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ESCHATOLOGICAL  
YOM KIPPUR  
IN THE *APOCALYPSE OF ABRAHAM*:  
PART I. THE SCAPEGOAT RITUAL<sup>1</sup>

Introduction

In the second part of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a Jewish pseudepigraphon written in the first centuries of the Common Era, its hero — the patriarch Abraham — encounters an angelic being appointed by God to be his celestial guide. This creature, named in the apocalypse as the angel Yahoel, baffles the seer's imagination with his enigmatic appearance. The text describes him as a composite pteromorphic being with a body shining like sapphire<sup>2</sup> and a face resembling chrysolite.<sup>3</sup> The wardrobe of the angel also appears wondrous. Dressed in purple garments, he wears a turban reminiscent of "the bow in the clouds."<sup>4</sup> Abraham also sees a golden staff in the right hand of his celestial companion.

Scholars have previously noted the sacerdotal significance of the angel's attire.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Martha Himmelfarb argues that Yahoel's "wardrobe has strong priestly associations. The linen band around his head

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(1) An expanded version of this article is forthcoming in *Henoch*.

(2) Slav. *canфуръ*. B. PHILONENKO-SAYAR, M. PHILONENKO, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham. Introduction, texte slave, traduction et notes* (Paris: Librairie Adrien Maisonneuve, 1981) (*Semitica*, 31) 60.

(3) Slav. *хрысолитъ*. Ibid.

(4) "...and a turban (*кидаръ*) on his head like the appearance of the bow in the clouds..." A. KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha: Toward the Original of the Apocalypse of Abraham* (Atlanta: Scholars, 2004) (*TCS*, 3) 19; PHILONENKO-SAYAR, PHILONENKO, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham...*, 60.

(5) Thus, Dan Harlow observes that "Yahoel's clothing ... indicates that he is the heavenly high priest: he wears a 'turban on his head like the appearance of the bow in the clouds,' his garments are purple, and he has a golden staff in his hand (11:2). These elements evoke the wardrobe and accoutrement of Aaron (Exodus 28; Numbers 17)." D. S. HARLOW, *Idolatry and Otherness: Israel and Nations in the Apocalypse of Abraham* (forthcoming).

recalls Aaron's headdress<sup>6</sup> of fine linen (Ex. 28:39)."<sup>7</sup> Other details of the angel's appearance also reveal his connections with the priestly office. Himmelfarb reminds us that the purple of Yahoel's robe betrays connections to one of the colors of the high-priestly garments of Exodus 28.<sup>8</sup> The angel's golden staff also seems to have a sacerdotal meaning, invoking the memory of Aaron's rod which miraculously sprouted in the wilderness after Korah's rebellion "to indicate the choice of Aaron and his descendants as priests (Num. 17:16–26)."<sup>9</sup>

Himmelfarb also brings attention to the rainbow-like appearance of Yahoel's turban, which, in her opinion, "brings together the two central color schemes employed elsewhere in the description of God as high priest, whiteness and the multicolored glow."<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, the tradition about "the rainbow in the cloud" associated with the headgear of the highest ranking sacerdotal servant is known from several texts, including the description of the high priest Simon in the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira 50:7.<sup>11</sup> Later rabbinic traditions<sup>12</sup> de-

(6) Jacob Milgrom observes that the high priest's head covering was a turban (מַצְנֵפֶת) and not מַגְבַּעוֹת, the simpler headdresses of the ordinary priests (Exod. 28:39–40). J. MILGROM, *Leviticus 1–16* (New York: Doubleday, 1991) (Anchor Bible, 3) 1016.

(7) M. HIMMELFARB, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York—Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 62.

(8) HIMMELFARB, *Ascent to Heaven...*, 62.

(9) *Ibid.*, 62. Yahoel's role as a heavenly high priest is also hinted at later in the text (*Apoc. Ab.* 10:9) through his liturgical office as choirmaster of the Living Creatures, which is reminiscent of the liturgical office of Enoch-Metatron in the Merkabah tradition. Cf. A. ORLOV, *Celestial Choirmaster: The Liturgical Role of Enoch-Metatron in 2 Enoch and the Merkabah Tradition*, *JSP* 14.1 (2004) 3–24.

(10) HIMMELFARB, *Ascent to Heaven...*, 62.

(11) "Greatest of his brothers and the beauty of his people was Simeon the son of Johanan the priest ... how honorable was he as he gazed forth from the tent, and when he went forth from the house of the curtain; like a star of light from among clouds, and like the full moon in the days of festival; and like the sun shining resplendently on the king's Temple, and like the rainbow which appears in the cloud ...." C. N. R. HAYWARD, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996) 41–42.

(12) One of the extensive descriptions of קָדָשׁ is found in the *Book of Zohar* which describes its unusual luminosity: "[Rabbi Simeon] began quoting: 'And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, [and wrote upon it a writing, like the engravings of a signet: Holy to the Lord]' (Exodus 39:30). Why was this plate called קָדָשׁ? It means 'being seen, to be looked at.' Since

scribe the high priest's front-plate (יָרֵאֵ), which he wore on his forehead.<sup>13</sup> Made of gold and inscribed with the divine Name, the plate shone like a rainbow.<sup>14</sup>

The priestly affiliations of Abraham's celestial guide are not coincidental. He appears in the crucial juncture of the story at which the young hero of the faith has just left his father's destroyed sanctuary that had been polluted by idolatrous worship and is now called by God "to set a pure sacrifice" before the deity. In this respect Yahoel appears to be envisioned in the text not merely as an *angelus interpres* whose role is to guide a visionary on his heavenly journey, but as a priestly figure initiating an apprentice into celestial sacerdotal praxis. Scholars have previously reflected on the peculiar cultic routine that surrounds the relationship between Abraham and his celestial guide as he explains to the seer how to prepare the sacrifices, deliver praise to the deity, and enter the heavenly Throne room. Indeed, the intensity of these sacerdotal instructions and preparations hints at the importance of priestly praxis for the overall conceptual framework of the text. It also appears that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, as in many other Jewish accounts, including *1 Enoch* 14 and the *Testament of Levi* 8 the entrance of a seer into the celestial realm reveals the cultic dimension and is envisioned as a visitation of the heavenly temple. Thus, scholars have previously noted that the authors of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* seem to view heaven as a temple.<sup>15</sup> This emphasis on the links of

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it was there to be seen by people, it was called יָרֵאֵ. Whoever looked upon this plate was recognized by it. The letters of the holy name were inscribed and engraved upon this plate, and if the person who stood in front of it was righteous, the letters inscribed in the gold would stand out from bottom to top and would shine out from the engravings, and illuminate the person's face." (*Zohar* II.217b) I. TISHBY, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, 3 vols. (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1989) Vol. 3. 920–921.

(13) Ex 39:30–31 "They made the rosette of the holy diadem of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, 'Holy to the Lord.' They tied to it a blue cord, to fasten it on the turban above ..."

(14) *b.* Yoma 37a.

(15) In this respect Himmelfarb observes that "the heaven of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is clearly a temple. Abraham sacrifices in order to ascend to heaven, then ascends by means of the sacrifice, and joins in the heavenly liturgy to protect himself during the ascent. ... The depiction of heaven as a temple confirms the importance of the earthly temple. The prominence of the heavenly liturgy lends importance to the liturgy of words on earth, which at the time of the apocalypse provided a substitute for sacrifice, a substitute

priestly praxis with the heavenly sanctuary does not appear coincidental in such a text as the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, which was written in a very special period of Jewish history. It was a time when, faced with a wide array of challenges revolving around the loss of the terrestrial sanctuary, the authors of the Jewish apocalyptic writings were seeking various theological alternatives for preserving and perpetuating traditional priestly practices. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* is drawing on one such option connected with the idea of the celestial sanctuary represented by the divine Chariot when it offers the story of the young hero of the faith who travels from the destroyed terrestrial shrine polluted by idols to the heavenly Temple.

Indeed, priestly concerns permeate not only the second apocalyptic section of the text, which deals with the patriarch's transition into the heavenly realm, but the fabric of the entire pseudepigraphon.<sup>16</sup> It has also been previously noted that besides Yahoel, whom the text envisions as the heavenly high priest *par excellence*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* offers an extensive roster of other priestly characters, including "fallen" priests culpable for perverting true worship and polluting heavenly and terrestrial shrines. Thus, Dan Harlow observes that besides the two "positive" priestly servants represented by the high priest Yahoel and his priestly apprentice Abraham, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* also offers a gallery of negative priestly figures, including the "idolatrous priests" Terah and Nahor<sup>17</sup> as well as the "fallen priest" Azazel.<sup>18</sup> Harlow's observation is sound and one can safely assume

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that in the apocalypse's view was to be temporary." HIMMELFARB, *Ascent to Heaven...*, 66.

(16) Thus, for example, Harlow views the whole structure of the work as the composition which includes five sacerdotal steps or "movements": "Abraham's separation from false worship (chs. 1–8); Abraham's preparation for true worship (chs. 9–14); Abraham's ascent for true worship (chs. 15–18); Abraham's vision of false worship (19:1–29:1–13); Abraham's vision of true worship restored (29:14–31:12)." HARLOW, *Idolatry and Otherness...*

(17) Alexander Kulik argues that the description of the sacrificial services of Terah's family found in the first chapter of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* "precisely follows the order of the Second Temple daily morning *tamid* service as it is described in the Mishna: first, priests cast lots (*Yoma* 2, 1–4; *Tamid* 1, 1–2; cf. also Luke 1:9), then they sacrifice in front of the sanctuary (*Tamid* 1–5), finishing their service inside (*Tamid* 6)." KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 86.

