

It is well known that Lev 16 employs some unusual terminology, most prominently קָדַשׁ (vv. 2, 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27) and מִקְדָּשׁ הַקְּדָשׁ (v. 33) with reference to the holy of holies, which is elsewhere called קְדֹשׁ הַקְּדָשִׁים (e.g., Exod 26:33–34).⁸ On the basis of such differences, critics have regarded at least part of this chapter as produced by a phase of authorship distinct from the phase that generated other parts of Lev 1–16.⁹

J. Milgrom recognizes the uniqueness of Lev 16 but contends that its combination of ritual purging and expulsion of evil is preexilic in origin, as confirmed by early attestation of the purgation-expulsion nexus in the ancient Near East. He maintains that the Day of Atonement procedures are intended by the biblical text to be functionally integrated with the other P rituals in a dynamic system.¹⁰ An important part of his support is to demonstrate how the חַטָּאת sacrifices can work together as a system: two kinds of purification offerings outlined in Lev 4, which include applications of blood on the outer altar and in the outer sanctum, functionally complement the special חַטָּאת sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, which extend blood applications all the way into the inner sanctum (Lev 16).¹¹

1 Kgs 6:22b: וְכָל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר-לְדָבִיר צִפָּה זָהָב, “even the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold.” Here it is emphasized that the incense altar has a function that pertains to the inner sanctum, even though it is located in the outer sanctum. This supports Meyers’s point: among the tabernacle furnishings, the incense altar was unique in that its function transcended its bounded location.

8. E.g., M. Noth, *Leviticus* (trans. J. Anderson; OTL; London: SCM, 1965) 120, 126; K. Aartun, “Studien zum Gesetz über den grossen Versöhnungstag Lv 16 mit Varianten: Ein ritualgeschichtlicher Beitrag,” *ST* 34 (1980) 76–77.

9. Because the inner sanctum is simply הַקְּדָשׁ in Lev 16:2–28, Milgrom holds that “this terminological anomaly is one of the many reasons for regarding vv 2–28 as comprising a discrete literary unit that was not originally composed by the author or redactor of P” (*Leviticus 1–16* [AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991] 1013); cf., e.g., Noth, *Leviticus*, 118; cf. 117, 119; Snaith, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 115.

10. See Milgrom’s massive study in *Leviticus 1–16*, esp. on Lev 4 and 16; cf. idem, “Day of Atonement as Annual Day of Purgation in Temple Times,” *EncJud* 5:1384–86.

11. Idem, *Leviticus 1–16*, 257–58; cf. idem, “Israel’s Sanctuary: The Priestly ‘Picture of Dorian Gray,’” *RB* 83 (1976) 390–99. For other treatments of the חַטָּאת sacrifices, including those of the Day of Atonement, as a coherent system, see, for example, Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, 3:219–20; Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*; D. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (SBLDS 101; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); A. Marx, “Sacrifice pour les péchés ou rite de passage? Quelques réflexions sur la fonction du ḥattā’t,” *RB* 96 (1989) 27–48; F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); A. Schenker, “Interprétations récentes et dimensions spécifiques du sacrifice ḥattā’t,” *Bib* 75 (1994) 59–70; idem, *Recht und Kult im Alten Testament* (OBO 172; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 113–22, repr. from “Keine Versöhnung

In further support of the functional integration of the Day of Atonement rituals is the fact that instructions regarding them depend on information found elsewhere.¹² For one thing, these instructions presuppose a fully operational sanctuary and corps of cultic personnel, as described elsewhere in the Pentateuch. M. Rooker comments on Lev 16:

The literary dependence on the previous revelation given to Moses is, however, everywhere apparent. The chapter presumes the content of the previous section, Leviticus 11–15, particularly 15:31, where uncleanness defiles the sanctuary. The Day of Atonement sacrifices purify the sanctuary from this defilement. As will be shown, one of the main accomplishments of the Day of Atonement is the purification of the tabernacle (16:15–19). But more than this, the Day of Atonement presumes the laws for sacrifice (Lev 1–7) and the role of the priesthood (Lev 8–10); laws from both of these sections are critical for the execution of the Day of Atonement rituals.¹³

Following are more specific ways in which the Day of Atonement prescriptions in Lev 16 depend on other pentateuchal passages in the final form of the text:

1. Leviticus 16:1 introduces the Day of Atonement within a narrative context by mentioning the death of Aaron’s sons, which occurred during the inauguration of the sanctuary (10:1–2). So at least in the final form of the text, the overall narrative framework of Leviticus embraces the complex of rituals that purge the sanctuary.¹⁴
2. Leviticus 16:2 refers to God appearing in a cloud upon the ark cover. This theophanic cloud is described more fully in Exod 40:34–38 and Num 9:15–22.

ohne Anerkennung der Haftung für verursachten Schaden: Die Rolle von Haftung und Intentionalität in den Opfern חַטָּאת und אִשָּׁם,” *ZABR* 3 (1997) 164–73.

12. Cf. B. Baentsch, who lists a number of connections between Lev 16 and other “P” passages (*Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri* [HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903] 379–80).

13. M. Rooker, *Leviticus* (NAC 3A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000) 212.

14. While Lev 16:1, referring to the death of Aaron’s sons, links the law-giving of ch. 16 to the narrative of ch. 10, the appropriateness of the present placement of the regulations regarding purities in chs. 11–15 before those of the Day of Atonement in ch. 16 has long been recognized by critics (e.g., Kuenen, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry*, 148; S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* [ITL; New York: Scribner’s, 1897] 46; Noth, *Leviticus*, 14). J. Watts explains the placement of the Day of Atonement prescriptions within the arrangement of Leviticus, which “follows topical logic: the day’s ceremonies presuppose both the sacrificial instructions of Leviticus 1–7 and the purity regulations of chs. 11–15, and they form a climactic conclusion to the entire complex of cultic law. So the logic of list overrides the chronology of story” (*Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch* [BSem 59; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999] 87).

3. Leviticus 16:16b abbreviates the prescription for blood manipulations in the outer sanctum by referring to the procedure followed in the inner sanctum, where blood is applied once to the ark cover (כַּפֹּרֶת) and seven times in front of this object (vv. 14–15). However, the outer sanctum has no ark cover. So where should the blood go? Exodus 30:10 specifies the altar of incense in the outer sanctum as the recipient of blood from “the purification offering of purgation” (חַטַּאת הַכִּפְּרִים), which is to be performed once a year.¹⁵
4. Leviticus 16:16 and 21 assume knowledge of various kinds of evil that affect the sanctuary, that is, טְמֵאוֹת, “impurities” (cf. chs. 11–15), חַטָּאוֹת, “sins” (cf. chs. 4–5), and עֲוֹנוֹת, “culpabilities” (e.g., 5:1, 17).
5. Leviticus 16:24 (cf. vv. 3, 5) requires burnt offerings, without specifying their procedure. The instructions in ch. 1 regarding this class of sacrifices must be assumed. Notice also the close association between purification and burnt offerings on behalf of the priests and laity in ch. 16, in harmony with the frequent combination of these kinds of sacrifices elsewhere (5:7–10; 9:7–16; 12:6, 8; 14:19–20, 31; 15:15, 30; Num 6:11; 8:12; 15:24–25).
6. Leviticus 16:27 states that the carcasses of חַטָּאוֹת animals are to be incinerated “outside the camp.” Leviticus 4:12 specifies the precise location of these disposals.

References or allusions to the Day of Atonement outside Lev 16 reinforce the concept that its solemn rites belong to the larger system of Israelite cultic practices.

1. As mentioned above, Exod 30:10 says that the incense altar is to be purged once per year with blood from the “purification offering of purgation.” This refers to the חַטָּאוֹת procedure prescribed in Lev 16.
2. Leviticus 20:3 and Num 19:13, 20 indicate that some serious violations of cultic laws, including through wanton neglect, defile יְהוָה’s sanctuary when they are committed. These verses do not explain how the sanctuary is cleansed from such pollution, but the rituals of the Day of Atonement are an obvious solution.¹⁶

15. For the rendering “the purification offering of purgation,” see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1059.

16. *Ibid.*, 257–58. A. Rodríguez and A. Treiyer have argued that the defilement of the sanctuary referred to in Lev 20:3 and Num 19:13, 20 does not need to be purged from the sanctuary through the Day of Atonement rituals because it is cleansed by the destruction of the sinners themselves (A. Rodríguez, “Transfer of Sin in Leviticus,” in

3. In the context of instructions for Israelite festivals, Lev 23:27–32 emphasizes the Day of Atonement requirements for the Israelites to practice self-denial and abstain from work (cf. 16:29, 31), adds penalties for noncompliance (23:29–30), labels the tenth day of the seventh month as יוֹם הַכִּפְּרִים, “the Day of Atonement” (v. 27; cf. v. 28), and mentions the reason for the requirements: purgation (כַּפֹּר) on behalf of the Israelites (v. 28b). This echoes 16:30, which states the same motive. However, the כַּפֹּר procedure appears only in 16:11–28.¹⁷
4. In Lev 25:9, the Jubilee year begins “on the tenth day of the seventh month, on the Day of Atonement.”¹⁸
5. Numbers 29:7–11 includes the tenth day of the seventh month, that is, the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev 16:29), in a calendar of festival days on which sacrifices supplementing the regular burnt offering are to be performed on behalf of the community. On this day the people are to practice self-denial (Num 29:7; cf. 16:29, 31), and a חַטָּאוֹת goat is to be offered in addition to the “purification offering of purgation” (v. 11; cf. Exod 30:10; Lev 16:11–28).¹⁹

Challenges to the unity of Leviticus 16 do not prevent consideration of the Day of Atonement rituals as a system

In 1876, H. Oort made the first systematic attempt to separate the legislation of Lev 16 into different strata. He took the original law to consist of the

The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy [ed. F. Holbrook; DARCOM 3; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986] 169, 174–77; A. Treiyer, “The Day of Atonement as Related to the Contamination and Purification of the Sanctuary,” in *The Seventy Weeks*, 198–99, 204–6). It is true that some kinds of serious sins that defile the land or the community are purged by the deaths of the sinners who have lived there (Num 35:33; Deut 17:7; 32:43). But there is no evidence that the sanctuary is cleansed in this way.

17. Cf. Kuenen, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry*, 312.

18. Cf. *ibid.*

19. Cf. *ibid.*; Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, 3:214. D. Baker suggests that חַטָּאוֹת הַכִּפְּרִים, “the purification offering of purgation,” in Num 29:11 could be the full name of the non-calendric חַטָּאוֹת sacrifice prescribed in Lev 4, “since that is the function of the sacrifice there” (“Leviticus 1–7 and the Punic Tariffs: A Form Critical Comparison,” *ZAW* 99 [1987] 195 n. 31). This idea could be supported by comparison with Num 5:8, where אֵיל הַכִּפְּרִים, “the ram of atonement,” refers to an אָשָׁם, “reparation offering,” also a non-calendric expiatory sacrifice, which is prescribed in Lev 5:14–26[6:7]; 7:1–7. However, because the cultic calendar of Num 28–29 deals with calendric rituals, חַטָּאוֹת הַכִּפְּרִים in 29:11 does not refer to a noncalendric sacrifice, in agreement with Exod 30:10, where חַטָּאוֹת הַכִּפְּרִים purges the horns of the incense altar only once per year. So this must be the special, annual חַטָּאוֹת prescribed in Lev 16.

1. Contra the popular view that the Day of Atonement ceremony (ch. 16) somehow has the purpose of remedying evil brought about by the tragic demise of Nadab and Abihu (ch. 10), Schwartz argues against a strong conceptual connection between chs. 10 and 16. In 16:1 the words “after the death of the two sons of Aaron . . .” are spoken by *the narrator*, rather than by God to Moses and/or Aaron. So rather than warning the priests on the basis of tragic precedent, these words merely indicate that the instructions in ch. 16 were given after Nadab and Abihu died. The words “when they drew near” only describe, but do not explain, the circumstances of their death. They did not die *because* they “came near to YHWH,” and neither would the priests die if they approached him to minister in the tabernacle.

2. Since v. 1 only provides the narrator’s explanation of the sequence in which the laws were given—ch. 10, followed by ch. 16, and then chs. 11–15 to explain the impurities that would be cleansed by the sanctuary—they provide no evidence for stages of textual development. Therefore, Schwartz concludes that the arrangement of material is that of the original priestly author.

3. Against the idea that the Day of Atonement ceremonies were originally an “entrance ritual,” by which the high priest could gain access to the place where YHWH was enshrined, Schwartz contends that the priest would not desire to make such a dangerous approach but was required to do so for the necessary task of purifying the inner sanctum so that YHWH’s residence there could continue.

4. Against the theory that vv. 29–34a, specifying an annual date and requiring self-denial and rest, are later than the rest of Lev 16 and stem from H, Schwartz dismisses alleged terminological and stylistic inconsistencies with P in these verses as inconclusive, shows that P often gives instructions before explaining their purpose (cf. esp. Num 19), and points out that active participation of those whose impurities and sins are being ritually purged by a *זָבַח* sacrifice would be essential for P.

