

Leviticus 16:1-34 (KJV). 1 And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died; 2 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark [that would place him within the Holy of Holies]; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. 3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. 6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat [for Azazel אֲזָזֵל]. 9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. 10 But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself:

12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: 13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: 14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. 15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: 16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. 18 And he shall go out [of the Temple] unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. 19 And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: 21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: 22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.


23 And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there: 24 And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. 25 And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar. 26 And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. 27 And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. 28 And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

29 And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: 30 For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

32 And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: 33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. 34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Numbers 29 (KJV): 7-11 And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: 8 But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: 9 And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram, 10 A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 11 One kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings.

II. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IN THE RABBINIC TRADITION



The *Babylonian Talmud Tractates Yoma* and *Tamid*², further describe the activities of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, and, with discernment, it can give us a deeper understanding of them as well as of the High Priest's preparation for this day and the proper execution of the rites required of him. In addition these details will enable us to better understand why the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church considers St. Zechariah, the father of St. John the Baptist, to be a High Priest of Israel, and not just an ordinary priest as most of the Protestant and Evangelical world professes.

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) [יֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים, *Yom ha-Kippurim*, *day of the atonements*] must have always been an occasion of profound interest and of great awe to the people of Israel, for only on the 10th of Tishri (the 7th month in the Jewish Lunar Calendar which typically falls in September) did the High Priest [הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל *ha-Kohen ha-Gadol*, *the priest the high one*] enter into the Holy of Holies to attempt to secure atonement for himself, the priesthood, and the whole of Israel. On all other days of the year the High Priest would wear his eight regal garments including the ephod sewn of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen thread, the breast plate of judgment with 12 precious stones bearing the names of the 12 tribes, the robe of the ephod of blue with either 36, 70, or 72 pomegranates made of blue, purple and scarlet hung beneath the bottom hem alternating with or containing bells³, so that the LORD would hear him when he entered into the Holy Place to minister, and when he came out, that he did not die (Ex. 28:31-35). He also wore a magnificent mitre of fine linen to which was attached by a blue ribbon, a golden plate on which was engraved לַיהוָה קֹדֶשׁ *Kodesh lah-YHVH HOLY TO THE LORD*. But on Yom Kippur, he exchanged these awe inspiring vestments for the four simple linen garments and a simple linen mitre for various parts of the Yom Kippur services. These symbolically represented his humility, purity, and holiness as a supplicant for Israel before the LORD. [His unvesting can be seen as a foreshadowing of the King of Heaven removing His Royal Garments for His incarnation as well as the removal of the “royal robe” and “crown of thorns” placed on him by the Roman soldiers after mocking Him as a King and smiting Him en route to His Crucifixion. Then, like the High Priest who was

clothed in the simple white linen garments to minister the atonement rites for Israel, we can see Christ, the High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek, in great condescension, ministering the atoning sacrifice for us on the Cross in humble clothing. At His Resurrection and return to Heaven on the day after the Sabbath, the day of First-Fruits, we see the King of Glory returning to Heaven and donning His Regal Vestments again.]

The Jews considered the burning of the incense following High Priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies to be the climax of their Yom Kippur service, as it was then that the High Priest first presented himself in the presence of the God of Israel to make atonement for himself, the priesthood, and for all the children of Israel, and, subsequently, to lay all of their sins upon the head of the scapegoat [אַזָּזֵל *Azazel*], which bore those sins into an *uninhabited wilderness*, thus, cleansing them of all sin by removing it and sending it far away. Their sins are then hidden from sight, i.e., covered over, and thus atoned for.⁴

PREPARATION FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT


TRACTATE YOMA, MISHNAH. (page 2a) Seven days before the day of atonement the high priest was removed from his house to the cell of the counsellors and another priest was prepared to take his place in case anything happened to him [i.e., to the high priest] that would make him unfit [for performing the service] ... (18a). They delivered to him elders from the elders of the court, and they read before him [over those seven days] out of the order of the day. They say to him, “Sir High Priest, read you yourself with your own mouth, perchance you have forgotten or perchance you have never learnt.” On the eve of the day of atonement in the morning they place him at the eastern gate and pass before him oxen, rams and sheep, that he may learn to know and become familiar with the service. Throughout the seven days they did not withhold food or drink from him. But on the eve of the day of atonement near nightfall they would not let him eat much because food brings about sleep ... (14a) ... throughout the seven days he sprinkles the blood, burns the incense and trims the lamps and offers the head and the hind leg; on all other days he offers only if he so desires for the high priest is first in offering a portion and has first place in taking a portion ... (19a) ... The elders of the court handed him over to the elders of the priesthood and they took him up to the upper chamber to the house of Abtinas.⁵ They adjured him, took their leave, as they said to him: Sir High Priest, we are messengers of the Beth Din [House of Judgment/Law, a legal court of priests] and you are our messenger and the messenger of the court. We adjure you by Him that made His Name to dwell in this house that you do not change anything [of what we said to you.]

