



## Source Materials for Kapporet and Intertextuality

Robbie Fein – D'var Torah Feb. 25, 2023

In reading sources in Sections A-D, you may want to consider questions such as can works of art be used for good and bad purposes? What makes them holy? What feelings do works of art invoke in you and how does this relate to a sense of holiness?

וְעָשִׂיתָ כַּפֹּרֶת זָהָב טָהוֹר אֲמֹתַיִם וְחָצִי אַרְכָּהּ וְחָצִי רְחֹבָהּ.... וְנָתַתָּ אֶת הַכַּפֹּרֶת עַל הָאָרֶן  
מִלְמַעְלָה וְאֶל הָאָרֶן תִּתֵּן אֶת הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ:

### A. Plain Meaning of the Text

You will make a *kappōret* of pure gold; two cubits and a half its length, and a cubit and a half its width.... And you shall put the *kappōret* on the top of the Ark; and in the Ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you.

→Kuf-peh-reish can be translated as cover (Rashi and Rashbam) and JPS – Ark-Cover.

→Can also be translated as atone or expiate as in Yom Kippur. Everett Fox as Purgation Cover following this meaning.

→Note also the Kofer Nefesh in both Manslaughter in Mishpatim (last week's parasha) and the Kesef HaKippurim donated BEFORE soldiers go off to war in Ki Thissa in a couple of weeks.

### B. Connection to YK Ritual in Vayikra 16

וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר וְהִזָּה בְּאֶזְבֵּעוֹ עַל פְּנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת קֹדְמָה וְלִפְנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת יִזָּה שְׁבַע פְּעָמִים מִן הַדָּם בְּאֶזְבֵּעוֹ וְשָׁחַט אֶת שְׁעִיר הַחַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר לָעָם וְהִבִּיא אֶת דָּמוֹ אֶל מִבֵּית לְפָרְכָת וְעָשָׂה אֶת דָּמוֹ בְּאֶשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדָם הַפָּר וְהִזָּה אֹתוֹ עַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת וְלִפְנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת. וְיִכָּפֵר עַל הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִטְּמֵאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִפְשְׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל חַטָּאתָם...

He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger **over the *kapporēt*** on the east side; **and in front of the *kapporēt*** he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. He shall then slaughter the people's goat of sin offering, bring its blood behind the curtain, and do with its blood as he has done with the blood of the bull: he shall sprinkle it **over the *kapporēt* and in front of the *kapporēt***.<sup>16:16</sup> **Thus he shall purge (*kipper*)** the Hoiy from the uncleanness and transgression of the Israelites, whatever their sins...

### C. Connection in the Midrash

רבי יוסי בן חנינה אומר ועשית כפרת זהב טהור, יבא זהב כפורת ויכפר על זהב עגל.

R. Yossi ben Hanina says: "Then you shall make a *kappōret* of pure gold ..." (Exod. 25:17)—Let the gold of the *kappōret* atone [*yekhaper*] for the gold of the calf.

→Connected by sound and material

### D. The Cherubim on the Ark-Cover & the Golden Calf

וְעָשִׂיתָ שְׁנַיִם כְּרֻבִים זָהָב מְקֻשָּׁה תַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם מִשְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַכַּפֹּרֶת: וַעֲשֶׂה כְרוֹב אֶחָד מִקְצֵה מִזֶּה וּכְרוֹב אֶחָד מִקְצֵה מִזֶּה מִן הַכַּפֹּרֶת תַעֲשֶׂה אֶת הַכְּרֻבִים עַל שְׁנֵי קְצוֹתָיו: וְהָיוּ הַכְּרֻבִים פְּרָשֵׁי כְנָפַיִם לְמַעַל סֻכְכִים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל אָחִיו אֶל הַכַּפֹּרֶת יִהְיוּ פְנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים:

And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the *kappōret*. Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end; of one piece with the *kappōret* shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the *kappōret* with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the *kappōret* shall the faces of the cherubim be

→Although Ki Thissa is to come, Rashi teaches ומאוחר בתורה – אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה – there is no earlier or later in the Torah relating to the Golden Calf – that all of the Mishkan material comes after the Golden Calf episode.

→Genesis 3:23-4: People are banished from Gan Eden and the Cruvim are stationed east of Eden – a sign of response to the expulsion.

E. Temple Prayer Objects and the Covenant Ceremony -- Sinai – a clear literary bridge after the Covenant ceremony at end of last week's Parasha – compare the Covenant Ceremony in 24:15-18 and today's Parasha; What does it mean that we evoke Sinai with ritual objects?

Parashat Mishpatim	Parashat Terumah and Beyond
Moses went up to the Mount and the Cloud covered the Mount	Cloud covered the tent of meeting
Presence of God dwelled on Mount Sinai	Presence filled the Mishkan
Cloud covered the Mount for Six Days	Moses could not enter the tent of meeting when the Cloud covered it
He called Moses on the 7 <sup>th</sup> Day	Beginning of Vayikra: He Called to Moses
Appearance of Glory of God was consuming fire on the Mount	Vayikra 9:13: Glory of God appeared before the entire nation
Beheld by the Nation	9:24: The nation beheld and rejoiced
Moses ascended the mountain and remained for forty days	9:23 – Moses and Aaron went into the Ohel Mo'ed

As we unveil our Parochet (the modern term for ark-cover), we see the connection to what the people thought was a Holy object but wasn't. It only becomes holy if we infuse holiness into it. The beauty and intentionality of Ilana's work will be holy, therefore, if it evokes feelings of holiness in us. The intertextual references between covering and atonement warn us that danger can come from a beautiful thing as well as holiness – similar to the loss of holiness symbolized by Cherubim of Eden and the Golden Calf. The references to Sinai, however, make it clear that we can infuse holiness into our beautiful symbols. Our real task is to be found within and so we end with a song as is my practice. Today, the song is not modern Israeli music but from a piyut from "Sefer Chareidim" by R' Elazar Az'kiri- author of Yedid Nefesh.

### בִּלְבָבִי Bilvavi

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Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh  
 l'hadar k'vodo,  
 ul'mishkan mizbeach asim l'karnei hodo,  
 ulner tamid ekach li es esh ha'akeidah,  
 ulkorban akriv lo es nafshi, es nafshi  
 hayechida.

בִּלְבָבִי מִשְׁכַּן אֲבִנָּה לְהַדָּר כְּבוֹדוֹ,  
 וּלְמִשְׁכַּן מִזְבֵּחַ אֲשִׁים לְקַרְנֵי הַדָּוָד,  
 וּלְנֹר תָּמִיד אֶקַּח לִי אֶת-אֵשׁ הָעֵקֶידָה,  
 וּלְקֹרְבָן אֶקְרִיב לוֹ אֶת נַפְשִׁי,  
 אֶת נַפְשִׁי הַיְחִידָה.

#### Translation:

I will build a tabernacle in my heart to glorify God's honor. And I will place an altar in the tabernacle dedicated to God's divine rays of splendor.  
 And for the eternal, constant flame I will take upon myself the fire that fueled the Binding( of Isaac). And as a sacrifice I will offer God my soul, my unique soul.