Even if a composite prehistory of Lev 16 and/or the rituals that it reflects were proved, which it is not, the fact that the final form of the biblical text presents the Day of Atonement rituals together as a system that is functionally integrated within the larger system of Israelite rituals would justify synchronic study at this stage of literary presentation.⁴³ As R. Knierim observes, “Old Tes-

43. Cf. Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, 2:160; 3:219–20; idem, “How to Approach Leviticus,” *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Division A: *The Bible and Its World* (ed. D. Assaf; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1990) 16; Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*, 144–45; Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 197. Commenting on the

tament scholarship has recognized the need for taking the final text seriously in its own right, regardless whether one claims for it an author, a redactor, or a composer.”⁴⁴

An investigation into the meaning/function of a ritual at a stage for which evidence is extant need not be crippled by lack of a solid prehistory any more than semantic study of a word should be fatally flawed by insufficient etymological background. Linguists have demonstrated that the way in which a word is used in a given period determines its meaning during that period. While etymology is interesting and important, it is not a safe guide to meaning.⁴⁵ Similarly, the origin of a ritual does not determine some kind of invariable essential meaning but, rather, the meaning of a given ritual activity resides in the way it is used and understood by a particular group of people according to the system of concepts that belongs to their cultural system.⁴⁶ Normative ritual meaning can be fixed by a religious authority, including one believed to be a deity, such as YHWH. But although this meaning may be held to originate from a source outside of or transcending the culture in which the ritual operates, it nevertheless functions within the cultural context.⁴⁷

Scholars present diverse interpretations regarding the role of the special Day of Atonement services

Among those who interpret the Day of Atonement services within the functional context of the Israelite ritual system, there is a bewildering variety of

fact that Milgrom’s *Leviticus* commentary “deals with the level of meaning found in the text’s final form,” G. Anderson approves: “Perhaps nowhere more than in the Book of *Leviticus* could such a methodological presupposition be better founded, for nowhere else in the Bible has source criticism been more controversial and harder to employ than here” (Review of “Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*,” *CBQ* 55 [1993] 762). Along similar lines, F. Crüsemann says that “the text should first be interpreted, even in its details, in conjunction with the entire P system” (*The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* [trans. A. Mahnke; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996] 313 n. 186), and Watts contends that “methodologically the text must be read sympathetically (i.e., described as it stands) before historical questions and evidence can be adduced from it” (*Reading Law*, 132).

44. R. Knierim, Review of “*The Book of Leviticus*. By Gordon J. Wenham,” *Encounter* 44 (1983) 308.

45. See, e.g., J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: SCM / Philadelphia: Trinity, 1961) 107–60.

46. R. Hendel, “Sacrifice as a Cultural System: The Ritual Symbolism of Exodus 24,3–8,” *ZAW* 101 (1989) 369–70, 389; cf. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*, esp. 14–19.

47. Glenn Hartelius (Santa Rosa, California) suggests that ritual is between culture and the transcendent (personal communication).

opinion. J. Calvin viewed the Day as providing simply a yearly reaffirmation on the corporate level of expiation that has already been granted to individual Israelites throughout the year.⁴⁸ However, many scholars have understood its unique procedures to serve as a dynamic complement to the other sacrifices by providing one or more aspects of expiation that have not already been received.

Of the latter group, some see the role of the Day of Atonement rituals as removal of imperfections that have not already been remedied by expiatory sacrifices,⁴⁹ whether (1) because these evils have not been recognized,⁵⁰ or (2) because they are too serious to remove through other sacrifices (e.g., *m. Yoma* 8:8; *t. Yoma* 4.7). Emphasizing the latter reason, Milgrom explains the **הַטָּאת** sacrifices of the Day of Atonement as uniquely purging from the sanctuary pollution that has been caused by the “aerial” penetration of wanton, unrepented sin all the way into the inner sanctum, thereby complementing the function of purification offerings throughout the year that remedy lesser penetrations of inadvertent offenses to the outer altar or outer sanctum.⁵¹ Similarly, R. Rendtorff holds that on the Day of Atonement “the sanctuary is cleansed from the impurity caused by all the happenings for which atonement could not be made,”⁵² that is, from the kinds of evil for which the

48. J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996) 1:313–14.

49. C. Bush, *Notes, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Leviticus* (New York: Ivison & Phinney, 1857) 164; Baentsch, *Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri*, 385; A. Clamer, *Lévitique, Nombres, Deutéronome* (La Sainte Bible 2; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1946) 127.

50. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952 [orig. 1874]) 2:394–95; C. Feinberg, “The Scapegoat of Leviticus Sixteen,” *BSac* 115 (1958) 320; A. Schenker, “Interprétations récentes,” 67. Schenker places the function of the Day of Atonement rituals within the context of his proposal for the ways in which the Israelite expiatory system deals comprehensively with various categories of sin, including intentional sin (burnt offering), inadvertent sins of commission (purification offering), and inadvertent sins of commission that remain undetected for a long time (reparation offering; “Der Unterschied zwischen Sündopfer *chattat* und Schuldopfer *ascham* im Licht von Lv 5,17–19 und 5,1–6,” *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies: Papers Read at the XIIIth IOSOT Congress, Leuven 1989* [ed. C. Brekelmans and J. Lust; BETL 94; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990] 121–23). C. Ginsburg believes that the Day of Atonement is “an annual supplement and completion” of the other cultic practices in that it atones for imperfections and sins that have been mixed up with and have tainted even the sacred worship throughout the year (*Leviticus* [ed. C. Ellicott; LHC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961] 146).

51. Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1–16, 257–58; cf. idem, “Israel’s Sanctuary: The Priestly ‘Picture of Dorian Gray.’”

52. R. Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 146.

offender is condemned to extirpation or death, without an opportunity to receive the benefit of sacrificial expiation.

M. M. Kalisch emphasized a general kind of imperfection, which would be difficult to recognize and remedy in a tidy way: the Day of Atonement “is essentially the institution of sin-offerings concentrated and intensified,”⁵³ but unlike those sacrifices, its expiation “did not concern special offences, but the human weakness in general which cannot be admitted into a communion of God except by an act of grace and mercy.”⁵⁴

Recognizing the comprehensive language of Lev 16:16 (**כָּל-הַטָּאתִים**, “all their sins”; cf. vv. 21–2) and unique usage of **טָהַר** for moral cleansing in v. 30, some have held that the Day of Atonement remedies all sins with which the Israelites soil themselves during the course of the previous year.⁵⁵ Along these lines, F. Crüsemann finds that the reiteration of “all” (**כָּל**) in this chapter (vv. 16, 17, 21, 30, 34) in connection with a variety of important terms for sin emphasizes the comprehensiveness of the atonement and elimination of the nation’s sins.

Of course, the restrictions of Lev 4:2 or 4:13 have been overcome. We are no longer dealing exclusively with sins committed unintentionally, this means all sin. There can be no doubt, on the basis of the overall view of priestly theology, that an annual, complete cleansing of the entire nation is what is intended.⁵⁶

Similarly, A. Schenker believes that the blood applications of the special sacrifices of the Day of Atonement have the same function for forgiveness as in other **הַטָּאת** sacrifices, but without limitation in coverage of guilt.⁵⁷ At the same time, the blood purifies the cult, signifying that God himself must heal it from damage done to it through human fallibility. In this way **יְהוָה** restores the integrity of his relationship with Israel at the beginning of each year.⁵⁸

53. M. M. Kalisch, *A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament, with a New Translation: Leviticus* (2 vols.; London: Longman, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867–72) 2:174.

54. *Ibid.*, 1:173. Cf. E. Gerstenberger: “Through transgressions against the commandments, the community of faith was continually heaping guilt upon itself; and because God dwelled in his house in the midst of this flawed and guilt-ridden people, some portion of the substance of that sin was also bound to come into contact with and taint the sanctuary despite all cautionary measures” (*Leviticus: A Commentary* [trans. D. Stott; OTL; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1996] 218).

55. See rabbinic sources cited by A. Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century* (LBS; New York: KTAV, 1967) 302.

56. Crüsemann, *The Torah*, 314.

57. A. Schenker, *Versöhnung und Sühne* (BibB 15; Freiburg: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981) 114.

58. *Ibid.*, 114, 116; cf. 113.

Some scholars have argued that the Day of Atonement rituals provide a second stage of atonement (כפר) with regard to all or at least some of the same imperfections for which a first stage has already been accomplished through individual expiatory sacrifices. Thus A. Rodríguez summarizes with regard to the חטאת sacrifice: "Through the ritual sin is brought to the sanctuary. There it is kept until its final removal on the Day of Atonement."⁵⁹ J. H. Kurtz found the language of Lev 16:16 to indicate that the Day of Atonement ceremony remedies "all the sins of the whole nation without exception, known or unknown, atoned for or not atoned for."⁶⁰ Similarly, S. Kellogg included in the scope of the Day of Atonement both sins that have already been handled by ordinary חטאת sacrifices and those that have been overlooked.⁶¹

In Kiuchi's understanding, the instructions in Lev 4–5 enable the Israelites to attain forgiveness for their individual sins during the time between one Day of Atonement and another, but the basic yearly purification from all their sins (16:30, 34) is connected with the crucial purification of the sanctuary.⁶² He maintains that "all the sins over a certain period of time are envisaged as being atoned for again on the day of Atonement by the most potent blood manipulation."⁶³ For him this is not only repetition, but completion of a process:

it is possible to hold that by purifying sancta Aaron bears the guilt associated with uncleanness, and that he lays it on the head of the Azazel goat when he confesses the sins of all the Israelites. On this interpretation the Azazel-goat ritual can be seen to meet the demand in Lev 10.16–20 that the guilt Aaron bears as the head of the house must be removed.⁶⁴

According to Kiuchi, the high priest's blood manipulations in the outer sanctum for his own sin or that of the community (Lev 4) serve as a provi-

59. A. Rodríguez, *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus* (AUSDS 3; Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1979) 136; cf. 219, 305–7; cf. G. F. Hasel, "Studies in Biblical Atonement I: Continual Sacrifice, Defilement // Cleansing and Sanctuary," *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies* (ed. A. Wallenkampf; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1981) 93–107; idem, "Studies in Biblical Atonement II: The Day of Atonement," *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, 115–25; Treiyer, *The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Judgment*, 147–212.

60. J. H. Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament* (trans. J. Martin; Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1980; repr. of 1863) 386.

61. S. Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus* (EB; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900) 257, 259.

62. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*, 156–59; cf. Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, 3:222.

63. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*, 159.

64. *Ibid.*, 163. Cf. the less-complicated interpretation of G. Knight that, after all the sacrifices for specific sins and impurities, the once-per-year sacrifice of YHWH's goat assures the Israelites that God indeed forgives sins, and the ritual with Azazel's goat deals

sional, temporary measure, foreshadowing full elimination of their grave sins that requires the special purification offerings of the Day of Atonement.⁶⁵ The conclusion of the instructions for the purification offering on behalf of the high priest (4:10–12) lacks a notice that he receives expiation (כפר), such as appears at the end of other prescriptive units (vv. 20, 26, 31, 35). So his need for expiation, foreshadowed by sprinkling blood in the outer sanctum as close to the inner sanctum as possible (v. 6), is fulfilled on the Day of Atonement, when he receives כפר by bringing blood into the inner sanctum to the ark cover (16:14; cf. vv. 6, 11).⁶⁶ Thus the high priest's case is unique in that his sin is treated twice by חטאת sacrifices, but he receives expiation only once, on the Day of Atonement.

The view of C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch is a sort of hybrid that combines different interpretations. They regarded the single applications of blood from the bull and goat upon the ark cover, the incense altar, and the outer altar on the Day of Atonement as expiating the sins of the priests and laity corporately, just as חטאת sacrifices throughout the year expiate for individuals. On the Day of Atonement the expiation is greater in that blood is taken into the inner sanctum, the "throne room" of YHWH, to obtain true reconciliation with him in his direct presence. However, Keil and Delitzsch assigned another kind of meaning to the sevenfold sprinklings in the two apartments and on the outer altar: to expiate these parts of the sanctuary from the sins of the Israelites.⁶⁷

B. Baentsch had a different hybrid. The blood manipulations of the חטאת bull on behalf of the priests purify the priests themselves, but the blood of the goat for the people purges the sanctuary (16:15–19), which has been infected during the course of the year by the sins and impurities of the surrounding Israelites to the extent that these evils have not already been remedied by expiatory sacrifices in the course of the year. He views the ritual of Azazel's goat

with the effect of sins that remains after forgiveness (*Leviticus* [DSB; Edinburgh: Saint Andrew / Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981] 92; cf. 88, 91).

65. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*, 129; cf. Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, 3:162–63.

66. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*, 126–30; cf. Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, 2:159–60; cf. 3:173, 221, 224.

67. Keil and Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary*, 399–402. They saw the cleansing of the sanctuary as expiation in the sense that "the sin-destroying virtue of the blood" works on objects in the same way that it works upon persons and identified the uncleanness of the Israelites that is purged from the sanctuary as "the ideal effluence of their sins, which had been transferred to the objects in question" (p. 402). For the idea that Day of Atonement expiation is greater because blood is brought closer to YHWH, cf. Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus*, 264; Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, 215.

(vv. 20–22) as purifying the people from all the sins (not only the cultic ones) that they have committed in the last year.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Whatever the prehistory of the pentateuchal cultic legislation may have been, the final form of the biblical text presents its rituals throughout the year and on the Day of Atonement as a functionally integrated system. Amid ongoing debates regarding the authorship/redaction of passages such as Lev 4 and 16 and diachronic relationships between them, we can justify a synchronic approach that investigates the meanings of the rituals as the final text, our primary source of data, presents them.

The vast array of scholarly opinions regarding the special role of the Day of Atonement services reveals the vexing complexity of this topic, which is crucial for understanding the nature of ancient Israelite religion. We are left with major questions: Do the Day of Atonement procedures duplicate or complete the כפר process accomplished by expiatory sacrifices earlier in the year? If the latter, does this completion treat only evils that have not already been remedied, or does it deal with at least some of the same sins a second time to provide a kind of כפר that goes beyond forgiveness? In the remainder of this book, I will relentlessly pursue solid answers to these questions.

68. Baentsch, *Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri*, 381, 383–85.

PART 2

Purification Offerings Performed throughout the Year

YHWH and the offerer (cf. 7:34).⁹⁴ In a burnt offering, the prebend is the hide of the animal (7:8). In a grain offering it is everything except a handful that is burned on the altar as a memorial portion (2:2–3, 9–10; 7:9–10). In a well-being offering it is the breast and right thigh (7:31–35). In a purification or reparation offering, it is the remaining meat (6:19[26], 22[29]; 7:6–7). The fact that the remaining meat of a purification offering functions as a prebend is confirmed by 7:7, where this portion is mentioned among prebends of other sacrifices (vv. 7–10). So priestly consumption of the remaining meat is not simply to get rid of it. Consequently, it is not functionally equivalent to disposal of purification-offering carcasses by incineration when a priest officiates on behalf of himself or a group in which he is included (cf. 4:11–12, 21; 8:17).⁹⁵

In outer-altar purification offerings for sin, the remaining meat is more than a prebend. The priest's privilege and duty of eating the flesh (Lev 6:19[26], 22[29]) simultaneously functions as appropriation of his agent's commission and as contributing in some way to expiation (10:17).⁹⁶ It is not necessary to argue for one of these functions to the exclusion of the other. We will devote ch. 5 to this debate.

