

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The solemn yearly expiation for the high priest, who must not come at all times into the holy place, Leviticus 16:1, Leviticus 16:2. He must take a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, bathe himself, and be dressed in his sacerdotal robes, Leviticus 16:3, Leviticus 16:4. He shall take two goats, one of which is to be determined by lot to be a sacrifice; the other to be a scapegoat, Leviticus 16:5-10. He shall offer a bullock for himself and for his family, Leviticus 16:11-14. And shall kill the goat as a sin-offering for the people, and sprinkle its blood upon the mercy-seat, and hallow the altar of burnt-offerings, Leviticus 16:15-19. The scapegoat shall be then brought, on the head of which he shall lay his hands, and confess the iniquities of the children of Israel; after which the goat shall be permitted to escape to the wilderness, Leviticus 16:20-22. After this Aaron shall bathe himself, and make a burnt-offering for himself and for the people, Leviticus 16:23-28. This is to be an everlasting statute, and the day on which the atonement is to be made shall be a Sabbath, or day of rest, through all their generations, Leviticus 16:29-34.

Verse 1

After the death of the two sons of Aaron - It appears from this verse that the natural place of this chapter is immediately after the tenth, where probably it originally stood; but the transposition, if it did take place, must be very ancient, as all the versions acknowledge this chapter in the place in which it now stands.

Verse 2

That he come not at all times into the holy place - By the holy place we are to understand here what is ordinarily called the Holy of Holies, or most holy place; that place within the veil where the ark of the covenant, etc., were laid up; and where God manifested his presence between the cherubim. In ordinary cases the high priest could enter this place only once in the year, that is, on the day of annual atonement; but in extraordinary cases he might enter more frequently, viz., while in the wilderness, in decamping and encamping, he must enter to take down or adjust the things; and on solemn pressing public occasions, he was obliged to enter in order to consult the Lord: but he never entered without the deepest reverence and due preparation. That it may appear that the grand subject of this chapter, the ordinance of the scape-goat, typified the death and resurrection of Christ, and the atonement thereby made, I beg leave to refer to Hebrews 9:7-12, and Hebrews 9:24-26, which I shall here transcribe, because it is a key to the whole of this chapter. "¶ Into the second [tabernacle] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come, a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his Own Blood; he entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; (for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world); but now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared To Put Away Sin By The Sacrifice Of Himself.¶"

Verse 3

With a young bullock for a sin-offering - The bullock was presented as a sin-offering for himself, his family, the whole priesthood, and probably the Levites. The ram was for a burnt-offering, to signify that he and his associates were wholly consecrated, and to be wholly employed in this work of the ministry. The ceremonies with which these two sacrifices were accompanied are detailed in the following verses.

Verse 4

He shall put on the holy linen coat - He was not to dress in his pontifical garments, but in the simple sacerdotal vestments, or those of the Levites, because it was a day of humiliation; and as he was to offer sacrifices for his own sins, it was necessary that he should appear in habits suited to the occasion. Hence he has neither the robe, the ephod, the breastplate, the mitre, etc.; these constituted his dress of dignity as the high priest of God, ministering for others and the representative of Christ: but now he appears, before God as a sinner, offering an atonement for his transgressions, and his garments are those of humiliation.

Verse 7

But the nearest resemblance to the scapegoat of the Hebrews is found in the Ashummeed Jugg of the Hindoos, where a horse is used instead of a goat, the description of which I shall here introduce from Mr. Halhed's Code of Gentoo Laws; Introduction, p. xix. "That the curious," says he, "may form some idea of this Gentoo sacrifice when reduced to a symbol, as well as from the subsequent plain account given of it in a chapter of the Code, sec. ix., p. 127, an explanation of it is here inserted from Darul Shek's famous Persian translation of some commentaries upon the four Beids, or original Scriptures of Hindostan. The work itself is extremely scarce, and it was by mere accident that this little specimen was procured: - "The Ashummeed Jugg does not merely consist in the performance of that ceremony which is open to the inspection of the world, namely, in bringing a horse and sacrificing him; but Ashummeed is to be taken in a mystic signification, as implying that the sacrificer must look upon himself to be typified in that horse, such as he shall be described; because the religious duty of the Ashummeed Jugg comprehends all those other religious duties to the performance of which the wise and holy direct all their actions, and by which all the sincere professors of every different faith aim at perfection. The mystic signification thereof is as follows: The head of that unblemished horse is the symbol of the morning; his eyes are the sun; his breath, the wind; his wide-opening mouth is the bish-waner, or that innate warmth which invigorates all the world; his body typifies one entire year; his back, paradise; his belly, the plains; his hoof, this earth; his sides, the four quarters of the heavens; the bones thereof, the intermediate spaces between the four quarters; the rest of his limbs represent all distinct matter; the places where those limbs meet, or his joints, imply the months, and halves of the months, which are called peche, (or fortnights); his feet signify night and day; and night and day are of four kinds:

1. The night and day of Brihma;
2. The night and day of angels;
3. The night and day of the world of the spirits of deceased ancestors;
4. The night and day of mortals.