2. *Socino Babylonian Talmud*, online edition @ <https://ia600104.us.archive.org/19/items/TalmudSocinoEdition/Talmud%20-%20Socino%20Edition.pdf>

3. Jewish opinions vary on the number of the pomegranates and bells. See <https://templeinstitute.org/priestly-garments-3/> Josephus makes no comment on the number of bells.

4. Jung, Leo, *Introduction, Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma*, The Socino Press, London, Jerusalem, New York, 1972, p. 1.

5. The house of Abtinas prepared the incense. There the high priest was taught the skillful manipulation that would enable him to take up the incense without spilling one grain.



As we can see from the *Mishnah* quoted above, the importance of the services was so great that one week before the Day of Atonement the High Priest was isolated, levitically purified, and taught at great length by select elders of the Sanhedrin as to what his exact words and actions must be on that day. Moreover, in the case that the High Priest should die or become levitically unfit for his duties, a substitute priest was appointed as a backup for him, presumably from the appointed course of priests who would be serving during that time period in the Temple. The substitute would, of necessity, have to have gone through the same school of purification and instruction simultaneously, so that he would be equally prepared. During the whole of that week they would also have to practice the various priestly rites, such as as sprinkling the blood from the morning and evening sacrifices on the outer Altar in the courtyard of the priests. They would remove the ashes from the Golden Altar of Incense before the Veil dividing the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, place new the coals on it, ignite the coals, and learn to properly place the incense on it for the regular morning and evening sacrifices [the *Tamid*, תמיד the *daily offering*]. They would relight the seven lamps of the menorah [or of the 11 menorahs present in Herod's Temple] in the Holy Place after replacing their wicks and filling the lamps with oil. Since every part of the Day of Atonement's services were incumbent upon the High Priest's actions, were he to commit any errors, it would potentially jeopardize atonement for the entire nation's sins. The High Priest [and his substitute] were bound by oath not to diverge from anything they had been taught [by the select elders], as the *Gemara* instructs. Why? -- because of the innovation of the Sadducees wherein they instructed the High Priest to light the incense before entering into the Most Holy Place instead of after his entering.

The evening meal of the High Priest on the eve of the the great day was to be scanty. Throughout that night he was kept awake by the reading of and expounding of the Holy Scriptures by the selected elders.

At midnight the lot was cast to determine which assisting priests would be chosen from among the 500 or more members of the assigned course of priests, for the preparing the Altar of Sacrifice in the Priest's Courtyard, for the removing of the ashes from the previous days offerings, and for preparing the day's offerings. To distinguish the Day of Atonement from all other days, *four* fires instead of the usual three were arranged on the great altar of burnt offering.

THE OFFERING OF THE TAMID

At dawn, in his resplendent eight gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and linen twined garments, the High Priest would slay the lamb for the *Tamid*, the blood of which he sprinkled on the outer Altar of Sacrifice in the Priest's Court. This was followed by the daily burning of incense in the Holy Place on the Altar of Incense in front of the Veil [תְּרִיבָה, *paroket*, *veil/curtain*] which separated The Holy Place [שְׁרֵטְהָ, *Ha-Qodesh*] from The Holy of The Holies [שְׁרֵטְהָ שְׁרֵטְהָ *Ha-Qodesh ha-Qadashim*]. On the outer altar again the High Priest offered up the prescribed parts of the lamb as well as his own cake-offering.

For the *Tamid* services we will focus on the burning of the incense and any blessings/prayers recited by the participants.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Tamid, Chapter V,⁶ *MISHNAH*, (32b) The superintendent said to them, pronounce one blessing, and they did so: they then recited the ten commandments and the first, second and third sections of the *SHEMA* [“*Hear O Israel, the LORD thy God is one LORD ...*” Deut. 6:4-9, *And it shall come yo pass if you shall hearken ...* Deut 11:13-21, and *And the Lord spoke to Moses ...* Num. 15 37-41], and they blessed the people with three benedictions, namely *True and Firm*, *Abodah*, and the priestly benediction.