(18) Harlow's research helps to clarify the priestly status of Azazel by drawing on the structural parallelism between the high priestly profile of

that all the major characters of the Slavonic apocalypse have priestly affiliations.

All these details demonstrate the importance of priestly praxis in the conceptual framework of the Slavonic apocalypse, a work written at a time overshadowed by the challenging quest for priestly and liturgical alternatives that could compensate for the loss of the terrestrial sanctuary.

While identifying the priestly settings of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* does not pose significant difficulties, understanding the relationship between these sacerdotal rituals and initiations and a particular cultic setting or festival is more challenging. To what kind of Jewish festival might the order of Abraham's sacrifices and initiations be related? Several possibilities have been entertained. Ryszard Rubinkiewicz suggests that the priestly initiations of Abraham could be connected with the feast of *Shavuot* or Pentecost, which commemorates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.<sup>19</sup> To support this hypothesis, Rubinkiewicz appeals to certain "Mosaic" details of Abraham's priestly initiation, including references to the seer's forty-day fast and the naming of the place of the patriarch's sacrifices as Horeb.

While these hints of a *Shavuot* setting are valid, given the aforementioned complexity of the sacerdotal universe of the Slavonic apocalypse, it is possible that the priestly traditions found in the text are not limited to only one particular setting or festival but possibly reflect connections with several events of the liturgical year. Thus, some other symbolic features of the Slavonic apocalypse, including the figure of the main antagonist of the story Azazel, as well as pervasive usage of the terminology of two lots, suggest that the imagery of the distinctive rites taking place on the Day of Atonement might play a significant role in the authors' theological worldview.

This article examines the peculiar priestly traditions found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* that might reflect a Yom Kippur liturgical setting. The article will also try to show that some portions of the second, apocalyptic part of the pseudepigraphon can be seen as a re-enactment

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Yahoel in chs. 10–11 and the Azazel's priestly profile in chs. 13–14. HARLOW, *Idolatry and Otherness...*

(19) R. RUBINKIEWICZ, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham en vieux slave. Édition critique du texte, introduction, traduction et commentaire* (Lublin, 1987) (Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego: Źródła i monografie, 129) 98–255, at 58–60.

of the Yom Kippur ritual, one of the most enigmatic cultic ceremonies of the Jewish tradition.

### I. Mosaic Background of Abraham's Priestly Initiations and the Day of Atonement

Chapters 9–12 describe the beginning of Abraham's priestly initiation, during which Yahoel teaches the young hero of the faith how to prepare sacrifices in order to enter the presence of the Deity. Scholars have previously observed that some details of this initiation recall the story of another remarkable visionary of the Jewish tradition — the son of Amram, the seer who was privileged to receive a very special revelation on Mount Sinai.

As was already mentioned, the liturgical setting of Abraham's priestly initiation might be related to the Festival of Weeks — *Shavuot* or Pentecost.<sup>20</sup> This feast celebrates Moses' reception of revelation at Mount Sinai and is also known in Jewish tradition as the Festival of the Giving of Our Torah.

Indeed, as many scholars have already noted, some motifs found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* appear to reflect the peculiar details surrounding the reception of the Torah on Sinai by the great Israelite prophet. One of the distinctive hints here for establishing the connection with the Mosaic traditions is the theme of Abraham's forty-day fast.

This motif is first introduced in *Apoc. Ab.* 9:7, where God orders Abraham to hold a strict fast for forty days.<sup>21</sup> It is noteworthy that, as in the Mosaic traditions, so in the Slavonic apocalypse this fast coincides with the promise of a divine revelation on a high mountain:

But for forty days abstain from every food which issues from fire, and from the drinking of wine, and from anointing [yourself] with oil. And then you shall set out for me the sacrifice which I have

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(20) RUBINKIEWICZ, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham en vieux slave...*, 60.

(21) David Halperin notes the Mosaic flavor of this passage, observing that "in preparation, Abraham must abstain from meat, wine, and oil (*Apocalypse of Abraham*, chapter 9). The immediate source of this last detail seems to be Daniel 10:3. But, significantly, it recalls the abstentions of Moses and Elijah (Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 1 Kings 19:7–8); for like Moses and Elijah, Abraham is to have his experience on 'the Mount of God, the glorious Horeb....'" D. J. HALPERIN, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1988) (TSAJ, 16) 105.

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commanded you, in the place which I shall show you on a high mountain.<sup>22</sup>

The theme of the forty day fast on the mountain receives an even more distinctly “Mosaic” shape in chapter 12, where it coincides with another cluster of Mosaic traditions, including the reference to Horeb (a name for Sinai in some biblical passages) and information about the nourishment of a seer through the vision of a celestial being:

And we went, the two of us alone together, forty days and nights.  
 And I ate no bread and drank no water, because [my] food was to see  
 the angel who was with me, and his speech with me was my drink.  
 And we came to the glorious God’s mountains—Horeb.<sup>23</sup>

Scholars often see in this passage an allusion to Exodus 34:28,<sup>24</sup> which reports that Moses was with God forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai without eating bread or drinking water.<sup>25</sup> The refer-

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(22) KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 17.

(23) *Ibid.*, 19.

(24) Dan Harlow observes that “the patriarch’s fasting for forty days is only one of several places in the apocalypse where the author models Abraham’s experience on Moses’, who according to Exod. 34:28 ‘was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights’ and ‘neither ate bread nor drank water.’” HARLOW, *Idolatry and Otherness...*

(25) Martha Himmelfarb observes that “the account in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* implicitly compares Abraham’s ascent to Moses’ experience at Sinai. Thus, for example, Abraham performs the sacrifice described in Genesis 15 at Mount Horeb (the name for Mount Sinai in some biblical sources) after forty days of fasting in the wilderness. The exegetical occasion for the association of Genesis 15 and Exodus 19–20 is the manifestation of the presence of God in smoke and fire in both passages.” HIMMELFARB, *Ascent to Heaven...*, 62. For the Mosaic background of the patriarch’s actions in chapter twelve see also N. L. CALVERT, *Abraham Traditions in Middle Jewish Literature: Implications for the Interpretation of Galatians and Romans* (Ph.D. diss.; Sheffield, 1993). Calvert observes that “the similarity between Abraham’s actions in chapter twelve and those of Moses are striking. He first travels to the mountain Horeb, known also in the Old Testament as Mt. Sinai, which is called ‘God’s mountain, glorious Horeb’ in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 12:3. Like Moses when he receives the law, Abraham spends forty days and nights on the mountain. Abraham is said neither to eat bread nor to drink water because his food ‘was to see angel who was with me, and his discourse with me was my drink.’ (*Apoc. Abr.* 12:1–2). Philo reflects a Jewish tradition of Moses’ time on the mount, saying that Moses neglected all meat and drink for forty days, because he had more excellent food than that in the contemplations with which he was inspired from heaven

ence to alternative nourishment through the vision of a celestial being again evokes the cluster of interpretive traditions associated in Second Temple<sup>26</sup> and rabbinic literature<sup>27</sup> with the figure of Moses.

Although the biblical accounts of Moses' and Elijah's theophanic experiences often "mirror" each other by sharing similar imagery,<sup>28</sup> David Halperin argues that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* Mosaic traditions have greater formative value than traditions about Elijah. He notes that

... when the angel tells Abraham that he will see God "come straight towards us" (chapter 16), this reminds us that God "passes by" both Moses and Elijah (Exodus 33:22; 34:6; 1 Kings 19:11–12). But it is only

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(*De Vita Moses* II.69). Because Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai are names for the same mountain, Abraham receives his revelation from God in the same place that Moses received God's commandments. Finally, as the Lord 'was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain' in the Exodus account, so the fire on top of Mt. Horeb burns the sacrifices over which Abraham and the angel ascend to heaven where God also appears as fire." CALVERT, *Abraham Traditions in Middle Jewish Literature...*, 274.

(26) Box notes the connection of this idea of alternative nourishment with the Mosaic tradition found in Philo. He observes that "...there is a close parallel to our text in Philo, *Life of Moses*, III. 1, where it is said of Moses in the Mount: 'he neglected all meat and drink for forty days together, evidently because he had more excellent food than that in those contemplations with which he was inspired from above from heaven.'" G. H. BOX, J. I. LANDSMAN (eds.), *Apocalypse of Abraham* (London: Macmillan, 1918) (Translations of Early Documents, 1.10) 50.

(27) David Halperin elaborates this tradition of the unusual nourishment of the patriarch and its connection to Moses' feeding on the *Shekhinah* attested in some later rabbinic accounts. He notes that "...Moses also discovered that the divine presence is itself nourishment enough. That is why Exodus 24: 11 says that Moses and his companions beheld God, and ate and drank. This means, one rabbi explained, that the sight of God was food and drink for them; for Scripture also says, 'In the light of the King's face there is life'.... We may assume that the author of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* had such midrashim in mind when he wrote that 'my food was to see the angel who was with me, and his speech — that was my drink.'" HALPERIN, *The Faces of the Chariot...*, 111.

(28) Christopher Begg observes that "making Mt. Horeb (*Apoc. Ab.* 12:3) the site of this incident (contrast *Jubilees*, where it takes place at Hebron) serves to associate Abraham with the figures of Moses and Elijah, both of whom received divine communications at that site ..." C. BEGG, Rereading of the "Animal Rite" of Genesis 15 in Early Jewish Narratives, *CBQ* 50 (1988) 36–46 at 44.



