and pass before him bulls and rams and sheep so that he will be familiar with the animals and grow accustomed to the service (Mishnah Yoma 1:3)

What Did the People Do?

The High Priest] would come to the goat for Azazel and place his two hands on it, and confess. . . Then, the priests and the people standing in the courtyard, when they heard the explicit Name from the mouth of the High Priest, would bend their knees, bow down and fall on their faces, and they would say, "Blessed be the Honored Name of His Sovereignty forever." (Mishnah Yoma 6:2)

And after the High Priest concludes his reading, each and every person present brings a Torah scroll from his house, and reads from it in order to show its beautiful appearance to the community. (Yoma 70a)

The one who sees the High Priest while he is reading does not see the bull and he-goat that are burned, and the one seeing the bull and the he-goat being burned does not see the High Priest while he is reading. Not because it is prohibited to do so, but because the distance between the two areas was great, and both rituals were performed simultaneously. (Mishnah Yoma 7:2)

Seder HaAvoda

Place	Clothes	Action
1. Azara	Gold	Daily sacrifice תמיד
2. Azara and Kodesh	Gold	Daily ktoret, menorah, menachot
3. Azara	Gold	Musaf sacrifices
4. Azara	White	Personal Vidui on the cow
5. Eastern Azara	White	Lottery of goats
6. Azara	White	Vidui for all Kohanim on cow
7. Azara	White	Slaughter cow, put blood in mizrak מזרק
8. Azara and Kodesh kodashim	White	Brings coals and ktoret to kodesh kodashim, combines them
9. Kodesh kodashim	White	Sprinkles cow blood on kaporet
10. Azara and Kodesh kodashim	White	Slaughter goat, sprinkle goat blood on kaporet
11. Kodesh	White	Sprinkles cow blood on parochet
12. Kodesh	White	Sprinkles goat blood on parochet
13. Kodesh	White	Combine blood, sprinkle on incense altar, pour rest on bottom of outside altar
14. Azara	White	Vidui of people on goat, sent to desert
15. Azara	White	Cuts up cow and goat, puts aside innards for altar, sends rest to Bet HaSerefa

16. Ezrat Nashim	White	Reads Torah At same time, animals are burnt in Bet HaSerefa
17. Azara	Gold	Other sacrifices
18. Kodesh kodashim	White	Removes Ktoret accessories
19. Kodesh	Gold	Afternoon incense, menorah, sacrifice תמיד של בין הערביים
20. Outside	His own clothes	Escorted home by people

Why the Fashion Show?

he sanctified his hands and feet and removed the golden garments, and he descended into the ritual bath and immersed and ascended and dried himself. They brought him the white garments again, and he dressed in them and sanctified his hands and feet. He entered the Holy of Holies to take out the incense spoon and the coal pan. He sanctified his hands and feet and removed the white garments and descended to the ritual bath and immersed and ascended and dried himself with a towel. They brought him the golden garments, and he dressed in them and sanctified his hands and feet and entered the Sanctuary to burn the afternoon incense and to remove the ashes from the lamps, (Mishnah Yoma 7:4)

Incense Ingredients

ת"ר פיטום הקטרת הצרי והציפורן והחלבנה והלבונה משקל שבעי' של שבעים מנה מור וקציעה שיכולת נרד וכרכום משקל ששה עשר של ששה עשר מנה הקושט שנים עשר קילופה שלשה וקנמון תשעה . . . רש"א הצרי אינו אלא שרף [הנוטף] מעצי הקטף

The Sages taught in a baraita: How is the blending of the incense performed? Balm, and onycha, and galbanum, and frankincense, each of these by a weight of seventy maneh. Myrrh, and cassia, and spikenard, and saffron, each of these by a weight of sixteen maneh. Costus by a weight of twelve maneh; three maneh of aromatic bark; and nine maneh of cinnamon. . . [Rabbi Shimon](#) says: The balm mentioned here is nothing other than a resin exuded from the balsam tree” (Keritot 6a)

What Was in the Holy of Holies?

