HALAKHA

Changes in the Yom Kippur service – The High Priest sanctifies his hands and feet from the laver; on Yom Kippur he uses a golden flask. On every other day the priests ascend the altar on the eastern side of the ramp and descend on the western side; on Yom Kippur they ascend and descend in the middle of the ramp. On every other day the priest who is privileged to scoop the coals uses a silver coal pan and pours the coals into one made of gold; on Yom Kippur the High Priest scoops the coals with a golden coal pan. The silver coal pan was heavy, but the gold pan was light. The silver coal pan had a short handle, but the gold one had a long handle (Rambam Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim 2:5).

The arrangements of wood on the altar – On every other day there were three arrangements of wood on the altar, but on Yom Kippur there were four, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei in his dispute with Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehuda (Rambam Sefer Avoda; Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim 2:5).

GEMARA

The mishna states that the blood of the bull is stirred by a priest standing on the fourth row of tiles in the Sanctuary, while the High Priest sacrifices the incense in the Holy of Holies. The Gemara asks: But is it not written “And there shall be no man in the Tent of Meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Sanctuary, until he comes out” (Leviticus 16:17)? How then could the stirrer be standing in the Sanctuary? Rav Yehuda said: Emend and teach the mishna as saying: The fourth row of tiles of the Sanctuary, i.e., outside the Sanctuary on the fourth row from its entrance.

The Sages taught in a baraita: “The verse states: “And there shall be no man in the Tent of Meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Sanctuary, until he comes out.” The verse prohibits anyone to be inside the Tent of Meeting during the burning of the incense.

I might have thought nobody should be present, even in the Temple courtyard. Therefore, the verse states “in the Tent of Meeting,” limiting the prohibition to the Temple itself. I have derived only that a prohibition exists in the Tent of Meeting of the Tabernacle that was in the desert, from where do I derive that the prohibition applies also to the Tabernacle that stood in Shiloh, and that it applies also to the Eternal House, i.e., the Temple in Jerusalem? The verse states “in the Sanctuary,” indicating that the prohibition applies to any Sanctuary.

I have derived only that a prohibition exists during the burning of the incense; from where do I derive that the prohibition applies also during the presentations of the bull’s blood in the Holy of Holies? The verse states: “When he goes in to make atonement,” and atonement is achieved through the presentations of blood. I have derived only that a prohibition exists from the time of his entrance into the Holy of Holies; from where is it derived that the prohibition remains in force until his exit? The verse states: “Until he comes out.”

HALAKHA

Removing oneself during the inner service – The priest blesses as follows: Every day, during the burning of the incense, all priests vacated the entire Sanctuary area as well as the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar, until the priest burning the incense exited. Similarly on Yom Kippur, those same areas were empty of people when the High Priest went into the Sanctuary to sprinkle blood of the sin-offering there. However, only the Sanctuary itself had to be empty when the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies to burn incense; the area between the Entrance Hall and altar was not off limits then. This follows the details presented in the mishnaot and baraitot cited in the Gemara here (Rambam Sefer Avoda; Hilkhot Terumot U’Musafim 3:3, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim 4:2).
The baraita concludes by expounding the final part of the verse: “And have made atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.” (Leviticus 16:17). This teaches that his atonement precedes the atonement of his household; the atonement of his household precedes that atonement of his brethren, the priests; the atonement of his brethren, the priests, precedes the atonement of the entire community of Israel.

The Gemara analyzes the baraita: The Master said in the baraita: I have derived only that a prohibition exists during the burning of the incense. From where in the verse could this have been inferred? Rava said, and similarly Rabbi Yitzhak bar Avdini said, and similarly Rabbi Elazar said: The conclusion of that verse states: “And have made atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.” Which act of atonement is the same for him, and for his household, and for his brethren, the priests, and for the entire community of Israel? You must say this is the burning of the incense.

