Satan: Adversary, Tempter, Exposer of Truth  
Nechama Goldman Barash  
(Translations Sefaria unless otherwise noted)

Detuernonomy 27

Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying: Observe all the Instruction that I enjoin upon you this day.

As soon as you have crossed the Jordan into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall set up large stones. Coat them with plaster and inscribe upon them all the words of this Teaching. When you cross over to enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you—

upon crossing the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, about which I charge you this day, on Mount Ebal, and coat them with plaster.

There, too, you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones. Do not wield an iron tool over them;

you must build the altar of the LORD your God of unhewn stones. You shall offer on it burnt offerings to the LORD your God,

and you shall sacrifice there offerings of well-being and eat them, rejoicing before the LORD your God.

And on those stones you shall inscribe every word of this Teaching most distinctly.

Moses and the levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying: Silence! Hear, O Israel! Today you have become the people of the LORD your God:

Heed the LORD your God and observe His commandments and His laws, which I enjoin upon you this day.

Thereupon Moses charged the people, saying:
After you have crossed the Jordan, the following shall stand on Mount Gerizim when the blessing for the people is spoken: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin.

And for the curse, the following shall stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

The Levites shall then proclaim in a loud voice to all the people of Israel:

Cursed be anyone who makes a sculptured or molten image, abhorred by the LORD, a craftsman’s handiwork, and sets it up in secret.—And all the people shall respond, Amen.

Cursed be he who insults his father or mother.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who moves his fellow countryman’s landmark.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who misdirects a blind person on his way.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who subverts the rights of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who lies with his father’s wife, for he has removed his father’s garment.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who lies with any beast.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who lies with his sister, whether daughter of his father or of his mother.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who lies with his mother-in-law.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who strikes down his fellow countryman in secret.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed be he who accepts a bribe in the case of the murder of an innocent person.—And all the people shall say, Amen.
Cursed be he who will not uphold the terms of this Teaching and observe them.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

Deuteronomy 28

Now, if you obey the LORD your God, to observe faithfully all His commandments which I enjoin upon you this day, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

All these blessings shall come upon you and take effect, if you will but heed the word of the LORD your God:

Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the country.

Blessed shall be the issue of your womb, the produce of your soil, and the offspring of your cattle, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock.

Blessed shall you be in your comings and blessed shall you be in your goings.

The LORD will put to rout before you the enemies who attack you; they will march out against you by a single road, but flee from you by many roads.

The LORD will ordain blessings for you upon your barns and upon all your undertakings: He will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

The LORD will establish you as His holy people, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.

And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the LORD’s name is proclaimed over you, and they shall stand in fear of you.

The LORD will give you abounding prosperity in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to assign to you.

The LORD will open for you His bounteous store, the heavens, to provide rain for your land in season and to bless all your undertakings. You will be creditor to many nations, but debtor to none.
The LORD will make you the head, not the tail; you will always be at the top and never at the bottom—if you obey and faithfully observe the commandments of the LORD your God that I enjoin upon you this day.

and do not deviate to the right or to the left from any of the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day and turn to the worship of other gods.

But if you do not obey the LORD your God to observe faithfully all His commandments and laws which I enjoin upon you this day, all these curses shall come upon you and take effect:

Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the country.

Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

Cursed shall be the issue of your womb and the produce of your soil, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock.

Cursed shall you be in your goings.

The LORD will make pestilence cling to you, until He has put an end to you in the land that you are entering to possess.

The LORD will let loose against you calamity, panic, and frustration in all the enterprises you undertake, so that you shall soon be utterly wiped out because of your evil doing in forsaking Me.

The LORD will make you the head, not the tail; you will always be at the top and never at the bottom—if you obey and faithfully observe the commandments of the LORD your God that I enjoin upon you this day.

and do not deviate to the right or to the left from any of the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day and turn to the worship of other gods.
Your carcasses shall become food for all the birds of the sky and all the beasts of the earth, with none to frighten them off.

The LORD will strike you with the Egyptian inflammation, with hemmorhoids, boil-scar's, and itch, from which you shall never recover.

The LORD will strike you with madness, blindness, and dismay.

You shall grope at noon as a blind man gropes in the dark; you shall not prosper in your ventures, but shall be constantly abused and robbed, with none to give help.

If you pay the bride-price for a wife, another man shall enjoy her. If you build a house, you shall not live in it. If you plant a vineyard, you shall not harvest it.

Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your ass shall be seized in front of you, and it shall not be returned to you; your flock shall be delivered to your enemies, with none to help you.

Your sons and daughters shall be delivered to another people, while you look on; and your eyes shall strain for them constantly, but you shall be helpless.

A people you do not know shall eat up the produce of your soil and all your gains; you shall be abused and downtrodden continually.

until you are driven mad by what your eyes behold.

The LORD will afflict you at the knees and thighs with a severe inflammation, from which you shall never recover—from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.

The LORD will drive you, and the king you have set over you, to a nation unknown to you or your fathers, where you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone.

You shall be a consternation, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples to which the LORD will drive you.

Though you take much seed out to the field, you shall gather in little, for the locust shall consume it.
Though you plant vineyards and till them, you shall have no wine to drink or store, for the worm shall devour them.

Though you have olive trees throughout your territory, you shall have no oil for anointment, for your olives shall drop off.

Though you beget sons and daughters, they shall not remain with you, for they shall go into captivity.

The cricket shall take over all the trees and produce of your land.

The stranger in your midst shall rise above you higher and higher, while you sink lower and lower:

he shall be your creditor, but you shall not be his; he shall be the head and you the tail.

All these curses shall befall you; they shall pursue you and overtake you, until you are wiped out, because you did not heed the LORD your God and keep the commandments and laws that He enjoined upon you.

They shall serve as signs and proofs against you and your offspring for all time.

Because you would not serve the LORD your God in joy and gladness over the abundance of everything,

you shall have to serve—in hunger and thirst, naked and lacking everything—the enemies whom the LORD will let loose against you. He will put an iron yoke upon your neck until He has wiped you out.

The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, which will swoop down like the eagle—a nation whose language you do not understand,

a ruthless nation, that will show the old no regard and the young no mercy.

It shall devour the offspring of your cattle and the produce of your soil, until you have been wiped out, leaving you nothing of new grain, wine, or oil, of the calving of your herds and the lambing of your flocks, until it has brought you to ruin.

It shall shut you up in all your towns throughout your land until every mighty, towering wall in which you trust has come down. And when you are shut up in all
your towns throughout your land that the LORD your God has assigned to you,

you shall eat your own issue, the flesh of your sons and daughters that the LORD your God has assigned to you, because of the desperate straits to which your enemy shall reduce you.

He who is most tender and fastidious among you shall be too mean to his brother and the wife of his bosom and the children he has spared
to share with any of them the flesh of the children that he eats, because he has nothing else left as a result of the desperate straits to which your enemy shall reduce you in all your towns.

And she who is most tender and dainty among you, so tender and dainty that she would never venture to set a foot on the ground, shall begrudge the husband of her bosom, and her son and her daughter,

the afterbirth that issues from between her legs and the babies she bears; she shall eat them secretly, because of utter want, in the desperate straits to which your enemy shall reduce you in your towns.

If you fail to observe faithfully all the terms of this Teaching that are written in this book, to reverence this honored and awesome Name, the LORD your God,

the LORD will inflict extraordinary plagues upon you and your offspring, strange and lasting plagues, malignant and chronic diseases.

He will bring back upon you all the sicknesses of Egypt that you dreaded so, and they shall cling to you.

Moreover, the LORD will bring upon you all the other diseases and plagues that are not mentioned in this book of Teaching, until you are wiped out.

You shall be left a scant few, after having been as numerous as the stars in the skies, because you did not heed the command of the LORD your God.

And as the LORD once delighted in making you prosperous and many, so will the LORD now delight in causing you to perish and in wiping you out; you shall be torn from the land that you are about to enter and possess
The LORD will scatter you among all the peoples from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, whom neither you nor your ancestors have experienced.

Yet even among those nations you shall find no peace, nor shall your foot find a place to rest. The LORD will give you there an anguished heart and eyes that pine and a despondent spirit.

The life you face shall be precarious; you shall be in terror, night and day, with no assurance of survival.

In the morning you shall say, “If only it were evening!” and in the evening you shall say, “If only it were morning!”—because of what your heart shall dread and your eyes shall see.

The LORD will send you back to Egypt in galleys, by a route which I told you you should not see again. There you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but none will buy. These are the terms of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to conclude with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb.

Job Chapter One:

There was a man in the land of Uz named Job. That man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

Seven sons and three daughters were born to him;

his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses, and a very large household. That man was wealthier than anyone in the East.