These four kinds are typified in his four feet. The rest of his bones are the constellations of the fixed stars, which are the twenty-eight stages of the moon's course, called the lunar year; his flesh is the clouds; his food, the sand; his tendons, the rivers; his spleen and liver, the mountains; the hair of his body, the vegetables; and his long hair, the trees; the forepart of his body typifies the first half of the day, and the hinder part, the latter half; his yawning is the flash of the lightning, and his turning himself is the thunder of the cloud; his urine represents the rain, and his mental reflection is his only speech. The golden vessels which are prepared before the horse is let loose are the light of the day, and the place where those vessels are kept is a type of the ocean of the east; the silver vessels which are prepared after the horse is let loose are the light of the night, and the place where those vessels are kept is a type of the ocean of the west. These two sorts of vessels are always before and after the horse. The Arabian horse, which on account of his swiftness is called Hy, is the performer of the journeys of angels; the Tajee, which is of the race of Persian horses, is the performer of the journeys of the Kundherps, (or good spirits); the Wazba, which is of the race of the deformed Tazee horses, is the performer of the journeys of the Jins, (or demons); and the Ashov, which is of the race of Turkish horses, is the performer of the journeys of mankind: this one horse which performs these several services on account of his four different sorts of riders, obtains the four different appellations. The place where this horse remains is the great ocean, which signifies the great spirit of Perm-Atma, or the universal soul, which proceeds also from that Perm-Atma, and is comprehended in the same Perm-Atma. The intent of this sacrifice is, that a man should consider himself to be in the place of that horse, and look upon all these articles as typified in himself; and conceiving the Atma (or Divine soul) to be an ocean, should let all thought of self be absorbed in that Atma. This sacrifice is explained, in sec. ix., p. 127, of the Code of Hindoo Laws, thus: - "An Ashummeed Jugg is when a person, having commenced a Jugg, (i. e., religious ceremony), writes various articles upon a scroll of paper on a horse's neck, and dismisses the horse, sending along with the horse a stout and valiant person, equipped with the best necessaries and accoutrements to accompany the horse day and night whithersoever he shall choose to go; and if any creature, either man, genius, or dragon, should seize the horse, that man opposes such attempt, and having gained the victory upon a battle, again gives the horse his freedom. If any one in this world, or in heaven, or beneath the earth, would seize this horse, and the horse of himself comes to the house of the celebrator of the Jugg, upon killing that horse he must throw the flesh of him upon the fire of the Juk, and utter the prayers of his deity; such a Jugg is called a Jugg Ashummeed, and the merit of it as a religious work is infinite. This is a most curious circumstance; and the coincidence between the religious rites of two people who probably never had any intercourse with each other, is very remarkable. I would not however say that the Hindoo ceremony could not have been borrowed from the Jews; (though it is very unlikely); no more than I should say, as some have done, that the Jewish rite was borrowed from the Egyptian sacrifice to Apis mentioned above, which is still more unlikely. See particularly Clarke's note on Leviticus 1:4 (note).

Verse 21

Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head, etc. - What this imposition of hands meant see in the notes on Exodus 29:10 (note), and Leviticus 1:4 (note).

