

## קדש הקדשים UPON EXITING THE כהן גדול OF THE תפלה

The תפלה of the כהן גדול upon exiting the קדש הקדשים is described in the משנה as follows:

משנה מסכת יומא פרק ה'–משנה א'–הוציאו לו את הכף ואת המחטה וחפן מלא חפניו ונתן לתוך הכף הגדול לפי גדלו והקטן לפי קטנו וכך היתה מדתה נטל את המחטה בימינו ואת הכף בשמאלו היה מהלך בהיכל עד שמגיע לבין שתי הפרוכת המבדילות בין הקדש ובין קדש הקדשים וביניהן אמה ר' יוסי אומר לא היתה שם אלא פרוכת אחת בלבד שנאמר (שמות כ"ו) והבדילה הפרוכת לכם בין הקדש ובין קדש הקדשים החיצונה היתה פרופה מן הדרום והפנימית מן הצפון מהלך ביניהן עד שמגיע לצפון הגיע לצפון הופך פניו לדרום מהלך לשמאלו עם הפרוכת עד שהוא מגיע לארון הגיע לארון נותן את המחטה בין שני הבדים צבר את הקטורת על גבי גחלים ונתמלא כל הבית כולו עשן יצא ובא לו בדרך בית כניסתו ומתפלל תפלה קצרה בבית החיצון ולא היה מאריך בתפלתו שלא להבעית את ישראל.

*Mishnah. They brought out to him the ladle and the pan. From the latter he took his two hands full of incense and put it into the ladle. If he was a tall high priest he would place an amount of incense according to his size; a short one according to his size and thus was its measure. He then placed the pan in his right hand and the ladle in his left hand. He went through the outer chamber until he came to the place between the two curtains which separated the Holy from the Holy Of Holies. Between those two was a space of one cubit. R. Jose said: there was but one curtain, as it is said: and the veil shall divide unto you between the Holy place and the most Holy. The outer curtain was held back by a clasp on the south side and the inner curtain on the north side. He walked along between them until he reached the north side. When he reached the north side he turned round to the south and went on along the curtain, to his left, until he reached the ark. When he reached the ark, he put the pan of burning coals between the two bars. He heaped up the incense upon the coals and the whole house became full with smoke. He came out by the way he entered and in the outer chamber he uttered a short prayer. He did not make the prayer long so as not to concern the Jews congregated there.*

No details as to what the כהן גדול said as part of his תפלה are shared by the משנה.

Perhaps the משנה omits the details because the prayer that the כהן גדול recited was not fixed and each כהן גדול recited what he deemed to be appropriate for the occasion. That the prayer was not fixed provides support for the claim that few of the תפילות followed a set text during the period of the בית שני. Although the משנה fails to provide any information concerning the texts of the תפלה, both the תלמוד ירושלמי and the תלמוד בבלי suggest what that text may have included:

תלמוד ירושלמי (וילנא) מסכת יומא פרק ה- ומתפלל תפלה קצרה בבית החיצון: וכך היתה תפלתו של כה"ג ביה"כ בצאתו בשלום מן הקודש: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' או"א שלא תצא עלינו גלות לא ביום הזה ולא בשנה הזאת; ואם יצאה עלינו גלות ביום הזה או בשנה הזאת תהא גלותינו למקום של תורה. יהי רצון מלפניך ה' או"א שלא יצא עלינו חסרון לא ביום הזה ולא בשנה הזאת ואם יצא עלינו חסרון ביום הזה או בשנה הזאת יהא חסרונינו בחסרון של מצות. יהי רצון מלפניך ה' או"א שתהא השנה הזאת שנת זול שנת שובע שנת משא ומתן שנת גשומה ושחונה וטלולה ושלא יצטרכו עמך ישראל אלו לאלו ואל תפנה לתפלת יוצאי דרכים. רבנן דקסרין אומרין ועל עמך ישראל שלא יגבהו שררה זו על גב זו; ועל אנשי השרון היה אומר יהי רצון מלפניך ה' או"א שלא יעשו בתיהן קבריהן. ולא היה מאריך שלא להבעית את ישראל. מעשה באחד שהאריך וגמרו להכנס אחריו אמרו שמעון הצדיק היה אמרו לו למה הארכתה? אמר להן מתפלל הייתי על מקדש א-להיכם שלא יחרב. אמרו לו אף על פי כן לא היית צריך להאריך.