Conclusion

Thus far we have found that an outer-altar purification offering carries out the goal of removing evil (sin or ritual impurity) on behalf of the offerer through activities that identify the offerer as the party transferring the victim to YHWH (hand-leaning), effect purgation (blood), make a debt payment to YHWH (suet), and award an agent's commission to the officiating priest (meat).

94. Compare the three-party apportionment of the well-being offering among YHWH, the priest, and the offerer (Lev 7:15–36; Gane, "Bread of the Presence," 198).

95. Cf. D. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (SBLDS 101; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987) 132. Against N. Snaith, who argues that a priest involved either personally or corporately in the sin for which the sacrifice is brought does not eat the meat because he cannot consume (i.e., dispose of) his own sin ("The Sin-Offering and the Guilt-Offering," *VT* 15 [1965] 74–75).

96. B. Baentsch, *Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903) 325, 337, 352–53; Hoffmann, *Das Buch Leviticus*, 213, 298; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 622–25, 636–39; cf. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity*, 133 n. 22.

Chapter 4

Outer-Sanctum Purification Offerings

In the purification offering of a bull on behalf of the high priest (Lev 4:3–12) or the entire community (vv. 13–21), the high priest applies blood in the outer sanctum of the Sacred Tent, and the remainder of the animal is disposed of by incineration. Such an outer-sanctum purification offering is required only when the high priest or the community inadvertently violate a divine command (v. 2). The ritual paradigms for these offerers are the same, with the qualification that in the sacrifice for the community the representative elders rather than the high priest perform the hand-leaning (v. 15).

The outer-sanctum purification offering differs from the outer-altar type in several respects. First, the victim is a bull, the most expensive sacrificial animal. Second, the high priest must officiate the ritual. Third, and most important, the blood is sprinkled seven times "before the veil" in the outer sanctum and daubed on the horns of the incense altar rather than on the horns of the outer altar. Fourth, the remaining meat is incinerated rather than eaten by the officiating priest.

The ritual procedure includes some activities that are mentioned in the text and others that are not

We will focus on the high priest's purification offering and refer to that of the community as necessary. Activities explicitly prescribed in Lev 4:3–12 for the high priest's sacrifice include:

- lean hand on head of animal
- slay animal
- bring some blood into outer sanctum
- dip finger in blood and sprinkle blood seven times in front of (inner) veil
- put some blood on horns of incense altar
- pour remaining blood at base of outer altar
- remove suet
- burn suet on altar
- carry remainder of animal to clean place outside camp
- incinerate remainder of animal

the inaugural sacrifice mentioned above (9:11). Correctly performed incineration of this outer-altar offering for the priests, which was the counterpart of the outer-altar offering for the community (v. 15) that the priests should have eaten under normal circumstances (10:16–20), undermines Kurtz's explanation that outer-sanctum offerings (uniquely) had to be incinerated because they were too holy even for priestly consumption.⁵⁸

Conclusion

Thus far we have found that an outer-sanctum purification offering carries out the goal of removing inadvertent sin of community-wide scope on behalf of the offerer(s) through activities that identify the offerer(s) as the party transferring the victim to YHWH (hand-leaning), effect superior purgation (blood in outer sanctum), make a debt payment to YHWH (suet), and dispose of the remaining animal material that includes what would otherwise be the "agent's commission" (meat) for the officiating high priest, who is denied this because he simultaneously plays the role of an offerer.

58. Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship*, 237.

Chapter 5

Purification-Offering Flesh: Prebend or Expiation?

In our investigation of the outer-altar purification offering, we found that a priest who officiates such a sacrifice on behalf of another Israelite receives the remaining meat as a prebend/perquisite that functions as an "agent's commission" for carrying out the primary transaction between YHWH and the offerer (Lev 6:19[26], 22[29]; 7:6). Here we will take up the question of whether priestly consumption of the meat additionally and simultaneously plays some kind of role in effecting purgation (כפר) on behalf of the offerer.

When priests eat the flesh of purification offerings at which they have officiated, they contribute to expiation

Those who regard the purification-offering flesh as a priestly requisite that lacks an expiatory role use a variety of arguments. I will describe and parry these in the following paragraphs, arriving at my own conclusion in the process.

J. Kurtz and A. Dillmann have viewed the "most holy" status of purification offerings (Lev 6:18[25], 22[29]; 10:17) to be incompatible with the idea that they carry evil.¹ Later we will find this argument to be undermined by 6:20–21[27–28], where most holy purification offerings are uniquely and paradoxically treated as if they are impure.²

Dillmann observed that in Lev 4 atonement is achieved (vv. 20, 26, 31, 35) without any indication that it depends on the priest's eating of the meat. According to his reading of the text, following the forgiveness granted in ch. 4 no further extermination of sin is needed.³ He did not give adequate weight to the fact that eating the meat is postrequisite. It takes place after the core

1. J. H. Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament* (trans. J. Martin; Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1980; repr. of 1863) 228–30; cf. 240–41; A. Dillmann, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1897) 463–64; cf. 517.

2. Cf. J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 403–4.

3. Dillmann, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus*, 464.

If the עֹן were to remain on the priests, who are immune to its consequences, when would they get rid of it? Koch's next sentence reads: "Furthermore, the high priest is also able through confession and leaning a hand on the animal's head to transfer the 'āwōn to that animal such that the 'scape-goat' is now the one bearing it (Lev. 16:21f.)."⁵⁴ This is an intriguing connection, to which we will return later when we trace the trajectories of terms for evil that appear in Lev 16:16, 21.

W. Zimmerli distinguishes between expressions of direct, divine sin-bearing with YHWH as subject, which refer to forgiveness in noncultic contexts, and cultic usage, which includes priestly consumption of purification-offering flesh (10:17).⁵⁵ So even if noncultic instances show no aftereffect for YHWH,⁵⁶ can we assume the same to be true when a human priest bears עֹן on behalf of another person as a result of carrying out expiation that is *prerequisite* to divine forgiveness?⁵⁷

The close parallel between the language of Exod 34:7, in which YHWH is נָשָׂא עֹן וְחַטָּאָה, "bearing iniquity and transgression and sin," and Lev 10:17, in which his priest bears עֹן, indicates that there is a close relationship between the two. Koch observes: "Use of the term 'āwōn is one example among many demonstrating that the legislative concerns of the Priestly document focus on institutionalizing God's own activity in removing guilt rather than fostering some sort of nomism."⁵⁸ It appears that, by eating the flesh, the priests participate in the process through which YHWH grants forgiveness. If there is a distinction between divine and human sin-bearing on behalf of another, it is most likely to be sought in the difference between the divine and

54. Koch, "עֹן 'āwōn," 559.

55. W. Zimmerli, "Zur Vorgeschichte von Jes. LIII," *Congress Volume: Rome, 1968* (VTSup 17; Leiden: Brill, 1969) 239.

56. Regarding God bearing sin for people, R. Knierim states that he possesses power to remove a load of offenses without suffering from their destructive power (*Die Hauptbegriffe*, 52).

57. Zimmerli comments on Isa 53 that here the bearing of guilt does not indicate the guilt-bearing of God but in the sense of Lev 16:22 and 10:17 it has to do with the vicarious guilt/punishment-bearing of a man, the servant of YHWH ("Zur Vorgeschichte," 240). Olafsson argues that the effect on a secondary "carrier" can "be safely assumed in light of what happens to those who bear their own iniquities: suffering, disease, and/or death" ("The Use of *ns'*," 216). This assumption does not take into account the possibility that secondary carriers in passages such as Lev 10:17 may have immunity.

58. Koch, "עֹן 'āwōn," 560; compare Milgrom on "to remove the iniquity of the community" in Lev 10:17: "True, the subject is man, not God, but in this case it is the priest who serves as the divine surrogate on earth and exclusively so in the sanctuary" (*Leviticus 1–16*, 623).

human natures of YHWH and his priests, respectively, in terms of the kind(s) of immunity to evil that they possess. In later chapters we will pursue further the issue of cultic immunity and the dynamics of עֹן in relation to other kinds of moral evil.

Conclusion

The structure of Lev 10:17 shows that priestly eating of purification-offering meat as a prebend is an integral, if postrequisite, part of the ritual and contributes to the expiatory process. When a priest bears the culpability of a sinner as YHWH's servant and representative, he participates in the process by which YHWH frees the sinner from culpability by bearing it for him.

but not on the Day of Atonement.⁷⁷ (2) Gammie argues the following with regard to passages such as Lev 4:1–5:13:

kipper takes the preposition 'al instead of 'et for a very good linguistic reason, namely, to remind the reader that from which the person or thing has been purged, namely, sin or uncleanness. Thus 'al is frequently followed by *min* (e.g., Lev. 4:26; 5:6) and even when *min* is absent the very use of 'al carries with it the reminder that there is a purgation *from* something; the particle 'et would not convey this meaning. See also Lev. 12:8; 14:19.⁷⁸

The phrase **כפר על** could serve as a reminder that something is removed only because it serves as the functional equivalent of a longer version of the formula in which **מן** carries a privative sense. It is the presence or implied presence of **מן**, not a difference between **על** and **את**, that is the determining factor.

Gammie concludes with a fascinating observation, which tracks with my earlier remarks to the effect that some interpretations rejected by Milgrom actually provide strong support for aspects of his overall understanding of the purification offering.

Under Milgrom's view the slate was constantly being wiped clean, so to speak, with every sin offering. Under the view argued above, the sanctuary for the priestly writers was far more a portrait of Dorian Gray than Milgrom's own theory would allow. The sin offerings purged the people from their sins, but only the sin offerings once a year on the Day of Atonement purged the tent of meeting and only the sin offerings at ordination purged the outer altar. Thus we may conclude: *Sanctuary and sancta indeed reflected the state of the people's sinfulness precisely because the uncleannesses that the former accrued were not removed at every hattā't offering.*⁷⁹

Conclusion

I agree with Milgrom that the **חטאת** sacrifices at the initial consecration of the altar (Exod 29; Lev 8) and on the Day of Atonement (Exod 30:10; Lev 16) have the function of purging the sanctuary and its sancta on behalf of their offerers. But controlled syntactic analysis of the **כפר** formulas that state the goals/functions/meanings of the various kinds of purification offerings has forced me to the inescapable conclusion that all other purification offerings (discounting the ritual of Azazel's goat, which is not an offering) remove evil from their offerer(s), rather than from the sanctuary, as Milgrom claims.

77. Ibid., 39–41.

78. Ibid., 40 n. 61.

79. Ibid., 41.

In subsequent chapters we will find reinforcements for this conclusion, the implications of which reach to the core of the dynamic meaning behind the Israelite sacrificial system. Regarding the relative positions of Milgrom, Kiuchi, and Gammie, I am in basic agreement with Gammie, and I am in some respects between Kiuchi and Milgrom.

as working together to provide dynamics of passage. Purification offerings effect separation from the previous state, and burnt offerings accomplish aggregation to a new or renewed state. Consequently, Marx suggests that the "purification offering" should be termed "sacrifice of separation."¹³²

Some problems with the system of Marx are as follows:¹³³

1. Purification offerings can be involved in rites of passage, such as consecration ceremonies (e.g., Lev 8:14–17), and within the conceptual system of Israelite ritual they do change states of persons or things. However, "passage" is not a defining functional trait of this category of sacrifices because it is not unique to them. Burnt offerings can also be involved with purification offerings in transitions of state (see below), and a burnt offering is included in the consecration ceremonies (e.g., vv. 18–21) along with the special ordination (מִלְאִים) sacrifice (vv. 22–28), which is primarily if not exclusively a rite of passage. Like purification offerings, a reparation offering accomplishes כָּפַר, thereby removing an impediment to the divine-human relationship, prerequisite to reconciliation when forgiveness is granted directly by YHWH (5:16, 18, 26[6:7]; 19:22). Even well-being offerings provide some kind of כָּפַר (17:10–12).

2. In Lev 5:6–13 and Num 15:24–28, lone purification offerings and combinations of purification offerings with burnt offerings are functionally equivalent. Therefore, if it is true that purification offerings are rites of passage, they must not be limited to separation. In the passages just mentioned, whether or not a burnt offering accompanies a purification offering is due to quantitative considerations. The burnt offering supplements the quantity of offering material and thereby brings the expiatory power of the purification offering up to its requisite level, either by enhancing the lesser offerings of poor persons (Lev 5) or by expanding the scope of a purification offering to embrace the entire community (Num 15).¹³⁴

3. While it is true that purification offerings are involved in consecration, this is because they serve a purifying function that is prerequisite to transition to a state of enhanced intimacy with YHWH, whether a holy state (e.g., Lev

132. Marx, "Sacrifice pour les péchés," 37–48. The classic work on "rites of passage" is A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960). Cf. E. Leach's attempt to apply similar concepts (including liminality, separation, and aggregation) to sacrifice in general ("The Logic of Sacrifice," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament* [ed. B. Lang; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985] 136–50).

133. Cf. J. Milgrom's penetrating critique of Marx: "The Ḥattā't: A Rite of Passage?" *RB* 98 (1991) 120–24; idem, *Leviticus 1–16*, 289–92.