MISHNAH . He said to them, those who are fresh [i.e., new] to the [offering of the] incense come and draw lots, and one or another was successful ... [Thus, the one blessed to burn the incense for the *Tamid* offerings is chosen by lot from the available officiating course of priests.]


MISHNAH. The one who had been selected to offer the incense took up the spoon ... and the dish that was in the middle of it, (33a) heaped it up with incense; this had a covering, over which was spread a kind of jacket ...

MISHNAH, Chapter VI (33a) they commenced to ascend the steps of the porch⁷ ... The one who had been chosen for the incense took the dish from the middle of the spoon and gave [the spoon back] to his friend or his relative ... The one who burnt the incense [on the Golden Altar of Incense in the Holy Place in front of the Veil for this service] did not do so until the superintendent said to him, burn the incense. If it was the High Priest who burnt, he would say to him, “Sir, pray burn the incense.” The people left [so the offerer was alone in the Holy Place] and he burnt the incense and prostrated himself and went out. [Note: the incense is burnt without any accompanying prayer whatsoever.]

MISHNAH, Chapter VII. (33b) When the High Priest went in [to the *Holy Place*, or returned to it, if he had formerly burnt the incense] to prostrate himself [after the offering of the incense], three priests supported him, one by his right and one by his left and one by the precious stones [on the shoulders of the ephod]. When the superintendent heard the sound of the

6. The *Tractate Tamid* in the *Mishnah* and in the *Babylonian Talmud* are the same except for commentary (*Gemara*) on 3 chapters in the latter. The extra commentary is provides no additional benefit for our purposes here.

7. There were 12 steps between the Altar of Sacrifice and the Porch.



footsteps of the High Priest as he was about to issue [exit the *Holy Place*], he raised the curtain for him. He [the superintendent] went in, prostrated himself and went out, and then his brother priests went in and prostrated themselves and went out. [Note: Again, no prayer was offered by any of them.]

MISHNAH. Then [all the priests who had officiated] went and stood on the steps of the porch [that led up from the Court of the Priests, to the porch of the Holy Place]... They blessed the people with a single benediction [*The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace (Num. 6:24-28).*] ... In the Temple they pronounced the divine name as it is written [יהוה = *YHVH*, i.e., “*JEHOVAH / LORD*”] ... in the Temple [the priests raised their hands] right above their heads, all except the High Priest, who did not raise his hands above the plate [the plate of pure gold attached to the mitre of the High Priest, with קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה *Qodesh la-YHVH, Holy to the LORD*, engraved upon it, (cf. Exodus 28:36)] ...

So, we can say that the priest who offered the incense for the *Tamid* offering was chosen by lot from the serving course of priests [and could include the High Priest], that he entered the Holy Place by himself, quickly put the incense on the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place, prostrated and left. He did not pray in the Holy Place. Following that the High Priest with his 3 assistants, then the supervisor, the incense offerer, and the other priests, entered one (or one group) at a time and prostrated before the Altar of Incense, then, without praying, exited the Holy Place before the next one or group entered. After all had prostrated in the Holy Place, they lined up and gave a blessing to the people. Were any of the officiating priest to be delayed in coming out, any of the other officiating priests, especially the supervisor, could enter the Holy Place and check on the one who was delayed. As we shall see, this was not the case for the incense and blood offerings for the specific Yom Kippur services.

That completed the service of the *Tamid* for that morning. On Yom Kippur, the High Priest would then undress, wash, and put on the simple four linen garments that were to be used only for the services specific for the Day of Atonement. The evening service of the *Tamid* would be very much the same as this one.

SERVICES FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT CONFESSION OF THE SINS OF THE HIGH PRIEST AND HIS FAMILY

In this section, we will focus on the most important aspects of the services for Yom Kippur.

The Bull of Yom Kippur is the חַטָּאת *chatas (sin)* offering required of the High Priest on Yom Kippur to atone for himself and his family. It was paid for out of

own personal funds and not from Temple funds. That same bull would also be used later for the *sin* offering on behalf of the entire family of *Kohanim* [the *LORD* appointed only the descendants of Aaron to be priests).

