

# "Watchman, what of the night?"

XXXVI - 8(03)

*"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,  
is hour and the end!"*

*Est. 7:6 (Moffat)*

## TA HAGIA

τα ἁγία

### In Summary

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### Which Altar?

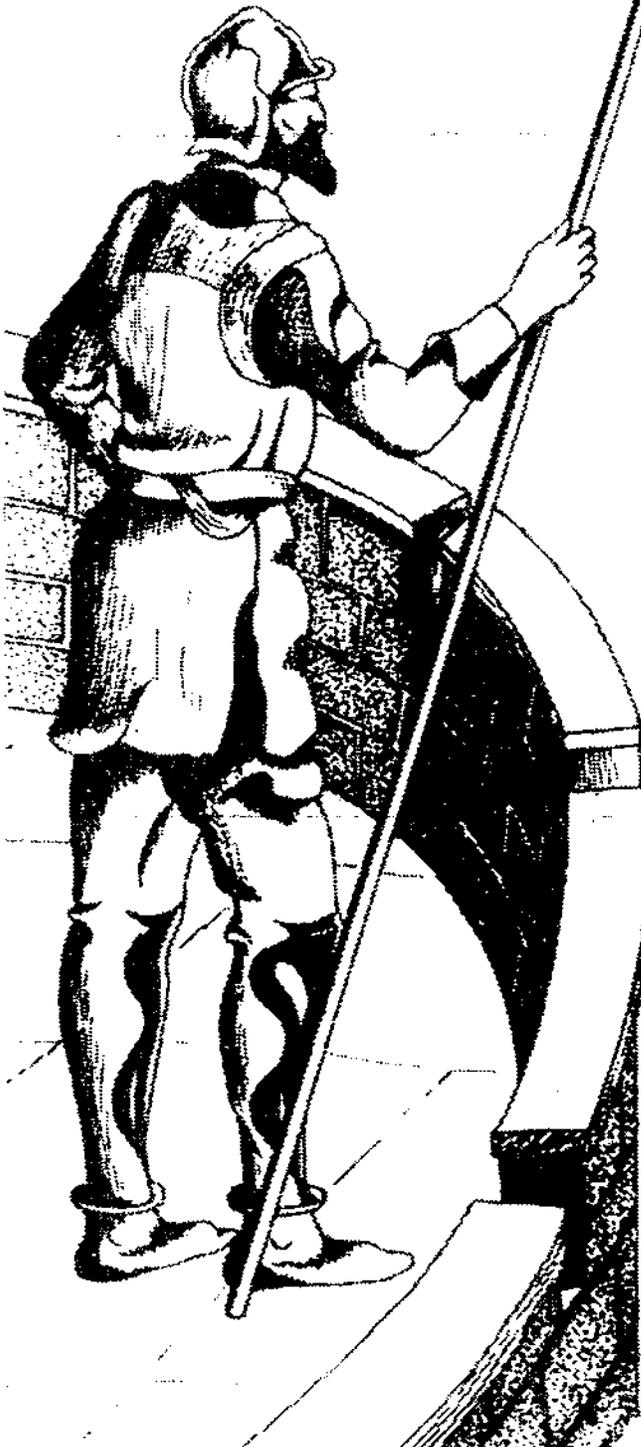
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### *Editor's Preface*

Elder M. L. Andreasen in his book on Hebrews commenting on Paul's declaration - "the Holy Spirit this signifying" - wrote: "This pronouncement by the Spirit raises the sanctuary and its services from the level of mere history to the high plane of an inspired account of a prophetic institution of symbolic significance" (p. 324.) However, he noted - "There are three expressions that need definition before we shall be able to determine what is meant by 'the Holy Spirit this signifying.'" One word was "ta hagia" which we shall discuss in this issue. We hope to make it simple enough so that all may understand what is meant by the use of this Greek word, and not utter the proverbial comment, "Its all Greek to me."

