



## Making the Kohen Gadol Swear

*Masechet Yoma* deals primarily with the *avodah* on *Yom Kippur*. The *Masechet* opens by describing the preparation of the *kohen gadol* in the days prior to the *yom tov*. The fifth *Mishnah* describes how on *erev Yom Kippur* the elder *kohanim* would take the *kohen gadol* to the attic of *beit avtinus* where they would teach him to perform *avodah* of burning the *ketoret* in the *kodesh hakodashim*. They would then make him swear that he would not diverge from the method he had been instructed, when performing the *avodah*.<sup>1</sup>

The *Bartenura* explains that their concern was that this *kohen gadol* might be a *Tzeduki* – a Sadducee – who dismissed the oral tradition. One of the points of debate between the *tzedukim* and the *perushim* (those faithful to the oral tradition) was regarding the two handfuls of *ketoret* that were offered in the *kodesh ha'kodashim* on *Yom Kippur*. The *Tedukim* maintained that the *ketoret* was placed on the shovel of coals prior to entering the *kodesh ha'kodashim*. Their position was based on the *pasuk* – "...for in a cloud I will appear above the *kaporet*" (*Vayikra* 16:2). The *Chachamim* however understood the *koteret* was burnt inside the *kodesh ha'kodashim*. This is based on the *pasuk*, "he shall place the incense on the fire before *Hashem*..." Since the *kohen gadol* was the only one to enter the *kodesh hakodashim* and no one would be there to see how he performed the *avodah*, it was necessary for them to make the *kohen gadol* swear that he perform the *avodah* as they instructed them.

The *Tosfot R' Akiva Eiger* cites the question of the *Pri Chadash*. If the *kohen gadol* was indeed a *tzaduki*, how was the oath a deterrent? According to the *tzedukim*, the *perushim* were in error. The *tzeduki* might then lie in order to fulfil the *mitzvah* according to their understanding. To put it differently, for a *tzeduk* he was being asked to swear to annul a *mitzvah*, which would not be binding. The *Pri Chadash*

answers that since this oath was well known, it may act as a deterrent for a *tzeduki kohen* who did not treat oaths lightly.

The *Sefat Emet* (*Yoma* 18b) presents a few answers. Firstly, he suggests that since the law that an oath to annul a *mitzvah* is not binding is based on expositions, the *tzedukim* may not have drawn the same conclusion. In other words, for them, this oath might be binding and therefore effective to ensure that they perform the *avodah* as required.

The *Sefat Emet* also suggest that this oath was broader than the this specific *avodah*. He notes that the *Mishnah* suggests that this was the case – "swear that you will not stray from anything that we have told you". A *shevua* of this nature, that is *kollel* (encompasses) other things including this *mitzvah* is indeed binding in its entirety. The *Tifferet Yisrael* also suggests this answer.

Finally the *Sefat Emet* explains that even if the *tzeduki* would consider this case as an oath to annul a *mitzvah* and not binding, making such an oath would be considered a *shevuat shav* (an empty oath) and still prohibited. Consequently, requesting the *kohen gadol* to make the oath would be a good test to see if he was a *tzeduki* since his refusal would indicate that he perceived the *shevua* as a *shevuat shav*.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* however notes that in the *Mishnah* description, prior to the oath, they would assert that they were the *shluchoi* (messengers) of the *beit din* and that he was our messenger. The *Tifferet Yisrael* suggest therefore that part the oath the he was only acting as *kohen gadol* on condition that he perform the *ketoret* as they instructed him. Consequently, irrespective of how the *tzedukim* understood the process, if the *kohen gadol* acted out of line, he would not be considered the *kohen gadol* and his *avodah* would be invalid.

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<sup>1</sup> This explanation is according to the *Bartenura*. The *Tifferet Yisrael* however explains that it was the *Beit Din* that made the *kohen gadol* swear prior to the *ziknei kahuna* teaching him how to perform the *avodah* involving the *ketoret*.

שקלים ח' ח'

- Which of the following applies nowadays (without a *Beit Ha'Mikdash*): (ח': ח')
  - *Ma'aser Dagan*?
  - *Bikurim*?
  - *Bechorot*?
  - *Shekalim*?

יומא א' א' – ב' ב' ה'

- How many days before *Yom Kippur* was the *kohen gadol* separate from his home? (א': א')
- To where was the *kohen gadol* taken? (א': א')
- What *avodah* would the *kohen gadol* do during this period? (ב': ב')
- Who helped the *kohen gadol* revise the order of the *Yom Kippur* services? (ג': ג')
- What would they do on the morning *erev Yom Kippur*? (ג': א')
- Why would they prevent the *kohen gadol* from eating a heavy meal on *erev Yom Kippur*? (ד': א')
- About what would the *ziknei kehuna* make the *kohen gadol* swear and why? (ה': א')
- What would the *kohen gadol* do during the night of *Yom Kippur*? (ו': א')
- What two things would the *pirchei kehuna* do if they noticed the *kohen gadol* dozing off? (ז': א')
- When was the *trumot ha'deshen* performed: (ח': א')
  - On a regular day?
  - On *Yom Kippur*?
  - On one of the *regalim*?
- Initially, how did they decide which *kohen* would perform the *trumot ha'deshen*? (א': ב')
- What incident caused them to change this system and what was it replaced with? (ב': ב')
- What roles were decided by the second daily lottery? (ג': ב')
- What restriction was placed on those that could be included in the third lottery? (ד': ב')
- What was decided by the fourth lottery? (ד': ב')
- When did the *korban tamid* require the following number of people to be involved in its offering: (ב': ה')
  - 9?
  - 10?
  - 11?
  - 12?

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
27 August ה' אלול	28 August ו' אלול	29 August ז' אלול	30 August ח' אלול	31 August ט' אלול	1 September י' אלול	2 September י"א אלול
Shekalim 8:8 - Yoma 1:1	Yoma 1:2-3	Yoma 1:4-5	Yoma 1:6-7	Yoma 1:8-2:1	Yoma 2:2-3	Yoma 2:4-5