The bullock for the sin-offering for the High Priest and for his family stood between the Temple-porch and the altar in the Courtyard of the Priests. It was placed towards the south, but the High Priest, who stood facing the east (to face the worshippers), turned the head of the sacrifice towards the west (that is to face the sanctuary). He then laid both his hands upon the head of the bullock, and confessed upon it as follows:


Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma, Chapter III, MISHNAH, 35b O LORD! I have done wrong. I have transgressed. I have sinned before Thee I and my house. Oh LORD! Forgive the wrongdoings, the transgressions, the sins which I have committed and transgressed and sinned before thee, I and my house, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Thy servant: *for on this day shall atonement be made for you [to cleanse you: from all your sins shall you be clean before the LORD].* And they answered after him: Blessed be the name of His glorious Kingdom for ever and ever.

It should be noted in the High Priest's solemn confession, the name of יהוה, *LORD*, occurred three times. Each time the High Priest spoke the name יהוה those who stood nearby prostrated themselves with their faces on the ground, while the multitude responded: “Blessed be the name of His glorious Kingdom for ever and ever.” Those who had stood among the priests in the Temple and listened with rapt attention trying to discern the *LORD*'s name, found it to be lost amidst the sound of the priests' instruments, as they accompanied the benediction of the people.

THE CHOOSING OF THE HE-GOAT FOR THE LORD AND THE HE-GOAT FOR AZAZEL

This first part of the expiatory service -- that for the High Priest -- had taken place close to the Holy Place, between the porch and the altar. The next task was the choosing of the he-goat for the LORD and for *Azazel* (translated as *scapegoat* in the KJV⁸). In the eastern part of the Court of Priests, that is close to the worshippers, and on the north side of it, stood an urn, called *Calpi*, in which were two lots of the same shape,

8. The name *Azazel* אֲזָאזֵל is derived from אָזַל, *strong*; and אָזַל, *mighty*. Some Jewish rabbis considered the word to be a lofty, hard, precipitous cliff. *Ibn Ezra* wrote that it was a mountain near Mount Sinai. Rabbinic practice in the Temple era was to sent the he-goat to an unspecified high cliff where a designated man would push it over precipice killing is in its plunge upon the rocky slopes below. *Rashi* considered *Azazel* a proper name. The apocryphal *Book of Enoch* recognizes *Azazel* as the leader of the fallen angels that married women (cf. *Gen. 6:2-4*). Others translate אֲזָאזֵל as *the goat that was sent away*, or *the goat that departed*. Origen identified אֲזָאזֵל as Satan in *Contra Celsum, Bk.vi., Ch. xlili, ANF, Vol. 6, ; 592-3*.



size, and material had been placed. In the second Temple they were of gold; the one bearing the inscription לַיהוָה, *for the LORD*, the other אֲזָזֵל *for Azazel* [for the scapegoat (KJV)]. These two he-goats had been placed with their backs to the people and their faces towards the sanctuary (westwards) as the bullock previously. The High Priest now faced the people, with his substitute priest at his right hand and the head of the ministering course of priests on his left hand side. He then shook the urn, thrust both hands into it, and simultaneously drew forth the two lots, laying one on the head of each he-goat. Popularly it was deemed a good “omen” if the right-hand lot had fallen *for the LORD*.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma, Chapter VI, MISHNAH, (61a) The two he-goats of the day of atonement are required to be alike in appearance, in size, in value, to have been bought at the same time.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma, Chapter IV, MISHNAH, (39a) He shook the urn and brought up the two lots, on one was inscribed: ‘*for the LORD*’, and on the other: ‘*for Azazel*’. The deputy high priest was at his right hand. The head of the ministering family at his left. If the lot having ‘*for the LORD*’ inscribed thereon came up in his right hand, the deputy high priest would say to him: Sir High Priest, raise thy right hand! And if the lot with the inscription ‘*for the LORD*’ came up in his left hand, the head of the family would say: Sir High Priest, raise thy left hand! Then he placed them on the two he-goats and said: ‘a sin offering unto the LORD!’ ... and they answered after him: “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever!” ...

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma, Chapter IV, MISHNAH, (41b). He bound a thread of crimson wool on the head of the he-goat which was to be sent away [destined *for Azazel* in the wilderness]; and on the neck of the he-goat that was to be slaughtered [as a sin offering].