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Moses who is told in this connection that “you cannot see my face” and “my face shall not be seen” (33:20, 23), just as the angel goes on to tell Abraham that God “Himself thou shalt not see.” Moses, not Elijah, “bowed down upon the earth and prostrated himself” when God passed (34:8) — which explains Abraham’s frustrated urge to do the same thing (chapter 17).<sup>29</sup>

Previous studies have convincingly demonstrated the importance of Mosaic typology for the authors of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, who decided to transfer several important Mosaic motifs into Abraham’s story. Yet, despite scholars’ thorough attention to the Mosaic background of the story, one portentous detail appears to have escaped their notice: Moses’ forty-day fast occurred immediately after his fight with idolatry and his destruction of the Golden Calf, when he returned to Sinai again to receive a second set of tablets from the deity.

It is intriguing that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, as in the Exodus account, the forty-day fast follows the hero’s fight with idolatry. One can see a certain parallelism between the stories of the two visionaries. Like Moses who burns the Golden Calf (Exodus 32) and then fasts (Exodus 34), Abraham too is described earlier in the text as burning the idol of his father, a figurine bearing the name Bar-Eshath.<sup>30</sup> It is important that in both cases the transition to the initiatory purifying fast occurs immediately after the accounts dealing with idolatry and the demotion of idols.

The tradition of the hero’s fast that occurs after his fight with an idolatrous statue betrays distinctly priestly concerns and appears important for discerning the sacerdotal background of Abraham’s story and its possible connections with Day of Atonement traditions. Yet, the main question remains open: how can a Yom Kippur setting be reconciled with the Mosaic details of Abraham’s initiation, given that these details point unambiguously to the cluster of motifs associated with the *Shavuot* festival which celebrates Moses’ reception of the Tablets of the Law?

It is intriguing that later rabbinic writers identify the day on which Moses received the tablets of the law for a second time with another

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(29) HALPERIN, *The Faces of the Chariot...*, 110.

(30) On the Bar-Eshath episode see A. ORLOV, “The Gods of My Father Terah”: Abraham the Iconoclast and the Polemics with the Divine Body Traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *JSP* 18.1 (2008) 33–53; IDEM, Arboreal Metaphors and Polemics with the Divine Body Traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *HTR* 102 (2009) 439–451.

Jewish festival, the Day of Atonement. Thus, *b. Baba Bathra* 121a records the following tradition:

...One well understands why the Day of Atonement [should be such a festive occasion for it is] a day of pardon and forgiveness. [and it is also] a day on which the second Tables were given ...<sup>31</sup>

An almost identical tradition is found in *b. Taanith* 30b:

...R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: There never were in Israel greater days of joy than the fifteenth of Ab and the Day of Atonement. I can understand the Day of Atonement, because it is a day of forgiveness and pardon and on it the second Tables of the Law were given....<sup>32</sup>

It appears that this cluster of traditions about the “day of pardon and forgiveness” draws on biblical traditions similar to the one found in Exodus 32:30, where, after the idolatry of the Golden Calf, Moses tells the people that he will go to the Lord asking for atonement of their sin.

Several midrashic passages make even more explicit this connection between the repentance of the Israelites after the idolatry of the Golden Calf in Exodus 33 and the establishment of Yom Kippur. In these materials the Israelites’ repentance serves as the formative starting point for observance of the Day of Atonement. Thus, *Eliyahu Rabbah* 17 reads:

When Israel were in the wilderness, they befouled themselves with their misdeeds, but then they bestirred themselves and repented in privacy, as is said, Whenever Moses went out to the Tent, all the people would rise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses. And when Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the Tent ... When all the people saw the pillar of cloud poised at the entrance of the Tent, all the people would rise and bow low, each at the entrance of his tent (Exod. 33:8, 9, 10), thus intimating that they repented, each one in the privacy of his tent. Therefore His compassion flooded up and He gave to them, to their children, and to their children’s children to the end of all generations the Day of Atonement as a means of securing His pardon.<sup>33</sup>

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(31) I. EPSTEIN (ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud. Baba Bathra* (London: Soncino, 1938) 498.

(32) I. EPSTEIN (ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud. Taanith* (London: Soncino, 1938) 161.

(33) *Tanna Debe Eliyyahu: The Lore of the School of Elijah*. Tr. W. G. BRAUDE, I. J. KAPSTEIN (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981) 190.

It is noteworthy that this passage from *Eliyahu Rabbah* invokes the memory of the familiar events found in Ex 33 which occurred immediately after the Golden Calf episode.<sup>34</sup> The midrashic evidence indicates that the rabbinic tradition attempts repeatedly to place the institution of Yom Kippur's atoning rites into the framework of the traditions surrounding Moses' reception of the second set of the Tablets of the Law.

Thus, a passage found in *Pirke de R. Eliezer* 46 unveils the tradition connecting Moses' vision of the Glory of God in Exodus 33 with the Day of Atonement:

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(34) As can be seen, some midrashic materials try to connect the establishment of the Day of Atonement festival with repentance of the Israelites after the idolatry of the Golden Calf. Later Jewish mysticism deepens this connection even further when it interprets the scapegoat ritual in the light of the Golden Calf traditions. Thus some Jewish texts connect the Golden Calf episode with the beginning of the enigmatic practice of assigning a share to "the other side" in sacrificial ritual. Isaiah Tishby refers to the tradition found in the *Book of Zohar* according to which "... one of the consequences of Israel's sin with the Golden Calf was that 'the other side' was assigned a share in the sacrificial ritual." (ТІШБЫ, *The Wisdom of the Zohar...*, 891). *Zohar* II, 242b tells that "...from that day the only thing they could do was to give a portion of everything to 'the other side' through the mystery of the sacrifices, the libation, and the whole-offerings." (Ibid., 891). In the dualistic framework of the Zoharic tradition the goat which is dispatched to Azazel comes to be understood as "the principal offering that is destined in its entirety for 'the other side.'" (Ibid., 821). Tishby notes that "in many passages [of the *Zohar*] this is described, following a late midrash, as a bribe that is offered to Samael. The *Zohar* quotes a number of parables to explain this matter of the bribe. One describes how a king wishes to rejoice with his son or his friends at a special meal. In order that the happy occasion should not be spoiled by the presence of ill-wishers and quarrelsome men, he orders a separate meal to be prepared for them. According to this parable the purpose of sending a goat to Azazel is to remove *sitra ahra* from the 'family circle' of Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, on the Day of Atonement..." (Ibid., 892). These references to the later Jewish dualism connected with the Yom Kippur ritual are not completely irrelevant in light of the dualistic imagery of the two lots found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. Often, students of the Slavonic apocalypse try to interpret the dualistic developments found in the pseudepigraphon as later interpolations by the Bogomils. Yet, as we will see further in this investigation, the dualistic understanding of the Yom Kippur traditions found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and the *Zohar* can be traced to the Second Temple traditions found in the Dead Sea Scrolls where the imagery of the two lots was put in a dualistic eschatological framework.

Moses said: On the Day of Atonement I will behold the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, and I will make atonement for the iniquities of Israel. Moses spake before the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of all the universe! "Shew me, I pray thee, thy glory" (Ex. xxxiii, 18). The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: Moses! Thou art not able to see My glory lest thou die, as it is said, "For men shall not see me and live" (ibid, 20)...<sup>35</sup>

This tradition of Moses' quest to behold the *Kavod*, now placed in the liturgical setting of the Day of Atonement, anticipates the vision of the concealed Glory of God in the Holy of Holies by the high priest on Yom Kippur.

It is even more important for our study, in view of the Mosaic traditions found in the Slavonic apocalypse, that several midrashic passages link Moses' forty-day ordeal on Sinai with the institution of the Day of Atonement. Thus, the passage found in *Pirke de R. Eliezer* 46 preserves the following tradition:

The Son of Betheria said: Moses spent forty days on the mount, expounding the meaning of the words of the Torah, and examining its letters. After forty days he took the Torah, and descended on the tenth of the month, on the Day of Atonement, and gave it as an everlasting inheritance to the children of Israel, as it is said, "And this shall be unto you an everlasting statute" (Lev. xvi. 34).<sup>36</sup>

It is also intriguing that the passage from *Pirke de R. Eliezer* links the revelation given to the son of Amram with the instructions about Yom Kippur in Leviticus 16. Another passage, *Eliyahu Zuta* 4, goes even further by connecting the forty-day fast that preceded Moses' reception of the tablets for a second time with the establishment of the practice of self-denial on Yom Kippur:

During the last forty days when Moses went up a second time to Mount Sinai to fetch the Torah, Israel decreed for themselves that the day be set aside for fasting and self-affliction. The last day of the entire period, the last of the forty, they again decreed self-affliction and spent the night also in such self-affliction as would not allow the Inclination to evil to have any power over them. In the morning they rose early and went up before Mount Sinai. They were weeping as they met Moses, and Moses was weeping as he met them, and at

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(35) G. FRIEDLANDER, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (New York: Hermon Press, 1965) 364.