A number of years ago, we prepared a study on "1844 Re-Examined." As a corollary to this study we added an examination of the word, Ta Hagia. We based its eight uses in Hebrews on the meaning affixed in the definitive verses of Hebrews 9:2-3. A further study of the word in context led us to realize that while we still have many things to learn, we have some things also to unlearn. While it still stands that Paul used the expression ta hagia ton hagion (long "o"), defined as the Most Holy Place only once, and stated plainly, that he would not discuss in his treatise this part of the heavenly ministry, other uses of the word, hagia, found in the book of Hebrews, need further study in context. This we have endeavored to do in this issue of WVN.

Recognizing that the High Priest moved from the Most Holy to the Court on the Day of Atonement, we have considered Christ's ministry in those same three phases.



# TA HAGIA

(τα ἁγία)

This Greek word, an adjective, meaning, "holy," appears eight times in the book of Hebrews in the plural form, and once in the singular form (Heb. 9:1). In its singular form and one half of its plural uses, it refers to the earthly typical sanctuary built at Mt. Sinai. The other four times the reference is to the heavenly antitype. It is used once compounded – *hagia hagion* (long "o") {"holies of holies"} - to refer to the second apartment of the earthly sanctuary. (9:3).

The KJV is not consistent in the translation of this word. The references where the word is found and the translation given in the KJV are as follows:

Hebrews 8:2 – "sanctuary"  
Hebrews 9:2 – "sanctuary"  
Hebrews 9:8 – "holiest of all"  
Hebrews 9:12 – "holy place"  
Hebrews 9:24 – "holy places"  
Hebrews 9:25 – "holy place"  
Hebrews 10:19 – "holiest"  
Hebrews 13:11 – "sanctuary"

The ARV translates the word in Hebrews 8:2 the same as the KJV, but in all the rest of the texts the translation reads – "holy place." The NIV also translates Hebrews 8:2 the same as both the KJV and ARV. It follows the ARV for Hebrews 9:2, and translates 9:24 – "man-made sanctuary." In all the rest of the references the NIV reads: "Most Holy Place." This is a gross mistranslation of *ta hagia*, and the basis for the teaching that Christ upon His ascension began his priestly ministry in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

Andreasen, while noting the consistency of the ARV translation, considers the translation "holy place" a faulty translation because the word, *hagia*, is plural and the translation, singular. But it needs to be observed that in Hebrews 9:2

where only the first apartment is described, the plural form, *Hagia*, is used as its designation. Why a plural use to refer to a singular object? We would suggest that the Hebrew language usage of the "majestic plural" is employed in this book. This would answer Andreasen's problem in the use of the singular in the ARV translations, as well as confirm the conclusion that the NIV translations are gross errors. Further, the definitive designation of the second apartment as *hagia hagion* (long "o"), and this compound designation for the second apartment not used again in the book of Hebrews, would appear to justify the translation of *ta hagia* in each text following Hebrews 9:2-3 as the "holy place," meaning the first apartment, as was done in the ARV. But how do we translate *hagia* when the plural genitive form (*hagion*) is used by itself as is done in Hebrews 9:8 and 10:19?

Let us consider each usage in context:

In Hebrews 8:2 prior to the definitive statements given in Hebrews 9:2-3 the plural form is used. Hebrews 8:2 reads literally: "Of *hagion* (long "o") a minister and of the tent, the true, which (tent) pitched the Lord, not man." This use of *hagion* is best translated as given in the margin of the KJV – "of holy things." This then conveys the meaning that Christ becoming High Priest, seated "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (ver. 1), is minister of holy things as well as serving in the "true tabernacle" which the Lord pitched, not man. Paul previously noted that Jesus having "passed into the heavens" was, as High Priest, ministering at "the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:14-16). Now in summary – "this is the sum" – the chief point being that Jesus upon His ascension shared the "Throne of God," from which as the Throne of Grace is dispensed the redemption made possible by His blood. See also Rev. 5:6.