Edersheim: “The goat that was to be sent forth was now turned round towards the people, and stood facing them, waiting, as it were, till their sins should be laid on him, and he would carry them forth into a *land not inhabited*. Assuredly a more marked type of Christ could not be conceived as He was brought forth by Pilate and stood before the people, just as He was about to be led forth, bearing the iniquity of the people. And, as if to add to the significance of the rite, tradition has it that when the sacrifice was fully accepted the scarlet mark which **the scapegoat had borne became white, to symbolize the gracious promise** in Isaiah 1:18; but it [rabbinic tradition] adds that this miracle did not take place for 40 years before the destruction of the Temple!”⁹

Because the two he-goats had to be virtually indistinguishable in look, size, and value, and even be purchased at the same time, the he-goat chosen for *Azazel*, the *scapegoat* had to be distinguished from the he-goat chosen for the *LORD*. That was done by the crimson thread/ribbon of wool placed on the head

[horns] of the former, while the latter had it around its neck.

CONFESSION OF THE SINS OF THE PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE OF THE BULLOCK

After the selection of the scapegoat, the High Priest returned to the bullock in the Court of the Priests and again confessed his and his family’s sins, but now, also confessed the sins for all of the children of Aaron, i.e., the priests of Israel. He again pronounced the name of the LORD, יהוה, three more times. He then sacrificed the bullock and collected its blood in a sacred vessel for future use:

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma, Chapter IV, MISHNAH, (41b) ... at the place of the slaughtering **he came to his bullock a second time, pressed his two hands upon it and made confession, and thus he would say:** O LORD! I have done wrong. I have transgressed. I have sinned before Thee I and my house, **and the children of Aaron, Thy holy people.** Oh LORD! Forgive the wrongdoings, the transgressions, the sins which I have committed and transgressed and sinned before thee, I and my house, **and the children of Aaron, Thy holy people**, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, Thy servant: *for on this day shall atonement be made for you [to cleanse you: from all your sins shall you be clean before the LORD]*. And they answered after him: Blessed be the name of His glorious Kingdom for ever and ever. Then the high-priest killed the bullock, caught up his blood in a vessel, and gave it to an attendant to keep it stirring, lest it should coagulate.


INCENSE OFFERING OF YOM KIPPUR:

At this time as part of the special Yom Kippur services, the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) was obligated to burn the incense inside the Kodesh HaKodashim (Holy of Holies). He brought with him two handfuls of incense [*MISHNAH, Chapter V, 47a*], and shovelful of burning coals from the Outer Altar into the Holy of Holies, and burned the incense on these coals.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma, Chapter V, MISHNAH, (58b). Advancing to the altar of burnt-offering, he next filled the censer with burning coals, and then arranged a handful of frankincense in the dish destined to hold it. Ordinarily, everything brought in actual ministry unto God must be carried in the right hand -- hence the incense in the right and the censer in the left. But on this occasion, as the censer for the Day of Atonement was larger and heavier than usual, the high-priest was allowed to reverse the common order. Every eye was strained towards the sanctuary as, slowly bearing the censer and the incense, the figure of the white-robed high-priest was seen to disappear within the Holy Place. After that nothing further could be seen of his movements. [The priests retreated into the Courtyard of the Priests until the High Priest reappeared exiting from the Holy Place.]

MISHNAH, (51b) He went through the *Hekel* [the Holy Place] until he came to the place between the two curtains which separated the Holy from the Holy of Holies and

9. Edersheim, p. 312. [Thus, the 40 years were from AD 30 to 70.]



between which there was (a space of) one cubit ... (52b) The outer curtain was held back by a clasp on the south side and the inner curtain on the north side. He walked along between them until he reached the north side. When he reached the north side he turned round to the south and went on along the curtain, to his left until he reached the ark.

When he reached the ark he put the pan of burning coals between the two bars. He heaped up the incense upon the coals and the whole house became full with smoke. He came out by the way he entered and in the outer house [the *Hekel*, i.e., the Holy Place] he uttered a short prayer. He did not make the prayer long so as not to frighten Israel¹⁰ ...