It was the custom of his sons to hold feasts, each on his set day in his own home. They would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

When a round of feast days was over, Job would send word to them to sanctify themselves, and, rising early in the morning, he would make burnt offerings, one for each of them; for Job thought, “Perhaps my children have sinned and blasphemed God in their thoughts.” This is what Job always used to do.
One day the divine beings presented themselves before the LORD, and the Adversary came along with them.

The LORD said to the Adversary, “Where have you been?” The Adversary answered the LORD, “I have been roaming all over the earth.”

The LORD said to the Adversary, “Have you noticed My servant Job? There is no one like him on earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and shuns evil!”

The Adversary answered the LORD, “Does Job not have good reason to fear God? Why, it is You who have fenced him round, him and his household and all that he has. You have blessed his efforts so that his possessions spread out in the land.

But lay Your hand upon all that he has and he will surely blaspheme You to Your face.”

The LORD replied to the Adversary, “See, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on him.”

The Adversary departed from the presence of the LORD.

Numbers 22:32

The angel of the LORD said to him, “Why have you beaten your ass these three times? It is I who came out as an adversary, for the errand is obnoxious to me.

Midrash Tanhuma Parashat Balak

And he went with the officers of Moab. To teach you that he was gladdened by the misfortune of Israel. And God was angered that he went and placed before him an angel of God on the journey to act as an adversary to him. This was an angel of mercy and he was turned into the Satan/adversary, and thus he said to Bilaam, you have caused me to act according to a craft that is not mine, as it says, here I have come to act as adversary:

Numbers Rabbah Balak 20:11

11 ….For when someone is going to sin, Satan dances before him until he completes the transgression. As soon as he has transgressed, he returns to inform Him.
Job 2:3

The LORD said to the Adversary, “Have you noticed My servant Job? There is no one like him on earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and shuns evil. He still keeps his integrity; so you have incited Me against him to destroy him for no good reason.”

בבִּינְיָן

איוב ב:ג׳

וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהוָָּׂ֜ה אֶל־הַשָּׂטָָּׂ֗ן הֲשַַׂ֣מְתָּׂ

לִבְּךָ֮ אֶל־עַבְּדִִּ֣י אִיּוֹב֒ כִי֩ אֵין כָּמ ֹ֜הוּ

בָּאָָּ֗רֶץ אִִ֣ישׁ תָָּּ֧ם וְּיָּשָָּׁׁ֛ר יְּר ֵ֥א אֱלֹהִִ֖ים וְּסִָּּ֣ר מ רֶָ֙נּוֶּ֙ מַחֲזִִּ֣יק

בְּתֻמָּת֔וֹ וַתְּסִית ֵ֥נִי

Bava Batra 16a

Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Were it not explicitly written in the verse, it would be impossible to say this, as it would be insulting to God’s honor. The verse states: “You moved Me against him,” like a person whom others persuade and allows himself to be persuaded, as if God had not wanted to do anything, but allowed Himself to be persuaded to bring harm to Job.

Satan, Job and the Akeida (Binding of Isaac)

Bava Batra 16a

Having mentioned the book of Job, the Gemara addresses several matters relating to it. It is stated: “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the Satan came also among them. And the Lord said to the Satan: From where do you come? And the Satan answered the Lord, and said: From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking through it” (Job 1:6–7). The Satan said to God: Master of the Universe, I have gone to and fro throughout the entire world and I have not found anyone as faithful as Your servant Abraham, to whom You said: “Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it to you” (Genesis 13:17). And even so, when he did not find a place to bury Sarah before he purchased a burial site for four hundred silver shekels, he did not find fault with Your ways or complain about the fact that you had failed to fulfill Your promise. “And the Lord said to the Satan: Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on earth, a perfect and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil?” (Job 1:8). About this Rabbi Yoḥanan says: That which is stated about Job is greater than that which is stated about Abraham. As with regard to Abraham it is written: “For now I know that you fear God” (Genesis 22:12), with regard to Job it is written: “A perfect and an upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil” (Job 1:8)…

... Rabbi Levi says: Both Satan, who brought accusations against Job, and Peninah, who tormented Hannah, mother of Samuel the prophet, acted with intent that was for the sake of Heaven. As for Satan, when he saw that the Holy One, Blessed be He, inclined to favor Job and praised him, he said: Heaven forbid that He should forget the love of Abraham. With regard to Peninah, as it is written: “And her rival wife also provoked her sore, to make her fret” (I Samuel 1:6), i.e., Peninah upset Hannah in order to motivate her to pray. Rav Aḥa bar Ya’akov taught this in Paphunya, and Satan came and kissed his feet in gratitude for speaking positively about him.