(36) *Ibid.*, 362.

length that weeping rose up on high. At once the compassion of the Holy One welled up in their behalf, and the holy spirit gave them good tidings and great consolation, as He said to them: My children, I swear by My great name that this weeping will be a joyful weeping for you because this day will be a day of pardon, atonement, and forgiveness for you — for you, for your children, and for your children's children until the end of all generations.<sup>37</sup>

All this evidence from the rabbinic literature indicates that in later Jewish interpretation Moses' fight with idolatry, his forty-day fast, his vision of the deity, and his reception of the portentous revelation on Sinai were understood as a chain of formative events linked to the establishment of the Yom Kippur ceremony. Moreover, some of these traditions envisioned Moses' ordeal as the cosmic prototype of the symbolic actions that, while the Temple still stood, were re-enacted annually by the high priest in the Holy of Holies.

Now it is time to return to the Slavonic apocalypse, where a very similar constellation of motifs is found. It is possible that by evoking this particular cluster of Mosaic traditions the authors of the apocalypse were attempting to connect the patriarch's sacrificial practices on Mount Horeb with Moses' receiving the tablets of the law for the second time, the event which later rabbinic traditions interpreted as the inauguration of the Yom Kippur holiday.

It is intriguing that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, as in the aforementioned rabbinic accounts, the self-afflicting practice of the forty-day fast which follows the sin of idolatry is then connected to Day of Atonement imagery. It is possible that in the Slavonic apocalypse, as in rabbinic accounts, a very similar combination of Mosaic motifs is permeated with Yom Kippur symbolism.

While several scholars have previously pointed to the existence of Yom Kippur imagery in the Slavonic apocalypse,<sup>38</sup> no sufficient ex-

(37) *Tanna Debe Eliyyahu...*, 385.

(38) See, for example, L. L. GRABBE, *The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation*, *JSJ* 18 (1987) 165–79 at 157; C. FLETCHER-LOUIS, *The Revelation of the Sacral Son of Man*, in: F. AVEMARIE, H. LICHTENBERGER (eds.), *Auferstehung-Resurrection* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck) 282; R. HELM, *Azazel in Early Jewish Literature*, *Andrews University Seminary Papers* 32 (1994) 217–226 at 223; B. LOURIÉ, *Propitiatorium in the Apocalypse of Abraham*, in: L. DITOMMASO and C. BÖTTICH, with the assist. of M. SWOBODA (eds.), *The Old Testament Apocrypha in the Slavonic Tradition: Continuity and Diversity* (Tübingen, 2009) (*Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum*) (forthcoming); D. STÖKL

planation was offered for why this cluster of traditions surrounding the scapegoat Azazel and the two lots suddenly appears in the Abrahamic pseudepigraphon. In this respect it is noteworthy that other Abrahamic pseudepigrapha (for example, the *Testament of Abraham*), while sharing some other common conceptual tenets with the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,<sup>39</sup> do not show any interest in appropriating Day of Atonement symbolism. Such imagery is also absent from other early extra-biblical elaborations of the patriarch's story found in the *Book of Jubilees*, Josephus, and Philo as well as in the later rabbinic materials (*Genesis Rabbah*, *Tanna debe Eliyyahu*, *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba*).<sup>40</sup> There too one fails to find any references to Azazel or the imagery of the two lots, the very themes that play such a significant theological role in the Slavonic apocalypse. The aforementioned Abrahamic materials also contain no references to the peculiar cluster of Mosaic traditions found in our text.

Yet the uniqueness of this cluster of motifs opens up the possibility that in the Slavonic apocalypse the story of the patriarch might be patterned not according to biblical Mosaic typology but according to a later version, found also in the aforementioned rabbinic accounts, which now connects the hero's fight with idolatry and his practice of self-denial with the establishment of the observance of the Yom Kippur festival. In this respect the highly "developed" shape of certain Mosaic themes found in the apocalypse — such as, for example, the motif of the unusual nourishment of a seer during his forty-day fast — points to apparent departures from the early biblical blueprint.

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BEN EZRA, Yom Kippur in the Apocalyptic Imaginaire and the Roots of Jesus' High Priesthood, in: J. ASSMAN, G. STROUMSA (eds.), *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 349–366; IDEM, The Biblical Yom Kippur, the Jewish Fast of the Day of Atonement and the Church Fathers, *SP* 34 (2002) 493–502; IDEM, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003) (WUNT, 163) 94.

(39) For the common anti-anthropomorphic tendencies of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and the *Testament of Abraham* see ORLOV, "The Gods of My Father Terah" ..., 33–53; IDEM, Praxis of the Voice: The Divine Name Traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *JBL* 127.1 (2008) 53–70.

(40) For the expansion of Abraham's story in the *Book of Jubilees*, Josephus, Philo and the later rabbinic materials (*Genesis Rabbah* 38:13, *Tanna debe Eliyyahu* 2:25, *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba* 33), see: BOX, LANDSMAN, *Apocalypse of Abraham*..., 88–94; RUBINKIEWICZ, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham en vieux slave*..., 43–49.

## II. Two Lots

### *From a Sacrificial Animal to a Fallen Angel*

One of the challenges in arguing for a Yom Kippur setting in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* lies in the fact that the accounts of Abraham's sacrificial practices lack any explicit reference to the two goats of biblical and rabbinic traditions. These emblematic sacrificial animals played a distinctive role in the Yom Kippur rite, wherein one goat was sacrificed to God and the other was released into the wilderness for Azazel.<sup>41</sup>

Yet in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a writing which exhibits a great deal of influence from the Enochic tradition, allusions to the Yom Kippur ritual seem to be affected also by Enochic re-interpretation of the scapegoat imagery and especially the enhanced symbolism of its chief antagonist, the scapegoat Azazel, envisioned now not as a sacrificial animal but as a demoted celestial being.<sup>42</sup> Scholars have previously

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(41) In this respect the authors of the Slavonic pseudepigraphon appear to be bound by the formative blueprint manifested in the biblical account of Abraham's sacrifices found in Gen 15. Thus G. H. Box notes that "the apocalyptic part of the book is based upon the story of Abraham's sacrifices and trance, as described in Gen. xv." Box, LANDSMAN, *The Apocalypse of Abraham...*, xxiv.

(42) On the Azazel traditions, see J. DE ROO, Was the Goat for Azazel destined for the Wrath of God?, *Biblica* 81 (2000) 233–241; W. FAUTH, Auf den Spuren des biblischen Azazel (Lev 16) : Einige Residuen der Gestalt oder des Namens in jüdisch-aramäischen, griechischen, koptischen, äthiopischen, syrischen und mandäischen Texten, *ZAW* 110 (1998) 514–534; E. L. FEINBERG, The Scapegoat of Leviticus Sixteen, *BSac* 115 (1958) 320–31; M. GÖRG, Beobachtungen zum sogenannten Azazel-Ritus, *BN* 33 (1986) 10–16; GRABBE, The Scapegoat Tradition..., 165–179; HELM, Azazel..., 217–226; B. JANOWSKI, *Sühne als Heilgeschehen: Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterchrift und der Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982) (WMANT, 55); IDEM, Azazel, in: K. VAN DER TOORN et al. (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 240–248. B. JURGENS, *Heiligkeit und Versöhnung: Leviticus 16 in seinem Literarischen Kontext* (New York: Herder, 2001); H. M. KÜMMEL, Ersatzkönig und Sündenbock, *ZAW* 80 (1986) 289–318; R. D. LEVY, *The Symbolism of the Azazel Goat* (Bethesda: International Scholars Publication, 1998); O. LORETZ, *Leberschau, Sündenbock, Asasel in Ugarit und Israel: Leberschau und Jahvestatue in Psalm 27, Leberschau in Psalm 74* (Altenberge: CIS-Verlag, 1985) (UBL, 3); J. MACLEAN, Barabbas, the Scapegoat Ritual, and the Development of the Passion Narrative, *HTR* 100 (2007) 309–334; J. MILGROM, *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology*

noted that in the *Book of the Watchers* the scapegoat rite receives a striking angelological reinterpretation in incorporating some details of the sacrificial ritual into the story of its main negative hero — the fallen angel Asael. Thus, *1 Enoch* 10:4–7 reads:

And further the Lord said to Raphael: “Bind Azazel by his hands and his feet, and throw him into the darkness. And split open the desert which is in Dudael, and throw him there. And throw on him jagged and sharp stones, and cover him with darkness; and let him stay there for ever, and cover his face, that he may not see light, and that on the great day of judgment he may be hurled into the fire. And restore the earth which the angels have ruined, and announce the restoration of the earth, for I shall restore the earth ....<sup>43</sup>

Several distinguished students of the apocalyptic traditions have previously discerned that some details of Asael’s punishment are reminiscent of the scapegoat ritual.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Lester Grabbe points to a num-

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(Leiden: Brill, 1983) (SJLA, 36); D. RUDMAN, A note on the Azazel-goat ritual, *ZAW* 116 (2004) 396–401; W. H. SHEA, Azazel in the Pseudepigrapha, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 13 (2002) 1–9; STÖKL BEN EZRA, Yom Kippur..., 349–366; IDEM, “The Biblical Yom Kippur, the Jewish Fast of the Day of Atonement and the Church Fathers,” *SP* 34 (2002) 493–502; IDEM, *The Impact of Yom Kippur...*; A. STROBEL, Das jerusalemische Sündenbock-ritual. Topographische und landeskundische Erwägungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Lev. 16,10,21f, *ZDPV* 103 (1987) 141–168; H. TAWIL, “Azazel the Prince of the Steepe: A Comparative Study,” *ZAW* 92 (1980) 43–59; M. WEINFELD, Social and Cultic Institutions in the Priestly Source against Their ANE Background, *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem, 1983) 95–129; D. P. WRIGHT, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987) (SBLDS, 101).