MISHNAH, (53b). After the ark had been taken away, there was a stone from the days of the earlier prophets,¹¹ called the *shethiyah*.¹²

Edersheim: “ ... The curtain of the Most Holy Place was folded back, and the high-priest stood alone and separated from all the people in the awful gloom of the Holiest of all, only lit up by the red glow of the coals in the priest’s censer. In the first Temple the ark of above it, the visible presence of JEHOVAH in the cloud of the *Shechinah*, and on either side the outspread wings of the cherubim; and the high-priest had placed the censer between the staves of the ark. But in the Temple of Herod there was neither *Shechinah* nor ark -- all was empty; and the high-priest rested his censor on a large stone, called the *foundation stone*. He now most carefully emptied the incense into his hand, and threw it on the coals of the censer, as far from himself as possible, and so waited till the smoke had filled the Most Holy Place. Then retreating backwards, he prayed outside the veil [by the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place] as follows: ‘May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that neither this day nor during this year any captivity come upon us. Yet, if captivity befall us this day or this year, let it be to a place where the law is cultivated. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers that want come not upon us, either this day or this year. But if want visit us this day or this year, let it be due to the liberality of our charitable deeds. May it please Thee, O Lord, our God, and the God of our fathers, that this year may be a year of cheapness, of fulness of intercourse and trade; a year with abundance of rain, of sunshine and of dew;

10. [Note: The 1st Temple lasted 410 years served by only 18 High Priests. The 2nd Temple Sanctuary abided for 420 years but as served by more than 300 High Priests, many of whom were not descendants of Aaron but had bought the office. Many of these died when they unworthily entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur because of immorality and contempt for the office, *Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma*, (9a).] Secondly, The practice of buying the High Priesthood began in 175 BC when Menaulus, a non-Kohen from the tribe of Benjamin, promised Antiochus Epiphanes IV a larger sum of money for the position of Kohen Gadol than did the High Priest Onias III’s’ Hellenized brother, Jason. This practice continued throughout Hasmonaen and Roman sovereignty. Many of these latter priests proved unworthy and consequently died during the Yom Kippur services. Ref. *The High Priest in Jewish Tradition*, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4195084/jewish/The-High-Priest-in-Jewish-Tradition.htm.

11. According to *Sot.* (48b) this term includes Samuel, David, and Solomon. Three fingers above the ground, on which he would place the pan of burning incense.

12. Root: *shatha* -- to lay a foundation, thus foundation stone. From it, as the Gemara says, the world was founded or started.

one in which Thy people Israel shall not require assistance one from another ... And as to Thy people Israel, may no enemy exalt himself against them. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that the houses of the men of Sharon may not become their graves.’ The high-priest was not to prolong this prayer, lest his protracted absence might fill the people with fears for his safety.

“While the incense was offering in the Most Holy Place the people withdrew from proximity to it [no closer than the Courtyard of Israel], and worshipped in silence. At last the people saw the high-priest emerging from the sanctuary, and they knew that the service [of the burning of incense] had been accepted.”¹³

SACRIFICE OF THE HE-GOAT FOR THE LORD

Then it was time for the sacrifice of the he-goat for the LORD, a communal sacrifice on behalf of the nation. Here the prayer was for the sins of all the children of Israel. But the High Priest does not perform confession over this he-goat. It is slain, its blood collected in its own vessel, and also stirred to prevent coagulation.

SPRINKLING AND APPLICATION OF THE BLOOD OF THE BULLOCK AND THE HE-GOAT FOR THE LORD

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma, Chapter V, MISHNAH, (51b) ... He would take the blood [of the bullock] from him who was stirring it, and enter [again] into the place where he had entered [in the Holy of Holies], and stand [again] on the place on which he had stood, and sprinkle thereof once upwards and seven times downwards, aiming to sprinkle neither upwards nor downwards, but *ke-mazlif* [making the movement of swinging a whip]. And the thus would he count: one, one and one, one and two, one and three, one and four, one and five, one and six, one and seven. Then he would go out and put it on the golden stand [Altar of Incense] in the sanctuary. One would bring him the he-goat [for the LORD]. He would slay it, receive its blood in a basin, enter [again] into the place where he had entered, and stand [again] on the place on which he had stood, and sprinkle thereof once upwards and seven times downwards,. Thus would he count: one, one and two, etc. Then he would go out and place it on the second golden stand in the sanctuary. R. Judah said “there was no more than one golden stand.” He would take the blood of the bullock and put down the blood of the he-goat, sprinkle thereof upon the curtain facing the ark outside, once up, seven times downwards, aiming to sprinkle neither upwards or downwards, but *ke-mazlif*. This would he count [as above]. Then he would take the blood of the he-goat, depositing the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle thereof upon the curtain facing the ark outside once upwards, seven times downwards [as above]. Then he would pour the blood of the bullock into the blood of the he-goat, emptying the full vessel into the empty one.