The second use of *hagia* (Heb. 9:2) introduces some linguistic problems. The case ending ( $\alpha$ ) is the same for the feminine singular nominative as for the neuter plural nominative. The translators of the KJV evidently perceived it as singular and

translated it, "sanctuary." In 9:2, there is no article used which could have helped determine whether the singular or plural was intended; however, when used in 9:12, 25, and 13:11, the article *τα* is used which is the mark of the neuter plural. Frieburgs, a husband and wife linguistic team, in their monumental work, the *Analytical Greek New Testament*, note all eight uses of *hagia* in Hebrews as neuter plural.

The definitive use of *hagia hagion* in 9:3 to designate the second apartment of the sanctuary also needs careful consideration. As stated above, the term is not used again in the book of Hebrews although the most holy place is noted in 9:7, but there simply designated as the "second." It should be observed that after Paul describes the second apartment, and defines it by the compound expression, *hagia hagion*, he writes "of which, we cannot now speak particularly" (ver. 5). Simply stated, Paul informs his readers that he will not be writing in the book of Hebrews concerning the second phase of Christ's High Priestly ministry. Thus when he uses the designation, *hagia*, he means the first apartment or "holy place," unless there are mitigating factors in the context.

After stating clearly that he did not intend to discuss the high priestly ministry in the second apartment, Paul summarizes the priestly ministries in the two apartments (9:6-7), and then declares - "The Holy Spirit this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing" (9:8). The Holy Spirit considers the type as conveying truth that needs to be understood, even though in parable form. The word, "figure" in verse 9 in the Greek text is *παραβολη* (*parable*). Andreasen makes a very pointed observation on "the Holy Spirit this signifying." He wrote:

Some Christians see little of value either in the sanctuary or its services. The Holy Spirit here announces that there is value and spiritual import in the Hebrew ritual. This pronouncement by the Spirit raises the sanctuary and its services from the level of mere history to the high plane of an inspired account

of a prophetic institution of symbolic significance. (*Book of Hebrews*, p. 324)

It should be obvious that at the time of the writing of Hebrews the successor temple was still standing and priestly ministrations were still being performed (8:4). But there was a significant difference. A new and living way had been opened. The truth conveyed by the construction of this text (9:8) needs to be carefully considered. The text literally reads - "the of the holies way" - *ton hagion* (long "o"), the plural form used so as to include both apartments. This same concept of "the way" is again used in Hebrews 10:19-20 with a challenge to boldly enter by the open door into the holies (*ton hagion* - the same form as in 9:8). This consecrated way was made possible by Christ's entrance into the flesh, so that being "touched with the feelings of our infirmities" (4:15), He would be "able to succour them that are tempted" (2:18). In these two uses of the plural form of *hagia*, the context would indicate the translation, "holy places."

The introduction of the concept of the "way" also needs consideration. It was used by Luke, a companion of Paul, in the historical record of Acts. It is first noted in Paul's attempt to eradicate the Christian faith in Damascus. He received letters from the high priest in Jerusalem to bring bound from the synagogue at Damascus any "of the way" (9:2, margin). During Paul's ministry in Ephesus, he "separated the disciples" from those in the synagogue who "spake evil of the way" (19:9). What constituted "the way" became the testing truth of Paul's ministry in the establishment of the Christian Church in Ephesus. The continued proclamation of the gospel in Ephesus resulted in "no small stir about the way" (19:23). [The text indicates "the way" rather than "that way" as in the KJV.] When in Jerusalem after his rescue from the Jews who sought to kill him, Paul reviewed for the mob his former zeal for Judaism declaring that he persecuted to the death those who followed "this way" (22:4). When making his defense before Felix, Paul confessed "that after the way which (the Jews) call heresy, so worship I the

God of my fathers, believing all things written in the law and the prophets" (24:14). More study needs to be given to the gospel as proclaimed by Paul, called "the way" in Acts, and the emphasis on that "way" as given in the book of Hebrews.