(43) M. KNIBB, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) 87–88.

(44) R. H. CHARLES, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1893); D. DIMANT, *The Fallen Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Related Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Ph.D. diss.; The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 1974) [in Hebrew]; IDEM, *1 Enoch 6–11: A Methodological Perspective*, *SBLSP* (1978) 323–339; A. GEIGER, Zu den Apokryphen, *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* 3 (1864) 196–204; GRABBE, *The Scapegoat Tradition...*, 165–179; P. HANSON, Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in *1 Enoch* 6–11, *JBL* 96 (1977) 195–233; HELM, Azazel..., 217–226; G. NICKELSBURG, Apocalyptic and Myth in *1 Enoch* 6–11, *JBL* 96 (1977) 383–405; R. RUBINKIEWICZ, *Die Eschatologie von Henoch 9–11 und das Neue Testament*. Tr. H. ULRICH (Klosterneuberg, 1984) (*Osterreichische Biblische Studien*, 6) 88–89; STÖKL BEN EZRA, Yom Kippur..., 349–366; IDEM, *The Impact of Yom Kippur...*, 85–88.



ber of parallels between the Asael narrative in *1 Enoch* and the wording of Leviticus 16, including “the similarity of the names Asael and Azazel; the punishment in the desert; the placing of sin on Asael/Azazel; the resultant healing of the land.”<sup>45</sup> Daniel Stökl also observes that “the punishment of the demon resembles the treatment of the goat in aspects of geography, action, time and purpose.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, the place of Asael’s punishment designated in *1 Enoch* as *Dudael* is reminiscent of the rabbinic terminology used for the designation of the ravine of the scapegoat (בֵּית הַדּוּרֹר / הַדּוּרֹר) in later rabbinic interpretations of the Yom Kippur ritual. Stökl remarks that “the name of place of judgment (*Dudael* – בֵּית הַדּוּרֹר) is conspicuously similar in both traditions and can likely be traced to a common origin.”<sup>47</sup>

Several Qumran materials also appear cognizant of this angelological reinterpretation of the scapegoat figure when they choose to depict Azazel as the eschatological leader of the fallen angels, incorporating him into the story of the Watchers’ rebellion. Thus, 4Q180 1:1–10 reads:

Interpretation concerning the ages which God has made: An age to conclude [all that there is] 2 and all that will be. Before creating them he determined [their] operations [according to the precise sequence of the ages,] one age after another age. And this is engraved on the [heavenly] tablets [for the sons of men,] [for] / [a]ll/ the ages of their dominion. This is the sequence of the son[s of Noah, from Shem to Abraham,] [unt]il he sired Isaac; the ten [generations ...] [...] Blank [...] [And] interpretation concerning ‘Azaz’el and the angels wh[o came to the daughters of man] [and s]ired themselves giants. And concerning ‘Azaz’el [is written ...] [to love] injustice and to let him inherit evil for all [his] ag[e ...] [...] (of the) judgments and the judgment of the council of [...]<sup>48</sup>

Lester Grabbe points to another important piece of evidence — a fragmentary text from the *Book of Giants* found at Qumran (4Q203).<sup>49</sup>

(45) GRABBE, *The Scapegoat Tradition...*, 153.

(46) STÖKL BEN EZRA, *The Impact of Yom Kippur...*, 87.

(47) *Ibid.*, 87–88.

(48) F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, E. J. C. TIGCHELAAR (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden—New York—Köln: Brill, 1997) Vol. 1. 371–373. On the similar traditions see also 4Q181.

(49) GRABBE, *The Scapegoat Tradition...*, 155.

In this document<sup>50</sup> the punishment for all the sins of the fallen angels is placed on Azazel.<sup>51</sup>

Later rabbinic materials also link the sacrificial animal known from the scapegoat ritual to the story of the angelic rebels. Thus, for example, *b. Yoma* 67b records the following tradition:

The School of R. Ishmael taught: Azazel — [it was so called] because it obtains atonement for the affair of Uza and Aza’el.”<sup>52</sup>

As can be seen, the conceptual link between the scapegoat and the fallen angel is documented in a number of important materials across a substantial span of history. A broad scholarly consensus now recognizes this connection.

It appears that such an “angelological” pattern also operates in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, where Azazel, like the antagonist of the Enochic tradition, is envisioned as a fallen angelic being. It has previously been noted that the Azazel story in the apocalypse reflects several peculiar details of the Enochic myth of the fallen watchers.<sup>53</sup> Thus, for example, Rubinkiewicz argued that

... the author of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* follows the tradition of *1 Enoch* 1–36. The chief of the fallen angels is Azazel, who rules the stars and most men. It is not difficult to find here the tradition of Genesis 6:1–4 developed according to the tradition of *1 Enoch*. Azazel is the head of the angels who plotted against the Lord and who

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(50) On this text see also STUCKENBRUCK, *The Book of Giants from Qumran...*, 79–101.

(51) 4Q203 7:1–7 reads: “[...] ... [...] and [yo]ur power [...] Blank Th[en] ’Ohyah [said] to Hahy[ah, his brother ...] Then he punished, and not us, [bu]t Aza[ze]l and made [him ... the sons of] Watchers, the Giants; and n[o]ne of [their] be[loved] will be forgiven [...] ... he has imprisoned us and has captured yo[u]...” GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition...*, 411.

(52) I. EPSTEIN (ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud. Yoma* (London: Soncino, 1938) 316. On the afterlife of the Asael/Azazel tradition see A. Y. REED, From Asael and Šemihazah to Uzzah, Azzah, and Azael: 3 Enoch 5 (§§ 7–8) and Jewish Reception-History of 1 Enoch, *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8 (2001) 105–136; IDEM, *What the Fallen Angels Taught: The Reception-History of the Book of the Watchers in Judaism and Christianity* (Ph. D. Dissertation; Princeton, 2002); IDEM, *Fallen Angels and the history of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

(53) PHILONENKO-SAYAR, PHILONENKO, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham...*, 31–33; RUBINKIEWICZ, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham en vieux slave...*, 50.

impregnated the daughters of men. These angels are compared to the stars. Azazel revealed the secrets of heaven and is banished to the desert. Abraham, as Enoch, receives the power to drive away Satan. All these connections show that the author of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* drew upon the tradition of *1 Enoch*.<sup>54</sup>

It is clear that in the Slavonic apocalypse, as in the Enochic and Qumran materials, Azazel is no longer a sacrificial animal, but an angelic being. Already in his first appearance in chapter 13:3–4,<sup>55</sup> he is depicted as an unclean (impure) bird (Slav. *птица нечистая*).<sup>56</sup> In the pteromorphic angelological code of *Apocalypse of Abraham*, which chooses to portray Yahoel with the body of griffin, the bird-like appearance of Azazel points to his angelic form.<sup>57</sup>

The assumption that Azazel was once an angelic being is further supported by *Apoc. Ab.* 14 which tells about the celestial garment that the fallen angel once possessed: “For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him (Abraham)...”<sup>58</sup>

Yet, in comparison with the early Enochic developments, the angelic profile of Azazel appears to be more advanced. Lester Grabbe suggests that in the depiction of its main antagonist the *Apocalypse of Abraham* seems to be referring to the “basic arch-demon complex under the name of Azazel.”<sup>59</sup> In his opinion, there “Azazel is no longer just a leader among the fallen angels but *the* leader of the demons.

(54) R. RUBINKIEWICZ, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, in: J. H. CHARLESWORTH (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (New York: Doubleday, 1985 [1983]) Vol. 1. 681–705, at 685.

(55) *Apoc. Ab.* 13:3–4 “And an impure bird flew down on the carcasses, and I drove it away. And the impure bird spoke to me ...” KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 20.

(56) The reference to the impurity of the “bird” betrays the connection to the scapegoat figure who in the materials pertaining to the Yom Kippur ritual is understood as an impure entity, a sort of a “gatherer” of impurity which contaminates anyone who comes in contact with him, including his handlers, who must perform purification procedures after handling the goat. Milgrom observes that Azazel was “the vehicle to dispatch Israel’s impurities and sins to wilderness/netherworld.” MILGROM, *Leviticus 1–16...*, 1621.

(57) On the pteromorphic angelological language of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* see A. ORLOV, *The Pteromorphic Angelology of the Apocalypse of Abraham*, *CBQ* 72 (2009) 830–842.

(58) KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 20.

(59) GRABBE, *The Scapegoat Tradition...*, 158.

Figures originally separate have now fallen together while the various names have become only different aliases of the one devil."<sup>60</sup>

### *The Goat for YHWH?*

Abraham's symmetrical role in relation to Azazel in the Slavonic apocalypse again evokes the memory of the Enochic tradition and its legendary hero — the seventh antediluvian patriarch. In both cases the protagonists appear to be mirroring their respective negative counterparts, as both stories portray them exchanging attributes and roles with one another. Just as Enoch takes the priestly and celestial offices of Asael, while the fallen angel assumes some human roles, so in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* too, Azazel surrenders his angelic garment to the hero of the faith. Both parties, thus, accept the roles and offices of their counterparts as they enter the realms of their opponents. In this respect it is noteworthy that the transition of the antagonist of the Slavonic apocalypse into the lower realm, as in the case of Asael of the Enochic tradition, encompasses two steps: his removal first to the earth,<sup>61</sup> then further, to the fiery abyss of the subterranean sphere.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, similarly to the *Book of the Watchers*, in the Abrahamic pseudepigraphon the protagonist progresses in the direction opposite to his negative counterpart by ascending into heaven, as he acquires a special status and a celestial garment that allows him to enter the celestial sanctuary.<sup>63</sup> The progression of the patriarch into upper sancta has here, like in *1 Enoch*, a sacerdotal significance, as it betrays connections

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(60) GRABBE, *The Scapegoat Tradition...*, 158.