Edersheim: “Finally, pouring the blood of the bullock into the bowl which contained that of the goat, and again the mixture of the two into that which had held the blood of the bullock, so as thoroughly to commingle the two, he sprinkled each of the horns of the altar of incense, and then, making a

13. Edersheim, pp. 313-315. He believed the prayer contained in this passage was composed much later and inserted here in the *Talmud*.

Dr. Seraphim Steger, Editor, THE GOOD WORD

c/o St. Seraphim of Sarov & St. John of Kronstadt Orthodox Church
6063 Lake Murray Blvd.
La Mesa, CA 91942-2506,
U.S.A.

clear place on the altar, seven times the top of the altar of incense. Thus he had sprinkled forth-three times with the expiatory blood, taking care that his own dress should never be spotted with the sin-laden blood. What was left of the blood the high-priest poured out on the west side of the base of the altar of burnt offering. By these expiatory sprinklings the high-priest had cleansed the sanctuary in all its parts from the defilement of the priesthood and the worshippers. The Most Holy Place, the veil, the Holy Place, the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering were now clean alike, so far as the priesthood and as the people were concerned; and in their relationship to the sanctuary both priests and worshipper were atoned for. So far as the law could give it, there was now again free access for all; or, to put it otherwise, the continuance of typical sacrificial communion with God was once more restored and secured. Had it not been for these services, it would have become impossible for priests and people to offer sacrifices and so to obtain the forgiveness of sins, or to have fellowship with God. But their *consciencences* were not yet free from a sense of personal guilt and sin. That remained to be done through the *scapegoat*. All this seems clearly implied in the distinctions made in Lev 16:33 *And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priest, and for all the people of the congregation.*

SENDING THE HE-GOAT FOR AZAZEL INTO THE WILDERNESS

“Most solemn as the services had hitherto been, the worshippers would chiefly think with awe of the high-priest going into the immediate presence of God, coming out thence alive, and securing for them by the blood of the continuance of the Old Testament privileges of sacrifices and of access unto God through them. What had not yet taken place concerned them, if possible, even more so. Their own personal guilt and sins were now to be removed from them, and that, in a symbolical rite, at one and the same time the most mysterious and the most significant of all. All this while the *scapegoat*, with the *scarlet-tongue* [wool ribbon on its head], telling of the guilt it was to bear, had stood looking eastwards, confronting the people, and waiting for the terrible load which it was to carry away *unto a land not inhabited.*

Laying both his hands on the head of this goat, the high-priest now confessed and pleaded:

“Ah, JEHOVAH! They have committed iniquity; they have transgressed; they have sinned -- Thy people, the house of Israel. Oh, then, JEHOVAH! Cover over (atone for), I intreat Thee, upon their iniquities, their transgressions, and their sins, which they have wickedly committed, transgressed, and sinned before Thee -- Thy people, the house of Israel. As it is written in the law of Moses, Thy servant, saying, *For on that day shall it be covered over (atoned) for you, to make you clean from all your sins before JEHOVAH, ye shall all be cleansed!* And while the prostrate multitude worshipped at the name of JEHOVAH, the high-priest turned his face towards them as he uttered his last words, . . . *ye shall all be cleansed!*

“Then a strange scene would be witnessed. The priests led the sin-burdened goat out through Solomon’s Porch, and, as tradition has it, through the eastern gate, which opened upon the Mount of Olives.¹⁴ [To the north] an arched bridge spanned the intervening valley, and over it they brought the goat to the Mount of Olives, where one, specially appointed for the purpose, took him in charge. Tradition enjoins that he should be a stranger, a non-Israelite, as if to make still more striking the type of Him who was delivered over by Israel unto the Gentiles! Scripture tells us no more of the destiny of the goat that bore upon him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, than that they *shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, and that he shall let go the goat in the wilderness* (Lev. 16:22). But Rabbinic tradition supplements this information”¹⁵ [-- as we shall see in Part II.]



14. The *Talmud* has it that the foreign Jews present used to burst into words and deeds of impatience, that the *sin-bearer* might be gone.
15. Edersheim, pp. 315-319.