*Translation: He would recite a short prayer in the outer chamber. This was the text of the prayer said by the Kohain Gadol upon his exiting in good health from the Holy of Holies. May it be Your will, G-d, G-d of our forefathers that the Jewish People not be exiled from the land of Israel today nor this year. However, if it is Your will that the Jewish People be exiled today or this year, may they be taken to a place where they will be permitted to study Torah. May it be Your will, G-d, G-d of our forefathers, that the Jewish People not suffer a financial loss today or this year. Nevertheless if it is Your will that the Jewish People suffer a financial loss, may it be that the financial loss results from the Jewish People performing Mitzvos and acts of kindness. May it be Your will, G-d, G-d of our forefathers, that this year be one of affordable prices, a year of abundance, a year full of commerce, a year of adequate rain, adequate sunshine and sufficient dew; that the Jewish People not need to seek out each other for assistance. Also do not hearken to the prayers of those who travelled from far to spend the holidays in Yerushalayim. The Rabbinic leaders of Caesarea added: may the Jewish People not dominate over each other; and concerning the Jews of Sharon, they asked: May it be Your will, G-d, G-d of our forefathers, that their homes not become their graves. The Kohain Gadol would not recite a long prayer so as to not worry those present. On one Yom Kippur, the Kohain Gadol did recite a long prayer. Those present then began debating whether to enter the chamber to check on the condition of the Kohain Gadol. The Kohain Gadol involved in that incident was Shimon Ha'Tzaddik. When he exited, they asked him: why did you recite a prayer that was longer than the average such prayer? He told them that he was praying that G-d not allow the Beis Hamikdash to be destroyed. They admonished him saying: although your motive was admirable, it was not appropriate to do so because you caused anguish for those present.*

Professors Safrai in their **פירוש ספראי** to the **משנה** in **מסכת יומא** express the view that each section that begins with the words: **יהי רצון מלפניך** represents an example of a distinct prayer uttered by individual **כהנים גדולים**. They further question whether the themes found in the prayers match the historical circumstances that were prevalent during the **בית שני** era. For example, the first prayer includes a request that G-d prevent the Jews from being taken into exile. That should have not been a concern during the Roman

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occupation of Israel since exile was not a political method of control utilized by the Romans. Babylonia, whose army destroyed the first **בית המקדש**, did use exile as a method of control and were the ones who exiled the Jewish People to Babylonia. The Romans, despite having to suppress numerous rebellions by the Jews, did not resort to exile as a means of suppressing the rebellions. That said, there did come a point when the Romans forcibly moved the Jews to the Galilee and prohibited Jews from entering a zone north of **ירושלים**. A second anachronistic request found in the prayer of the **כהן גדול** involves the petition that if exile was to take place, that it be to a “**מקום של תורה**.” The study of **תורה** began to play an important role in Jewish life only after the destruction of the **בית שני**.

The **תלמוד בבלי** presents its own version of the **תפלה** of the **כהן גדול**:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת יומא דף נג' עמ' ב'—ומתפלל תפלה קצרה בבית החיצון. מאי מצלי?  
רבא בר רב אדא ורבין בר רב אדא, תרויהו משמיה דרב אמרי: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו  
שתהא שנה זו גשומה ושחונה. – שחונה מעליותא היא? – אלא אימא: אם שחונה – תהא  
גשומה. רב אחא בריה דרבא מסיים בה משמיה דרב יהודה: לא יעדי עביד שולטן מדבית  
יהודה, ולא יהיו עמך ישראל צריכין לפרנס זה מזה, ולא תכנס לפניך תפלת עוברי דרכים.

