

TORAH STUDY FOR CHRISTIANS

Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center, November 18, 2015

INTRODUCTION

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), before and after 70 C.E. (the destruction of the Second Temple): While Leviticus 16 describes the ritual for atonement prescribed for the *Cohain Gadol* - the High Priest - it is not historically ascertainable that this ritual (and how much of it) was performed every year. Nevertheless, to have this ritual described in detail in the Torah points to the significance of its central themes: purification, the expiation of individual and communal guilt, and the absolute need to behave correctly in service to G-d. If we assume that this ritual comprised the central part of the Yom Kippur observance while the Temple stood, we can also assume that other ritual took its place after that. There was already a prohibition against decentralized animal sacrifice, so “alternative” altars upon which the prescribed sacrifice could be brought probably were not built. That concentrated the Yom Kippur observance on the spiritual - on intense and lengthy prayer, on fasting, and on afflicting the soul, all so that atonement could be achieved without a Temple, priests, or animal sacrifices and banishment (i.e., the “scapegoat”). Can we say that there was/is truly no intermediary? On one level, it is true that each Jew is responsible for his/her own atonement, but we do have communal confession of sins during the day’s services (the *Al Chet* prayer - “for the sin we have committed before you by...” and *Ashamnu* prayer/declaration); furthermore, the cantor or prayer leader who serves as the *shaliach tzibbur* (messenger of the congregation) helps to symbolically elevate the congregation’s prayers Heavenward. Yet, he/she is not the conduit or intermediary.

Leviticus, Chapter 16

- א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, אַחֲרֵי מוֹת, שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן--בְּקָרְבָּתָם לִפְנֵי-יְהוָה, וַיָּמָתוּ.
- 1 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD, and died;
- ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, דַּבֵּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן אַחִיד, וְאֶל-יָבֵא בְכָל-עֵת אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ, מִבֵּית לְפָרֹכֶת--אֶל-פְּנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל-הָאָרוֹן, וְלֹא יָמוּת, כִּי בַעֲנֹן, אֲרָאָה עַל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת.
- 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 veil, before the ark-cover which is upon the ark; that he die not; for I appear in the cloud upon the ark-cover.
- ג בְּזֹאת יָבֵא אַהֲרֹן, אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ: בֶּפֶר בֶּן-בָּקָר לְחֹטְאֹת, וְאַיִל לְעֹלָה.
- 3 Herewith shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering.

- ד** כְּתִנֶּת־בַּד קִדָּשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ, וּמְכַנְסֵי־בַד יִהְיוּ עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ, וּבְאַבְנֵט בַּד יַחַגֵּר, וּבְמִצְנֶפֶת בַּד יִצְנֹף; בְּגָדֵי־קִדָּשׁ הֵם, וְיִרְחֹץ בַּמַּיִם אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ וְלִבָּשֵׁם.
- 4** He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with the linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired; they are the holy garments; and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and put them on.
- ה** וּמֵאֵת, עֵדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, יִקַּח שְׁנֵי־שְׂעִירֵי עִזִּים, לַחֲטָאתִי; וְאֵיל אֶחָד, לְעֹלָה.
- 5** And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two he-goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering.
- ו** וְהִקְרִיב אֶהְרֹן אֶת־פֶּר החֲטָאתִי, אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ; וְכֹפֶר בְּעֵדוֹ, וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ.
- 6** And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his house.
- ז** וְלָקַח, אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים; וְהִעֲמִיד אֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, פְּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד.
- 7** And he shall take the two goats, and set them before the LORD at the door of the tent of meeting.
- ח** וְנָתַן אֶהְרֹן עַל־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים, גִּרְלוֹת--גּוֹרֵל אֶחָד לַיהוָה, וְגּוֹרֵל אֶחָד לְעִזָּאֵזֶל.
- 8** And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for Azazel.
- ט** וְהִקְרִיב אֶהְרֹן אֶת־הַשְּׂעִיר, אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגּוֹרֵל לַיהוָה; וְעָשָׂהוּ, חֲטָאתִי.
- 9** And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for the LORD, and offer him for a sin-offering.
- י** וְהַשְּׂעִיר, אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגּוֹרֵל לְעִזָּאֵזֶל, יַעֲמִד־חַי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, לְכֹפֶר עָלָיו--לְשַׁלַּח אֹתוֹ לְעִזָּאֵזֶל, הַמִּדְבָּרָה.
- 10** But the goat, on which the lot fell for Azazel, shall be set alive before the LORD, to make atonement over him, to send him away for Azazel into the wilderness.
- יא** וְהִקְרִיב אֶהְרֹן אֶת־פֶּר החֲטָאתִי, אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ, וְכֹפֶר בְּעֵדוֹ, וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ; וְשַׁחַט אֶת־פֶּר החֲטָאתִי, אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ.
- 11** And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and shall make atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself.
- יב** וְלָקַח מְלֵא־הַמַּחְתָּה גִחְלֵי־אֵשׁ מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה, וּמְלֵא חֲפְנָיו, קְטֹרֶת סַמִּים דִּקְהָה; וְהֵבִיא, מִבַּיִת לְפָרֶכֶת.
- 12** And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil.