134. Cf. Milgrom, "The Ḥattā't: A Rite of Passage?" 122.

8:15)¹³⁵ or a status of authorization for levitical service (Num 8:5–22; see esp. vv. 8, 12, 21). However, the consecration activity par excellence is not the purification offering, whether alone or in combination with the burnt offering but, rather, the application of holy anointing oil (Exod 28:41; 29:7; 30:30; 40:13, 15; Lev 8:12, 30).¹³⁶

4. It is true that in the cultic calendars of Lev 23 and Num 28–29, calendric purification offerings are prescribed in connection with important times of the year, and these performances are not mandated by specific needs for purification. However, there is no warrant for disconnecting their function from the basic idea of purification carried by their חַטָּאת label and the goal verb כָּפַר (Num 28:22, 30; 29:5).

Conclusion

The fact that purification-offering blood contaminates (Lev 6:20[27]) before it is applied to the sanctuary and/or its sancta can be explained by its function to remove sin or physical ritual impurity from the offerer. However, three purification offerings are exceptional: initial decontamination of the altar, inner-sanctum sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, and the red cow ritual performed outside the camp.

Milgrom has reconstructed a general paradigm of purification-offering dynamics on the basis of the exceptional initial purification of the altar and inner-sanctum offerings, in which חַטָּאת blood purges the sacred objects and/or areas to which it is physically applied. But we have found that this kind of purgation does not apply in outer-altar and outer-sanctum sacrifices. I agree with Milgrom that individual expiable sins throughout the year have communal consequences in that they pollute the sanctuary.¹³⁷ However, whereas he holds that outer-altar and outer-sanctum purification offerings purge the sanctuary from the sins that have already polluted the sanctuary, I contend that these sacrifices result in mitigated pollution of the sanctuary, which must consequently be purged on the Day of Atonement.

135. For my suggestion about how the Nazirite's final purification offering serves this function in relation to culmination of his/her holy status, see on Num 6:14 and 16 in my *Leviticus, Numbers* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004) 535.

136. Milgrom, "The Ḥattā't: A Rite of Passage?" 121.

137. Cf. K. C. Hanson, "Sin, Purification, and Group Process," in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim* (ed. H. T. C. Sun et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 177.

Perhaps this amnesty recognizes the potential risks and/or conflicting interests involved in testifying and encourages witnesses with misgivings to aid the legal process, even after a delay.⁵⁹

It appears that the factor of delay is a common denominator between all moral faults expiable by noncalendric outer-altar or outer-sanctum **הטאת** sacrifices. Whether a person commits an inadvertent offense that he/she fails to recognize until later (Lev 4), delays giving required testimony (5:1), or forgets a duty to YHWH (5:2–4), there is delay between the violation and its ritual remedy.⁶⁰

Lest a “gap theory” of Num 15:22–31 appear too strange, we can point out that the unique pronouncement regarding defiant sins (vv. 30–31) appears to be the main thrust of this legislation, which is placed between narratives of communal rebellion recorded in chs. 14 and 16 and immediately preceding a narrative concerning an inexpiable offense committed by an individual (15:32–36).⁶¹ In this context it makes sense that the inadvertent-defiant opposition in vv. 22–31 would be contrastive (rather than necessarily comprehensive) in order to emphasize the gravity of the covenant-defying, “high-handed” category.⁶² Placement of purification-offering legislation in Num 15:22–29, immediately preceding the warning against “high-handed” sin in vv. 30–31, supports B. Levine’s observation: “The covenant, and the only-to-be-expected violations of it represent the larger framework within which the *hattā’t* sacrifice functioned.”⁶³

I have found no real contradiction between Lev 5 and Num 15. The difference between the two passages is in terms of their legal scope. Whereas the

logical, but it is somewhat more neat than the biblical data. For example, he does not adequately take Lev 5:1 into account. Here failure to testify is included in the scope of the purification offering (cf. vv. 5–6) even though its commission is neither **בְּשִׁגְגָה** nor **נְעִלְם**.

59. On leniency to encourage confession, see Phillips, “The Undetectable Offender,” 150.

60. On the graduated **הטאת** (Lev 5:1–13) as the remedy for the wrong of prolonging impurity (vv. 2–3), see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 310–13.

61. Cf. G. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1981) 130–31; P. J. Budd, *Numbers* (WBC 5; Waco, Texas: Word, 1984) 173–74.

62. See Wright’s observation that suffering lesser impurities would remind the Israelites of the threat of serious impurities (“Two Types,” 192).

63. B. Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord: A Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel* (SJLA 5; Leiden: Brill, 1974) 103. Levine compares the Hebrew verb **חטא**, “sin,” with its Akkadian cognate *hatû*, “to err, be at fault, betray,” which can refer to treaty violations (Levine, *Leviticus*, 19; cf. *In the Presence*, 102–3).

former has to do with the intermediate category of nondefiant deliberate sins, the latter deals with the outer inadvertent and defiant categories. So I find unnecessary the various attempts to harmonize these passages by adjusting the semantic parameters of terms for sin or introducing factors such as *post hoc* repentance.⁶⁴

Conclusion

While moral faults and physical ritual impurities are related, they remain distinct categories. The former are violations of YHWH’s commandments, but the latter arise from a human state of mortality.

Numbers 15:22–31 asserts that, although YHWH will extend mercy to the inadvertent sinner through sacrifice, no such remedy is possible for the defiant sinner, who is irrevocably and irredeemably condemned to the terminal punishment of extirpation (**כרת**). The point of this passage is not to divide the entire range of possible offenses down the middle into inadvertent and advertent categories but to highlight the severity due to rebels by contrasting it with the leniency available to sinners at the other end of the spectrum.

It is true that in biblical narratives YHWH can directly extend mercy to presumptuous sinners who repent (e.g., Manasseh; 2 Chr 33:12–13), and in Ezek 18:21 YHWH promises amnesty to the wicked who repent.⁶⁵ However, there is no indication that the mediation of the cult is envisioned as reversing terminal condemnation of defiant sinners. In subsequent chapters we will find, in agreement with Crüsemann (see above), that this observation holds true even for the awesome services of the Day of Atonement, including the high priest’s comprehensive confession over Azazel’s goat and subsequent banishment of the animal in order to purify the Israelite camp collectively of all moral faults (Lev 16:21–22).

64. Cf. my “Numbers 15:22–31 and the Spectrum of Moral Faults,” in *Inicios, paradigmas y fundamentos: Estudios teológicos y exegeticos en el Pentateuco* (ed. G. Klingbeil; River Plate Adventist University Monograph Series in Biblical and Theological Studies 1; Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2004) 149–56.

65. Compare the fact that in some texts (Exod 32:30; Ps 65:4[3]; 78:38; 79:9; Dan 9:24) **כפר** is only a divine act rather than the result of human cultic performance (F. Maass, “**כפר** *kpr* pi. To Atonement,” *TLOT* 2:631).

Chapter 10

Inner-Sanctum Purification Offerings

Observing that the prescriptions for the Day of Atonement in Lev 16 are strategically placed at the heart of the central book of the Pentateuch, S. A. Geller suggests that the chapter is “the gateway to the hidden sanctum of P’s theology.”¹ While the Day of Atonement was not the greatest of Israelite ceremonial days in terms of the quantity of sacrifices specified for it (cf. Num 28–29), its unique character sets it at the pinnacle of Israelite cultic observance.²

On the Day of Atonement, five main rituals are structurally bound together as a unified system

Verses 1–2 of Lev 16 introduce the ceremonies that are unique to the Day of Atonement³ within a narrative framework as originating from YHWH “after the death of the two sons of Aaron,” at the time when the sanctuary was inaugurated (cf. Lev 10:1–2). Geller suggests that this introduction is a literary clue to focus on the blood manipulations in the Holy of Holies rather than on the bloodless ritual with the so-called “scapegoat.”⁴

1. S. A. Geller, “Blood Cult: Toward a Literary Theology of the Priestly Work of the Pentateuch,” *Prooftexts* 12 (1992) 97–124. On the centrality of ch. 16 in the arrangement of material in Leviticus, see W. Shea, “Literary Form and Theological Function in Leviticus,” in *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy* (ed. F. Holbrook; DARCOM 3; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986) 138, 146–51; J. Hartley, *Leviticus* (WBC 4; Dallas: Word, 1992) xxxiv–xxxv, 217, 224; W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus* (BIS 35; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 86–87. Of course, literary structure can be viewed on more than one level. See the “ring” structure of Leviticus proposed by M. Douglas (“Poetic Structure in Leviticus,” *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* [ed. D. Wright, D. N. Freedman, and A. Hurvitz; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1995] 247–55, esp. 253) and endorsed by J. Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22* [AB 3A; New York: Doubleday, 2000] 1364–65), in which ch. 19 is the central turning point.

2. Cf. G. B. Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925) 306–7.

3. Excluding the regular daily (Exod 27:20–21; 29:38–42; 30:7–8; Num 28:1–8) and weekly (Lev 24:1–9) rituals and additional sacrifices performed similarly on other festivals (Num 29:7–11).

4. Geller, “Blood Cult,” 105–6.

Verses 3–10 outline preparations for the rituals of the day, including assembling certain animals at the sanctuary (cf. 9:1–5), the personal ritual purification of the high priest by washing his whole body, and designation of the respective ritual roles of two goats through the use of lots. Leviticus 16:11–28 prescribes the main ritual procedures, including core activities (vv. 11–25) and tasks that are prerequisite to Azazel's goat and purification-offering rituals (vv. 26–28). The chapter concludes in vv. 29–34 with commands for all Israelites to practice self-denial and abstain from work on this tenth day of the seventh month because of the special **כפר** that is performed for them, both priests and laity, and for all parts of YHWH's sanctuary.

In vv. 11–25, the high priest officiates over five main Day of Atonement rituals:⁵

1. Two elaborate purification offerings, using a bull on behalf of the high priest and his household and a goat on behalf of the lay community, are interwoven with each other. That is to say, the second ritual begins before the first is completed, and similar activities belonging to the two rituals alternate. When the mixed bloods of both animals are applied together to the outer altar (vv. 18–19), the rituals are merged. The blended purification offerings function together as a higher-level activity system called **הטאת הכפרים**, “the purification offering of purgation” (Exod 30:10; Num 29:11; see further below).⁶ Only during this exceedingly solemn ritual complex on the tenth day of the seventh month is the high priest, and no other, permitted to enter the awesome inner sanctum of the sanctuary, which in this chapter is called simply **הקודש**, “the holy (place)” (Lev 16:2, 12–16a). Because these **הטאת** sacrifices uniquely involve blood applications in the inner sanctum, I have referred to them as “inner-sanctum purification offerings.”

2. The high priest makes a verbal confession over a goat designated for “Azazel” (so-called “scapegoat”) while leaning both his hands on its head, and then the goat is led away into the wilderness by an assistant (vv. 20–22; cf. v. 10). The live goat is provided by the lay community (v. 5) but functions for all Israelites (v. 21), including the priests.

3. Following the ritual with Azazel's goat, the high priest offers two burnt offerings of rams, one on behalf of the priests and the other on behalf

5. Not counting the lot ritual (vv. 8–10) or any ablutions of the high priest, such as his second full bath in v. 24.

6. W. C. Kaiser (“The Book of Leviticus,” *NIB* 1:1112) and P. Jenson (“The Levitical Sacrificial System,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible* [ed. R. Beckwith and M. Selman; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995] 36) mistakenly identify **הטאת הכפרים** in Num 29:11 with the scapegoat ritual.

of the laity (v. 24; cf. vv. 3, 5). Not stated in Lev 16, but required by Num 15:1–16, are a grain and drink offering to accompany each burnt offering (cf. Num 29:8–11).

In the Israelite system of rituals, only the special Day of Atonement ceremonies involve what P. Jenson has termed “two extreme poles of the spatial dimension of the Holiness Spectrum”: the Holy of Holies (purification offerings) and the wilderness (Azazel's goat).⁷

The ritual of Azazel's goat (Lev 16:20–22) and the burnt offerings (v. 24) interrupt the inner-sanctum purification offerings after their blood manipulations (vv. 14–19) and before the burning of their suet/fat (v. 25), which is followed by disposal of their carcasses by incineration outside the camp (v. 27).⁸ So the purification offerings provide a framework within which the Azazel's goat ritual and the two burnt offerings are embedded. Thus all five rituals are structurally bound together as a unified system. This system is embedded within the larger system comprising all rituals performed on the tenth day of the seventh month, including regular rituals (Exod 30:7, 8; Num 28:1–8) and additional festival offerings (Num 29:7–11).

Of the five rituals unique to the Day of Atonement, the basic carriers of qualitative meaning are the two purification offerings and Azazel's goat.⁹ The meaning of the burnt offerings on behalf of the priests and laity is subsumed under that of the purification offerings on behalf of these offerers, respectively. As elsewhere when these two kinds of sacrifices are coupled on behalf of the same offerer, the burnt-offering token “gift” enhances the efficacy of the purification-offering token “debt payment” in a quantitative sense, making what amounts to a greater purification offering (cf. Lev 5:6–7; Num 15:24–28).¹⁰

7. P. Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (JSOTSup 106; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 201–2.

8. While *m. Yoma* 6 (see esp. 6:6–7) retains the biblical order, the *Temple Scroll* avoids interruption of the **הטאת** sacrifices by placing the burning of their suet and disposal of their carcasses before the high priest commences the ritual of Azazel's live goat (26:7–11).

9. Compare Geller, who supports the conclusion that the entrance into the inner sanctum to manipulate blood and the scapegoat ritual must bear the special meaning of the Day of Atonement on the basis that these are the only rites unique to the day (“Blood Cult,” 104–5).

10. Cf. S. R. Driver, “Propitiation,” in *A Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. J. Hastings; New York: Scribner's, 1911) 4:131. So it is unnecessary to seek a separate significance for such a burnt offering, as some scholars do. For example, A. F. Rainey interprets combinations of purification and burnt offerings as representing expiation followed by consecration (“The Order of Sacrifices in Old Testament Ritual Texts,” *Bib* 51 [1970] 498, esp. n. 5). In his analysis of Lev 8, F. Gorman explains such a pair as purging the

Thus the burnt offerings are an integral, although functionally secondary, part of the system of rituals involved in the purgation of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.¹¹

Although Lev 16 provides considerable detail, it economizes in several ways:

1. Leviticus 16 does not mention some activities that must logically be included for practical physical reasons. For example, blood must be collected at the time of slaughter (cf. 2 Chr 29:22; *m. Yoma* 4:3) so that it can be manipulated.

