

Seder Moed | Masechet Yoma 14-20 | Shabbat Parashat Emor | 13-19 Iyyar (Apr. 25-May 1)



Daf 14: פְּרָה אֲדוּמָה – RED HEIFER

King Solomon was the wisest person in the world. Nonetheless, even he could not understand the reason behind one Torah law: that of the *Parah Adumah* (red heifer).



Shechitah was performed on the *Parah Adumah*, and then its carcass was burned. Ashes left from the fire were mixed with water.

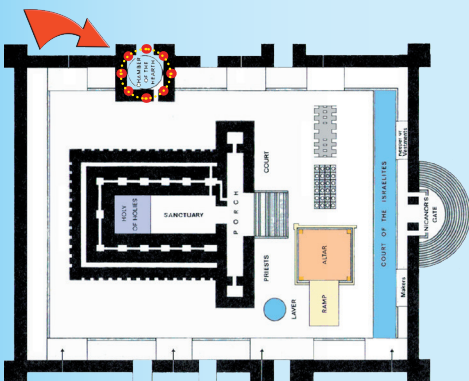
This special water mixture was called "*mei chatat*" (waters of transgression). Sprinkling this water on a *tameh* (ritually impure) person renders that person *tahor* (ritually pure).

And yet, if a person who was *tahor* touched this water, that person would become *tameh*. How is it possible to understand that when *mei chatat* touches a person who was *tameh*, that person becomes *tahor*, but if a person who was *tahor* comes into contact with that same water, that person becomes *tameh*? Even Solomon, the wisest king among men, was unable to understand this seeming contradiction.

Daf 15: לְשֵׁכֶת בֵּית הַמֹּקֵד – CHAMBER OF THE HEARTH

The Talmud teaches us about the various *lishkot* (chambers) in the *Beit HaMikdash*. The rooms of the *lishkot* were used to fill the various needs of the *Beit HaMikdash*. One of the *lishkot* was called: "*Lishkat Beit HaMoked*" (Chamber of the Hearth). The "*moked*" was a fire. In this *lishkah*, there was a perpetual fire burning, and the *kohanim* would warm themselves by the heat of that fire.

Why did the *kohanim* need to warm up? *Kohanim* in the *Beit HaMikdash* worked barefooted. Sometimes, they would get cold from walking around without shoes and enter the *Lishkat Beit HaMoked* to warm up.



In the corners of the *Lishkat Beit HaMoked* there were small rooms. The stones from the *mizbe'ach* (altar) desecrated by the Greeks during the Second Temple period were stored in one of these rooms. The Greeks had sacrificed idolatrous offerings on the *mizbe'ach*. Therefore, after the Hasmoneans defeated the Greeks (Chanukah), they hid the old, desecrated *mizbe'ach* and constructed a new *mizbe'ach*.



FROM THE TALMUD SEDER MOED MASECHET YOMA DAF 19

מן התלמוד:

סדר מועד, מסכת יומא דף י"ט:

"דאמר רב הונא בריה דרב יהושע: הני כהני - שלוחי דרחמנא נינהו. דאי אמרת שלוחי דידן נינהו - מי איכא מידי דאנן לא מצינן למעבד ושלוחי דידן מצו עבדי?"

Translation

שלוחי ... Shluchei ... Emmissaries
מצינן ... Matzeenan ... They are able
דידן ... Deedan ... Our

Explanation

Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, said *kohanim* must be God's *shlichim* (emissaries) because had they been emissaries of *Am Yisrael*, how would they be able to do things that ordinary Israelites are unable to do (e.g., perform sacrifices)?



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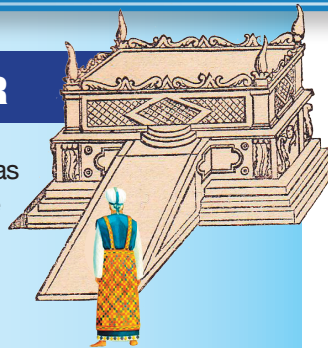
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Daf 16: המזבח החיצון – THE OUTER ALTAR

There were two *mizbechot* (altars) in the *Beit HaMikdash*. The first was the golden *mizbe'ach* located inside the *Heichel* (Sanctuary). The second was a *mizbe'ach* constructed in the *Azarah* (Courtyard), and therefore, this *mizbe'ach* was called the “outer *mizbe'ach*,” because it was outside the Sanctuary building.