*Translation: AND HE UTTERED A SHORT PRAYER IN THE OUTER HOUSE: What did he pray? Raba son of R. Adda and Rabin son of R. Adda both reported in the name of Rav: 'May it be Your will, O Lord our G-d, that this year be full of heavy rains and hot'. But is a hot year an advantage? Rather, if it be a hot year, let it be rich in rain. R. Aha the son of Raba in the name of R. Judah added to the prayer thus: May there not depart a ruler from the house of Judah, and may the house of Israel not require that they sustain one another, and permit not the prayers of travellers to find entrance before You.*

The version of the **תפלה** of the **כהן גדול** found in the **תלמוד בבלי** also contains wording that does fit into the historical context of the **בית שני** period. According to the **גמרא**, the **כהן גדול** uttered a prayer requesting that control of the Jewish monarchy remain in the hands of the tribe of **יהודה**. Any **כהן גדול** who served after the events that led to the holiday of **הנוכה** would have been a member of the **השמונאי** family. The only independent Jewish monarchs who served during the **בית שני** period were also members of the **השמונאי** family. It is not likely that a **כהן גדול** who was a member of the family of the **השמונאים** would pray that the king who was one of his family members be deposed and that a king from the tribe of **יהודה** be appointed.

The **תפלה** of the **כהן גדול** was incorporated into **מוסף** of **חזרת הש"ץ** on **יום כיפור**. Here is the point at which the **תפלה** is described in the **פיוט** of **אתה כוננת**:

ופנה גחלים שמהציתן גחלת ומהציתן שלהבת אילך ואילך, וחתה מן הלוחשות מצד מערב המזבח. הורידה מלאה גחלי אש לוחשות, והניחה על הרובד הרביעי שבעזרה. הוציאו לו כף ריקן ומחתה מלאה קטרת דקה מן הדקה. וחפן ממנה מלא חפניו, לא מחוקות ולא גדושות, אלא טפופות, ונתן לתוך הכף. ונותן בימינו המחתה של גחלים, ובשמאלו הכף של קטרת. זרו עצמו ונכנס לקדש הקדשים עד שמגיע לארון, והניח המחתה בין בדי הארון ובבית שני מניה על אבן השתיה. חפן כל הקטרת שבכף בחפניו, ונתן על הגחלים לצד מערב, וממתין שם עד שנתמלא הבית כלו עשן. טהר לב פסע ושב לאחוריו, פניו לקדש ואחוריו להיכל, עד שיצא מן הפרכת ומתפלל בהיכל תפילה קצרה סמוך לפרכת. וכך היתה תפלתו של כהן גדול: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-להינו וא-להי אבותינו, שתהא שנה זו הבאה עלינו ועל כל עמך בית ישראל בכל מקום שהם, אם שחונה, תהא גשומה. ואל יכנס לפניך תפילת עוברי דרכים לענין הגשם, בשעה שהעולם צריך לו. ושלא יצטרכו עמך בית ישראל בפרנסה זה לזה ולא לעם אחר. שנה שלא תפיל אשה את פרי בטנה, ושיתנו עצי השדה את תנובתם, ולא יעדי עביד שלטן מדבית יהודה.

