



בשורה *Besorah!*

Adonai Tzidkenu - the Lord, our Righteousness

With the destruction of the Second Temple, the 'cord' of sacrificial service that united the people of Israel to their God was severed, leaving the Jewish people adrift like a 'chip upon the water'. Since that great tragedy, every human attempt was made to console the nation and create the belief that it was possible to remain true to God, even without the Temple and the sacrificial service for atonement.

During the reign of Titus (1st Cent. CE), Rabbi Jochanan Ben Zaccai, who saw the destruction of the Second Temple and established the academy in Javne where much of rabbinic Judaism was formulated, taught that expiation of sin was achieved through the exercise of benevolence, quoting Hos.6:6: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice', thereby persuading the council to replace animal sacrifice with prayer. After him, R Elazar ben Azaria taught that the Day of Atonement, *itself*, has the power to absolve sin - even without the Temple, the high priest and the sacrifices. Other rabbis taught that repentance, giving alms, study of the Law,

fasting, prayer, suffering and death – all without animal sacrifice – are sufficient to purge one's sins. (One rabbi – Shimon ben Ystrai – even proclaimed that he, alone, could free the whole world from the guilt accumulated in his lifetime. One wonders how?)

But if the abovementioned actions really *became* sufficient to absolve sin, then there would no longer be any need to observe the Day; one could practice these things anytime and the former Biblical observances of the Day of Atonement are, by implication, annulled. If 'repentance atones for all transgressions', then the atonement prescribed through Moses is really no atonement at all. Why, then, did Moses appoint such a 'useless' and cruel ritual as the taking away of innocent animal life?! Is God arbitrary? However, in maintaining an annual observance, the rabbinate tacitly admits that their own revision is insufficient to pacify an awakened conscience of sin within the Jewish people. Therefore, the annual holiday is retained.



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Nevertheless, the Law and the Prophets plainly declare – to the subversion of revisionist rabbinic doctrines of human merit – that *God* ordained a Day, once a year, when atonement was made by the high priest through sacrifice – first for himself, and then for all the people of every class and degree. This clearly shows that all people are sinners in need of atonement by sacrifice and annihilates any idea of justification by merit.

Indeed, since Adam, all men are sinners - no matter how 'good' we seem to ourselves. Even Judaism affirms this: 'By the means of Adam נקנסה מיתה לכל, death was inflicted by way of punishment on all.' (R. Jacob Ben Asher). 'When he (Adam) sinned, כלו חטא, the whole world sinned, and his sin we bear. The whole congregation of Israel have need of atonement for the sin of Adam, for he was חשוב ככל העדה, reckoned as the whole congregation.' (R. Menachem Rakanati) The sense is that all that were in Adam, and all that belonged to him - all his natural seed and posterity - sinned in him, became mortal and subject to death through him.

So, what is the remedy?

God Himself instituted a system whereby the shedding of the blood of innocent substitutes (unblemished animals), at the hands of priests, brought atonement for sin. In the Biblical rituals, a person's – or nation's - sin was imputed to the innocent animal and the animal was slain. What God has 'enjoined', let no man put asunder! If God still requires this for atonement, then what is the answer to the tragic predicament resulting from the destruction of the Temple, leaving Israel without priesthood, sacrifice and atonement ever since? Was God 'caught out' by historical events leaving His covenant people – for two millennia – without the provision of

means for them to return to Him?

God certainly wasn't taken by surprise when the Second Temple was destroyed, leaving the priesthood lineage scattered and sacrifice terminated. Long before the First Temple, David wrote, 'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool... The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' (Ps 110:1&4) By this, God decreed – by an oath! - a new order of priesthood. Here, we see that the priesthood was to transfer from the lineage of Levi to Judah, and within Judah, to the royal line of David! Melchizedek's 'order' as we know, was that of both king and priest. Many other prophecies show that this 'royal priesthood order' prefigured the Messiah, such as: 'Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH ...Even **he shall build the temple of the LORD**; and he shall bear the glory, **and shall sit and rule upon his throne**; and he shall be a **priest upon his throne**: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.' (Zech 6:12, 13).

An oath of God removes controversy. But nothing connected with the Law or Mosaic covenant was confirmed with an oath. Had it been, that would have made it irrevocable and permanent. By this we know that the Law and Mosaic covenant were temporary. The Levitical priesthood was connected with the Mosaic dispensation - again, without an oath - signalling that it, too, was provisional.

All men are in Adam seminally, as the common parent of human nature. Abram acknowledged Melchizedek's superior position, as king and priest of God Most High, and paid tithes to him. So in like sense, the whole nation paid tithes, including the tribe of Levi and priesthood of Aaron. Therefore, it is plainly said that Levi paid tithes to

Melchizedek, being in the loins of Abraham. (Heb 7:9)

To repeat, the prophecy in Ps 110:4 decrees a change in the priesthood. As we also concluded above, changing even one of God's Laws nullifies the whole. A human decision stating that atonement can come through something other than that which God stipulates not only abrogates God's laws regarding the Day of Atonement, but also all of Moses. Rabbis, however well-meaning, feeling compelled by political upheavals and their consequences, have no right to change God's Law.

But God does have the right and He foretold the change well in advance, confirming it with an oath, which is an end to all disputes. Such a change also nullified the previous covenant and produced the need for a new one: 'Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah' (Jer 31:31)

The Branch (צמח) mentioned above is presented to us in four instances, which

reveal His person. He is the 'Branch (or, Son) of David' (Jer 23:5,6), God's Servant (speaking to Joshua the High Priest; Zech 3:8), the Man (Zech 6:12,13 as above), and The Branch (or, Son) of the Lord (i.e. Son of God: Is 4:2).

The Messiah – Jesus - is Son of Man, Son of David, Son of God and Great High Priest – **forever** - after the order of Melchizedek. Yeshua – Jesus - is a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God (Heb 7:19). He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises (Heb 8:6). He is the better sacrifice (Heb 9:23) and His blood speaks better things than that of Abel (Heb 12:24) because He rose from the dead!

For as in Adam all die, even so in Messiah shall all be made alive! (1 Cor 15:22). During the 10 Days of Awe, leading up to Yom Kippur, the Jewish greeting is, 'May your name be inscribed [in the Book of Life]'.

May your name be written in the Lamb's book of Life!

Chrissy Rodgers