

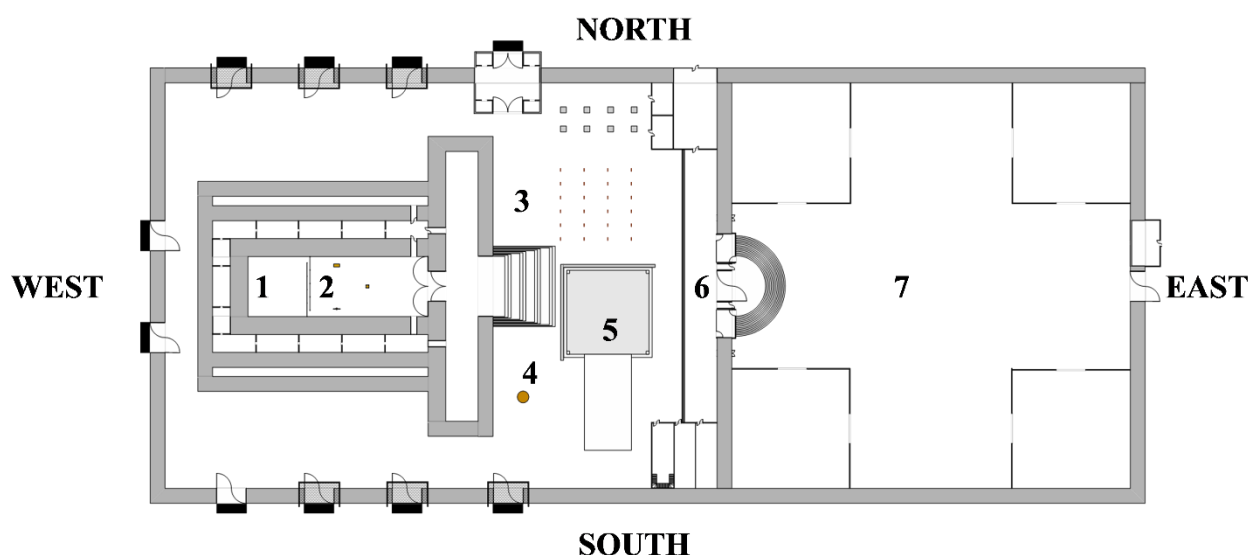
Appendix 16

The Avodah: Terms and Concepts

Most of the explanations below are a relatively brief and simplistic summary of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch's extensive explanations of all aspect of the avodah in the Beis Hamikdash. Here is not the place for a full detailed account of the symbolism of each piece of clothing of the Kohen Gadol, why what animals are used for which Korban, the differences of how the blood was sprinkled or splashed when and where, as well as all the Mincha offering and pourings of wine. But it is self-understood that they are not random!

Kodesh Kodoshim / Heichal / Azara קודש קודשים / היכל / עזרה

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1. **Kodesh Kodoshim:** During most of the time of the first Beis Hamikdash the Aron was in here.
2. **Heichal:** When you are in the Heichal facing west, facing the **Paroches/Wall** (facing towards the Kodesh Kodoshim) the Menorah is to your left, the Shulchan is to your right and the Inside-Mizbeiach Hazahav is in the middle.
Paroches/Wall separating the Heichal and the Kodesh Kodoshim: During the first Beis Hamikdash there was a wall (and possibly curtain in the doorway). In the second Beis Hamikdash there was a double curtain.
3. **Azarah / Courtyard.** The Shechita of the korbanos on Yom Kippur took place to the north of the Mizbeiach.
4. **Kiyor** where kohanim would generally do Kiddush Yadayim V'raglayim.
5. **Outside Mizbeiach**
6. **Shaar Nikanor / the Eastern Gate** where the goral lottery for the two goats took place. It was from this gate that goat L'Azazel was sent out.
7. **Ezras Nashim** where the Kriyas HaTorah of the Kohen Gadol took place.

Kiddush Yadayim V'Raglayim קידוש ידיים ורגליים

What is it? Every day, every Kohen had to immerse in a mikveh before entering the Azara. As well, before doing the avodah, each kohen had to perform “kiddush yadayim v’raglayim”. This meant washing their hands and feet with water from the Kiyor (a copper vessel with spouts). Standing next to one of the spouts, he would place his right hand on top of his right foot and his left hand atop his left foot. While the water was flowing from the spout, he would gently rub his feet with his hands.

When does he do it? On Yom Kippur, in addition to immersing in the mikveh and washing his hands and feet before beginning the avoda, the Kohen Gadol also had to immerse in the mikveh each time he changed from Bigdei Zahav to Bigdei Lavan and vice versa (four changes took place on Yom Kippur, as will be explained in the Avodah). Additionally, he had to perform kiddush yadayim v’raglayim with each change of clothing: once before removing the old set and once after putting on the new. Thus, the Kohen Gadol immersed in the mikveh five times (once before he started the avodah, and one for each change of clothes) and washed his hands and feet ten times on Yom Kippur (once before the avodah, eight for the four changing of clothes, and one at the end when he took off the Bigdei Zahav and put on his personal clothes to go home).