Sanhedrin 89b

Apropos the binding of Isaac, the Gemara elaborates: It is written: “And it came to pass after these matters that God tried Abraham” (Genesis 22:1). The Gemara asks: After what matters? How does the binding of Isaac relate to the preceding events?

Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosei ben Zimra: This means after the statement of Satan, as it is written: “And the child grew, and was weaned, and Abraham prepared a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned” (Genesis 21:8). Satan said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, this old man, you favored him with a product of the womb, i.e., a child, at one hundred years of age. From the entire feast that he prepared, did he not have even one dove or one pigeon to sacrifice
before You as a thanks-offering? God said to Satan: Did Abraham prepare the feast for any reason but for his son? If I say to him: Sacrifice your son before Me, he would immediately slaughter him. Immediately, after these matters, the verse states: “And God tried Abraham.”

...Satan preceded Abraham to the path that he took to bind his son and said to him: “If one ventures a word to you, will you be weary...you have instructed many, and you have strengthened the weak hands. Your words have upheld him that was falling...but now it comes upon you, and you are weary” (Job 4:2–5). Do you now regret what you are doing? Abraham said to him in response: “And I will walk with my integrity” (Psalms 26:11).

Satan said to Abraham: “Is not your fear of God your foolishness?” (Job 4:6). In other words, your fear will culminate in the slaughter of your son. Abraham said to him: “Remember, please, whoever perished, being innocent” (Job 4:7). God is righteous and His pronouncements are just. Once Satan saw that Abraham was not heeding him, he said to him: “Now a word was secretly brought to me, and my ear received a whisper thereof” (Job 4:12). This is what I heard from behind the heavenly curtain [paragod], which demarcates between God and the ministering angels: The sheep is to be sacrificed as a burnt-offering, and Isaac is not to be sacrificed as a burnt-offering. Abraham said to him: Perhaps that is so. However, this is the punishment of the liar, that even if he speaks the truth, others do not listen to him. Therefore, I do not believe you and will fulfill that which I was commanded to perform.

**Midrash HaGadol Vayera pp. 346-47 (translation VBM)**

Another explanation: “If one venture a word.” Rav Chama bar Chanina said: Thus said Satan to Avraham: Shall a great man like you do this? Surely you, who bring people under the wings of the Shekhina, if you kill your son, everyone will distance themselves from you, and call you a murderer. Avraham said to him: I will not listen to your counsel.

Another explanation: “If one venture a word.” Rabbi Yose ben Zimra said: Thus said Satan to Avraham: Is it not you, at whose door all the great men in the world arrive early in the morning, and from whom they take advice? If you do this, everyone will abandon you. Come back! But Avraham did not listen to his counsel.

Another explanation: “If one venture a word.” Rabbi Elazar ben Pedat said: Thus Satan said to him: Is it not you, whom all the princes see and before whom they rise, and even those riding on horses dismount and kneel before you. If you do this, all knees will kneel and kick you, as it is written: “Your words have upheld him that was falling” (Job 4:4).

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**Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 32:8-9**

(8) When Abraham returned from Mount Moriah in peace, the anger of Satan* was kindled, for he saw that the desire of his heart to frustrate the offering of our father Abraham had not been realized. What did he do? He went and said to Sarah: Hast thou not heard what I heard from behind the curtain? She said to him: No. He said to her: Thy husband, Abraham, has taken thy son Isaac and slain him and offered him up as a burnt offering. The sheep is to be sacrificed as a burnt-offering, and my ear received a whisper thereof.

She began to weep and to cry aloud three times, corresponding to the three sustained notes of the Shofar i.e. the Teki’oth. And (she gave forth) three howlings corresponding to the three disconnected short notes This is the “Teru’a’” and her soul fled, and she died.

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**I. Satan and the High Holy Days**

Rashi Job 1:6

רש”י, איוב פרק א פסוק י
One Day – this day was Rosh Hashana the day of the blast of the shofar and God commanded Satan to bring the good and bad deeds of all of humanity from his traveling around the earth.
And Satan came among them – to prosecute mankind.

Rosh Hashana 16a
And recite before Me on Rosh HaShana verses that mention Kingdoms, Remembrances, and Shofarot:
Kingships so that you will crown Me as King over you;
Remembrances so that your remembrance will rise before Me for good; and with what will the remembrance rise? It will rise with the shofar.