In “*Hilchot Beit HaBechirah*” of the Rambam’s “*Mishneh Torah*,”* we learn that King Solomon constructed the *mizbe'ach* in the First *Beit HaMikdash* on the same spot where Cain and Abel built their *mizbe'ach*. Adam offered sacrifices at this location as well. Avraham Avinu also built the *mizbe'ach* for *Akeidat Yitzchak* (Binding of Isaac) on this exact spot. According to tradition, this was also the spot where Noah built his ark. Rambam adds that primordial man was created from the dust of the location of the *mizbe'ach*.

*This authoritative code of Jewish laws and ethics, is also known by the name י"ד החזקה “*Yad HaChazakah*,” or the Strong Hand, in part because י”ז symbolizes “14” in *gematria*, which corresponds to the number of volumes that make up the *Mishneh Torah*.

Daf 17: משמרות הכהנים בבית המקדש – PRIESTLY SHIFTS IN THE BEIT HAMIKDASH



The *Beit HaMikdash* was the holiest place in the world. *Kohanim* wanted to work there all the time to be privileged to fulfill the great *mitzvah* of sacrificing *korbanot* (offerings) to God.

The *kohanim* were divided into service *mishmarot* (shifts). Every priestly *mishmar* (shift) was privileged to serve a full week in the *Beit HaMikdash*, and on Shabbat the *mishmarot* rotated. Suppose a *kohen* arrived at the *Beit HaMikdash* and said, “Even though I do not belong to this week’s *mishmar*, is it possible for me to serve, nevertheless?” The *kohanim* whose turn it was to serve that week would respond: “We ask your forgiveness. We understand, but this week belongs to us. We apologize. Wait patiently for your turn.”

However, the *Kohen Gadol* is different from all other *kohanim*. He had a unique privilege -- whenever he wanted, he was permitted to officiate at the Temple service.

Daf 18: הכנות הכהן הגדול ליום הכיפורים – THE HIGH PRIEST'S PREPARATION FOR YOM KIPPUR

Leading up to *Yom Kippur*, the elders of the *Sanhedrin* studied the laws of the holiday with the *Kohen Gadol*. On the eve of *Yom Kippur*, the *Kohen Gadol* stood near the Niknor Gate of the *Beit HaMikdash* and examined all types of animals he would be required to sacrifice on *Yom Kippur*. The people brought bulls, rams, and sheep so that the *Kohen Gadol* could observe them and become accustomed to how each of these animals needed to be sacrificed. [Cont'd. on p. 3]



Dvar Torah
EMOR

אֵמֹר

The *kohanim* were obligated to fulfill several special commandments, one of which is the prohibition against defilement through contact with a corpse. What does the underlying concept behind this prohibition, and why precisely are the *kohanim* so commanded? Many of the religious beliefs and notions found worldwide regard God’s service as an escape from mundane life on earth. Many people believe that religious practice is expressed primarily through isolation, asceticism, and the abandonment of social life to create a disconnect from the world.

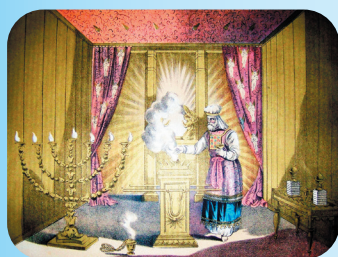
In contrast, the Israelite worldview emphasizes the sanctity of life and the imperative to sanctify all aspects of it. Therefore, the holy people of *Am Yisrael* — the *kohanim*, are commanded to fully separate themselves from death, as a symbol that *Am Yisrael* believes in the sanctity of life itself and *not* in the escape and separation from it.



[Cont'd. from p. 2] On *Yom Kippur* itself, the *Kohen Gadol* entered the *Kodesh Hakodashim* (Holy of Holies) and took a handful of *ketoret* (incense) to burn completely. The rite of taking the blended handfuls of *ketoret* was extremely complicated and challenging and required great skill. Therefore, on *erev Yom Kippur*, the elder *kohanim* would ascend to the “Chamber of the House of Avtinas” together with the *Kohen Gadol*. They prepared the *ketoret*, and the *Kohen Gadol* taught him the proper method of taking the required handfuls.



Daf 19: מְדוּעַ הַכּוֹהֵן הַגָּדוֹל הָיָה צָרִיךְ לְהִשָּׁבַע? – WHY WAS AN OATH ADMINISTERED TO THE HIGH PRIEST?



During the era of the Second *Beit HaMikdash*, there was a faction within *Am Yisrael* known as “Sadducees.” These Jews declared: “We are only willing to observe the mitzvot that are explicitly written in the Torah; not everything Moshe Rabbeinu orally relayed to *B’nei Yisrael*.”