Where does he do it? During the year, he used the Kiyor like the rest of the kohanim. On Yom Kippur, in his honor, the water was brought to him in a golden vessel so that he would not have to keep going back to the Kiyor.

What is the message in this avodah? This is better understood after an explanation of the two kinds of garments the Kohen Gadol wears on Yom Kippur. See below.

Bigdei Zahav / Bigdei Lavan בגדי זהב / בגדי לבן

What are they? The Bigdei Zahav are the standard eight garments the Kohen Gadol wore every day. They are referred to as Bigdei Zahav since some of them were made with gold threads. Bigdei Lavan are the four garments made from pure white linen, which the Kohen Gadol wore only on Yom Kippur during the four times he entered the Kodosh Kodoshim.

What do they symbolize? On one hand, we must be aware of our great potential and the ability to use all that Hashem has given us to bring kedusha to the world. This is symbolized by the Bigdei Zahav – royal looking golden garments with precious stones and royal colors. Each of us have been given potential to accomplish great things – as long we sanctify our talents and dedicate our hands (what we do) and our feet (where we choose to go in life) to become the best “we” that we can be in the service of Hashem. Thus, the Kohen Gadol immersed in the mikveh and washed his hands and feet with kadosh water from the Kiyor before putting on those clothes.

But on the other hand, when we stand directly in front of Hashem, we must be humbled by the fact that in truth, we are full of imperfections and do not always use all His beautiful gifts properly. And considering all He does for us, in absolute truth, our Avodas Hashem seems quite weak! That is the simple pure white Bigdei Lavan worn by the Kohen Gadol in the Kodosh Kodoshim. Coming face to face with our imperfections is ALSO an important avodah and thus also demands the mikveh and washing the hands and feet. This is the tricky balance of our growth. On one hand, to motivate ourselves to continued growth we must have a sense of the greatness humans can attain and be proud of one’s unique Bigdei Zahav! But without a healthy dose of our imperfections, we can become haughty and complacent. On the other hand, focusing only on one’s Bigdei Lavan imperfections and “colorless” avodas Hashem will make you give up without even trying! Thus, we need to always be conscious of our Bigdei Zahav! And perhaps the most important change of clothes was at the end of

the Avodah of Yom Kippur when the Kohen Gadol changed into his weekday clothes. That too demanded kiddush yadayim v'raglayim! The whole point of the Avodah of Yom Kippur is to bring all these messages into our daily life! See the Introduction to Neilah for more on this idea.

Ketores – Incense קטורת

What is it? The Ketores – Incense was made up of eleven ingredients (as we say in פטום הקטורת) finely ground so that they would mix thoroughly and produce an even, pleasant fragrance. On Yom Kippur it was extra finely ground. It was brought twice daily on the inside Mizbeiach Hazahav, once in the morning and once in the evening together with the Korban Tamid. On Yom Kippur there was another special Ketores brought inside the Kodosh Kodoshim.

How was it done daily? After the Korban Hatamid had been slaughtered (Shechita), and the blood had been received in a vessel called the mizrak (Kabbalah) and the blood had been taken to the Mizbeiach (Holacha) and been dashed by the Kohen on the northeast and southwest corners of the Mizbeiach (Zerika) – it was time for the Ketores. The winner of the third payis lottery would bring the incense for the Ketores into the Heichal to the Mizbeiach Hazahav. A different Kohen would bring a shovel full of coals from the outer Mizbeiach, spread them out onto the top of the Mizbeiach Hazahav and then bow down and leave (since no one was allowed to be in the Heichal at the burning of the Ketores except for the Kohen who was chosen to do the Avodah of the Ketores). Since the amount of incense to be burned had to be two handfuls of incense, another Kohen would enter and take the container of incense from the first kohen (the one chosen to do the Ketores that day,) and pour the Ketores into his cupped hands (Chafina). He would then also bow and leave. Now, the first Kohen was ready to do the avodah of Ketores by gently pouring the incense over the burning coals that were on top of the Mizbeiach hazahav. He would then also bow down and leave.