*Translation<sup>1</sup>: He took a light, red-gold fire-pan, which could hold three kabim and which included a long handle. He went up to the top of the outer altar, cleared the burning coal-of which half were embers and half were flaming-to both sides, scooped up a panful of glowing coals and placed it on the fourth row of the pavement in the Temple Court. They brought out to him an empty ladle and a censer full of very finely ground incense, from which he took two hands full-neither leveled nor heaped, but liberally measured-and put it into the ladle. In his right hand he put the fire-pan with the glowing coals and in his left, the ladle with the incense. Arousing within himself feelings of reverence, he entered the Holy of Holies. When he reached the Ark, he set down the fire-pan between the staves of the Ark; and in the Second Temple era, he set it upon the Foundation Stone. He transferred all the incense from the ladle into his hands, put it on the glowing coals to the west side and waited there until the Holy of Holies became filled with smoke. Then the Kohen Gadol, pure of heart, stepped backwards with his face toward the Holy of Holies and his back toward the Sanctuary, until he exited from behind the curtain. Once he found himself in the Sanctuary near the curtain, he offered a brief prayer. The following was the prayer of the Kohen Gadol: May it be Your will, Lord our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that this coming year shall be for us and for all Your people, the House of Israel, wherever they are, rich in rain if it is hot. And when the world is in need of rain, do not permit the prayers of travelers with regard to rain to gain entrance before You. May Your people, the House of Israel, not be dependent for their livelihood upon one another nor upon any other people. May it be a year that no woman suffers miscarriage; and that the trees of the field yield their produce; and may the ruler of the Jewish People always be appointed from among the House of Judah.*

Surprisingly, the תפלה of the כהן גדול on יום כיפור does not appear within the פיוט of אמיץ כח. It is recited after the completion of the פיוט as follows:

אשרי העם שככה לו, אשרי העם שה' א-להיו. ויום טוב היה עושה כהן גדול לכל אוהביו, כשנכנס בשלום ויצא בשלום בלי פגע. וכך היתה תפלתו של כהן גדול ביום הכפורים,

1. Reprinted from the Machzor For Yom Kippur With English Translation, Third Edition, 2006, Merkos Linyonei Chinuch, Inc. (available at [hebrewbooks.org](http://hebrewbooks.org)).

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בצאתו מבית קדש הקדשים בשלום בלי פגע: יהי רצון מלפניך . . .

*Translation: Praiseworthy are the people for whom this is so. Praiseworthy are the People whose G-d is Hashem. At the conclusion of Yom Kippur the Kohain Gadol would hold a celebration for his admirers to mark that he had entered successfully and departed uneventfully from the Holy of Holies without any harm being done to him. And this is the prayer that the Kohain Gadol said on Yom Kippur upon departing from the Holy of Holies. May it be Your will . . .*

Professor Joseph Tabory in his book: מועדי ישראל בתקופת המשנה והתלמוד, Magnes Press 2000, page 268-269 notes several important aspects of the תפלה of the כהן גדול on יום כיפור:

יסוד ליטורגי שנוסף לעבודת כהן הגדול היה תפילה קצרה שהכהן התפלל אחרי שהקטיר את הקטורת ויצא מקודש הקודשים (מ' יומא ה: א). שעת הקטרת הקטורת נחשבה כמועד אופטימלי לתפלה, אבל הכהן הגדול השתהה את תפילתו עד לאחר יציאתו מקודש הקודשים מחמת הסכנה בדבר. המשנה אינה מפרטת תפילת הכהן הגדול בשעה זו, אלא קובעת באופן סתמי שהוא "מתפלל תפלה קצרה בבית החיצון ולא היה מאריך בתפלתו שלא להבעית את ישראל" (יומא ה: א). העם דרש שתפלה זו תהיה קצרה מכיוון שהם היו בחרדה, שהרי הם עדיין לא ידעו שהוא יצא מכלל סכנה כי לא יכלו לראות בהיכל.