Similarly, Rabbi Abba hu said: Why does one sound a blast with a shofar made from a ram’s horn on Rosh HaShana? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Sound a blast before Me with a shofar made from a ram’s horn, so that I will remember you for good; and with what will the remembrance rise? It will rise with the shofar.

The Gemara is astonished by this, Rabbi Yitzhak said: Why does one sound a blast with a shofar made from a ram’s horn? The Gemara is astonished by the question: Why do we sound a blast? The Merciful One states: In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns (terua)” (Leviticus 23:24). Rather, Rabbi Yitzhak asked about the common practice in Jewish communities, which is not explicitly stated in the Torah: Why does one sound a long, continuous shofar blast [tekia] and then a staccato series of shofar blasts [terua] while the congregation is still sitting before the silent prayer, and then sound again a tekia and a terua while they are standing in the Amida prayer? He answers: In order to confuse the Satan.

Pesikta Rabbati 45
A Psalm of David. Maschil. Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is pardoned. These words are to be considered in the light of a verse from another Psalm. You have forgiven the iniquity of your people. You have pardoned all their sins. Selah (Ps. 85.3). You find that Satan comes on the Day of Atonement to accuse Israel and he specifies the sins. You find that Satan comes on the Day of Atonement to accuse Israel and he specifies the sins. You find that Satan comes on the Day of Atonement to accuse Israel and he specifies the sins.
iniquities of Israel, saying Master of the universe, let the Children of Israel be cleansed from all their sins as Isaiah has declared: ‘For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; because it is said, “for on this day shall atonement be made for you”’ (Lev. 16:30). When Satan sees there is no iniquity, he cries out before the Holy One.

The Day of Atonement, the Day of Reconciliation and the Day of Reunion shall not pass away, for the Day of Atonement will not pass away, for the Day of Atonement effects reconciliation for serious offences as well as for slight offences. Whence do we derive that the Day of Atonement effects reconciliation? Because it is said, ‘For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean’ (Lev. 16:30). ‘From your sins’ is not written here, but ‘from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord’ (ibid.).

Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer

The Son of Bethera 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. 16:34).

Rabbi Zechariah said: They read in the Torah and found written therein, ‘And ye shall afflict your souls’ (Lev. 16:29), and on the Day of Atonement they caused a Shophar to be sounded throughout all the camp and proclaimed a fast for all Israel, old and young. Were it not for the Day of Atonement the world could not stand, because the Day of Atonement is in this world and in the world to come. Therefore, ‘A sabbath of sabbaths unto you’ (Lev. 16:31). ‘A sabbath’ refers to this world, ‘sabbaths’ refers to the world to come. Moreover, if all the festivals pass away, the Day of Atonement will not pass away, for the Day of Atonement effects reconciliation for serious offences as well as for slight offences. Why do we know that the Day of Atonement effects reconciliation? Because it is said, ‘For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean’ (Lev. 16:30). ‘From your sins’ is not written here, but ‘from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord’ (ibid.).
Sammael (Satan) said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of all the universe! Thou hast given me power over all the nations of the world, but over Israel Thou hast not given me power. He answered him, saying: Behold, thou hast power over them on the Day of Atonement if they have any sin, but if not, thou hast no power over them. Therefore they gave him a present on the Day of Atonement, in order that they should not bring their offering, as it is said, “One lot for the Lord, and the other lot for Azazel” (Lev. 16:8).

…Satan saw that sin was not to be found among them on the Day of Atonement. He said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of all the universe! Thou hast one people like the ministering angels who are in heaven. Just as the ministering angels have bare feet, so have the Israelites bare feet on the Day of Atonement. Just as the ministering angels have neither food nor drink, so the Israelites have neither food nor drink on the Day of Atonement. Just as the ministering angels have no joints, in like wise the Israelites stand upon their feet. Just as the ministering angels have peace obtaining amongst them, so the Israelites have peace obtaining amongst them on the Day of Atonement. Just as the ministering angels are innocent of all sin on the Day of Atonement, so are the Israelites innocent of all sin on the Day of Atonement. The Holy One, blessed be He, hears the prayers of Israel rather than (the charges brought by) their accuser, and He makes atonement for the altar, and for the sanctuary, and for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation both great and small, as it is said, “And he shall make atonement for the holy place” (Lev. 16:16).