2. Leviticus 16 assumes a fully operational cultic system and knowledge of rules that operate throughout it. For example, the high priest would purify himself by washing his hands and feet with water drawn from the sacred laver before each period of officiation at the altar or entrance into the Sacred Tent (cf. Exod 30:17–21).¹²

3. Leviticus 16 abbreviates by referring to patterns of activity previously set up in the same ritual complex. In v. 16b the text prescribes blood manipulations to be performed in the outer sanctum, called here the “Tent of Meeting” (i.e., the rest of the Tent),¹³ by saying simply that he shall do likewise for the Tent of Meeting. Here “likewise” (כִּי) refers back to the pattern of activities specified for the inner sanctum (vv. 14–15).

sanctuary (purification offering) and then providing a gift to YHWH to secure right relations with him, averting divine wrath caused by the offense of sin (burnt offering; *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* [JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990] 126–27). Such approaches fail to account for the fact that an unaccompanied *חטאת* sacrifice can be functionally equivalent to a purification–burnt offering pair (Lev 5:5–6; Num 15:24, 27).

11. The *Temple Scroll* (25:15–16) recognizes that the burnt offerings accompany the special *חטאת* complex. Contra B. Levine, who explains the reference to *כפר* in connection with the burnt offerings in Lev 16:24: “The ‘*olah*, ‘burnt offering,’ was not directly involved in the rites of expiation. This is a general statement referring to all that the High Priest had done by way of expiation, rather than to the ‘*olah* specifically” (*Leviticus* [JPS Torah Commentary: Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989] 108). Also contra Geller, who interprets the high priest’s performance of burnt offerings in his usual vestments (v. 24) as immediate resumption of the regular cult (“Blood Cult,” 107). In the very next verse the high priest burns the suet of the inner-sanctum purification offerings on the altar (v. 25), showing that he has *not yet* resumed his regular cultic activity.

12. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 1017.

13. R. Péter-Contesse and J. Ellington, *A Handbook on Leviticus* (UBSHS; New York: United Bible Societies, 1990) 250; compare Lev 4:7, where *כָּל־דָּם הַפָּר*, “all the blood of the bull,” refers to the remainder of the blood that had not already been used (cf. v. 18), and v. 12, where *כָּל־הַפָּר* refers to “all the rest of the bull.”

4. Leviticus 16 assumes knowledge of a ritual paradigm presented earlier in Leviticus: v. 24 calls for two burnt offerings but provides no instructions for their performance. These instructions appear in Lev 1.¹⁴

Now we turn to more-specific analysis of the inner-sanctum purification offerings. In the following chapter we will examine the ritual of Azazel’s goat.

Two inner-sanctum purification offerings form a unit

As mentioned above, the two special purification offerings performed on the Day of Atonement, one on behalf of the priests and the other on behalf of the lay community, are designated as *חטאת הקפירים*, “the purification offering of purgation” (Exod 30:10; Num 29:11). Several factors support the idea that this construct expression, which refers to a single *חטאת* sacrifice, must cover both rituals:

1. In Exod 30:10 the high priest purges the incense altar once a year by performing purgation on its horns with blood of “the purification offering (*חטאת*, sing.) of purgation.” In Lev 16:14–16 and 18–19, bloods of both inner-sanctum purification offerings are used once a year to purge the sanctuary and its sancta, including the outer sanctum where the incense altar is located (v. 16b).

2. In Lev 16:25 the high priest burns the suet of *החטאת*, “the purification offering” (sing.), clearly referring to both purification offerings collectively.¹⁵

3. The offerings stipulated in the cultic calendar of Num 28–29 are performed on behalf of all Israelites, including the priests. In this context, it can be assumed that “the purification offering (*חטאת*, sing.) of purgation” in v. 11 should also be on behalf of all Israel. In Lev 16 this coverage is accomplished by means of the two inner-sanctum rituals, one on behalf of the priests and the other on behalf of the rest of the people.

The collective singular “purification offering of purgation” refers to the ritual complex that contains both *חטאת* rituals. Compare use of the singular *עֹלָה*, “burnt offering,” in Num 28–29 for two or more regular or additional burnt offerings that form a burnt-offering complex and are performed on behalf of the same offerer, all Israel (28:3, 6, 10, 11, 19, 27, etc.).

14. The lack of details in Lev 16 regarding the burnt offerings disturbed A. A. Bonar, who concluded that on the Day of Atonement “the Lord wished to fix the attention of all upon the *sin-offerings*” (*A Commentary on the Book of Leviticus, Expository and Practical* [5th ed.; London: Nisbet, 1875] 301).

15. Compare *Targum Onqelos*’s plural *חטאות* here. K. Elliger unnecessarily speculates that the singular in the MT could indicate that originally only one *חטאת* was offered (*Leviticus* [HAT 4; Tübingen: Mohr, 1966] 216).

animals by stipulating that the suet and carcass of the bull should be treated before those of the goat, are placed in the middle.³⁸ Note that we have added “exit to court” in the “both” column as the transition from initial application of the bull’s blood in the inner sanctum (Lev 16:14) to the slaughter of the community’s goat (v. 15). As before, italics indicate activities only belonging to the bull ritual.

The inner-sanctum purification offerings purge ritual impurities and moral faults from the three parts of the sanctuary on behalf of the priests and laity, and reconsecrate the outer altar

A. Chapman and A. Streane found that the Day of Atonement service is complicated, and its rituals “seem designed to illustrate more than one idea in connexion with atonement and purification.”³⁹ Their observation is confirmed by vv. 6, 11a, 16, 17b, 18a, 19b, 20a, 30, 32–34 of Lev 16, which indicate that the goal of the inner-sanctum purification offerings is to purge (*pi’el* of כפר with על or direct object; compare *pi’el* of טהר in v. 19) the three parts of the sanctuary—inner sanctum, outer sanctum, and outer altar—from (מן) the impurities and moral faults of the Israelites on behalf of (על/בעד) the priests and laity,⁴⁰ who are thereby purified (טהר, v. 30),⁴¹ and to (re)consecrate (*pi’el* of קדש) the outer altar (v. 19).

38. Postrequisite activities are lumped together after core portions of all rituals are completed. Although disposal of the carcasses (v. 27) must occur after the suet is removed from the animals so that it can be burned on the altar (v. 25) and before those who incinerate the carcasses purify themselves (v. 28), this disposal could take place before the handler of Azazel’s goat purifies himself (v. 26). The latter activity would be performed sometime after he releases the goat in the wilderness (v. 22; J. Milgrom, personal communication). Among postrequisite activities, those pertaining to the ritual of Azazel’s goat may be mentioned first (v. 26) because the core of this ritual is completed (v. 22) before that of the inner-sanctum הטהרה complex (v. 25).

39. A. Chapman and A. Streane, *The Book of Leviticus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914) 166.

40. Compare Ezek 45:18–20, where there is a threefold purification of the temple on the first and seventh days of the first month, but in this passage the three places of blood application are the doorpost of the temple, the four corners of the altar’s ledge, and the post of the gate of the inner court.

41. Milgrom comments: “as the sanctuary is polluted by the people’s impurities, their elimination, in effect, also purifies the people” (*Leviticus 1–16*, 1056). Kiuchi objects to Milgrom’s clear-cut distinction between purification of sancta and of persons in Lev 16 on the basis of v. 33, where “the sancta *kipper* is somehow equivalent to, or parallel to, the *kipper* on behalf of the priests and the people” (*The Purification Offering*, 93). However, in this verse כפר את takes the three parts of the sanctuary as direct objects because the blood is physically applied to them, but purification of the people is expressed with על כפר. Although these sacrifices benefit the people, the preposition על acknowledges that this benefit is not direct in the same way. B. Levine

Purging the sanctuary purifies the Israelites because its condition and fate is theirs. If their sins accumulate too much in YHWH’s sanctuary, his resident Presence (cf. Exod 25:8) will abandon them (cf. Ezek 9:3; 10:4, 18–19; 11:22–23).⁴²

There are two crucial differences between the inner-sanctum purification offerings and the הטהרה sacrifices belonging to the outer-altar and outer-sanctum types, which are performed on other days.

1. In our study of כפר goal formulas (ch. 6), we found that throughout the year outer-altar or outer-sanctum purification offerings remove evil from (כפר with על, optionally followed by privative (מן) their offerer(s), but on the Day of Atonement the inner-sanctum sacrifices remove evil from (כפר with על or direct object, optionally followed by privative (מן) sacred areas or objects belonging to the sanctuary.

2. Throughout the year, כפר for physical ritual impurity results in the purity (טהר) of the offerer (e.g., Lev 12:7–8; Num 8:21), and כפר for sins is prerequisite to forgiveness (סלח; e.g., Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35). But on the Day of Atonement, purgation (כפר) of the sanctuary from ritual impurities and moral faults results in purity (טהר) for the people from their sins (16:30). As A. Büchler pointed out, only the Day of Atonement purification offerings effect purity from sin.⁴³

The Israelites do not receive purity from their physical ritual impurities on the Day of Atonement, presumably because they have already received it directly through rituals earlier in the year. But remedying sin is another matter. First it requires sacrificial כפר, then divinely granted forgiveness (סלח), and finally communal purification (טהר) on the Day of Atonement. Therefore, on the Day of Atonement the people reach the טהר stage of כפר with regard to their sins that is equivalent to the טהר stage reached earlier in the year with

explains that, by practicing self-denial and abstaining from work, the Israelites identify with the purification of the sanctuary, and thus a purification of them is effected (“Leviticus, Book of,” ABD 4:315). This seems to complement Milgrom’s view: the people are purified as they identify with the cleansing of the sanctuary that is accomplished for their benefit.

42. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 258–61; cf. idem, “Israel’s Sanctuary: The Priestly ‘Picture of Dorian Gray,’” RB 83 (1976) 396–99; cf. Hasel, “Studies in Biblical Atonement II,” 119; B. Schwartz, “The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. D. Wright, D. N. Freedman, and A. Hurvitz; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1995) 21.

43. A. Büchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century* (LBS; New York: KTAV, 1967) 263.

regard to their ritual impurities.⁴⁴ This is evident in the striking parallel between Num 8:21, expressing the **טהר** goal of an outer-altar purification offering that removes *physical ritual impurity* from the Levites, and Lev 16:30, stating the **טהר** benefit of the communal Day of Atonement rituals with regard to *sins* of the entire community: ~

Num 8:21: וַיִּכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם אֶהָרִן לְטַהֲרֵם, and Aaron effected purgation on their behalf to purify them.

Lev 16:30: וַיִּכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם, . . . shall purgation be effected on your behalf to purify you.⁴⁵

In each of these verses, **כפר** for the collective offerer (Levites or whole community) cleanses (*pi'el* of **טהר**) them.

Milgrom agrees with Knohl in regarding Lev 16:30 as part of an H interpolation (vv. 29–34a)⁴⁶ and notes that in this verse H uses **טהר** in the sense of moral purification, as opposed to P, which only speaks of forgiveness (**סלח**).⁴⁷ Elsewhere Milgrom explains:

H's metaphoric use of P's cultic terms is highlighted by *tāmē*². In P, it is ritual impurity; in H, moral impurity. Ritual impurity (P) is remediable by ritual purification, but moral impurity is irremediable. It is a capital crime, punishable for the individual by *kāreṭ* and for the community by exile.⁴⁸

Since the **טהר**–**טמא** opposition earlier in Leviticus has to do with physical ritual impurity rather than with moral faults, the use of **טהר** in 16:30 does appear at first glance to accord with Milgrom's characterization of H. But here there is a major difference from irremediable moral impurity in Milgrom's H: **טהר** expresses the *remedy* of purification from *moral impurity*. So whatever the redactional status of this verse may be, its terminology simultaneously expresses an exceptional ritual efficacy and serves as a bridge to the conceptual world of the following chapters.

The contrast between expiable sins purified from the people in 16:30 versus inexpiable faults dealt with later in Leviticus is due to the respective

44. Rendtorff misses this final outcome, stating rather that in Lev 16 **כפר** itself is the goal for which Aaron offers his **חטאת** (*Leviticus*, 218).

45. Translation by Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1294; cf. idem, *Leviticus* 1–16, 1011.

46. Ibid., 62–63, 1064–65; idem, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1343; cf. Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence*, 27–28, 105; idem, “The Priestly Torah versus the Holiness School: Sabbath and the Festivals,” *HUCA* 58 (1987) 86–92. Knohl also regards Num 8:21 as belonging to an H passage (*The Sanctuary of Silence*, 71–73, 85, 93 n. 115, 105), but Milgrom thinks there is inadequate evidence for this (*Leviticus* 17–22, 1340–41, 1343–44).

47. Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1–16, 37.

48. Idem, *Leviticus* 17–22, 1326. On the difference between these kinds of impurity, see also J. Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 22–31.

natures of these moral evils. In 16:30 they are **חטאת** sins, which up to this point in Leviticus are inadvertent or otherwise nondefiant sins (e.g., Lev 4–5), but the irremediable offenses to which Milgrom refers are more serious (e.g., Lev 18:20, 23–25, 27–28, 30; 19:31; 20:3; etc.).⁴⁹

The inner-sanctum purification offerings accomplish כפר that is beyond forgiveness

As early as the Second Temple period, it has been thought that the opulent rites of the Day of Atonement, combined with the people's repentance expressed through self-denial, provide forgiveness on a grand scale from various kinds of moral faults.⁵⁰ Importing terminology from Lev 4:20–21 regarding the outer-sanctum purification offering for the community to express the goal of the inner-sanctum sacrifice of the people's goat on the Day of Atonement, *Temple Scroll* 26:9–10 reads:

חטאת הקהל הוא ויכפר בו על כול עם הקהל ונסלח להמה, (for it is) the sin offering for the assembly; and he shall atone with it for all the people of the assembly, and they shall be forgiven.⁵¹

Surprisingly, the verb **סלח**, “forgive,” does not appear even once in any of the biblical Day of Atonement prescriptions (Lev 16; 23:26–32; Num 29:7–11).⁵² This fact alone constitutes a major difference between the purification

49. Ibid., 1422: “Thus the alleged difference between H and P regarding the nature of expiation has to be sharply modified. H, after all, speaks of *advertent*, unrepentant sins (18:24–30; 26:14–39). P, however, deals with *inadvertent* violations, which are expiable by sacrifice. But P also posits—as can be derived from its laws—that advertent sins committed by the community result in Israel's exile (vol. 1.258–64).”

