

RED ALERT!

Acharei

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DIVREI TORAH

- The Kohen Gadol wore two separate sets of clothing on Yom Kippur. The regular 8 vestments included gold and was worn when doing the regular Avoda (ritual) of the day. But for the special rituals of Yom Kippur, as in his entering the Holy of Holies, the Kohen Gadol could not wear the gold, and hence he wore the plain white, 4 special vestments similar - but much finer - that a regular Kohen would wear.

This was due to the sin of the Golden Calf. Gold could not be used to defend a nation which has sinned with gold (in the making of the Golden Calf). This would make sense at that time, as all the people were alive and witnessed the Golden Calf debacle. But why would this issue be pertinent a thousand years later?!

Some sins scarred the nation forever. The Golden Calf is one example. Another situation is the sale of Yosef by his brothers. That sin is recorded in the story of the Ten Martyred Rabbis by the Romans. The sin is so great that it is recorded in our history as a blemish on us which we cannot ignore.

- The Torah commands the Kohen Gadol to take two identical he-goats for “a sin offering” (16:5). How can both he-goats be one sin offering? One goat is offered as a sacrifice on the Altar, while the other goat is sent to his death into the desert. The usual ritual involving the sin offering is: the leaning of the hands, the confession of the sin, and putting the blood and part of the animal on the Altar. The goat that is offered in the Temple has its blood sprinkled toward the Parochet and on the Golden Altar. Part of the animal is burnt on the Outside Altar, and the rest of the animal is burned outside of the camp. Over the goat that is sent out to the desert, the Kohen Gadol leans his hands on its head, and the Kohen Gadol confesses on it (16:21). So the ritual for a sin offering is divided between the two goats; hence, the two he-goats do comprise the one sin offering. This is extremely unique to have two animals combine and comprise into one offering.

- The Kohen Gadol went into the Holy of Holies with the makings of the incense. Once inside the Holy of Holies, he would put the incense on the hot coals, and the Holy of Holies would fill with the cloud of smoke. So important was the incense to allow the Kohen Gadol to be present “before Hashem” inside the Holy of Holies. Only Moshe Rabbeinu was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, during the year, without the incense cloud. Such was the higher level of

K'dusha that enabled Moshe to have his special relationship with Hashem. Only Moshe was the one person in the history of the world to have this close relationship with Hashem. The Rambam and the Ramban both commented on the different level that the prophet had with Hashem. The top of the list was Moshe. Then came other levels of prophecy that existed. The lowest level of prophecy was reserved for a person to whom Hashem spoke, but the person was unaware of his hearing Hashem's voice. The message came to him at night when he was sleeping. He would awaken with the message, but had no clue where it came from.

- “In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves...” (16:29). Nowhere in Scripture does it say what happened on that date, which was determined to be Yom Kippur. But in Pirkei D'R' Eliezer (ch. 46), our Sages give us the story. Moshe ascended Mt. Sinai for the third time on Rosh Chodesh Elul and stays there for 40 days. During that time, Hashem had Moshe create the second set of the Tablets of the Ten Commandments. Hashem accepted Moshe's prayers for forgiveness for the nation of Israel's sin of the Golden Calf. When Moshe descended the mountain 40 days later, on the 10th of Tishrei, Hashem formally forgave Bnei Yisrael. Hence that day became the Day of Atonement for all time. During those 40 days, Hashem taught Moshe the Thirteen Merciful Attributes of Hashem

and told Moshe to teach them to Bnei Yisrael. Bnei Yisrael would know to say them whenever they sinned. They became the formula for divine forgiveness.

- The Rambam formulates a distinction between the Hebrew words Kapara (atonement) and Tohara (purity). The Rav explained these two concepts: kapara means a “cover-up”. When a person sins, the sin is recorded in his Book of Life. A punishment can be avoided through sincere penitence; this is the cover-up – no punishment. But the sin remains in his personal ledger with Hashem. To remove the sin, the person has to seek Tohara, purity. This is accomplished only when the sinner is placed in the same circumstances in which he originally sinned, but this time he did not succumb to the temptation of sin. This produces a Tohara; and the sin is erased from his ledger. This would explain what the Viceroy Yosef was manipulating his brothers. He produced the same scenario when he accused Binyamin of theft. The brothers were in the same spot as they were in years before. They could desert the favorite child and return to their father empty-handed as they did with Yosef. But this time Yehuda rose to the occasion and saved Binyamin, earning Tohara for the previous sin of years ago.

Questions by RED

From the Text

1. On what calendar date was Yom Kippur? (16:29)
2. What must the Kohen Gadol have in hand when he entered the Holy of Holies? (16:12, 13)
3. The Kohen Gadol confessed for sins three times. What were they for? (ch. 16)
4. Which of these marriages are prohibited?
 - a) Man with his deceased wife's sister.
 - b) Aunt and nephew.
 - c) Uncle and niece.
 - d) Man with divorced wife's sister.
5. Which are prohibited from the Torah and which from the Rabbis?
 - a) Homosexuality
 - b) Lesbianism
 - c) Brother-Sister
 - d) A grandson with his deceased grandfather's young second wife

From Rashi

6. What is the connection between the death of two of Aharon's sons and Yom Kippur? (16:1)
7. What happened to the special white clothing that the Kohen Gadol wore on Yom Kippur after he was finished with them? (16:23)

8. What Mitzvot does Rashi quote as ones that are illogical and we observe only because Hashem decreed them? (18:4)

9. A son lived together out of wedlock with a young lady. They later split up. Would the father be permitted to marry the young lady? (18:15)

10. What is the process of giving your son to Molech? (18:21)

From the Rabbis

11. When was Moshe allowed to enter the Holy of Holies? (Rabbi Steinsaltz)

12. How should you "afflict" yourselves on Yom Kippur? (Yoma 74b)

13. Why are you not allowed to marry sisters? (Ramban)

From the Midrash

14. When the daughter of Pharaoh found baby Moshe, she saw that he was "good." How was he good?

From the Haftara (Amos)

15. How does Amos describe the fallen dynasty of King David?

Relationships

16.

a) Moshe - Merari

b) Mushi - Avihu

c) Aharon - Kalev

d) Amram - Yocheved

e) Nadav - Itamar

ANSWERS

1. 10 Tishrei

2. The incense offering.

3. One for the Kohen Gadol and family. The second was for all the Kohanim. The third time was for all of Israel.

4. B and D are prohibited. A and C are permitted.

5. A is from the Torah. B is from the Rabbis. C is from the Torah. D is from the Rabbis.

6. The Kohen Gadol must be careful to enter the Holy of Holies in the precise method; otherwise, he will die as Aharon's sons did.

7. They were placed in a Geniza, never to be worn again.

8. Eating forbidden meat, Shatnez (wool and linen together), and the laws of impurity (Tum'a aned Tahara).

9. Yes

10. You give your son to the priests, and they pass him between two places of fire. (The Ramban claimed that the son died in the fires.)

11. Any time he wanted.

12. By not having any food or drink.

13. You will make them rivals.

14. She saw that he was circumcised.

15. The fallen David's Sukka.

16.

a) Nephew and Uncle

b) First cousins once removed.

c) Brothers-in-law

d) Nephew and aunt

e) Brothers