Does incense effect atonement? The Torah mentions the concept of atonement only with regard to offerings. Yes, as Rabbi Hananya teaches in a baraita: We learned of the incense that it effects atonement, as it is stated: “And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people” (Numbers 17:12). And the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: For what does incense effect atonement? For slander. And why is that? Let something that is done in secret, i.e., the incense, which is burned in seclusion within the Sanctuary, come and effect atonement for an act done in secret, i.e., slander, which is generally said in private.

We learned in a mishna there: They remove themselves from the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar during the burning of the incense. Rabbi Elazar said: They taught that this is true only during the burning of the incense of the Sanctuary, but during the burning of the incense in the innermost chamber, i.e., the Holy of Holies, people are required to remove themselves only from the Sanctuary. They do not need to remove themselves from the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar.

Rav Adda bar Ahava raised an objection to Rabbi Elazar’s opinion from a baraita, and some say it unattributed: Rabbi Yosei says: Just as they remove themselves from the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar during the burning of the incense, they similarly remove themselves during the blood presentations of the bull of the anointed priest, i.e., of the High Priest, which he brings if he issues an erroneous halakhic ruling and acts upon it; and also during the blood presentations of the bull for an unwitting communal sin brought if the Sanhedrin issues an erroneous halakhic ruling and the community acts upon it; and also during the blood presentations of the goats of idol worship brought for an inadvertent communal transgression of idol worship.

The baraita continues: If so, what higher standard is applicable to the Sanctuary relative to the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar? Only that those in the Sanctuary remove themselves both during the incense burning and also during the blood presentations, which is not during the incense burning. Those who are in the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar remove themselves only during the incense burning but not during the blood presentations.

The Gemara explains the challenge: In any case, it is evident from the baraita that during the incense burning they do remove themselves. What, is it not referring to during the burning of the incense of the innermost chamber, i.e., the Holy of Holies? This would contradict Rabbi Elazar’s opinion.
The Gemara defends his opinion: No, it is referring to during the burning of the incense of the Sanctuary. The Gemara asks: If so, how can the baraita say: What higher standard is applicable to the Sanctuary? This implies that it is superior only with respect to one higher standard. Are there not more? Surely, there is this higher standard, that whereas the people in the Sanctuary remove themselves both during its own, i.e., the Sanctuary’s, incense burning and during the incense burning of the innermost chamber, i.e., the Holy of Holies, but in the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar they remove themselves only during the burning of the incense of the Sanctuary.

The Gemara explains: This is in fact what the baraita is teaching: It is teaching only that those in the Sanctuary remove themselves both during the burning of the incense and also during the blood presentations, which is not during the burning of the incense; from the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar they do not remove themselves, except during the burning of the incense.

But there is also this higher standard, that whereas from the Sanctuary they remove themselves both during its own sanctification, i.e., the blood presentations in the Sanctuary, and during the sanctification of the innermost chamber, i.e., the Holy of Holies, but from the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar, they remove themselves only during the sanctification of the Sanctuary. Rava said: Indeed, there are numerous distinctions, but the baraita teaches only one because all the distinctions fit into one category of removal.

The Gemara continues to analyze the baraita: The Master said in the baraita: Just as they remove themselves from the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar during the burning of the incense, they similarly remove themselves during the blood presentations of the bull of the anointed priest; of the bull for an unwitting communal sin; and of the goats of idol worship. From where do we derive this? Rabbi Pedat said: It is derived by a verbal analogy between the word atonement said in connection with those offerings and the word atonement from the prohibition on Yom Kippur.

Rav Aḥa bar Aha said: Learn from this that there is a prohibition in the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar. The higher standards applied to the various areas in the Temple are defined by Torah law, and the Sages learned them as a tradition.

As if it could enter your mind that these standards are defined by rabbinic law, what is different about the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar that the prohibition applies only there? Perhaps other priests would accidentally happen to enter the Sanctuary while incense is burning there. But if that is the reason, then the rabbinic decree should require that they remove themselves also from the entire Temple courtyard, since perhaps they would accidentally happen to enter. The fact that the prohibition does not extend to the Temple courtyard suggests that the standards are defined by Torah law.