This all echoes the message found in Psalms - "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (Ps. 77:13). The first encounter of Christ with the appointed guardians of the Temple set forth the premise of a new tabernacle, and indicated that through His flesh it would be accomplished (John 2:18-22). The Apostolic Church was slow to comprehend the transition from the earthly to the heavenly. While "breaking bread from house to house," they still continued "daily with one accord in the temple" (Acts 2:46). The conflict came to a head as Paul completed his third missionary tour, and reported to the leadership in Jerusalem. He "declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry" (Acts 21:19). Paul had "separated" the believers from the synagogues forming them into εκκλησιαι, "called out" assemblies. In response to Paul's report, James and the elders at Jerusalem responded - "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law" (21:20). These "thousands" were still in the synagogues (James 2:2, margin), and were still performing temple rites which no longer had any validity (Acts 21:22-24). The crisis in the early church came over the sanctuary question, as now; from a different angle, yes, but nevertheless basic in God's message for that hour.

In a previous issue of WWN [4(03)], we discussed Hebrews 9:12 where *ta hagia* is used again. The preposition "into" (Gr. εις) requires the use of the accusative; however, Paul did not use *hagia hagon*, but simply, *hagia*, the term by which he designated the first apartment of the sanctuary. It was in the tabernacle "not made with hands" that Christ as High Priest obtained eternal redemption for us. He was not a High Priest at Calvary, but there, as a common priest, He offered sacrifice. "Himself the priest, Himself the victim."

The next two uses of *hagia* in Hebrews are found in 9:24-25 and are a part of one thought. In verse 24, Paul declared the earthly *hagia* - the very word he had used to designate the first apartment - to be typical of the true into which Christ entered. Then he compared the single sacrifice of Christ with the yearly entries of the earthly high priest "into the *hagia*" (ver. 25). The question which arises from this verse and its use of *hagia* is - Was Paul referring to the daily ministry, or the yearly ministry of the high priest? When Paul referred to the high priestly ministry in the most holy place - he wrote - "alone once every year" (9:7 - ἀπαξ του ενιαυτου μονος). But now in 9:25 referring to the high priestly ministry he uses the wording κατ' ενιαυτον- "during the year." It was during the year, when corporate confession was made, that the high priest ministered and carried the blood into the holy place (Lev. 4:13-21).

In the last use of *hagia* in the book of Hebrews (13:11), this same ministry of the high priest "during the year" is referenced. Paul declares emphatically that the "altar" at which the Christian eats, those who "serve the tabernacle" have no right to eat (13:10). Here is indicated a clear separation, either the clinging to the type as reality, or the acceptance of the Reality. He admonishes that since Jesus "suffered without the gate," "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (13:12-14)

It is interesting to observe that in Paul's use of the type, he chose to reference that which involved corporate guilt, the very guilt of which the nation on the Day of Pentecost was charged. See Acts 2:36-40. To escape the resultant judgment, one had to "save (sever) themselves from this untoward generation." This was a difficult decision to make, and thirty some years after this initial warning by the Holy Spirit through Peter, there were still thousands of Jews who professed to believe, but were still zealous for the temple rites and ceremonies. They had not gone out unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.

The "way" of God has not changed. It is still in the sanctuary. We can abandon it because of the reproach placed upon it by Evangelical theology; or we can accept it, and by faith follow that "way" into the holiest of all there to appear "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24) and before the Lamb "in the midst of the throne" who has "redeemed us to God by His blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:6, 9).

## In Summary

In the services on the typical Day of Atonement, there was a threefold cleansing. The Scripture reads:

And when (the high priest) hath made an end of reconciling the (most) holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation (first apartment), and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. (Lev. 16:20).

The first phase involved the cleansing of the records of those who had made confession. The blood of both the bullock provided by the high priest, and the Lord's goat taken from the congregation were presented separately before the Shekinah glory in the most holy place. The reason is clearly stated - "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins" (16:16). While the record of sins is mentioned no more, until after the three fold cleansing is completed (16:21), the "uncleanness," which caused the sins, is again noted in the final act of the Day of Atonement when the blood of bullock and goat were mingled for the cleansing of the altar in the Court that is "before the Lord." (16:18-19).