50. Cf. *m. Yoma* 8:8–9; *b. Yoma* 86a; J. Herrmann, *Die Idee der Sühne im Alten Testament: Eine Untersuchung über Gebrauch und Bedeutung des Wortes kipper* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905) 93; A. Médebielle, “Le symbolisme du sacrifice expiatoire en Israël,” *Bib* 2 (1921) 281; idem, *L'Expiation dans L'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament* (SPIB; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1923) 85; S. Neches, *As at This Day* (New York: Bloch, 1930) 10; S. Y. Agnon, *Days of Awe* (New York: Schocken, 1948) 211–14; C. D. Ginsburg, *Leviticus* (ed. C. J. Ellicott; LHC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961) 150; A. Schenker, *Versöhnung und Sühne* (BibB 15; Freiburg: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981) 112, 114–15; Levine, *Leviticus*, 100; Kaiser, “The Book of Leviticus,” 999, 1113–14; F. Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* (trans. A. W. Mahnke; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 318; M. Rooker, *Leviticus* (NAC 3A; Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000) 212, 219.

51. Translation by Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983) 2:117.

52. Cf. L. Morris, “The Day of Atonement and the Work of Christ,” *Reformed Theological Review* 14 (1955) 12; Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, 180; cf. 212, 217–18, 221; Shea, “Literary Form,” 166; G. Olafsson, “The Use of *ns*² in the Pentateuch and Its Contribution to the Concept of Forgiveness” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1992) 201; Geller, “Blood Cult,” 107.

offerings of the Day of Atonement and those that remedy sins throughout the rest of the year. The purity accomplished for the people on this day is כפר *beyond forgiveness*.⁵³

It seems that the idea of forgiveness on the Day of Atonement has come from a combination of powerful sources. First, it is (incorrectly) assumed that כפר through a חטאת sacrifice always results in forgiveness. Second, it is (incorrectly) assumed that, when Azazel's goat bears the iniquity/culpability of the people (Lev 16:21–22), this implies that they receive forgiveness. Third, it is (incorrectly) assumed that in v. 30, which links cleansing from sins with כפר, the moral purification (טהר) of the people through observance of the Day of Atonement involves or at least implies the granting of forgiveness at that time.⁵⁴ This idea is reinforced by the close association between uncleanness and sin in v. 16⁵⁵ and between כפר and טהר in goal formulas of purification offerings that remedy physical ritual impurity (12:7–8, etc.), combined with the fact that Ps 51 (vv. 4[2], 9[7], 12[10]) and the prophets use טהר for moral purity/purification (e.g., Jer 33:8; Ezek 36:33).⁵⁶

M. Weinfeld informs us of another source for the idea of forgiveness on the Day of Atonement. The jubilee announced on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9–10) “underwent a process of spiritual metamorphosis during the Second Temple period, so that the proclamation of freedom brought about not only the physical liberation of slaves and of land, but also the liberation of the soul and its restoration to its pure source.”⁵⁷

Since the terminology of 16:16 and 21 indicates that the Day of Atonement rituals deal both with rebellious (פשע) and nondefiant (חטאת) sins,

53. Shea, “Literary Form,” 166.

54. So H. Ringgren, “טהר *tāhar*,” *TDOT* 5:295. Notice the prominence of Lev 16:30 in traditional confessions for the high priest (*m. Yoma* 3:8) and over Azazel's goat on behalf of the entire community (*m. Yoma* 6:2).

55. Idem, “טהר *tāhar*,” 293.

56. Cf. *ibid.*, 294–95; F. Maass, “טהר *thr* To Be Pure,” *TLOT* 2:484–85. Jeremiah 33:8 is particularly potent because it has the verbs טהר and סלח in parallel to express YHWH's remedy for moral faults, using all three roots for sin(ning) that appear in Lev 16:16, 21: פשע (“transgress[ion]”), חטא (“sin”), and עון (“culpability”). Interestingly, arrangement of these roots in Jer 33:8 reflects the pattern of their occurrence in Lev 16:16, 21 (repetition of two roots followed by addition of the third) but with a different order (including reversal of פשע and חטא), aside from the fact that Jeremiah places חטא and פשע in relative clauses that define the עון. (Read from right to left.)

←Lev 16
כפר, “purge”; v. 16) פשע←חטא (טהר, “purify”) ←Jer 33:8
פשע←חטא (סלח, “forgive”) עון←חטא
התודה, “confess”; v. 21) עון←פשע←חטא
פשע←חטא←פשע

57. M. Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Jerusalem: Magnes / Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 208; cf. 209–12.

postbiblical prayers and confessions assume that God forgives these categories on Yom Kippur.⁵⁸ But this understanding of the Day of Atonement has resulted from interpretive development beyond the plain sense of Leviticus.

Interestingly, Milgrom's general theory of חטאת sacrifices also has כפר after forgiveness for an act of sin. However, in this case initial forgiveness results from repentance and is granted before the offerer brings his outer-altar or outer-sanctum purification offering, which is needed to purge (כפר) the sanctuary, prerequisite to additional forgiveness for the negative effect of the sin on the sanctuary.⁵⁹

Activity components contribute to the overall goal

Organizing the inner-sanctum purification offering paradigm hierarchically into subsystems of activity dealing with incense, blood applied to the three parts of the sanctuary, suet, carcass, and purification of assistant(s), we can outline the ritual procedure as shown on p. 236. The function of the inner-sanctum purification offerings is reflected by the structure of their activities. Interweaving and merging indicate a close relationship between the two rituals (see table 13),⁶⁰ which operate together on behalf of the entire community of Israel, including both priests and laity. The order of blood manipulations shows that primary significance is accorded to treatment of each of the three sacred areas in descending order of sanctity.⁶¹ It is more important to complete the blood manipulations in each area before moving to the next area than it is to maintain the continuity of each individual ritual. Thus the bloods of both animals are applied to the inner sanctum, then to the outer sanctum, and finally to the outer altar. The principle of descending sanctity also requires that the priests' sacrifice be performed before that of the people.

After the blood applications to the inner sanctum, outer sanctum, and outer altar, the suet is burned on the outer altar, and then the carcasses are incinerated outside the camp. So the entire inner-sanctum purification-offering complex progresses outward through four areas:

inner sanctum → outer sanctum → outer altar → outside the camp

58. *Ibid.*, 208–9.

59. Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1–16, 256.

60. M. Noth obscures this relationship with his contention that Lev 16:15, prescribing manipulations of the blood of YHWH's goat in the inner sanctum that exactly correspond to the procedure with the blood of the high priest's bull, is secondary material because it specifically refers to v. 14 (*Leviticus* [trans. J. E. Anderson; OTL; London: SCM, 1965] 123–24).

61. Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 204.

There is an additional reason to incinerate both the high priest's bull and the community's goat: unlike **חטאת** sacrifices performed at other times, these function as ritual "sponges" to purge evils from the sanctuary. So incinerating them not only rules out benefit to the high priest; it eliminates the evils, except that in some sense the moral faults survive to be further eliminated to the wilderness by means of Azazel's goat.

Purifying Assistant(s)

Any assistant who participates in disposing of the inner-sanctum **חטאת** carcasses must purify himself by laundering his clothes and bathing (Lev 16:28). This is understandable if these animals, presumably with the exception of the suet burned for YHWH on his altar (v. 25), function as ritual "sponges" to absorb the ritual impurities and moral faults purged out of the sanctuary (cf. v. 16). While the carcasses themselves never directly contact the polluted sancta, the animals are regarded as units: purgative application of their blood to the sanctuary contaminates their carcasses *pars pro toto*. So a person subsequently contacting such a carcass contracts impurity.⁷²

While the inner-sanctum purification offerings purge the sanctuary of the ritual impurities and moral faults of the Israelites (v. 16), Azazel's goat carries away only moral faults (v. 21). So apparently the ritual impurities are destroyed when the carcasses laden with them are incinerated.⁷³ The moral faults are tougher to eradicate. They remain to be driven away on the live goat, polluting its handler in the process (v. 26).⁷⁴

Conclusion

On the Day of Atonement, a tightly woven ritual complex consisting of two elaborate purification offerings on behalf of the priestly and lay commu-

72. Denying contamination by contact of such an assistant or the assistant who leads Azazel's goat into the wilderness (v. 26), Kurtz attempted to explain the requirements for purification of these individuals on the basis of the fact that they went outside the camp, the place of purity, where they could have become defiled without knowing it (*Sacrificial Worship*, 415). But there is no evidence that simply going a distance from the camp could cause a person to be contaminated or that purification in these cases was for defilement that was only potential.

73. Cf. B. Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord: A Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel* (SJLA 5; Leiden: Brill, 1974) 103; Schwartz, "The Bearing of Sin," 17 n. 55.

74. Cf. *ibid.*, 17–18. P. Bovati observes: "When a crime has been committed, it becomes part of history; inscribed forever on reality" (*Re-Establishing Justice: Legal Terms, Concepts and Procedures in the Hebrew Bible* [JSOTSup 105; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994] 159).

nities, respectively, purges the ritual impurities and moral faults of the Israelites from the three parts of YHWH's sanctuary: inner sanctum, outer sanctum, and outer altar. While purifying (**טהר**) a person from severe physical ritual impurity is accomplished in one major stage of ritual **כפר** by a noncalendric outer-altar purification offering, cleansing a person/party from **חטאת**, "sin," requires two major phases of **כפר**: First, a noncalendric outer-altar or outer-sanctum purification offering purges (**כפר**) the moral evil from the offerer, prerequisite to YHWH's forgiveness (**סלח**). Second, the corporate purgation (**כפר**) of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement results in the moral cleansing (**טהר**) of the people.⁷⁵

75. Cf. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*, 157; Shea, "Literary Form," 165–66.

Chapter 11

The Purification Ritual of Azazel's Goat

When the high priest finishes purging the three components of the sanctuary—inner sanctum, outer sanctum, and outer altar—through the blood-manipulation phase of the inner-sanctum purification offerings, he turns his attention to the live goat that has been standing in the courtyard following its designation by lot “for Azazel” (Lev 16:20; cf. v. 10). While the activities involved in the ritual of Azazel's goat are relatively simple, their goal/meaning is rich and in some ways elusive. Our aim here is to penetrate the significance of this ritual enough to assess its basic purpose and its relationship to the inner-sanctum sacrifices.

The live goat is banished from the sanctuary court to the wilderness

Leviticus 16:20–22 prescribes the system of activities belonging to the ritual of Azazel's goat. First the high priest confesses the moral faults of all Israel over the goat while leaning both his hands on its head. Then an assistant leads the goat from the court of the sanctuary into the wilderness, where he releases/abandons it, after which he must purify himself. We can list these activities as follows:

- lean both hands on head of goat
- speak while keeping hands on head of goat
- banish goat into wilderness
- launder clothes
- bathe in water

Note the following clarifications:

1. “Bringing forward” (הִקְרִיב) the goat (v. 20b) is simply a transition to the beginning of the individual ritual (cf. v. 11). It is not presentation to the altar.
2. Uniquely in the Israelite ritual system, the high priest (here Aaron) leans both hands, not just one hand, on the head of the goat. He confesses while remaining in this posture.

3. Putting the sins on the head of the goat (v. 21) is interpreted function of confessing while leaning both hands. It is not a separate physical activity. Likewise, “the goat shall carry upon it all their iniquities” (v. 22) explains the purpose of “it shall be sent off” (v. 21).
4. Because the impurity necessitating personal purification of the assistant is contracted from his participation in the ritual, this purification can be regarded as a postrequisite part of the ritual.

The overall goal of the ritual with Azazel's goat is to banish moral faults from the Israelite camp

The basic function of the procedure with Azazel's goat is to transport all of the culpabilities, transgressions, and sins of the Israelites away from their camp to the wilderness, where they are obviously supposed to remain (Lev 16:21–22). Thus nonmaterial evils are treated as if they can be loaded onto an animal and toted away on this “tote-goat” as if it were material baggage.

Verses 5, 8, 10, and 26 provide additional data. Like the goat slain on behalf of the lay community, the tote-goat serves as a חַטָּאת, that is, some kind of purification ritual (v. 5). But whereas the goat to be slain is designated “for YHWH,” the live goat is “for Azazel” (v. 8) and is “stationed alive before YHWH to perform expiation upon it by sending it off into the wilderness to Azazel” (v. 10).¹ So the goal is to free the Israelites' camp of their moral faults by transferring them to Azazel, who/which is in the wilderness. By contacting Azazel's goat, which functions as a contaminated vehicle for transporting moral evils, the man who leads it into the wilderness becomes ritually impure and must undergo purification before reentering the camp (Lev 16:26). As pointed out by D. Wright, the close relationship between sin and ritual impurity is especially clear in this instance, where sin causes impurity.²

The core dynamics of the ritual, not including postrequisite purification of the assistant, involve two phases of transfer:

1. Confess: transfer moral faults to the goat.
2. Banish: transfer moral faults, which are on the goat, to the wilderness.

1. Translation by J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22* (AB 3A; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 1293; cf. idem, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 1009.

2. D. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (SBLDS 101; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) 19; cf. 18, 79; idem, “Day of Atonement,” *ABD* 2:73.

