

THOUGHTS ON YOM HAKIPPURIM

BY

Rabbi Yochanan Hammond.

Yom Kippurim is the one day when synagogues struggle to have enough room to accommodate all the people who want to attend. It is one of, if not the most important day on the “Jewish Calendar”. It is a day that HaShem commands His people to worship and to afflict our souls.

26 And HaShem spoke unto Moses, saying: 27 Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; there shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto HaShem. 28 And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before HaShem your G-d. 29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from his people. 30 And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people. 31 Ye shall do no manner of work; it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32 It shall be unto you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls; in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye keep your Sabbath. Leviticus 23:26-32 [JPS]

Interestingly it is a day when nearly all Christian churches will be empty – what a contrast we have before us this day, when both parties are adamant that they follow the Elohim of Abraham, Yitzchaq, and Yaaqov.

Something is terribly wrong when we have this chasm between those who claim to be the Children of HaShem. There should never be this difference, as all the Children of HaShem should “attend” this day and gather together on this day our Father calls Yom HaKippurim / Day of atonements.

We should remind ourselves a little about this precious day.

Atonements/Kippurim כִּפּוּרִים = expiation, propitiation, cover, blot out, protect, annul, pardoning, remove, ransoming, forgiving.

This is a serious and somber time for the Children of Israel, as we seek the atonement for our behaviour over the past twelve months. For this to take place we are in need of a High Priest and the functions were to be performed by the High Priest on this very day. Obviously this service that was to be done in the Holy Temple has not been able to be performed since the destruction of the last Temple by the Romans.

This destruction of the Temple was one of the contributing factors behind Rabbinical or Orthodox Judaism being seen as the replacement for the Aaronic Priesthood and the Temple. Despite best intentions, today's Orthodox Judaism is not the pure Biblical faith that HaShem "gave" to Israel. The pure Biblical faith must have a Priesthood, Temple/tabernacle and sacrifice, as these are the very foundational aspects of the covenant relationship between HaShem and His people – The nation of Israel.

I am of the thought that the Rabbis of Orthodox Judaism have taken **Hosea 6:6 "for I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."** out of context and introduced a system of "good works" to replace the Priesthood system. This is understandable considering the angst and confusion that resulted from the destruction of the Temple. Put this together with the rise of Christianity and the many and various voices clamoring to be heard, some order was desperately needed.

Within all this comes a cry from the Christian – Jesus atoned for our sins and we have no more need of any Yom HaKippurim, this is just old testament law, that has no place in today's Christian life.

Maybe it has no place in a Christian life, but it should, as Yom Kippurim should be followed by all Children of Israel for evermore. Keeping and engaging in Yom HaKippurim does not demean the atoning work of Yeshua HaMoshiach, in fact it enriches it. As a nation we need to address the issue of sin and seek forgiveness and atonement for our nation, according to the instructions of HaShem.

Let me ask a question: Has there ever been a time when we as a people and a nation have been in a position to discard and disregard the opportunity given to us on Yom HaKippurim? The obvious answer is no! So

why do so many actually reject and disregard this precious meeting time of HaShem? We have no excuse or right to ignore this day.

Consider the following scriptures.

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.” Leviticus 17:11 [NASB]

“Therefore even the first was not inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.’ And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. And according to the Law, almost all things are cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Hebrews 9:18-22 [NASB]

We arrive at the need and for the acceptance of Yeshua as HaMoshiach. If you take the time to read Leviticus 16:1-17:11 you will certainly recognise many “elements” referring to our Moshiach Yeshua.

We know from the Word of HaShem the work done regarding the atonement for sin on Yom HaKippurim must be done by a High Priest – Hence the dilemma of present day Rabbinical Judaism. Unfortunately, many religious Jews have been taught and feel there is no need for a mediator. These teachings not only stem from the lack of a Priesthood and Temple, but the rejection of the Christian doctrine that Jesus is the Messiah and Christians insisting that there is no longer a need of Torah. Except for Orthodox Judaism, most Jews no longer see a need for a mediator, so many not only reject Yeshua, but reject the foundational tenets of biblical faith.

But we must ask, what does the Torah and Tanach say, regarding the use of a mediator by HaShem?

For a start HaShem in **Ex 19:5-6** tells us we are to be a Set Apart nation, a Kingdom of priests. Israel is to be a light to the nations, reflecting the Light of HaShem as the moon reflects the light of the sun. To carry out this role,

we must be clean. We have a problem, as we are in an unclean sinful condition, unable to approach HaShem. With no Temple or Aaronic Priesthood, we have a challenge. Yet, as always, our Father does not leave us without the answer and we give thanks that this is a scriptural pattern we find throughout the bible. The truth of the matter is when Israel was in trouble through sin, there was always a mediator to stand between HaShem and the children of Israel:

The concept of a Mediator is as old as Israel itself, especially when it comes to sin and the forgiveness thereof.