During the year, the sin offerings of confession presented at the tabernacle were of a dual nature, corporate and individual. The record of confession for the individual was placed by the common priest on the horns of the Brazen Altar in the Court, while the blood for corporate confession was recorded by the high priest on

the horns of the alter of incense "in the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. 4:7, 18). On the Day of Atonement, the blood of the Lord's goat was placed on the horns of the altar of incense as the second phase of the three part cleansing prior to its being mingled with the blood of the bullock for the final phase at the altar in the court.

Little study has been given to the Biblical differentiation made between the "individual" as an individual and the "corporate" individual as a nation or people collectively. The accountability of the corporate for the sin of the individual is illustrated in the experience of Achan (Joshua 7:11-13). On the other hand, the Spirit speaking through Peter held accountable the individual of "the house of Israel" for the crucifixion of Jesus by the Jewish leadership, even though many of them were not even present at the time the act was committed and did not take part in the condemnation (Acts 2:36). In the case of Achan, the corporate body had to act in relationship to the individual, and those corporately involved in him (his family); and in the case of the crucifixion of Christ, the individual had to act in relationship to the action taken by the Sanhedrin, the corporate religious leadership of Israel.

In the daily service, a specific distinction was made between individual confession and corporate confession. On the Day of Atonement the cleansing of the Holy Place, where the record of corporate confession - if any - had been made during the year, preceded the individual cleansing. Corporate judgment precedes individual judgment in the type.

It should be noted that Andreasen in his comments on the significance of the Spirit's pronouncement in Hebrews 9:8 stated that by this pronouncement the Spirit of God raised the sanctuary and its services to "a prophetic institution of symbolic significance." (See quotation page 3, col. 1) In the typical service, the blood of the dual sacrifices - bullock and goat - cleansed the records of those who had made confession, and their names either

remained in or were transferred to the Lamb's book of life. With all heaven united in God's original purpose in the creation of man, three mighty angels were dispatched to carry the "age long gospel" to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6) All these words from "nation" to "people" are corporate designations, even as the ritual of the typical day of atonement passed from the most holy to the holy where were recorded the confessions of corporate guilt. It should be observed, however, that the Third Angel's Message involves the individual, "If any man" (14:9).

Israel as a nation was given a probationary time period. Seventy prophetic weeks of years were set by God (Dan. 9:24). It closed its probation in an act by the same Sanhedrin which forced the hand of Pilate in the crucifixion of Jesus. Time lingered for another thirty six years during which time, the individual Jew was given an opportunity to make a decision regarding the religious leadership of Israel whether to concur in their decision to crucify their Messiah, or to "separate themselves from this crooked generation" as admonished by the Spirit through Peter (Acts 2:40).

During this same period, "the times of the Gentiles (nations)" began. This time was also limited, not by a specific length of prophetic time as in the case of Israel, but by an event. Jesus prophesied - "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the nations (τα εθνη) until the times (καιροι - probationary time) of the nations (εθνων) be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). In 1967, the control of Jerusalem lost in 70 AD passed once again to Israel. In 1980, by the act of the Knesset, Jerusalem united became the capital of Israel. Does this event signal the ending of the second phase of the antitypical Day of Atonement, and the beginning of its third and final phase? This question must be answered. We are now into the 36th year from the "signal" given by Jesus! The days ahead are momentous. (See the tract - "Jerusalem in Bible Prophecy.")

## WHICH ALTAR?

In the type, the cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement was done in three stages. The instruction reads - "And when he (the high priest) hath made an end of reconciling the (most) holy and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat" (Lev. 16:20). The "altar" is designated as "the altar before the Lord" (verses 12, 18).

There were two altars involved in the sanctuary services which are defined as "before the Lord," the Altar of Incense, and the Brazen Altar in the Court. In the daily services, where the instruction is given as to the placing of the blood of confession for corporate transgression on the horns of "the altar of sweet incense before the Lord" the added definitive phrase is found - "which is in the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. 4:7, 18). At the time of the dedication of the temple, the offerings made by Solomon were too great for the Altar of Burnt Offering accommodate them. In the Biblical reference, this Altar is designated as "before the Lord" (I Kings 8:64). In the construction of the earthly sanctuary, there was no provision made for grates in the Altar of Incense, as in the case of the Altar of Burnt Offering (Ex. 27:4). There would be no "burning coals of fire" on the Altar of Incense for the High Priest to place in his censer as directed (Lev. 16:12). The conclusion is inescapable that "the Altar" involved in the third stage of the cleansing on the Day of Atonement was the Brazen Altar in the Court.