We can outline the ritual hierarchically as follows:

The Purification Ritual of Azazel's Goat

confess while leaning both hands on head of goat
 lean both hands on head of goat
 speak while keeping hands on head of goat
 banish goat into wilderness
 purify handler of the goat
 launder clothes
 bathe in water

Confession and leaning two hands serve to gather the moral faults and transfer them to Azazel's goat

While the text says only that the high priest confesses over the goat (Lev 16:21), we can assume that this speech is addressed to the injured party, namely YHWH, against whose commandments the Israelites sinned.³

Elsewhere in the Israelite ritual system, confession is required in some prescriptions for purification and reparation offerings (Lev 5:5; Num 5:7). But confession simultaneous with leaning two hands on the victim appears only in the corporate ritual of Azazel's goat.

Some scholars, such as R. Péter, B. Janowski, D. Wright, and J. Milgrom, have made a qualitative distinction between transfer with two hands on Azazel's goat versus identification of the offerer with one hand.⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, on the other hand, did not regard the difference as essential, "but the laying on of both hands rendered the act more solemn and expressive."⁵ A. B.

3. So *m. Yoma* 6:2; cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 303 on Lev 5:5.

4. See, e.g., R. Péter, "L'imposition des mains dans l'Ancien Testament," *VT* 27 (1977) 48–55; B. Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschaft und zur Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (WMANT 55; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982) 209–10, 215–21; D. Wright, "The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite Literature," *JAOS* 106 (1986) 433–46; J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 151–52.

5. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (trans. J. Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952 [orig. 1874]) 2:404 n. 1; cf. N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function* (JSOTSup 56; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987) 113; K. Mattingly, "The Laying on of Hands on Joshua: An Exegetical Study of Numbers 27:12–23 and Deuteronomy 34:9" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1997) 139–43. A. Rodríguez tentatively argues for two hands in the sacrificial ritual, thereby leveling the distinction between one and two hands, on the basis of Num 27:18 and 23, where God commands Moses to lay his hand (sing.) on Joshua (v. 18), but then Moses laid his hands (pl.) upon him (v. 23): "In the light of Num 27:18, 23, it may be suggested that, while descriptive cultic texts employ the singular, the actual performance of the ritual involves both hands, as in

Ehrlich views the distinction as quantitative, with two hands used on Azazel's goat because it is to bear numerous sins of the entire community.⁶ Similarly, C. D. Ginsburg has linked the use of both hands with the fact that the animal functioned for both the priests and the lay community.⁷

While I agree with those who hold that leaning one hand signifies identification of the offerer as owner of the victim, I would suggest that the two kinds of hand-leaning have a common denominator: each signifies a (different) kind of identification that is involved in transfer. Both require additional actions for transfer to take place. But the respective identifications and transfers differ qualitatively. When one hand is used, the following activities transfer the victim from the offerer to YHWH for his utilization. When the high priest places two hands on Azazel's goat, this act combined with simultaneous confession transfers moral faults to the goat. The role of double hand-leaning is not to identify ownership, which has already been established by the lot ritual, but to identify the route of transfer as it takes place. So whereas the identification gesture with one hand precedes transfer, the gesture with two hands is an integral part of the transfer process.

The respective functions of the two kinds of hand-leaning are shaped by the ritual contexts in which they appear. So perhaps two hands indicate quantitative heightening (cf. above) while the context establishes a qualitative difference in function.

Confession plus double hand-leaning appears to be the means by which the sins of the entire nation are transformed from abstraction, as if out of the air, into a concentrated, quasi-spatially containable form, gathered to the high priest, and channeled through his hands to the goat.⁸ Although he is immune

Lev 16:21" (*Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus* [AUSDS 3; Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1979] 197). However, neither Num 27:18, 23 nor Lev 16:21 is a sacrificial ritual. If Lev 16:21 is taken to exemplify sacrificial practice, it violates Rodríguez's distinction because it is prescriptive (= Rodríguez's "descriptive") rather than an actual performance.

6. A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: Textkritisches, Sprachliches und Sachliches* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1968) 2:56; cf. N. Zohar, who works back from the idea that two hands signify transfer in Lev 16:21 to the conclusion that leaning one hand indicates transfer of less evil ("Repentance and Purification: The Significance and Semantics of אָטַח in the Pentateuch," *JBL* 107 [1988] 612–13, 615 n. 31).

7. C. D. Ginsburg, *Leviticus* (ed. C. J. Ellicott; LHC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961) 155.

8. Cf. K. Koch, "Sühne und Sündenvergebung um die Wende von der exilischen zur nachexilischen Zeit," *EvT* 26 (1966) 229; F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 94. Wright avoids the idea that the sins are transferred through the high priest:

to this evil, no wonder he leans his hands *before* commencing the confession, so that the toxic flow will immediately pass from him!

The requirement of confession, which makes the transfer depend on more than simple physical contact, is symptomatic of the fact that moral faults are less directly treatable than physical ritual impurities. Compare outer-altar purification offerings, which can remove physical ritual impurities from persons (e.g., Lev 12:6–8; Num 8:12, 21) but can only serve as prerequisites to divine forgiveness for moral faults (Lev 4:26, 31, 35; Num 15:26, 28).

Moral faults are dangerous, as shown by the bipartite structure of the complex of rituals unique to the Day of Atonement. The transition between the two parts of this complex occurs just after the release of Azazel's goat and is signaled by the high priest's change of garments from the plain linen garb required for entering the inner sanctuary to his usual ornate vestments (vv. 23–24a).⁹ The fact that he does not change from his special linen clothes until he has officiated the ritual with Azazel's goat, which involves neither the Tent nor even the outer altar, implies that the process of removing moral faults from the sanctuary and then to the wilderness is an urgent one that must not be interrupted. With the release of Azazel's goat in the wilderness (Lev 16:22b), the period of greatest danger is over.

The אָזָזִל of Azazel's goat is a unique, nonsacrificial "purification ritual"

Expulsion of moral evils by means of a goat, serving as a ritual "vehicle," involves its conveyance to the wilderness and disposal by abandonment

"Aaron never carries or embodies these evils. Consequently, one cannot say that sins are *transferred*. Rather, the placement of the sins is effected by both the hand placement gesture which designates where the sins are to rest *and* the spoken confession which concretizes the sins which then fall on the head of the goat" (Wright, "The Gesture of Hand Placement," 436; cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1043).

9. *Ibid.*, 1048. The high priest's humble linen garments are appropriate within the context of the rite of passage that he enacts (*idem*, "The Priestly Consecration [Leviticus 8]: A Rite of Passage," in *Bits of Honey: Essays for Samson H. Levey* [ed. S. F. Chyet and D. H. Ellenson; SFSHJ 74; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993] 60). For association of the linen garments with humility or penitence, among other concepts, see S. H. Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus* (EB; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900) 262; W. Kornfeld, *Leviticus* (NEchtB 6; Würzburg: Echter, 1983) 63; M. F. Rooker, *Leviticus* (NAC 3A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000) 215. For the idea that the high priest undergoes a rite of passage, see B. Jürgens, *Heiligkeit und Versöhnung: Leviticus 16 in seinem literarischen Kontext* (Herders Biblische Studien 28; Freiburg: Herder, 2001) 67–72.

there.¹⁰ Because no part of the goat is offered to YHWH for his use, this is not a sacrifice; it is simply an elimination ritual.¹¹ The biblical prescription does not call for the death of the goat.¹² It must simply be sent away as a ritual "garbage truck" carrying controlled toxic waste to Azazel.

Azazel's precise nature is elusive, and the uncertain etymology of this designation does not help.¹³ The common understanding of Azazel as

10. For Hittite and Mesopotamian parallels, see Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity*, 45–72, esp. 57–60 on the Hittite Ambazzi and Huwarlu rituals, which most closely parallel the Israelite ritual "in that they use live animals as bearers of the evil and lack the motif of substitution" (*idem*, "Day of Atonement," 74); cf. M. Weinfeld, "Social and Cultic Institutions in the Priestly Source against Their Ancient Near Eastern Background," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Panel Sessions: *Bible Studies and Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies / Perry Foundation for Biblical Research, 1983) 112–14; A. Treiyer, *The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Judgment from the Pentateuch to Revelation* (Siloam Springs, Arkansas: Creation Enterprises, 1992) 258–65. On Hittite parallels, see O. R. Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion* (The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1976; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 47–52; J. C. Moyer, "Hittite and Israelite Cultic Practices: A Selected Comparison," in *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (ed. W. W. Hallo, J. C. Moyer, and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 33–35. For an apparent Ugaritic parallel, in which an elimination ritual involves driving a goat to a distant place, see K. Aartun, "Eine weitere Parallele aus Ugarit zur kultischen Praxis in Israels Religion," *BO* 33 (1976) 288; cf. O. Loretz, *Leberschau, Sündenbock, Asasel in Ugarit und Israel* (UBL 3; Altenberge: CIS-Verlag, 1985) 35–49.

11. Y. Kaufmann states: "It is not conceived, then, as an offering but as a vehicle for carrying off sin. What the community sends to Azazel is not so much the goat as the sin it bears" (*The Religion of Israel* [trans. and abridg. M. Greenberg; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960] 114); cf. Janowski, *Sühne*, 210. While Azazel's goat represented a demon in early Jewish interpretation (Enoch literature, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, rabbinic literature), with which Rev 20 has important connections, in early Christian tradition (Barnabas, Tertullian), the goat was a symbol of Christ (L. Grabbe, "The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation," *JSJ* 18 [1987] 152–67). John Calvin regarded the live goat as a bloodless sacrifice paired with the slain goat to typify another means of making atonement to God "when Christ, 'being made a curse for us,' transferred to Himself the sins which alienated men from God" (*Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996] 1:320; cf. 316–17, 319).

12. Perhaps so that it would not be regarded as a sacrifice. However, according to *m. Yoma* 6:6, in Second Temple times the unfortunate goat was killed by pushing it over a cliff, undoubtedly to prevent it from returning to areas of human habitation.

13. On possible interpretations of the name *Azazel* (Lev 16:8, 10, 26), including reference to a place, a personal being such as a demon or deity, or an abstraction signifying removal or one who removes, see C. L. Feinberg, "The Scapegoat of Leviticus Sixteen," *BSac* 115 (1958) 324–33; B. Levine, "כִּפּוּרִים," *ErIsr* 9 (Albright Volume; 1969) 94 n. 42; *idem*, *Leviticus* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989) 250–53; H. Tawil, "Azazel The Prince of the Steppe: A Comparative

“(e)scapegoat,” referring to the goat itself, is ruled out by the fact that the animal is sent “to Azazel” (Lev 16:10, 26). Obviously the goat would not be sent

Study,” ZAW 92 (1980) 43–59; Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity*, 21–22; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1020–21; Treiher, *The Day of Atonement*, 231–58; Jürgens, *Heiligkeit*, 81–91. In agreement with the tradition that in the Second Temple period Azazel’s goat was driven to a place of jagged rocks, over which it was driven to its death (*m. Yoma* 6:6), and following clues from Sa’adyāh and ’Abū Sa’īd, G. R. Driver understands Azazel as “jagged rocks/precipice,” an intensive form derived from the Semitic root ‘zz, which has also yielded Arabic ‘azāzu(n), “rough ground.” “The choice of the lots then, is between that cast ‘for the Lord’ and that cast for ‘(the) rugged rocks, (the) precipice’ (taken as a proper name): the first goat was slaughtered on the spot as a sacrifice to the Lord, the second was taken into the wilderness to the precipice called ‘Azazel’ or ‘jagged rocks’ and driven over them to its death, carrying the sins of the people with it” (“Three Technical Terms in the Pentateuch,” JSS 1 [1956] 98). While Driver’s explanation is attractive linguistically, it appears excessively influenced by postbiblical tradition and does not adequately take into account the indication in Lev 16 that Azazel is a personal being, as shown by the parallel between “belonging to YHWH” and “belonging to Azazel” (v. 8). However, this does not rule out the possibility that the word *Azazel* originated from the root ‘zz as Driver argues, but that in Lev 16 it is used as a (possibly pejorative) representation of what is at least in some sense regarded as a personal being. In any case, there is no indication in Lev 16 that the goat is led to a precipice called Azazel and driven over it to its death. Rather, the goat belonging to Mr. Azazel (i.e., possibly Mr. Very Rough Ground) is simply led into the wilderness and released there to fend for itself in an inhospitable, rough place that is cut off (Lev 16:22) from the ordering of human civilization and agriculture. Since the wilderness is a place of disorderliness, which in the moral realm manifests itself in the moral faults that are laid on the goat, we could say that responsibility for actions of chaos were sent to Mr. Chaos in the realm of chaos (cf. D. Davies, “An Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus,” ZAW 89 [1977] 394–95). O. Loretz suggests a linguistic relation to the Ugaritic divine name ‘zbl, which is listed in KTU 1.102, line 27 (*Leberschau, Sündenbock, Asazel in Ugarit und Israel* [UBL 3; Altenberge: CIS-Verlag, 1985] 56–57). M. Görg connects Azazel with the Egyptian god Seth and suggests that Azazel is derived from Egyptian ‘d3 + dr/l, a noun + passive participle for which he provides the approximate rendering: *der beseitigt/ferngehaltene Schuldige* (“the culprit removed/kept away”) (“Beobachtungen zum sogenannten Azazel-Ritus,” BN 33 [1986] 14). However, B. Janowski argues that Görg’s theory does not fit the context of Lev 16, where Israel rather than Azazel is guilty (“Azazel—biblisches Gegenstück zum ägyptischen Seth?: Zur Religionsgeschichte von Lev 16,10.21f.,” in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* [ed. E. Blum, C. Macholz, and E. Stegemann; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990] 102–8. As an alternative, B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm interpret the Hurrian term *aza/ushi* in light of the Akkadian sense of the root ‘zz as referring to divine anger and thus explain the original “Azazel” ritual as expelling a goat in order to overcome divine anger (“Der Bock, der die Sünden hinausträgt: Zur Religionsgeschichte des Azazel-Ritus Lev 16,10.21f.,” in *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament* [ed. B. Janowski, K. Koch, and G. Wilhelm; OBO 129; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993] 134–62; cf. Janowski, “Azazel: Biblisches Gegenstück,” 108–10). W. W. Hallo points out that *nakkusšiš*, a Hittite technical term for an animal that was loaded with impurities

to the scapegoat.¹⁴ However, partial illumination comes from the lot ceremony that determines the respective roles of the two goats provided by the community (vv. 7–10).