The Gemara rejects Rav Aḥa bar Aha’s reasoning: The prohibition could indeed be rabbinic. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to limit it to the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar, as follows: Since there is nothing that separates it from the Sanctuary, the distinction between the two areas is not conspicuous, and therefore people may err and enter. But with regard to the Temple courtyard, since there is the outer altar that separates the rest of the Temple courtyard from the Sanctuary, the distinction between the areas is conspicuous, and therefore there is no need to extend the prohibition throughout the Temple courtyard.
Rava said: Learn from this fact that there is a rabbinic prohibition in the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar. The sanctity of the Entrance Hall and the sanctity of the Sanctuary is one matter, i.e., there they share the same sanctity, and therefore the Torah prohibition applies to the Entrance Hall as well. For if it could enter your mind to say that these areas have two distinct levels of sanctity, it would emerge that the prohibition to be in the Entrance Hall is itself a rabbinic decree. But will we arise and issue one decree to prevent violation of another decree by prohibiting being present in the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar, lest one enter the Entrance Hall itself?

The Gemara rejects Rava’s reasoning: No, this would not be a case of issuing one decree to prevent violation of another decree, because the Entrance Hall and the area between the Entrance Hall and the altar share one sanctity. Consequently, any prohibition applied to one will certainly also apply to the other. However, the Sanctuary and the Entrance Hall have two distinct sanctities.

§ The mishna states: On every other day, a priest would scoop up the coals with a coal pan made of silver and pour the coals from there into a coal pan of gold. The Gemara asks: What is the reason the gold pan was not used to scoop the coals? The Gemara answers: Because the Torah spared the money of the Jewish people.

Since the pan is worn away with use, it is preferable to use a less expensive silver pan.

§ The mishna continues: But on this day, on Yom Kippur, the High Priest scoops up with a coal pan of gold, and with that coal pan, he would bring the coals into the Holy of Holies. The Gemara asks: What is the reason that on Yom Kippur only one pan is used? Due to the weakness of the High Priest.

He has to perform the entire service by himself while fasting; using only one pan minimizes his exertion.

§ The mishna states: On every other day, a priest scoops up the coals with a coal pan of four kavanot and pours the coals into a coal pan of three kavanot. Rabbi Yosei says: On every other day, a priest scoops up with a coal pan of a se’ah, which is six kavanot, and then pours the coals into a coal pan of three kavanot. It was taught in a mishna (Tamid 33a): As he poured from a pan of four kavanot to a pan of three kavanot, a kavanot became scattered, and he swept them into the canal that passed through the Temple and ran to the Kidron brook.

It was taught in one baraita: A kavanot of coals was scattered. And it was taught in another baraita: Two kavanot were scattered. The Gemara comments: Granted, this baraita, which teaches that a single kavanot was scattered, is understandable. It is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, the first tanna of the mishna, who maintain that coals are poured from a coal pan of four kavanot to one of three. But that baraita, which teaches that two kavanot of coals were scattered, in accordance with whose opinion is it? It is not in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis and not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei.

According to Rabbi Yosei, three kavanot of coals would have been scattered.

Rav Hisda said: It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yohanan ben Beroka, as it was taught in a baraita: Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yohanan ben Beroka, says: With a coal pan of two kavanot he would bring the coals into the Holy of Holies. If one accepts the opinion of the Rabbis that the coals were scooped with a coal pan of four kavanot, two kavanot were scattered.

Rav Ashi said: You can even say that this baraita is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, and this is what he is saying: On every other day, a priest scooped with a coal pan of a desert se’ah, which is five Jerusalem kavanot, and then he poured the coals into a coal pan of three Jerusalem kavanot. Therefore, two kavanot would be scattered.
His arm could assist him — On every other day of the year, the handle of the coal pan is short. On Yom Kippur it is longer to make the job of carrying the coal pan easier, lest the High Priest overexert himself and become weak. (Rambam Sefer Avoda; Nikkhah Avodat Yom Ha’Kippurim 3:2).

