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יוֹם כִּפּוּר תשפ"ה October 11-12, 2024



עִנְיְנֵי דְיוֹקָא • The Calendar

The Torah's name for the holiday on the tenth day of Tishrei is יוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים (Yom haKippurim, the Day of Atonement). We call it Yom Kippur for short.

Vayikra 23:28

...It is a Day of Atonement to atone for you before the Lord your God.

ויקרא כג:כח

...יוֹם כִּפֻּרִים הוּא לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם:

"Atonement" means forgiveness. But why is the tenth day of Tishrei a good day for us to get forgiveness from God?

It all goes back to the חֵטְא הָעֵגֶל (het ha-eigel, sin of the golden calf). God saved Benei Yisrael from Egypt and then gave them the Torah. But right after that, they built a golden calf and began worshiping it. Moshe smashed the לֻחוֹת (luhot, tablets), and God wanted to destroy Benei Yisrael. But Moshe begged for them to be forgiven. When did all this happen? Rashi (in his comments to Devarim 9:18) explains the dates:

- How does it change your understanding of Yom Kippur to know that it's the day we were forgiven for one of the worst sins in the Torah?
- According to this, Yom Kippur was also the day we finally got the luhot to keep! What does receiving the Torah have to do with atonement?



17 TAMMUZ — Moshe returned after 40 days on Har Sinai. He saw Benei Yisrael worshiping the eigel. He broke the luhot.

18 TAMMUZ — Moshe went back up Har Sinai to ask for forgiveness.

29 AV — God told Moshe to make a new set of luhot.

10 TISHREI (YOM KIPPUR) — Moshe came down with the new luhot. The people were forgiven.

תְּפִלָּה • Prayer

In the בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ (Beit HaMikdash, Holy Temple), the main event of Yom Kippur was the עֲבוֹדָה (avodah), the service led by the כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל (kohen gadol, High Priest). This ritual is sadly missing from Yom Kippur today because we do not have a Beit HaMikdash or a kohen gadol anymore. So our Musaf prayers describe that avodah service in great detail. When we say Musaf, we imagine what it might have been like to see that avodah happen long ago, and we pray to be able to see it again one day.

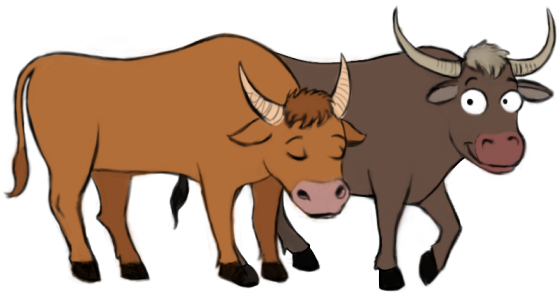
There were many important parts of the avodah.

1 קָרְבַּן חַטָּאת (korban hattat, sin or cleansing offering)

The kohen gadol would offer three different korban hattat sacrifices.

1. One was a bull. One of these would be offered on any holiday or Rosh Hodesh. The two others were special just for Yom Kippur.
2. There was another bull, too. This was for the sins of the kohen gadol, his family, and the other kohanim.
3. There was also a goat for the sins of all the Jewish people.





2 וִדּוּי (vidui, confession)

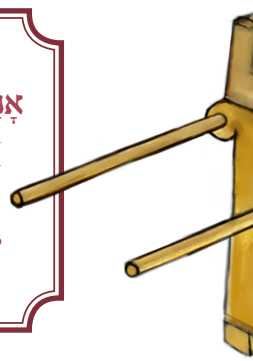
Vidui is part of doing תְּשׁוּבָה (teshuvah, repentance). It's admitting out loud that you did something wrong. During the avodah, the kohen gadol would say vidui three times, once before each hattat.

Here's what the kohen gadol would say before offering the hattat for himself and his family:

From Musaf for Yom Kippur

אָנָּא הַשֵּׁם. חָטָאתִי. עָוִיתִי. פָּשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי.
אָנָּא בַשֵּׁם. כַּפֶּר נָא לַחֲטָאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְּשָׁעִים. שֶׁחָטָאתִי וְשֶׁעָוִיתִי וְשֶׁפָּשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי.

Please, God. I have transgressed, I have sinned, I have done wrong before You, I and my household.
Please, with the name of God, forgive the transgressions, sins, and wrongdoings that I have transgressed, sinned, and wronged before You, I and my household.