Use of lots to determine the respective ritual roles of animals is unique here in Israelite ritual.¹⁵ The purpose of this preliminary procedure cannot be explained by the need to differentiate between two creatures of the same kind, even when they are provided by the same party and one is slain while the other is released alive. Compare the bird ritual for purification of a scale-diseased person, in which one bird is slain and the other is set free (14:4–7), but no lots are needed.¹⁶ The reason for the lot ritual “before YHWH” (16:7) on the Day of Atonement is that *he* must decide the roles of the goats through what appears to be chance.¹⁷

Through the lot ceremony, one goat is designated ליהוה, “for YHWH” (i.e., “belonging to YHWH”) and the other is לעזאזל, “for Azazel” (i.e., “belonging to Azazel,” v. 8).¹⁸ So YHWH and Azazel are legal parties capable of ownership.

of a penitent and sent on its way, etymologically “appears to be composed of ‘to let go’ (*nakk-*) and the abstract suffix (*-šī*), providing a parallel to one of the proposed etymologies for *azāzēl*, the ‘goat that departs’” (“Leviticus and Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” in B. J. Bamberger, *Leviticus* [New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981] 744); cf. M. Weinfeld, “Social and Cultic Institutions,” 114.

14. C. D. Ginsburg, *Leviticus*, 151. S. A. Geller tries to make sense of sending the goat to the Goat as a possible product of polemical intent on the part of P against the realm of magic (“Blood Cult: Toward a Literary Theology of the Priestly Work of the Pentateuch,” *Prooftexts* 12 [1992] 106). Long ago S. R. Driver and H. A. White pointed out that “the rendering *scape-goat*, derived through St. Jerome from Symmachus, is certainly incorrect: it does not suit v. 26, and implies a derivation opposed to the genius of the Hebrew language, as though Azazel were a compound word (‘the going goat’ = Heb. ‘ez ’ozel). Moreover, the marked antithesis between *for Azazel* and *for JHVH* does not leave it open to doubt that the former is conceived as a personal being” (*The Book of Leviticus* [SBONT 3; New York: Dodd, Mead, 1898] 81).

15. Roles of other animals are decided by offerers before they bring them to the sanctuary.

16. Compare Lev 5:7–10 and 14:22, 30–31, where a single offerer brings two birds of the same kind, but no lots are cast to determine which is to function as a purification offering and which is to be a burnt offering.

17. Cf. E. Leach, “The Logic of Sacrifice,” in *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament* (ed. B. Lang; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 148; H. Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and Its Place in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 86. For divine selection/identification through lots in the Bible, see, for example, Josh 7:14–18; 1 Sam 10:20–21.

18. For the ל of possession, see Isa 38:9; Hab 3:1; Ps 3:1; BDB 513; HALOT 1:509. Archaeologists have found many objects, especially seals, with the inscribed names of their owners immediately preceded by the ל of ownership (Levine, *Leviticus*, 102). The lots placed on the two goats apparently indicate their new owners, which have just been determined through the casting of lots, so that the animals will not subsequently

The fact that YHWH is supernatural could be taken to imply that Azazel is also some kind of supernatural being.¹⁹

YHWH's goat is sacrificed as a תִּזְבֹּחַ, "purification offering" (v. 9) on behalf of the community, but the other goat remains alive, to be sent "to Azazel into the wilderness" (v. 10; cf. vv. 21–22). Whatever the precise nature of "Azazel" may be, v. 10 identifies him as the party who receives the live goat. Now it makes sense that only YHWH can designate the respective roles of the two goats: "otherwise, if the high priest chose the animals, it would appear that he and the people he represented were offering an animal to Azazel."²⁰

While the lot ceremony transfers ownership of the goat from the community to the mysterious "Azazel," the animal is not an offering to him.²¹ Rather, the live goat transports Israelite moral faults to Azazel, who ends up with this noxious load.²² The ritual is a singularly unfriendly gesture toward Azazel. It would be like sending someone a load of chemical or nuclear waste. Because YHWH is the authority who commands the Israelites to perform the ritual (vv. 1–2), it appears that Azazel is his enemy. Therefore, it is likely that Azazel is some kind of demon²³ and that his presence in an uninhabited re-

be confused (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1019–20). The biblical text does not indicate the manner in which the lots are to be cast. For the traditional rabbinic description, see *m. Yoma* 3:9; 4:1. In noncalendric rituals, the giving party indicates his departing ownership by leaning one hand on the head of his animal. Placing lots on the heads of the two goats indicates ownership of the recipients—YHWH and Azazel—but there is no need to indicate departing ownership in this case because the ritual is a calendric ritual.

19. Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality*, 88–89.

20. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1020.

21. Cf. P. Heinisch, *Das Buch Leviticus* (HSAT 1; Bonn: Hanstein, 1935) 75; Kornfeld, *Leviticus*, 64–65. M. Noth viewed the ritual of Azazel's goat as ambiguous: "the gift to Azazel should then have had the apotropaic purpose of warding off this redoubtable desert demon and the dangers that he threatened; whilst the burdening of the he-goat with Israel's trespasses meant the cleansing and atoning removal of these trespasses. Thus it might be asked whether the whole rite had not already had a history before it came into the cleansing ritual of Lev. 16" (*Leviticus* [trans. J. E. Anderson; OTL; London: SCM, 1965] 125). However, there is no evidence that Azazel presented such danger to the Israelites.

22. Cf. Zech 5:5–11.

23. See *1 En.* 10:4–5. On the Azazel episode in *1 En.* 10, including its background, see P. D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in *1 Enoch* 6–11," *JBL* 96 (1977) 220–27. For interpretation of Azazel as an evil being or demon, see G. Bush, *Notes, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Leviticus* (New York: Iverson & Phinney, 1857) 149; J. Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament* (trans. J. Martin; Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1980; repr. of 1863) 399–401; H. L. Strack, *Die Bücher Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri* (Munich: Beck, 1894) 334; A. Dillmann, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1897) 577–78; Heinisch, *Das Buch Leviticus*, 74;

gion (cf. Lev 17:7; Isa 13:21; 34:14; Luke 11:24; Rev 18:2) represents "the extreme opposite of God's holy presence in the Holy of Holies."²⁴ However, the nature of Azazel's personality is not revealed in Leviticus, perhaps to avoid the danger that some would be tempted to worship him.²⁵ Notice that unlike non-Israelite exorcisms involving demons, the ritual expels evil to Azazel rather than expelling Azazel himself.²⁶

The goat for Azazel is not a sacrifice. It is not the lack of slaughter that excludes it from the category of sacrifices/offerings.²⁷ A sacrifice of grain

R. de Vaux, *Les Sacrifices de l'Ancien Testament* (CahRB 1; Paris: Gabalda, 1964) 87; Kornfeld, *Leviticus*, 64; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1020–21. Keil and Delitzsch, following Origen (*Contra Celsum* 6:43), thought Azazel must refer to "the devil himself, the head of the fallen angels, who was afterwards called Satan; for no subordinate evil spirit could have been placed in antithesis to Jehovah as Azazel is here, but only the ruler or head of the kingdom of demons" (*Biblical Commentary*, 398). Compare Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus*, 269–70. While A. Noordtjij finds no evidence for identifying Azazel with Satan, he regards him "as a desert demon that was capable of feeding on an animal laden with the sins of the entire nation of Israel" and notes that "there is no mention at all of any worship or even fear of Azazel. The ceremony rather forms a strong expression of contempt, for Moses' contemporaries, who were accustomed to presenting offerings to the desert demons (see discussion on 17:1–9), must have been greatly struck by the fact that it was here Israel's sins were fed to Azazel" (*Leviticus* [trans. R. Togman; BSC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982] 162–63). B. Levine regards this rite of riddance "to the domain of Azazel, the demonic ruler of the wasteland (see Lev 17:7)" to have "heavily magical overtones" and to represent "a vestige of pre-monotheistic religion, continued by the priests of Israel to dramatize expiation" ("Leviticus, Book of," *ABD* 4:315). For the theory that the ritual of Azazel's goat was incorporated into Israelite religion from pagan practice, see Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, 114–15; J. L. Mays, *The Book of Leviticus, The Book of Numbers* (LBC 4; Atlanta: John Knox, 1963) 54.

24. P. Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (JSOTSup 106; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 203. E. Leach notes that the movement of the scapegoat reverses the movement by which Aaron was consecrated as high priest ("The Logic of Sacrifice," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament* [ed. B. Lang; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985] 149).

25. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity*, 22–25; idem, "Azazel," *ABD* 1:536–37; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1020–21. G. A. Boyd says of demons in the Old Testament: "Their reality is affirmed, but their autonomy from the will of Yahweh is minimized. Such an emphasis was perhaps necessary at this early stage of biblical revelation in order to establish among God's people the singularity and sovereignty of the Lord in the face of a culture that absolutely denied it" (*God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* [Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1997] 83).

26. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, 114.

27. Contra Ibn Ezra on Lev 16:9; H. Cazelles, *Le Lévitique* (La Sainte Bible; 2nd ed.; Paris: Cerf, 1958) 79; Noordtjij, *Leviticus*, 162–63; G. Hasel, "Studies in Biblical Atonement II: The Day of Atonement," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies* (ed. A. Wallenkampf; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1981) 120–21; A. Rodríguez, "Sacrificial Substitution and the Old

community of the faithful participates in the great Day so that its efficacy applies to them.³⁸

Moral cleansing beyond forgiveness recognizes the need for loyalty to endure

Why does YHWH require his people to demonstrate loyalty to him through two phases of ritual כפר, in which evils are transferred into his sanctuary and then out of it? The Israelites' need for mercy does not provide an adequate rationale for expiatory sacrifices performed at the sanctuary. YHWH was able to forgive people apart from the sanctuary cult before it began to function (e.g., Exod 34:6, 7) and while it was in operation (e.g., 2 Sam 12:13; 2 Chr 33:12–13; cf. 30:18–19). Even when ritual כפר was officiated by priests at the sanctuary, it did not accomplish forgiveness but was only prerequisite to forgiveness granted directly by God (Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35).

Why should YHWH deal with sin through sacrifices at the sanctuary when he could do it without such procedures? One possible answer is that the cult was meant to teach moral values. For example, according to S. Kellogg the purpose of the Day of Atonement rituals once per year was to expiate sin

in the highest and fullest sense then possible. . . . The fact of such an ordinance for such a purpose taught a most impressive lesson of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man, on the one hand, and, on the other, the utter insufficiency of the daily offerings to cleanse from all sin . . . the solemn observances of this day, under God, were made for many in Israel a most effective means to deepen the conviction of sin.³⁹

D. Wright has pointed in the same direction by suggesting that the system of purities had a didactic purpose: to teach Israelites the difference between categories such as holy, profane, pure, and impure, which they would need to understand in order to relate to the resident deity in the proper manner. Remedies for lesser impurities would teach about potential danger from more severe contaminants that could inflict serious harm on society. "As they focus on these lesser impurities, this Pentateuchal tradition really has the larger moral issues and goals of religion as a major concern."⁴⁰ Both physical impurities and moral faults are defined in relation to YHWH and must be remedied

38. Cf. P. Heinisch, *Das Buch Leviticus* (HSAT 1; Bonn: Hanstein, 1935) 76.

39. Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus*, 259–60.

40. D. Wright, "The Spectrum of Priestly Impurity," in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (ed. G. Anderson and S. Olyan; JSOTSup 125; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 180; cf. 171–79.

by rituals. The natures and trajectories of the two kinds of evils coincide to a sufficient degree that each kind helps to explain the other.

If חטאת sacrifices, which remedy sins and physical impurities, contribute to teaching the contrast between divine holiness and human imperfection, how do we account for differences between the trajectories of these evils? Most notably, why does an Israelite need a second major stage of כפר for his/her sins in order to arrive at moral purity (טהור; Lev 16:30) when a noncalendric חטאת sacrifice for severe bodily impurity completes a person's physical purification (טהור) in only one major stage of כפר (e.g., 12:7–8; 14:19–20; 15:15, 30)? What does this difference teach?

Unlike ritual impurities, moral faults raise the question of loyalty to YHWH. Although expiable (i.e., nondefiant) sins do not sever the divine-human relationship, they create moral imbalance and compromise loyalty. Repentance, as expressed by confession if necessary and expiatory sacrifice as required, involves humble acknowledgment of accountability to YHWH and acceptance of his gracious provision for restoration. So repentance with sacrificial כפר, which is the precondition for forgiveness, affirms loyalty to YHWH. In addition, self-denial on the Day of Atonement demonstrates that the penitence, and therefore loyalty, of people who have already been forgiven *continue*. Thus the Israelite system of כפר, with moral cleansing beyond forgiveness (Lev 16:30), simultaneously recognizes the frailty of human nature, with its penchant for fleeting repentance, provides assurance that the moral equilibrium is restored, and encourages long-term moral rehabilitation.⁴¹

S. Geller identifies another dimension of reconciliation beyond forgiveness:

the logic of the covenantal relationship between God and Israel requires that sins be more than merely "forgiven." It is a known fact that, despite the proverbial expression, it is impossible really to "forget" offenses one has supposedly "forgiven." The memory of the crime remains as a shadow on future relations. When two people begin to quarrel, each soon resurrects the full inventory of "sins" the other has committed in the past. For the covenant to remain effective, God must wipe out completely this residual effect of sin . . . and so renew the pristine nature of the bond. For this process an expression like "purgation of impurity" would then be a priestly metaphor.⁴²

41. Cf. H. Cohen, "The Day of Atonement: I," *Judaism* 17 (1968) 357; idem, "The Day of Atonement: II," *Judaism* 18 (1969) 86–87.

42. S. Geller, "Blood Cult: Toward a Literary Theology of the Priestly Work of the Pentateuch," *Prooftexts* 12 (1992) 108.