How was the extra Ketores done on Yom Kippur? On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol had to do every avodah himself. First, he would scoop up coals from the outer Mizbeiach. He was then brought an empty ladle (כף) and also a ladle filled to the top with extra fine incense. Using both his hands, he scooped up two handfuls of incense from the ladle and emptied them into the empty ladle. He quickly took the shovel of coals in his right hand and the ladle with ketores in his left and entered the Kodosh Kodoshim (see below for details) and put the shovel of coals down in between the poles of the Aron (or in the second Baies Hamikdash, where the Aron would have been). As explained in Appendix 17, now is the hardest part of this avodah since the majority of opinions say that the Kohen Gadol had to somehow first pour all the incense into both his cupped hands (Chafina) and not directly from the ladle onto the burning embers (just like the daily Ketores is poured from his hands on to the coals on the Mizbeiach Hazahav). Authorities disagree as to how this was done. Some suggest that he actually held the ladle's handle between his teeth and pushed the Ketores into his hands with his thumbs; some say he held it with his elbows or knees and then rotated the ladle so that the Ketores poured into his hands. The Yerushalmi says that he threw the ladle up and over, cupped his hands and caught the falling Incense. And there is an opinion that he could simply empty the ketores directly from the ladle onto the coals in the shovel. He poured the Ketores onto the coals starting from the west - furthest from him, moving his hands with the Ketores eastward towards himself so that his hands would not get burned from the rising smoke! Once all the Ketores was on the burning coals he waited for the smoke to fill the Kodosh Kodoshim, and then he left (backing out). He said a tefilah in the Heichal before starting the avodah of sprinkling the blood, but he kept it short so that people should not get nervous that he had died in the Kodosh Kodoshim! Note that the Ashkenaz Avodah does not mention this tefilah at all at this point, whereas the Sefard Avodah does, and gives us the text of what he said.

How did he enter the Kodesh Kodoshim? The Nusach Ashkenaz Piyut says that he walked in between the two curtains that separated the Heichal and the Kodesh Kodoshim, and then put the shovel of coals down in between the two poles of the Aron. This is a bit imprecise, as in the first Beis Hamikdash the separation was a wall called the Amah Traksin which had a doorway covered with one curtain, and in the second Beis Hamikdash there were two curtains rather than a wall, but there was no Aron! Some say the piyyut is describing the second Beis Hamikdash and the Kohen Gadol did walk between two curtains, pushing the curtains to the side with his elbow so that they should not catch fire from the burning coals. He then put down the shovel at the spot which had been between the two poles of the Aron when there was an Aron. (The Nusach Sefard Piyut does mention both options of where he put the shovel of coals – between the poles, and the spot theoretically between the two poles.) Some suggest that the Nusach Ashkenaz piyyut is describing the first Beis Hamikdash, and that the doorway had two curtains as an extra “protection” and thus he walked between them.

What was the “Tzedoki” issue with the Ketores? Unlike the way described above, the Tzedokim held that the Ketores should first be prepared **outside** of the Kodesh Kodoshim (pouring the incense on to the coals in the shovel) and then brought into the Kodesh Kodoshim already smoking. It was this specific point to which the Kohen Gadol was sworn during his seven-day preparation that he would not prepare the incense “outside” as per the Tzedokim.

What does this all symbolize? The cloud of smoke of the Ketores represents the idea that our human vision is clouded, and the ways of Hashem are not always clear to us. But they are sweet! Just like the incense, which by combining many different spices including the bad smelling chelbanah filled the air with a wonderful, sweet fragrance, so too, taking all that Hashem does as one picture – it has a wonderful fragrance and is all the best for us! The Tzedokim felt that we choose how to serve Hashem in ways that make sense to us (we do the Avodah of the Ketores outside the Kodesh Kodoshim) and then bring what we have done into Hashem. That is arrogance of the highest degree. Instead, we first enter the Kodesh Kodoshim and then do the Avodah as Hashem commanded.

The Two Goats: L’Hashem (Korban Chatas) / Hamishtaleiach (sent to Azazel)

שְׁעִיר לַד' וְשְׁעִיר הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח

What are they? As explained in the Avodah (see page xxx), in the eastern part of the courtyard stood a pair of he-goats bought with communal funds that had to be identical in value, appearance and height. The Kohen Gadol mixed up two golden lots, and then lifted them out of the box. He leaned over and placed the lots on the respective goats - one lot for Hashem as a Korban Chatas and the other is the Mishtaleiach to be sent to Azazel and thrown over a rocky cliff.

What does all this symbolize? The message of the goats being identical is that appearances, wealth, stature have no compelling influence on one’s choice. At any state of life, at any stage, any degree of power or distinction, at any time, any person can choose to be L’Hashem or chas v’shalom L’Azazel. The Kohen says vidui on the goat L’Hashem and then sacrifices it – and this goat become a korban! Us too, if we are prepared to admit our shortcomings, and are prepared to sacrifice instant pleasure for long term kedusha, we can ourselves become “L’Hashem” and our homes become a mini-Beis Hamikdash. On the other hand, if we are not prepared to make any sacrifices in our material lives for the benefit of our neshamos and turn our backs on the Beis Hamikdash, then (no matter how much “stuff” we accumulate in our short time here on earth) we are in essence heading for a spiritual wilderness and self destruction.