It is understandable why the position is taken that the "altar before the Lord" is the Golden Altar of Incense. Crosier, in his essay on the Sanctuary, so stated. After quoting Lev. 16:18-19, he commented:

The Altar was the golden altar of incense in the Holy upon which the blood of individual atonements was sprinkled during the daily ministrations. Thus it received the uncleanness from which it is now cleansed. Exodus 30:10: "Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once a year, with the blood of the sin offering of atonement." [Here Crosier made his first mistake in regard to the Altar of Incense. None of "the blood of the individ-

ual atonements" was ever sprinkled on the Altar of Incense; only the blood of corporate confessions (Lev. 4:7, 18).] We see from verse 20, that at this stage of the work "he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar," i.e. the Holy of Holies, the Holy, and the Altar in the latter. We have before seen that atone, reconcile, cleanse, etc., signify the same hence at this stage he had made an end of cleansing these places. As the blood of atonements for the forgiveness of sins was not sprinkled in the courts, but in the tabernacle only, the entire work of cleansing the Sanctuary was performed within the tabernacle" (*Advent Review*, September 1850)

If as Crosier stated, the entire ministry on the Day of Atonement was "performed within the tabernacle," then the "altar" would have been the Altar of Incense. But it was the first mistake that led to the faulty conclusion. The daily sin offerings offered by the individual were by far the major offerings offered daily on the Altar of Burnt Offering in the Court. These confessions were marked on the horns of the Brazen Altar (Lev. 4:25).

There is another factor in the whole picture that dare not be overlooked. As we have noted there are two aspects to the sin question: 1) "the uncleanness of the children of Israel" [that which is the cause for sin]; and 2) "the transgressions in all their sins" [the acts of sins] (Lev. 16:16). It is not until the last act at the altar in the court by the mingled blood of both the bullock and the Lord's goat that the uncleanness is removed (Lev. 16:19). Further, there is a difference made in the cleansing of the two altars. The Altar of Incense is cleansed by placing the blood of the Lord's goat on the horns of the altar, while the Brazen Altar is cleansed by the combined blood of goat and bullock being sprinkled upon it. No mention is made of the record of confession which had been placed on the horns of the Altar. The emphasis is on the removal of the uncleanness, the very root cause of sin itself.

By limiting the final ministry of Christ to the Most Holy Place is to ignore the typical significance of the movements of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. To fail to focus on the final ministry depicted as transpiring in the Court is to sever the climax of the Three Angels'

Messages from the sanctuary to which the first angel directed attention - "the hour of the judgment of Him is come" (Rev. 14:7; Gr.) These messages are to produce a people "who keep [not "are trying to keep"] the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (verse 12).

Not only is the final atonement typified in the sanctuary service, but prophets of God saw, in visions given to them, activities related to that day. One command given in the instructions for the Day of Atonement was that the High Priest must wear the holy linen garments (Lev. 16:4). Ezekiel in vision saw that the man with a writer's inkhorn by his side was "clothed in linen" (9:2, 3, 11). He received instructions to place a mark on those that sigh and cry for the abominations committed in Jerusalem while standing "beside the brazen altar." He who was enthroned above the cherubim had moved to "the threshold of the house" to give this command. In the final ministry the One on the throne unites with the One clothed in linen. This follows the type of Leviticus 16:18 - the mingled blood of goat and bullock for the cleansing of the Altar.

In Zechariah 3, the "men of wonder" (v. 8; margin) are those whom the Lord has "caused (their) iniquity to pass from (them)" and whom He has clothed "with a change of raiment" (v. 4). This is a part of the final conflict between Christ and Satan (v. 1-2) which will be resolved in the "court." We have been reminded that:

Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement." (*Vol. 5, p. 472*)

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