DEVASH | YOM KIPPUR 5785 Content and editing by Shoshie Lockshin, Jeremy Tabick, Jason Rogoff, and Effy Unterman. Design by Jen Klor. Illustration by Chaim File.



3 Bowing

When the kohen gadol said vidui, he would pronounce God's full name in a way we don't do anymore. This would happen four times during the avodah. Saying this name had a powerful impact!

וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם הָעוֹמְדִים בָּעֲזָרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא
מְפֹרָשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל בִּקְדֻשָּׁה וּבְטָהֳרָה
הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים
בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

From Musaf for Yom Kippur

When the kohanim and the people standing in the azarah (courtyard) would hear God's most honored and awesome name clearly coming out of the mouth of the Kohen Gadol with holiness and purity, they would bend and bow and fall upon their faces and say: Blessed be the name of the glory of God's kingdom forever and ever!



4 Goats

Two goats were brought before the kohen gadol. One of these would be the hattat for the Jewish people's sins. The other would be led to the wilderness to be thrown off a cliff. But how to decide which goat was which? By lottery.

5 Sprinkling blood

The avodah was messy! The kohen gadol would sprinkle a lot of blood in a lot of directions.

He sprinkled the blood of the Yom Kippur hattat bull and goat inside the קֹדֶשׁ הַקָּדָשִׁים (kodesh ha-kodashim, Holy of Holies) and onto the פָּרֹכֶת (parokhet, curtain). He would sprinkle once upwards, and seven times downwards, counting out loud:

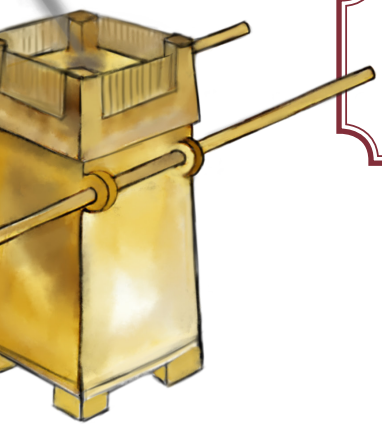




וְכַךְ הָיְתָה מוֹנָה. אַחַת. אַחַת וְאַחַת. אַחַת וּשְׁתַּיִם. אַחַת וְשָׁלֹשׁ. אַחַת
וְאַרְבַּע. אַחַת וְחָמֵשׁ. אַחַת וְשֵׁשׁ. אַחַת וְשֶׁבַע.

From Musaf for Yom Kippur

Here's how he would count: 1, 1+1, 1+2, 1+3, 1+4, 1+5, 1+6, 1+7.



6 קְטֹרֶת (ketoret, incense)

The kohen gadol brought a ketoret offering into the kodesh ha-kodashim and placed it between the poles of the אָרֹן (aron, ark). He would stay and wait for smoke to fill the space before leaving.

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מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

What kind of prayer might the כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל (kohen gadol, High Priest) have said when he was inside the קֹדֶשׁ הַקָּדָשִׁים (kodesh ha-kodashim, Holy of Holies) on Yom Kippur?

תלמוד בבלי ברכות דף ז עמוד א

אָמַר רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל בֶּן אֱלִישָׁע: פַּעַם אַחַת, נִכְנַסְתִּי לְהַקְטִיר קְטוֹרֶת לִפְנֵי וְלִפְנִים, וְרָאִיתִי אַכְתְּרִיאֵ-ל יָ-הּ ה' צְבָאוֹת, שֶׁהוּא יוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רָם וְנִשָּׂא,

וְאָמַר לִי: "יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנִי, בָּרְכֵנִי!"

אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ: "יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, שֶׁיִּכְבְּשׁוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ אֶת כַּעַסְךָ, וְיִגְּולוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ עַל מִדּוֹתֶיךָ, וְתִתְנַהֵג עִם בָּנֶיךָ בְּמִדַּת הָרַחֲמִים, וְתִכָּנֵס לָהֶם לִפְנִים מִשּׁוּרַת הַדִּין."

וְנִעְנַע לִי בְּרֹאשׁוֹ.