The mishna states: On every other day, the coal pan was heavy, but on this day it was light. It was taught in a baraita: On every other day its side was thick but on this day it was soft and thin. On every other day its handle was short but on this day it was long. What is the reason? So that the arm of the High Priest could assist him in carrying the coal pan, i.e., he could support the coal pan by resting it against his arm rather than bear the entire weight in his hand.

It was taught in a baraita: On every other day it did not have a ring, but on this day it has a ring on the end of the handle, which clatters against it and makes a noise in fulfillment of the verse “And the sound thereof shall be heard when he goes in to the Sanctuary” (Exodus 28:35); this is the statement of the son of the Deputy.

The mishna states: On every other day, it was of greenish gold but on this day it was of a red gold. Rav Hisda said: There are seven types of gold mentioned in the Bible: Gold, and good gold, and gold of Ophir (1 Kings 10:11), and glistering gold (1 Kings 10:18), and shafut gold (1 Kings 10:17), and closed gold (1 Kings 10:21), and parvayim gold (1 Chronicles 3:6). The Gemara explains the reason for these names: There is a distinction between gold and good gold, as it is written in the verse: “And the gold of that land is good” (Genesis 2:12), which indicates the existence of gold of a higher quality. Gold of Ophir is gold that comes from Ophir. Glistering [mufaz] gold is so named.

But on this day it was soft and thin: Since the coal pan used on Yom Kippur had a longer handle, had it not been made of thinner material it would have been heavier than the coal pan used throughout the year (Siah Yitzhak).

The arm of the High Priest could assist him — The handle extended to his underarm. He could therefore support it with his hands and the full length of his arm (Meiri).

Ring [nisahtik] — There are many suggested interpretations for this. Rashi and several ge’onim explain that there were two rings on it that clattered together when moved. The Me’iri suggests that the nisahtik was a base upon which the coal pan was placed. Others suggest that the nisahtik was a type of sheath that was placed over the coal pan’s handle. Because the coals sat on the coal pan for a time, the handle naturally became very hot and the sheath protected the priest’s hand (Tosafot; Tosafot Yeshanam). Some ge’onim explain that the sheath covered the entire coal pan to prevent the coals from becoming extinguished.

Red gold — שִׂרוּת: Some suggest the red gold was used because it was the most esteemed of the various types of gold, which is why it appears last in Rav Hisda’s list (Meiri). Others write that red gold was used because it was reminiscent of the sprinkling of the bull’s blood (Gevurat Ar; see Siah Yitzhak).

Resembles the luster of pearls: Rashi explains the reference is to the luster of pearls. The Jerusalem Talmud explains that it looks like the flame of a burning splint. According to another interpretation, mofaz is an abbreviation of zahav mirofaz, meaning gold from a place called Ofaz.

Types of gold: Gold of Ophir is pure gold and is soft and malleable. For practical purposes, such as the fashioning of vessels and the like, silver, bronze, and other substances must be added to create harder alloys. Even the addition of a small amount of a secondary metal has a great effect on the color and physical attributes of the gold, giving it a range of appearance from silvery white to blood red to bright green.

Because it resembles the luster of pearls [paz] in the way it glintens. Shafut gold is named as such because it is very malleable and is spun like thread [shenitve kehut]. Shafut is a contraction of the words shenitve kehut. Closed gold is so called because when a shop opens to sell it, all the other shops close, as no one is interested in purchasing any other type of gold. Parvayim gold is so called because its redness resembles the blood of bulls [parim].

Rav Ashi said: There are in fact only five types of gold, the last five in Rav Hisda’s list. Gold and good gold are not independent categories; rather, each and every one of the types of gold has two varieties: Regular gold and a superior variety called good gold. That was also taught in a baraita with regard to parvayim gold. On every other day the coal pan was made of greenish gold, but on this day it was made of a red gold, and this is the parvayim gold which resembles the blood of bulls.