(61) "Reproach is on you, Azazel! Since Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth, since you have chosen it and desired it to be the dwelling place of your impurity." (*Apoc. Ab.* 13:7–8).

(62) "May you be the fire brand of the furnace of the earth!" (*Apoc. Ab.* 14:5).

(63) The apocalyptic story thus can be seen as a re-enactment of the two spatial dynamics which are also reflected in the Yom Kippur ritual — the entrance into the upper realm and the exile into the underworld. In this respect Daniel Stökl notes that the Yom Kippur ritual "consisted of two antagonistic movements ... centripetal and centrifugal: the entrance of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies and the expulsion of the scapegoat. As the first movement, the holiest person, the High Priest, entered the most sacred place, the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple, burned incense, sprinkled blood and prayed in order to achieve atonement and purification for his people and the sacred institutions of the Jewish cult. As a second movement, the scapegoat burdened with the sins of the people was sent with an escort to the desert."

with the Yom Kippur ceremony of the high priest's entrance into the divine presence. Moreover, it is possible that Abraham's progressive movement into the heavenly Holy of Holies might be understood here as encompassing not only the priestly but also the sacrificial dimension, in view of the patriarch's symmetrical position to the celestial scapegoat, by virtue of which Abraham's lot is repeatedly juxtaposed with the lot of Azazel.

The Slavonic text conceals many details, and it remains unclear whether Abraham is understood in the Slavonic apocalypse as the sacrificial goat for the Lord. Yet, some cryptic traditions found in the text might hint at this possibility. As is known from the biblical and rabbinic descriptions of the Yom Kippur ritual, the flesh of the goat<sup>64</sup> for YHWH was destroyed by fire, while his blood (which represents in Jewish tradition the soul of the sacrificial animal) was then brought into the Holy of Holies by the high priest and used there for purification.<sup>65</sup>

In light of these traditions, could Yahoel and Abraham's entrance into the heavenly Throne room in chapter 18 be understood as an allusion to the entrance of the high priest who brings the purifying sacrifice into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur?

It is interesting that in *Apoc. Ab.* 13:4-5 Azazel warns his counterpart representing the "divine" lot that he will be destroyed by fire along with other sacrificial animals:

And the impure bird spoke to me and said, "What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor is there upon them food of men? But these will all be consumed by fire and they will burn you up. Leave the man who is with you and flee! Since if you ascend to the height, they will destroy you."<sup>66</sup>

Azazel's arcane warning remains one of the most profound puzzles of the text. Yet, the motif of a seer's encounter with fire appears sig-

D. STÖKL, *The Biblical Yom Kippur, the Jewish Fast of the Day of Atonement and the Church Fathers*, *SP* 34 (2002) 493–502 at 494.

(64) Lev 16:27 "The bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp; their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be consumed in fire."

(65) Milgrom observes that "the blood of the slain goat may have been brought into the adytum in its entirety." MILGROM, *Leviticus 1–16...*, 1031.

(66) KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 20.

nificant for the authors of the pseudepigraphon, who envision fire as a theophanic substance surrounding the very presence of the deity. Thus, later in the text Abraham's transition into the divine realm is described as his entering into the fire.<sup>67</sup> Could the promise of a celestial garment to the patriarch in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* signify here, as in many other apocalyptic accounts, that his "mortal" body must be "altered" in the fiery metamorphosis?<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, the text does not provide direct answers for such inquiries.

In order to better understand Abraham's connections with the "divine" lot, which might help us further clarify his eschatological role as the "goat for YHWH," we must now explore the imagery of the two lots found in the Slavonic apocalypse.

### *Eschatological Lots*

We have already noted that the remarkable angelic metamorphosis of the sacrificial animal associated with the lot of Azazel has had a long-lasting conceptual afterlife in Jewish apocalypticism and its eschatology. Yet one should not forget another portentous aspect of Yom Kippur symbolism that similarly exercised a formative influence on some Second Temple apocalyptic materials, including the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the Qumran writings one encounters a broad appropriation of the imagery of two lots, symbolism that has profound significance in the scapegoat ordinance. Like the figure of Azazel, who is enhanced with a new celestial profile, the imagery of the sacrificial lots also receives a novel eschatological reinterpretation. Thus, in a number of Qumran materials such as 1QM, 1QS, 4Q544, and 11Q13, the two lots become associated not with two sacrificial goats but with celestial protagonists, both positive — like Melchizedek or the Angel of Light — as well as negative — like Melchireša<sup>c</sup>, Belial, or the Prince of Darkness. Those fascinating characters come to be understood in these documents as the leaders of the "portions of humanity" associated with the

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(67) Cf. *Apoc. Ab.* 15:3 "And he carried me up to the edge of the fiery flame..."; *Apoc. Ab.* 17:1 "And while he was still speaking, behold, a fire was coming toward us round about, and a sound was in the fire like a sound of many waters, like a sound of the sea in its uproar."

(68) In this respect it should be noted that the entrance of a visionary into a fire and his fiery transformation represent common apocalyptic motifs found in texts ranging from Daniel 3 to 3 *Enoch* where Enoch undergoes the fiery metamorphosis that turns him into the supreme angel Metatron.

lots of good and evil, darkness and light.<sup>69</sup> In Qumran documents one can find repeated references to these eschatological lots representing the respective good and evil portions of humanity, often designated as “the men of the lot of Melchisedek”<sup>70</sup> (11Q13 2:8) or “the men of the lot of Belial”<sup>71</sup> (5Q11 1:3).

Such eschatological re-interpretation of the lots looms large in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* as well. Numerous references to the two lots are widely dispersed in the second, apocalyptic part of the pseudepigraphon. Scholars have previously noted that the peculiar conceptual elaborations that surround the imagery of the lots are reminiscent of the eschatological reinterpretations and terminology found in the Qumran materials.<sup>72</sup> Thus, it has been previously noted that the word “lot” (Slav. *часть*) appears to be connected to the Hebrew גורל, a term prominent not only in biblical descriptions of the scapegoat ceremony<sup>73</sup> but also in the Qumran materials.<sup>74</sup>

Similarly to the Qumran materials where the lots are linked to angelic representatives (like Belial or Melchizedek), in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the lots are now tied not to the sacrificial animals but to the

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(69) Paul Kobelski notes that each of these “lots” or “portions” of humanity is “characterized by one of the two spirits allotted by God — the spirit of truth and the spirit of perversity (1QS 3:18–21). Those belonging to the lot of God, of Melchizedek, of light, etc., are characterized by spirit of truth; they are the sons of righteousness whose leader is the Prince of Light (1QS 3:20). Those who belong to the lot of Belial, of darkness, etc., are characterized by the spirit of perversity; they are the sons of perversity whose leader is the Angel of Darkness (1QS 3:20–21).” P. J. KOBELSKI, *Melchizedek and Melchireša'* (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981) (CBQMS, 10) 57.

(70) אַנְשֵׁי גּוֹרֵל מִלְּ [כִּי] צְדָקָה. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition...*, 1206.

(71) אַנְשֵׁי גּוֹרֵל בְּלִיעַל. Ibid., 1132–1133.

(72) PHILONENKO-SAYAR, PHILONENKO, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham...*, 33; RUBINKIEWICZ, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham en vieux slave...*, 54. On the two lots see also B. PHILONENKO-SAYAR, M. PHILONENKO, *Die Apokalypse Abrahams, Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* 5.5 (1982) 413–460 at 418.

(73) For the גורל terminology in its connection with the scapegoat ritual see Lev 16:8, 9, 10.

(74) See for example, 1QS גורל בליעל (the lot of Belial); גורל קדושים (the lot of the holy ones). 1QM גורל בני חושך (the lot of the sons of darkness); גורל חושך (the lot of darkness). 11Q13 אַנְשֵׁי גּוֹרֵל מִלְּ [כִּי] צְדָקָה (the men of the lot of Melchizedek).

main heroes of the story — the fallen angel Azazel<sup>75</sup> and the translated patriarch Abraham.<sup>76</sup>

Yet, in comparison with the Qumran materials, connections to the underlying formative pattern of the scapegoat ritual appear even more distinctive and therefore more easily recognizable in the Slavonic accounts of the lots.<sup>77</sup> Thus, in *Apoc. Ab.* 13, in one of the first passages in the text to invoke imagery of two “lots” or “portions,” one can easily discern allusions to particular details associated with Yom Kippur observance. *Apoc. Ab.* 13:7–8 reads:

And he [Yahoel] said to him, “Reproach is on you, Azazel! Since Abraham’s portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth, since you have chosen it and desired it to be the dwelling place of your impurity. Therefore the Eternal Lord, the Mighty One, has made you a dweller on earth....”<sup>78</sup>

Here the distinctive reference to the dwelling place of the “impurity” of the antagonist immediately recalls the motif of the removal of impurity into another realm by means of Azazel, a concept which plays a prominent role in the original scapegoat ceremony.