“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Moshiach Yeshua.” 1Timothy 2:5 [NASB]

Make no mistake as we enter into this day of Yom HaKippurim asking for the forgiveness of our national sins we are in need of a Mediator, a High Priest to offer sacrifice on our behalf, a High Priest Who Himself can come before HaShem, pure and clean.

¹¹ But when the Messiah appeared as Cohen Gadol of the good things that are happening already, then, through the greater and more perfect Tent which is not man-made (that is, it is not of this created world), ¹² he entered the Holiest Place once and for all.

And he entered not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus setting people free forever.

¹³ For if sprinkling ceremonially unclean persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer restores their outward purity; ¹⁴ then how much more the blood of the Messiah, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God as a sacrifice without blemish, will purify our conscience from works that lead to death, so that we can serve the living God!

*¹⁵ It is because of this death that he is mediator of a **new covenant [or will]**. Because a death has occurred which sets people free from the transgressions committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promised eternal inheritance. ¹⁶ For where there is a will, there must necessarily be produced evidence of its maker's death, ¹⁷ since a will goes into effect only upon death; it never has force while its maker is still alive.*

¹⁸ This is why the first covenant too was inaugurated with blood.

¹⁹ After Moshe had proclaimed every command of the Torah to all the people, he took the blood of the calves with some water and used scarlet wool and hyssop to sprinkle

both the scroll itself and all the people; ²⁰ and he said, **“This is the blood of the covenant which God has ordained for you.”** ²¹ Likewise, he sprinkled with the blood both the Tent and all the things used in its ceremonies. ²² In fact, according to the Torah, almost everything is purified with blood; indeed, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” Hebrews 9:11-22 [CJB]

¹⁹ So, brothers, we have confidence to use the way into the Holiest Place opened by the blood of Yeshua. ²⁰ He inaugurated it for us as a new and living way through the parokhet, by means of his flesh. ²¹ We also have a great cohen over God’s household. ²² Therefore, let us approach the Holiest Place with a sincere heart, in the full assurance that comes from trusting — with our hearts **sprinkled clean** from a bad conscience and our bodies washed with **pure water**. ²³ Let us continue holding fast to the hope we acknowledge, without wavering; for the One who made the promise is trustworthy. ²⁴ And let us keep paying attention to one another, in order to spur each other on to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not neglecting our own congregational meetings, as some have made a practice of doing, but, rather, encouraging each other.

And let us do this all the more as you see the Day approaching. ²⁶ For if we deliberately continue to sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but only the terrifying prospect of Judgment, of **raging fire that will consume the enemies**.

²⁸ Someone who disregards the Torah of Moshe is **put to death** without mercy **on the word of two or three witnesses**. ²⁹ Think how much worse will be the punishment deserved by someone who has trampled underfoot the Son of God; who has treated as something common the **blood of the covenant** which made him holy; and who has insulted the Spirit, giver of God’s grace!

³⁰ For the One we know is the One who said,

**“Vengeance is my responsibility;
I will repay,”**

and then said,

“ADONAI will judge his people.”

³¹ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Hebrews 10:19-31 [CJB]

Hebrews 10:26 has always been a verse well discussed among the Christian world – with all kinds of answers given. As we close, I want to offer my thoughts on this passage looking through the eyes of the Torah.

The book of Hebrews was most likely written to those Jewish believers who were more “Orthodox” in the faith, living in the regions of Galilee, Judea, and Yerusalem, strongly attached to the land of Israel and the temple services.

So they knew the importance of the Torah of Moshe, and what it meant to reject the Torah of Moshe, the very set of instructions where mercy was found for the children of Israel through the Aaronic Priesthood. So how much more serious was it to reject HaMoshiach, who was and is the living Torah, because outside of Torah there is NO hope of finding redemption. This is the consequences of rejecting the truth found in Moshiach, as High Priest and the propitiation for our sins, a Torah truth and a pattern. There is no sacrifice for sin outside of the Torah, which incidentally includes and is founded on the once and for all sacrifice of Yeshua, who is Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

I do hope you can see the absolute importance of guarding and engaging in the Moedim of HaShem, of which Yom HaKippurim is but one.

We cannot hope to be the nation we are called to be unless we deliver ourselves into the hands of the living God. However, unless we embrace His Truth, His Way and His Life then it is indeed a fearsome thing to fall into those hands.

There is coming a time when people will have to make a choice, between their beloved institutions constructed by man, and the voice of the King of Yisrael. Let us be sober in mind and thought as we continue to worship our Heavenly Father in seeking His face and forgiveness for the past sin that we have committed as a people, as a nation.

May we be found giving praises to His Holy Name on this Yom HaKippurim.

Rabbi Yochanan Hammond uitam@unitedintorah.org