

Yom Kippur Thoughts

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement is upon us. In ancient times this is when the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies, and the sins of the nation would be atoned. The entire process is explained in detail in *Leviticus 16*. The duties of the regular people during that day are described in *Leviticus 23:26-32*. A central point is to *afflict your soul*, in some translations written as *deny yourselves*, or *humble yourselves*. This has generally been translated as fasting. The fasting, however, was not the main point of this holiday. The main points were the sacrifice, the scapegoat, and the entering of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies to make atonement.

Many Christians say that Yom Kippur is now irrelevant because our sins are already atoned for. We have forgiveness of sins 24/7. We can turn to God and repent of our sins whenever we want, not just on Yom Kippur. The NT relates about Yom Kippur: *“But into the inner, once a year, the kohen gadol alone...⁹It is a symbol for the present time...regulations for the body imposed until a time of setting things straight (reformation)” (Hebrews 9:7,9,10).*

But should we really cease observing Yom Kippur? I can't find any scripture that supports a cessation of keeping the Holy Days God gave us in *Leviticus 23*. This holiday carries the *forever* tag. Even if nothing else applies, we keep it out of obedience to The Father, and because we are grafted into Israel. Daniel interceded for Israel saying: *“we have transgressed your Torah.”* But he individually was not guilty!

Adonai commanded us to consider our ways and repent in *Parashat Vayelech*. This is serious and it involved the entire nation as they stood in front of the river Jordan. The Promised Land was on the other side, and they were about to enter into it. As a congregation, we are also standing today in front of our Promised Land (our future). It is time that we do what our ancestors practiced and face the reality of our shortcomings and our transgressions/sins. I challenge us as a congregation to get our affairs right with one another individually and as a congregation to be: *Chazak! Be courageous!*

There is probably no greater suffering in the life than the pain of being wronged by a brother/sister (biological or in the Lord). This kind of suffering can be *Adonai's* reminder that we have violated His ways: *“⁷¹It is good for me that I was afflicted (humbled), so that I may learn Your decrees” (Ps. 119:71)*. Also, this suffering can be *Adonai's* way to draw others to Himself: *“¹⁸For Messiah once suffered for sins also—the righteous for the unrighteous^[9]—in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Ruach” 1 Peter 3:18)*. But our calling when another person offends us is to forgive them so we can then be forgiven by *Adonai Himself*: *“¹²And forgive us our debts (trespasses) as (in the same manner) we also have forgiven our debtors (those who trespass against us.” (Matt. 6:12)*. Why are we here tonight in His Presence on Yom Kippur? Because we seek forgiveness for our Nation (both for the US and for Israel) thus, we must ourselves practice releasing our debtors so that *Adonai* can release us as the *firstfruits* of repentance for our nation – it must always begin with us!

What is *Adonai* expecting us to do and what is His kind of forgiveness? He is *NOT expecting us to pardon our offenders* because forgiveness is releasing an offender emotionally — while pardon requires an authority (like Him) who has jurisdiction over the matter to cancel out the consequences. We do have that kind of jurisdiction, but He does! Also, forgiveness is freeing *Adonai* to reward us unexpectedly because His forgiveness sees an offender's needs and *Adonai's* solution. Let us release and allow Him to do this great work in us!

Yom Kippur is the day to put the finishing touch on repentance. He gave us one day a year for fasting, praying, and taking stock of our life. We can ask ourselves where we are on our walk with God and where we want to be. How can we do better next year? Where do we wish our spiritual life to be next Yom Kippur? It is a day to reckon all matters recognizing that *Yeshua* is the High Priest of our lives who has entered the Holy of Holies and makes continual intercession for us having provided eternal atonement. Paul told the Corinthians: *“⁵Test yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Examine yourselves!” (2Cor. 13:5)* Good medicine indeed! *Chag Yom Kippur Tov!*