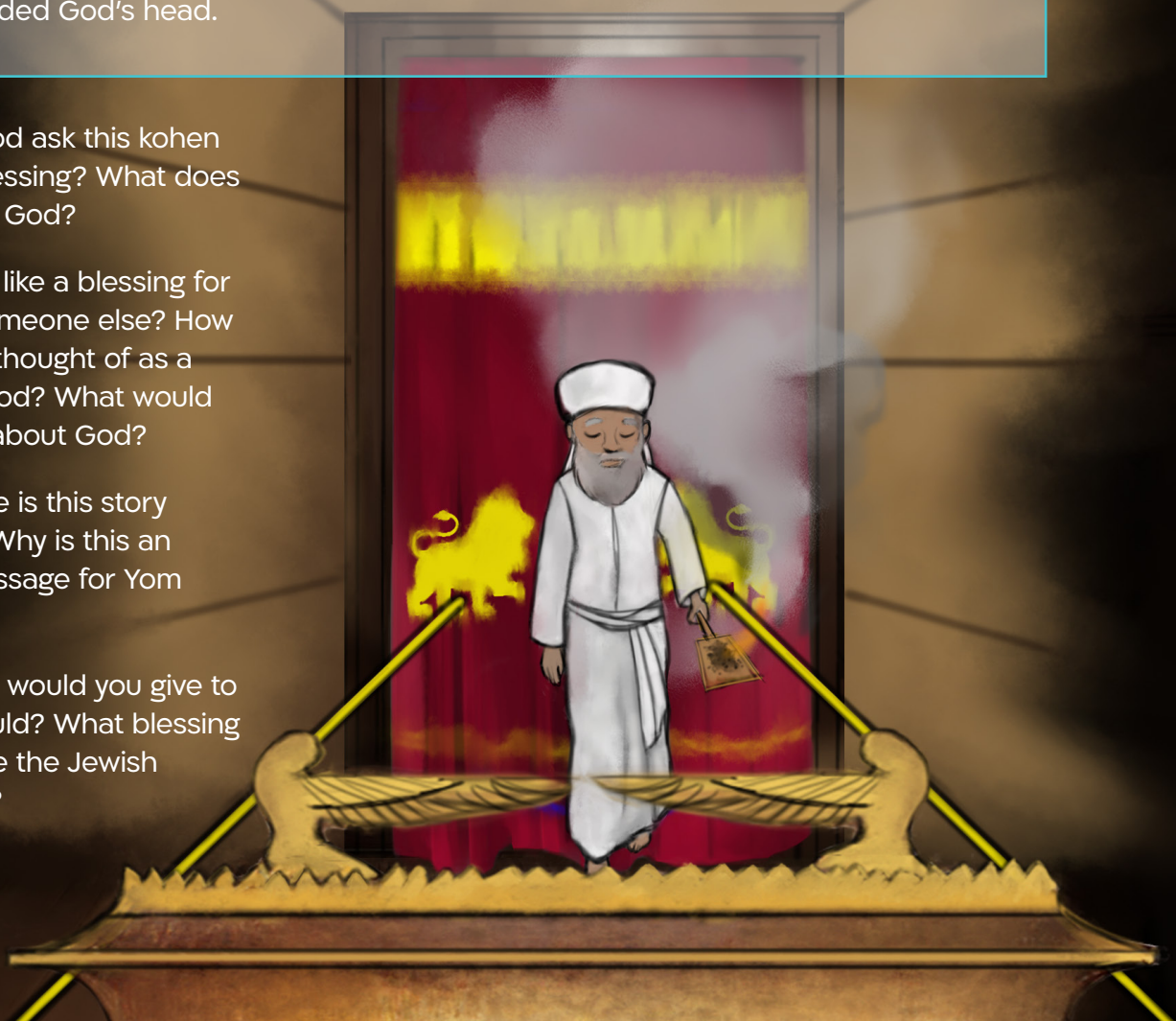
Talmud Bavli Berakhot 7a

R. Yishmael ben Elisha said: Once, I entered to offer ketoret (incense) in the Holy of Holies. And I saw Akatriel Yah, God of Hosts, Who was sitting on a high and lofty throne.

God said to me, "Yishmael, My son, bless Me!"

I said to God, "Let it be Your will that Your mercy will conquer Your anger, and Your mercy should roll over Your attributes, and You should act toward Your children with the attribute of mercy, and enter for them beyond the letter of the law."

And God nodded God's head.



- Why would God ask this kohen gadol for a blessing? What does this say about God?
- Does it sound like a blessing for God, or for someone else? How might this be thought of as a blessing for God? What would this teach us about God?
- What message is this story teaching us? Why is this an important message for Yom Kippur?
- What blessing would you give to God if you could? What blessing would you give the Jewish people? Why?