יג ונתן את-הקטרת על-האש, לפני יהוה; וכסה ענן הקטרת, את-הכפרת אשר על-העדות--ולא ימות.

יד ולקח מדם הפר, והזה באצבעו על-פני הכפרת קדמה; ולפני הכפרת, יזה שבע-פעמים מן-הדם--באצבעו.

טו ושחט את-שעיר החטאת, אשר לעם, והביא את-דמו, אל-מבית לפרכת; ועשה את-דמו, באשר עשה לדם הפר, והזה אותו על-הכפרת, ולפני הכפרת.

טז וכפר על-הקדש, מטמאת בני ישראל, ומפשעיהם, לכל-חטאתם; וכן יעשה, לאהל מועד, השכן אתם, בתוך טמאתם.

יז וכל-אדם לא-יהיה באהל מועד, בבאו לכפר בקדש--עד-צאתו; וכפר בעדו ובעד ביתו, ובעד כל-קהל ישראל.

יח ויצא, אל-המזבח אשר לפני-יהוה--וכפר עליו; ולקח מדם הפר, ומדם השעיר, ונתן על-קרנות המזבח, סביב.

יט והזה עליו מן-הדם באצבעו, שבע פעמים; וטהרו וקדשו, מטמאת בני ישראל.

כ וכלה מכפר את-הקדש, ואת-אהל מועד ואת-המזבח; והקריב, את-השעיר הדי.

13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the ark-cover 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 ark-cover on the east; and before the ark-cover 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 veil, and do with his blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the ark-cover, and before the ark-cover.

16 And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins; and so shall he do for the tent of meeting, that dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.

17 And there shall be no man in the tent of meeting when he goeth in to make atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.

18 And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make 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 uncleannesses of the children of Israel.

20 And when he hath made an end of atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting, and the altar, he shall present the live goat.