*Translation: A liturgical element, in the form of a short prayer uttered by the Kohain Gadol, became a part of the service that the Kohain Gadol performed on Yom Kippur. He recited it after offering the incense and upon exiting from the Holy Of Holies (Mishna Yuma 5, 1). He offered the prayer at that point because the time at which the incense was offered was considered the optimum time for putting forward a prayer. Nevertheless, the Kohain Gadol held back his prayer until he had exited from the Holy Of Holies out of concern that it may be a danger to him if he were to linger in the Holy Of Holies once his work there was completed. The Mishna provides no details as to the content of the prayer except to provide that the Kohain Gadol put forth a short prayer in the outer chamber and to point out that the Kohain Gadol would not say much so as to not concern those who had gathered to watch in the Beis Hamikdash (Yuma 5:1). Those congregated demanded that the prayer be kept short since they were overwhelmed by trepidation concerning the welfare of the Kohain Gadol. They were still unsure that the Kohain Gadol had exited the Holy Of Holies unharmed since they could not see what was occurring in the area surrounding the Holy of Holies.*

Professor Tabory inserts a footnote at the point at which he highlights the link between the תפלה of the כהן גדול and his offering of the קטורת. In his footnote he refers his readers to page 189 of the book: מנהג אשכנז הקדמון by Israel M. Ta-Shma, Magnes Press, 1999, in which Professor Ta-Shma reveals a difference of opinion that divided the תלמוד בבלי from the תלמוד ירושלמי as to what activity in the בית המקדש, תפלת מנחה, was meant to replicate. Professor Ta-Shma first cites the following excerpt from the תלמוד ירושלמי:

תלמוד ירושלמי (וילנא) מסכת ברכות פרק ד'—אמר רבי יוסי לא הוקשה תפלת המנחה לתמיד של בין הערבים אלא לקטרת מה טעם [תהילים קמא ב] תכון תפילתי קטרת לפניך משאת כפי מנחת ערב צא שעה אחת לעיסוקו ואת עביד מנחה שתי שעות ומחצה.

*Translation: R. Yosse said: The Mincha prayer does not correspond to the afternoon Tamid offering but rather to the afternoon incense offering. What is the basis for his holding? It is based on a verse in Tebillim 141:2: Let my prayer appear as incense before You, the lifting of my hands of the afternoon Mincha. Subtract one hour for the duration of the Tamid sacrifice and it emerges that the incense which is offered immediately after the afternoon Tamid offering, is offered at nine and one-half hours. That results in the period for reciting Mincha equaling a span of two and one half hours, as taught by the Baraisa.*

Professor Ta-Shma then adds:

לכאורה מחלוקת היא בין שני התלמודים, שלדעת הבבלי מנחה נלמדת, ותואמת, לקרבן תמיד של בין הערביים, ולדעת הירושלמי מקבילה היא לקטורת של בין הערביים ולא לקרבן.

*Translation: Apparently, it is a difference of opinion between the two sets of the Talmud. According to the Babylonian Talmud, the requirement to pray the Mincha service is derived and is linked to the afternoon Tamid offering while according to the Jerusalem Talmud, the Mincha service is derived and is linked to the incense offering of the afternoon and not to the afternoon Tamid offering.*

You might have expected that the תפלה of the כהן גדול on יום כיפור as outlined in the גמרא would provide an important glimpse into the early roots of Jewish liturgy. Unfortunately what we learn about the prayer provides little insight into early Jewish liturgy. In all likelihood, the תפלה that the כהן גדול recited was composed by him extemporaneously. The failure of the משנה to provide any details concerning that prayer may indicate that the practice of the כהן גדול reciting a prayer was a late addition to the עבודה and was not considered a vital part of the service. Support for that position can be garnered from the fact that we are not advised by either the משנה of the גמרא that the כהן גדול received guidance as to what he should include within his תפלה. Not so concerning the other aspects of the עבודה on יום כיפור. As to those, the משנה clearly relates that the כהן גדול underwent extensive training and review of all other aspects of the עבודה.

Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of the תפלה of the כהן גדול on יום כיפור is that none of the versions of his תפלה relate that the כהן גדול expressed words of thanks that he had survived his entry into the קודש הקדשים without incurring any bodily harm. One would have expected the כהן גדול to have recited some form of ברכת הגומל or equivalent words but no such text is found within the samples of the תפילות provided by the תלמודים.