Further connections can be seen in the description of the other lot, associated with Abraham. Thus, similarly to the Day of Atonement commemoration, wherein the lot of the goat for YHWH is called the lot for the Lord, in *Apoc. Ab.* 20:5 the lot of Abraham is designated as the lot of the deity (my [God’s] lot):

20:1 And the Eternal Mighty One said to me, “Abraham, Abraham!”  
20:2 And I said, “Here am I!” 20:3 And he said, “Look from on high

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(75) *Apoc. Ab.* 13:7: “... And he said to him, “Reproach is on you, Azazel! Since *Abraham’s portion* (часть Аврамля) is in heaven, and *yours* is on earth ...” KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 20; PHILONENKO-SAYAR, PHILONENKO, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham...*, 66.

(76) *Apoc. Ab.* 10:15: “Stand up, Abraham, go boldly, be very joyful and rejoice! And I am with you, since *an honorable portion* (часть вѣчная) has been prepared for you by the Eternal One.” KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 18; PHILONENKO-SAYAR, PHILONENKO, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham...*, 60.

(77) The sacerdotal significance of the eschatological lots in the Slavonic apocalypse is underlined also by the fact that the Slavonic term “жребий” used for the designation of the “lots” of humanity in the *Apoc. Ab.* 20:5 and *Apoc. Ab.* 29:21 is also used in *Ap. Ab.* 1:2 for designation of the priestly lot that Abraham shares in Terah’s temple. Cf. PHILONENKO-SAYAR, PHILONENKO, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham...*, 36, 82 and 102.

(78) KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 20.



at the stars which are beneath you and count them for me and tell me their number!" 20:4 And I said, "Would I be able? For I am [but] a man." 20:5 And he said to me, "As the number of the stars and their host, so shall I make your seed into a company of nations, set apart for me in my lot with Azazel."<sup>79</sup>

This identification of the positive lot with the lot of God is also present in the Qumran materials.<sup>80</sup>

While the parallels between the imagery of the lots found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and in Qumran materials have often attracted scholars' attention, they have often failed to discern the pronounced similarities with the rabbinic developments. Yet the intriguing details in the descriptions of the lots in the Slavonic apocalypse seem to point to close connections with later rabbinic re-interpretations of Yom Kippur imagery found in the Mishnah and the Talmud. A captivating parallel here involves the spatial arrangement of the lots on the left and right sides, found both in the Slavonic apocalypse and in rabbinic materials.

Thus, a passage found in *Apoc. Ab.* 22 portrays two portions of humanity arranged according to the two lots and situated on the left and right sides:

22:4 And he said to me, "These who are on the left side are a multitude of tribes who were before and who are destined to be after you: some for judgment and justice, and others for revenge and perdition at the end of the age. 22:5 Those on the right side of the picture are the people set apart for me of the people [that are] with Azazel. These are the ones I have destined to be born of you and to be called my people."<sup>81</sup>

In *Apoc. Ab.* 27:1–2 and 29:11 this division of the two lots arranged on the left and right is repeated again:

And I looked and saw, and behold, the picture swayed, and a heathen people went out from its left side and they captured those who were on the right side: the men, women, and children. And some they slaughtered and others they held with them (*Apoc. Ab.* 27:1–2).

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(79) KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 25.

(80) Cf. 1QM 13:5–6: "For they are the lot of darkness but the lot of God is for [everlast]ing light." GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition...*, 135.

(81) KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 26–27.

And that you saw going out from the left side of the picture and those worshiping him, this [means that] many of the heathen will hope in him (*Apoc. Ab.* 29:11).

It should be noted that while in the Qumran materials the spatial arrangement of the lots on the left and right sides does not play any important theological role, such a distinction receives its paramount cultic significance in the rabbinic descriptions of the Yom Kippur custom of the selection of the goats.<sup>82</sup>

In this respect it is intriguing that the spatial arrangement of the lots on the left and right sides in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is reminiscent of the descriptions found in the mishnaic treatise *Yoma* where the ritual selection of two goats — one for YHWH and the other for Azazel — also operates with the symbolism of the left and right sides.

Thus in *m. Yoma* 4:1 the following tradition is found:

He shook the casket and took up the two lots. On one was written "For the Lord," and on the other was written "For Azazel." The prefect was on his right and the chief of his father's house on his left. If the lot bearing the Name came up in his right hand the Prefect would say to him, "My lord High Priest, raise thy right hand"; and if it came up in his left hand the chief of the father's house would say to him, "My lord High Priest, raise thy left hand." He put them on the two he-goats and said "A sin-offering to the Lord."<sup>83</sup>

Although the passage from Mishnah does not openly identify the right side with the divine lot, as does the Slavonic apocalypse, the Babylonian Talmud makes this connection explicit. Thus *b. Yoma* 39a reads:

Our Rabbis taught: Throughout the forty years that Simeon the Righteous ministered, the lot ["For the Lord"] would always come

(82) Besides the mishnaic and talmudic materials such topological arrangements of the lots on the left and right sides plays a significant role in later Jewish mysticism. Thus, for example, Box noticed that *Apoc. Ab.*'s distinction between the left and right side is reminiscent of some developments found in the *Book of Zohar*. He observes that "in the Jewish Kabbalah ... 'right side' and 'left side' ... become technical terms. In the emanistic system of the *Zohar*, the whole world is divided between "right" and "left," where pure and impure powers respectively operate—on the right side the Holy One and His powers, on the left the serpent Samael and his powers..." Box, *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, xx.

(83) H. DANBY, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 166.

up in the right hand; from that time on, it would come up now in the right hand, now in the left. And [during the same time] the crimson-colored strap would become white. From that time on it would at times become white, at others not.<sup>84</sup>

This imagery of the selection of the goats in rabbinic materials, in which the scapegoat is placed on the left and the goat for the Lord on the right, recalls the spatial arrangement of the lots in the Slavonic apocalypse where the divine lot is similarly situated on the right side and the lot of Azazel on the left side.<sup>85</sup>

### III. Re-enactment of the Yom Kippur Festival in the *Apocalypse of Abraham: The Scapegoat Ritual*

#### *The High Priest and Azazel*

Like in the Enochic tradition where the profiles of both protagonists<sup>86</sup> and antagonists<sup>87</sup> often reveal their cultic affiliations, in the Slavonic apocalypse too both Azazel and Abraham are envisioned as priestly figures. As has already been mentioned, this sacerdotal vision permeates the fabric of the entire pseudepigraphon, in which all main

(84) EPSTEIN, *The Babylonian Talmud. Yoma...*, 184.

(85) In the light of the passage from *b. Yoma* which talks about the right hand of the high priest in relation to the goat for YHWH, it is also noteworthy that in *Apocalypse of Abraham* Yahoel, who is portrayed as a high priest, is often depicted as putting his right hand on Abraham: *Apoc. Ab.* 10:4 "And the angel whom he sent to me in the likeness of a man came, and he took me by my right hand and stood me on my feet." *Apoc. Ab.* 15:2 "And the angel took me with his right hand and set me on the right wing of the pigeon..."

(86) On Enoch's priestly roles, see M. HIMMELFARB, *The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel, the Book of the Watchers, and the Wisdom of ben Sira*, in: J. SCOTT, P. SIMPSON-HOUSLEY (eds.), *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991) 63–78; IDEM, "Apocalyptic Ascent and the Heavenly Temple," in: *Society of Biblical Literature 1987 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987) (SBLSP, 26) 210–217. See also: J. MAIER, *Das Gefährdungsmotiv bei der Himmelsreise in der jüdischen Apokalyptik und "Gnosis," Kairos* 5 (1) (1963) 18–40, esp. 23; IDEM, *Vom Kultus zur Gnosis* (Salzburg: Müller, 1964) (Kairos, 1) 127–128; G. W. E. NICKELSBURG, *Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Recipients of Revelation in Upper Galilee, JBL* 100 (1981) 575–600, esp. 576–582.; A. ORLOV, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2005) (TSAJ, 107) 70–76.

(87) On the priestly traditions related to the fallen Watchers see D. SUTER, *Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: the Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6–16, HUCA* 50 (1979) 115–135.

characters are endowed with cultic roles. The most spectacular cultic attributes are, of course, given to Yahoel, who is presented in the text as the heavenly high priest and the celestial choir-master. The repeated instructions about sacrificial rites and proper liturgical procedures that he conveys to his human apprentice Abraham reveal Yahoel as the most distinguished sacerdotal figure of the story. It is possible that, in his role as instructor and revealer of cultic mysteries, Yahoel discloses his teachings to the patriarch not only in speech but also through direct participation in priestly praxis. One such instance may be seen in chapters 13 and 14 of the Slavonic apocalypse, where Yahoel appears to perform one of the central ordinances of the Yom Kippur atoning ceremony, in which impurity is transferred onto Azazel and the scapegoat is dispatched into the wilderness.

Thus, in *Apoc. Ab.* 13:7–14 the following arcane encounter between the high priest Yahoel and the scapegoat Azazel can be found:

... "Reproach is on you, Azazel! Since Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth,

Since you have chosen it and desired it to be the dwelling place of your impurity. Therefore the Eternal Lord, the Mighty One, has made you a dweller on earth. And because of you [there is] the wholly-evil spirit of the lie, and because of you [there are] wrath and trials on the generations of impious men.

Since the Eternal Mighty God did not *send* the righteous, in their bodies, to be in your hand, in order to affirm through them the righteous life and the destruction of impiety.

... Hear, adviser! Be shamed by me, since you have been appointed to tempt not to all the righteous!