After the Ark was taken into exile, there was a rock in the Holy of Holies from the days of the early prophets, and this stone was called the foundation rock. It was three fingerbreadths higher than the ground, and the High Priest would place the incense on it (Mishnah Yoma 5:2)

And who buried the Ark? Josiah buried it. And what did he see that he decided to bury it? He saw that it is written: “The Lord will bring you, and your king whom you shall set over you, to a nation that you have not known” (Deuteronomy 28:36). (Yoma 52b)

Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai says: The Ark was exiled to Babylonia. . . Rabbi Yehuda ben Lakish says: The Ark was buried in its place (Yoma 53b)

But the rabbis say, the Ark was hidden in the storage room of the wood. It happened that a blemished Cohen was splitting wood in the storage room of the wood and saw a floor plate different from the others. He came and said to a colleague, come and see this floor plate which is different from the others. They did not finish the matter before his soul left him; then they knew that there the Ark was hidden. (Yerushalmi Shekalim 6:1)

Going to the Desert

Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities and transgressions of the Israelites, whatever their sins, putting them on the head of the goat; and it shall be sent off to the wilderness through a designated agent. (Vayikra 16:21)

And they made a ramp for the goat due to the Babylonian Jews, who would pluck at the goat’s hair and would say to the goat: Take our sins and go, take our sins and go. People from among the prominent residents of Jerusalem would escort until they reached the first booth. There were ten booths from Jerusalem to the cliff, with a distance of ninety *ris* between them. As there are seven and a half *ris* for each *mil*, the total distance was twelve *mil*. (Mishnah Yoma 6:4)

And how did they know that the goat reached the wilderness? They would build platforms and wave scarves [*sudarim*] . . . Rabbi Yehuda said: Didn’t they already have a reliable indicator? From Jerusalem to Beit Hiddudo, f three *mil*. Since the nobles of Jerusalem walked a *mil* to escort the dispatcher and returned a *mil*, and waited the time equivalent to the time it takes to walk a *mil*, they knew that the goat reached the wilderness. Rabbi Yishmael says: Didn’t they have a different indicator? There was a strip of crimson tied to the entrance to the Sanctuary, and when the goat reached the wilderness the strip would turn white, as it is stated: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they will become white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).(Mishnah Yoma 6:4)

Could the Temple Be in Tel Aviv?

וַיִּתֵּן אֶהָרֹן עַל־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִם גִּרְלוֹת גֹּרֶל אֶחָד לַיהוָה וְגֹרֶל אֶחָד לְעִזָּאֵזֶל:

and he shall place lots upon the two goats, one marked for God and the other marked for Azazel. (VaYikra 16:8)

A Clear Line of Sight

All the walls [of the Temple compound] were high except for the eastern one because the priest who burnt the red heifer stood on the Mount of Olives and he had to see the doorway of the Temple when he sprinkled the blood. (Mishnah Middot 2:4)

They would make a ramp from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives, arches upon arches to guard against graves and the heifer and all those who prepare it go out to the Mount of Olives. (Mishnah Para 3:6)

End of the Day

and the people escort him to his house. And the High Priest would make a feast for his loved ones and his friends when he emerged in peace from the Sanctuary. (Yoma 7:4)

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no days as joyous for the Jewish people as the fifteenth of Av and as Yom Kippur, as on them the daughters of Jerusalem would go out in white clothes. . And the daughters of Jerusalem would go out and dance in the vineyards. (Taanit 4:8)

Yom Kippur Without a Temple

Rabbi Matya ben Ḥarash asked Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya when Rabbi Elazar was in Rome: Have you heard the teaching that there are four distinctions in the process of atonement that Rabbi Yishmael would derive? He said to him: They are not four but three distinctions, and **repentance is necessary with each one.**" (Yoma 86)

How superior is the degree of repentance! But yesterday was this sinner separated from the Lord God of Israel. . . But to-day he is connected with the Shekinah . . . he cries and receives answer momentarily . . . he observes commandments, and they are received with pleasure and joy (Mishnah Torah Hilchot Teshuva 7:7)

אמר רבי עקיבא אשריכם ישראל לפני מי אתם מיטהרין מי מטהר אתכם אביכם שבשמים שנאמר (יחזקאל ל"ו) וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם ואומר (ירמיה י"ד) מקוה ישראל ה' מה מקוה מטהר את הטמאים אף הקדוש ברוך הוא מטהר את ישראל:

Rabbi Akiva says, Happy are you, Israel! Before whom are you purified, and who purifies you [of your transgressions]? Your Father Who is in heaven. For it is said, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean"; and it is also said, "The ritual bath [lit. Hope] of Israel is the Lord"; even as a ritual bath purifies the unclean, so does the Holy One, Blessed be He, purify Israel. (Mishnah Yoma 8:9)