- כא** וְסָמַךְ אֶהְרֹן אֶת-שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו, עַל רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר הַחַי, וְהִתְנַדָּה עָלָיו אֶת-כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאֶת-כָּל-פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל-חַטָּאתָם; וְנָתַן אֹתָם עַל-רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר, וְשָׁלַח בְּיַד-אִישׁ עֲתִי הַמִּדְבָּרָה. **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, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of an appointed man into the wilderness.
- כב** וְנָשָׂא הַשְּׂעִיר עָלָיו אֶת-כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹתָם, אֶל-אֶרֶץ גִּזְרָה; וְשָׁלַח אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר, בְּמִדְבָּר. **22** And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land which is cut off; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.
- כג** וּבָא אֶהְרֹן, אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, וּפָשַׁט אֶת-בְּגָדֵי הַבְּדָד, אֲשֶׁר לְבָשׁ בְּבָאוֹ אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ; וְהִנִּיחָם, שָׁם. **23** And Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there.
- כד** וְרָחַץ אֶת-בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם בְּמָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ, וְלָבַשׁ אֶת-בְּגָדָיו; וְיָצָא, וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת-עֹלֹתוֹ וְאֶת-עֹלֹת הָעָם, וַיִּכַּף בַּעֲדוֹ, וַיַּבְעֵד הָעָם. **24** And he shall bathe his flesh in water in a holy place and put on his other vestments, and come forth, and offer his burnt-offering and the burnt-offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people.
- כה** וְאֵת חֵלֶב הַחַטָּאת, יִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. **25** And the fat of the sin-offering shall he make smoke upon the altar.
- כו** וְהִמְשִׁיחַ אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר, לְעִזְאֵזֶל--יִכַּבֵּס בְּגָדָיו, וְרָחַץ אֶת-בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם; וְאַחֲרֵי-כֵן, יָבוֹא אֶל-הַמַּחֲנֶה. **26** And he that letteth go the goat for Azazel shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.
- כז** וְאֵת פֶּרַח הַחַטָּאת וְאֵת שְׂעִיר הַחַטָּאת, אֲשֶׁר הוֹבֵא אֶת-דָּמָם לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ--יֹוצֵיא, אֶל-מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה; וְשָׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ, אֶת-עֹרֹתָם וְאֶת-בְּשָׂרָם וְאֶת-פְּרִשָׁם. **27** And the bullock of the sin-offering, and the goat of the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be carried forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.
- כח** וְהִשְׂרִיף אֹתָם--יִכַּבֵּס בְּגָדָיו, וְרָחַץ אֶת-בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם; וְאַחֲרֵי-כֵן, יָבוֹא אֶל-הַמַּחֲנֶה. **28** And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

כט וְהִיְתָה לָכֶם, לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם: בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי
בְּעֶשְׂרֵי לַחֹדֶשׁ תַּעֲנּוּ אֶת-נַפְשֵׁיכֶם, וְכָל-מְלֹאכֶה לֹא
תַעֲשׂוּ--הָאֲזָרָה, וְהַגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם.

29 And it shall be a statute for ever unto you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and shall do no manner of work, the home-born, or the stranger that sojourneth among you.

ל כִּי-בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם, לְטַהַר אַתְּכֶם: מִכָּל,
חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם, לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, תִּטְהָרוּ.

30 For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.

לא שַׁבַּת שְׁבֻתוֹן הִיא לָכֶם, וְעִנִּיתֶם
אֶת-נַפְשֵׁיכֶם--חֻקַּת, עוֹלָם.

31 It is a sabbath of solemn rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; it is a statute for ever.

לב וְכֹהֵן הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר-יִמָּשַׁח אֹתוֹ, וְאֲשֶׁר יִמְלֹא
אֶת-זָדוֹ, לְכַהֵן, תַּחַת אָבִיו; וְלָבַשׁ אֶת-בְּגָדֵי הַבַּד, בְּגָדֵי
הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

32 And the priest, who shall be anointed and who shall be consecrated to be priest in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen garments, even the holy garments.

לג וְכֹפֵר אֶת-מִקְדָּשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, וְאֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
וְאֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ יִכָּפֵר; וְעַל הַכֹּהֲנִים וְעַל-כָּל-עַם הַקְּהָל,
יִכָּפֵר.

33 And he shall make atonement for the most holy place, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar; and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.

לד וְהִיְתָה-זֹאת לָכֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם, לְכַפֵּר עַל-בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל-חַטֹּאתֵם--אַחַת, בְּשָׁנָה; וַיַּעַשׂ, כַּאֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה.

34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make atonement for the children of Israel because of all their sins once in the year.' And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

QUESTIONS:

1. What parts of the ritual could only be carried out by the *Cohain Gadol*? What parts of this description could continue after the Temple ritual/service (*avodah*) was no longer possible? Why?
2. What are holy ways of “afflicting your soul”? How might you interpret that commandment?
3. Why do you think fasting (a total fast - both food and water) was made a key observance?
4. There are Jews who yearn for the rebuilding of the Temple and the reinstatement of the sacrificial system. What might be lost and what gained were that ever to happen?