Depart from this man! You cannot deceive him, because he is the enemy of you and of those who follow you and who love what you desire. For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him, and the corruption which was on him has gone over to you."<sup>88</sup>

In view of the cultic affiliations of Yahoel, it is possible that his address to the scapegoat has a ritual significance, since it appears to be reminiscent of some of the actions of the high priest on Yom Kippur. The first thing that draws attention is that Yahoel's speech contains a command of departure: "Depart from this man!" Crispin Fletcher-Louis has noted a possible connection between this command found

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(88) KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 20.

in *Apoc. Ab.* 13:12 and the dispatching formula given to the scapegoat in *m. Yoma* 6:4 — “Take our sins and go forth.”<sup>89</sup>

Scholars have also pointed out that some technical terminology found in chapter 13 appears to be connected with Yom Kippur terminology. Thus, Daniel Stökl draws attention to the expression about “sending” things to Azazel in *Apoc. Ab.* 13:10,<sup>90</sup> which Alexander Kulik traces to the Greek term ἀποστέλλω or Hebrew פלש.<sup>91</sup> Stökl proposes that this terminology “might allude to the sending out of the scapegoat.”<sup>92</sup>

The phrase “dwelling place of your impurity” is also noteworthy since it alludes to the “purgation” function of the scapegoat ceremony, the rite which centered on removing the impurity heaped on the sacrificial animal to the “dwelling” place of the demon in the wilderness.

Putting reproach and shame on Azazel in *Apoc. Ab.* 13:7 and 13:11 may also relate to the ritual curses bestowed upon the scapegoat.

Another important detail of Yahoel’s speech is the angel’s mention that the corruption of the forefather of the Israelite nation is transferred now to Azazel.

Reflecting on this utterance of the great angel, Robert Helm sees its connection to the Yom Kippur settings by proposing that “the transference of Abraham’s corruption to Azazel may be a veiled reference to the scapegoat rite....”<sup>93</sup> Similarly, Lester Grabbe also argues that the phrasing in the statement that “Abraham’s corruption has ‘gone over to’ Azazel suggest[s] an act of atonement.”<sup>94</sup>

It is also possible that the high priest Yahoel is performing here the so-called “transference function” — the crucial part of the scapegoat

(89) FLETCHER-LOUIS, *The Revelation...*, 282.

(90) *Ap. Ab.* 13:9–10: “And because of you [there is] the wholly-evil spirit of the lie, and because of you [there are] wrath and trials on the generations of impious men. Since the Eternal Mighty God did not *send* the righteous, in their bodies, to be in your hand, in order to affirm through them the righteous life and the destruction of impiety.” KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 20.

(91) A. KULIK, *Apocalypse of Abraham. Towards the Lost Original* (Ph.D. diss.; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000) 90.

(92) STÖKL BEN EZRA, *The Impact of Yom Kippur...*, 94.

(93) HELM, *Azazel...*, 223.

(94) GRABBE, *The Scapegoat Tradition...*, 157.

ritual — when the high priest conveys the sins of Israel onto the head of the goat through confession and laying-on of hands.<sup>95</sup>

### *Abraham and the Scapegoat*

It is quite clear that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* Yahoel functions as a senior priest explaining and demonstrating rituals to a junior sacerdotal servant — Abraham.<sup>96</sup> This parallelism between the instructions of the master and the actions of the apprentice is manifested already in the beginning of the apocalyptic section of the text, where the patriarch faithfully follows the orders of his angelic guide about the preparation of the sacrifices.<sup>97</sup> The same pattern of sacerdotal instruction in which orders of the master are then followed by the performance of the disciple is also discernable in the depiction of the ritual of dispatching the scapegoat.

In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, after Yahoel's own "handling" of Azazel, the angel then verbally instructs Abraham on how to deal with the scapegoat:

Say to him, "May you be the fire brand of the furnace of the earth! Go, Azazel, into the untrodden parts of the earth. <Since your inheritance are those who are with you, with men born with the stars and clouds. And their portion is you, and they come into being through your being. And justice is your enmity. Therefore through your own destruction vanish from before me!" And I said the words as the angel had taught me. (*Apoc. Ab.* 14:5–8).<sup>98</sup>

In this narrative the dispatching formulas appear to be even more decisive and forceful than in the previously investigated passage from chapter 13, now including such commands to the scapegoat as:

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(95) Lev 16:21–22 "Then Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and sending it away into the wilderness by means of someone designated for the task. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness." On the "transference" function see also MILGROM, *Leviticus 1–16...*, 1041.

(96) HARLOW, *Idolatry and Otherness...*

(97) Harlow observes that "in chap. 12 Yahoel acts like a senior priest showing a junior priest the ropes; he instructs Abraham: 'Slaughter and cut all this, putting together the two halves, one against the other. But do not cut the birds.'" HARLOW, *Idolatry and Otherness...*

(98) KULIK, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha...*, 21.

“Go” (Slav. *уди*)<sup>99</sup> and “Vanish from before me” (Slav. *буди от мене исчезль*).<sup>100</sup>

Another captivating detail is that the dispatching formula “Go, Azazel, into the untrodden parts of the earth” designates the destination of the demon’s removal as “the untrodden parts of earth.” The word “untrodden” (Slav. *беспроходна*)<sup>101</sup> is significant since it designates a place uninhabitable (lit. impassable) to human beings. Reflecting on the language of Lev 16 where the scapegoat is dispatched “to the solitary place” (אֶל-אֲרָץ גִּזְרָה) “in the wilderness,” (במדבר),<sup>102</sup> Jacob Milgrom observes that “the purpose of dispatching the goat to the wilderness is to remove it from human habitation.”<sup>103</sup>

In view of these observations it is possible that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* one encounters another, so-called “elimination,” aspect of the scapegoat ritual whereby impurity must be removed from the human *oikumene* into an inhabitable (or in the language of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, “untrodden”) realm.

In this respect Daniel Stökl also observes that the terminology found in *Apoc. Ab.* 14:5, where Azazel goes “into untrodden parts of the earth,” is reminiscent of the Septuagint version’s translation of Leviticus 16:22 (εἰς γῆν ἄβατον)<sup>104</sup> and the expression chosen by Philo in *De Specialibus Legibus* 1:188 in his description of Yom Kippur.<sup>105</sup>

The concluding phrase of the passage from chapter 14, which reports that Abraham repeated the words he received from the great angel, confirms our suggestion that Abraham is depicted here as a sort of a priestly apprentice receiving instructions from his master Yahoel and then applying this knowledge in dispatching the scapegoat.<sup>106</sup>

(99) PHILONENKO-SAYAR, PHILONENKO, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham...*, 68.

(100) *Ibid.*

(101) *Ibid.*

(102) Lev 16:22 “The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.”

(103) MILGROM, *Leviticus 1–16...*, 1045.

(104) KULIK, *Apocalypse of Abraham...*, 90.

(105) STÖKL BEN EZRA, *The Impact of Yom Kippur...*, 94.

(106) Harlow notes that “Yahoel teaches Abraham a kind of exorcistic spell to drive Azazel away.” HARLOW, *Idolatry and Otherness...*

### Conclusion

In the conclusion of our study of the Yom Kippur imagery discernable in the second part of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, we should again draw attention to the possible connections between these sacerdotal traditions and the conceptual developments found in the first, haggadic section of the pseudepigraphon.

As has already been mentioned, the first part of the text is also permeated with cultic concerns as it depicts the idolatrous worship of the household of Terah, envisioned there through the metaphor of the polluted sanctuary. The section ends with the demise of the infamous house of worship and the death of its sacerdotal servants — Abraham's father Terah and his brother Nahor — perishing in the fire of the destroyed shrine polluted by idols.

In this respect it is intriguing that the description of the Yom Kippur ritual found in Leviticus 16 also begins with a reference to two priests who have perished: Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu who, like Terah and Nahor in the Slavonic apocalypse, were killed by the fire proceeding from God because their improper priestly practice defiled the sanctuary.

This reference to priests who have perished and caused a contamination which now requires purgation appears to serve well for the cultic agenda of Lev 16, which then offers the description of the purificatory rite of Yom Kippur.<sup>107</sup> As was already seen, later rabbinic materials that link the Golden Calf episode with the establishment of Yom Kippur hint at this correspondence between sacerdotal transgression and the need for its cultic repair.

In light of the aforementioned traditions, it appears that the re-enactment of the Yom Kippur observances found in the second part of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* also fits nicely in the overall structure of the Slavonic pseudepigraphon where the hero's transition from the polluted and destroyed sanctuary depicted in the beginning of the story

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(107) In this respect Jacob Milgrom reminds us that in the beginning, before becoming an annual festival, Yom Kippur was understood as an "emergency rite" for purgation of the sanctuary. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1070. Scullion also observes that "... the purpose of the feast is purgation. The sins of the Israelites, inadvertent and advertent, defile the land and the temple, and even the holy of holies. Leviticus anachronistically projects back into presettlement times a feast to purify the tent/temple and camp/city to protect them from the buildup of impurity." J. P. SCULLION, *A Traditio-historical Study of the Day of Atonement* (Ph.D. diss.; Catholic University of America, 1991) 83.



to the true place of worship shown him by Deity at the end is mediated by the atoning ritual.

### SUMMARY

The article investigates the sacerdotal dimension of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. The study shows that the entrance of a seer into the celestial realm reveals the cultic dimension and is envisioned as a visitation of the heavenly temple. The study theorizes that some portions of the second, apocalyptic part of the pseudepigraphon can be seen as an eschatological re-enactment of the Yom Kippur ritual — one of the most enigmatic cultic ceremonies in the Jewish tradition.