And confess over him all the iniquities - transgressions - sins - The three terms used here, Iniquities, *avonoth*, from *avah*, to pervert, distort, or turn aside; Transgressions, *peshaim*, from *pasha*, to transgress, to rebel; and Sins, *chattaath*, from *chata*, to miss the mark, are supposed by the Jews to comprise every thing that implies a breach of the Divine law, or an offense against God. See Clarke's note on Genesis 12:13. Maimonides gives us the confession in the following words: - "O Lord, thy people, the house of Israel, have sinned and done iniquity, and trespassed before thee. O Lord, make atonement now for the iniquities and transgressions and sins that thy people, the house of Israel, have sinned and transgressed against thee; as it is written in the law of Moses thy servant, saying: That in this day he shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you from all your sins before the Lord, and ye shall be clean." - See the Mishna, vol. ii., p. 329. When this confession was finished, the goat was sent by a proper hand to the wilderness, and there let loose; and nothing farther was ever heard of it. Did not all this signify that Christ has so carried and borne away our sins, that against them who receive him as the only true atoning sacrifice they should never more be brought to remembrance? On the head of the scape-goat, a piece of scarlet cloth was tied, and the tradition of the Jews states that if God accepted the sacrifice, the scarlet cloth turned white while the goat was led to the desert; but if God had not accepted this expiation, the redness continued, and the rest of the year was spent in mourning. From the foundation of the Church of God it was ever believed by his followers, that there were certain infallible tokens by which he discovered to genuine believers his acceptance of them and their services. This was sometimes done by a fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice; sometimes by an oracular communication to the priest or prophet; and at other times, according to the Jewish account, by changing the fillet or cloth on the head of the scape-goat from scarlet to white: but most commonly, and especially under the Gospel dispensation, he gives this assurance to true believers by the testimony of his Spirit in their consciences, that he has forgiven their iniquities, transgressions, and sins, for his sake who has carried their griefs, and borne their sorrows.

Verse 26

He that let go the goat - shall wash, etc. - Not only the person who led him away, but the priest who consecrated him, was reputed unclean, because the goat himself was unclean, being considered as bearing the sins of the whole congregation. On this account both the priest and the person who led him to the wilderness were obliged to wash their clothes and bathe themselves, before they could come into the camp.

Verse 29

The seventh month, on the tenth day of the month - The commandment of fasting, and sanctifying this tenth day, is again repeated Leviticus 23:27-32; but in the last verse it is called the ninth day at even, because the Jewish day began with the evening. The sacrifices which the day of atonement should have more than other days, are mentioned Numbers 29:7-11; and the jubilee which was celebrated every fiftieth year was solemnly proclaimed by sound of trumpet on this tenth day, Leviticus 25:8, Leviticus 25:9. A shadow, says Mr. Ainsworth, of that acceptable year of the Lord, the year of freedom, which Christ has proclaimed by the trumpet of his Gospel, Luke 4:18-21; 2 Corinthians 6:2. This seventh month was Tisri, and answers to a part of our September and October. It was the seventh of the sacred and the first month of the civil year.

The great day of atonement, and the sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies prescribed for it, were commanded to be solemnized by the Jews through the whole of their dispensation, and as long as God should acknowledge them for his people: yet in the present day scarcely a shadow of these things remains; there is no longer a scape-goat, nor a goat for sacrifice, provided by them in any place. They are sinners, and they are without an atonement. How strange it is that they do not see that the essence of their religion is gone, and that consequently God has thrown them entirely out of covenant with himself! The true expiation, the Christ crucified, they refuse to receive, and are consequently without temple, altar, scape-goat, atonement, or any means of salvation! The state of the Gentile world is bad, but that of the Jews is doubly deplorable. Their total excision excepted, wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. What a proof is this of the truth of the predictions in their own law, and of those in the Gospel of Christ! Who, with the Jews and the Bible before his eyes, can doubt the truth of that Bible as a Divine revelation? Had this people been extinct, we might have doubted whether there were ever a people on the earth that acknowledged such a law, or observed such ordinances; but the people, their law, and their prophets are still in being, and all proclaim what God has wrought, and that he has now ceased to work among them, because they have refused to receive and profit by the great atonement; and yet he preserves them alive, and in a state of complete separation from all the people of the earth in all places of their dispersion! How powerfully does the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people bear testimony at once to the truth of their own law which they acknowledge, and the Gospel of Christ which they

reject!

2. But while the Jews sit in thick darkness, because of the veil that is on their hearts, though the light of the glory of God is shining all around them, but not into them because of their unbelief; in what state are those who profess to see their unbelief and obstinacy, acknowledge the truth of the New Testament, and yet are living without an atonement applied to their souls for the removal of their iniquities, transgressions, and sins? These are also in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. An all-sufficient Savior held out in the New Testament, can do them no more good than a scape-goat and day of atonement described in the law can do the Jews. As well may a man imagine that the word bread can nourish his body, as that the name Christ can save his soul. Both must be received and applied in order that the man may live.

3. The Jews prepared themselves to get benefit from this most solemn ordinance by the deepest humiliations. According to their canons, they were obliged to abstain from all meat and drink - from the bath - from anointing themselves - to go barefoot - and to be in a state of perfect continency. He who is likely to get benefit for his soul through the redemption that is in Christ, must humble himself under the mighty hand of God, confess his iniquity, abstain from every appearance of evil, and believe on him who died for his offenses, and rose again for his justification. The soul that seeks not shall not find, even under the Gospel of Christ.