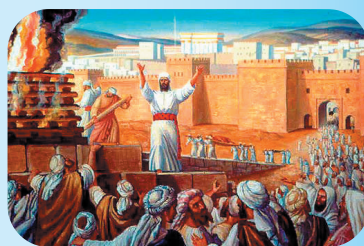
Therefore, on *Erev Yom Kippur*, they would tell the *Kohen Gadol*, “State under oath that when you enter the Holy of Holies, you intend to act in accordance with **all** of the *halachot* transmitted to Moshe Rabbeinu orally.” They feared that perhaps the *Kohen Gadol* might be a Sadducee, and if so, he would not behave in the *Kodesh Hakodashim* as was needed.

Daf 20: קוֹלוֹ הַחֲזָק שֶׁל הַכּוֹהֵן הַגָּדוֹל – THE BOOMING VOICE OF THE HIGH PRIEST

In the *Yom Kippur Musaf* prayer service, we recite the liturgical hymn “*Seder haAvodah*” about the *Kohen Gadol*’s *Yom Kippur* service in the Temple. Within *Seder haAvodah*, the *Kohen Gadol* intones the confession and declares in the name of the congregation: “I beseech You, God, I have sinned, acted wickedly, and rebelled against You ... Please absolve us.”

The Talmud notes that on one occasion, the *Kohen Gadol* chanted the confession in such a strong voice that people in Jericho could hear him from Jerusalem. The Talmud relates that another man had an even more powerful voice. This man was responsible for proclaiming: “*Kohanim* stand ready to serve, and *levi'im* man your pulpits,” every morning in the *Beit HaMikdash*. That is how the *kohanim* rose daily to perform their service as the *levi'im* prepared to sing.

Once, at a location far from the *Beit HaMikdash*, King Agrippa suddenly heard a booming voice in the distance: “*Kohanim*, stand ready to serve.” King Agrippa was so impressed by this man’s robust voice that he sent him many gifts.



QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK

1. Which stones were hidden in one of the chambers of the *Beit HaMikdash*?
2. Where was primordial man created?
3. Regarding what matter was the *Kohen Gadol* administered an oath on *erev Yom Kippur*?

***NOTE**
ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND
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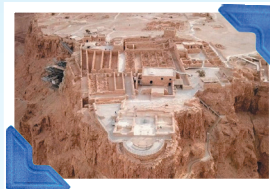
ארץ ישראל היפה

SOUTHERN ISRAEL

מבאר שבע לעין גדי • FROM BE'ERSHEVA TO EIN GEDI



After the museum, we head east towards the Dead Sea. We will pass through the city of Arad, which was founded in 1962, as Israel's first planned city. Today Arad is home to 26,000 residents. From Arad, we head to Masada, the fortress built by Herod the Great, atop a high rocky plateau.



Herod built the fortress as a place of refuge for him and his family. After the defeat of the Jewish revolt in 70CE, and the destruction of the second *Beit HaMikdash*, a group of rebels escaped to Masada. In 73CE the Roman began a siege of the fortress. Three months into the siege, the Romans were able to breach the walls and capture the fortress.

The next tour stop will be Be'er Sheva, the capital of the Negev. Be'er Sheva's history dates back to the Torah, when Avraham and Avimelech had a dispute over rights to a well. Be'er Sheva served as an administrative center during the Ottoman and British times.



Captured by the IDF during the War of Independence, Be'er Sheva quickly grew as new immigrants filled the city. In 1960, Soroka hospital was established, and the University of the Negev, which became Ben Gurion University, was opened in 1968.

Today, Be'er Sheva has a population of over 200,000.

From Be'er Sheva, we'll head to the Air Force Museum located on Chatzerim Air Force Base, home of the Israeli Air Force's flight school. This museum displays almost every type of aircraft the IAF has ever flown and several foreign aircraft (such as Soviet Migs).



Today, after an hour ascent walking along what is known as "the snake trail," we can tour the remains of Herod's Palaces, a synagogue, and the mammoth storerooms that existed to feed those in the fortress. If you can, it is best to climb Masada early in the morning to catch the gorgeous sunrise.



After we visit Masada, we'll drive to a nearby beach on the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth. The water here is so salty that it's nearly impossible to sink.



We will end our day at the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve. The reserve is built around a stream fed by the Ein Gedi Spring. After a 20-minute hike, we arrive at the lower waterfall and dip into the cool water. If we are lucky, we will see some of the desert wildlife that make Ein Gedi their home.



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