**Thoughts for Yom Kippur**

By Duane D. Miller

 Reading through the first chapter of the book of Hebrews, the writer wants us to know some very powerful truths; (i) the power, authority and role Yeshua has over God’s creation (ii) the finished work He has accomplished on our behalf and (iii) what our future holds for us. I feel these are important things we can contemplate upon during the coming holy day of Yom Kippur; thinking upon the awesome and holy character of God in his Messiah Yeshua and how much He loves us. In this time of contemplation our hearts may become saddened because we are thinking about atonement, death, and dying because of sin. I find however this time is one of rejoicing rather than sadness, for we have such a wonderful saviour and loving God who intercedes for us on our behalf in Heaven. Even though we may sin, God is merciful forgiving us if we repent and helping us to become what he wants us to be. God desires to make us after the likeness of his son Yeshua by becoming gentler and kinder to friends and family in love. The hardships and problems we have will make us more loving and patient if we let them, or they can make us hard of heart. The purpose is so we can glorify God as his holy people who are called by His Name no matter what circumstance we may find ourselves in.

This is the time of the year when the high priest would go into the holy of holies and make atonement for national Israel sprinkling the blood upon the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. This ceremony which takes place on Yom Kippur uniquely patterns the work of the Messiah in His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, His sacrifice of laying down His life for his sheep and His blood making atonement for our sins. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would intercede for us on our behalf before the mercy seat by the sprinkling of blood. Today Yeshua stands interceding on our behalf before the thrown of God as our high priest.

***Hebrews 1:1-12***

*1:1 In days gone by, God spoke in many and varied ways to the Fathers through the prophets. 1:2 But now, in the acharit-hayamim, he has spoken to us through his Son, to whom he has given ownership of everything and through whom he created the universe. 1:3 This Son is the radiance of the Sh'khinah, the very expression of God's essence, upholding all that exists by his powerful word; and after he had, through himself, made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of HaG'dulah BaM'romim. 1:4 So he has become much better than angels, and the name God has given him is superior to theirs. 1:5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Also, God never said of any angel, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son." 1:6 And again, when God brings his Firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." 1:7 Indeed, when speaking of angels, he says, ". . . who makes his angels winds and his servants fiery flames"; 1:8 but to the Son, he says, "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; you rule your Kingdom with a scepter of equity; 1:9 you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you with the oil of joy in preference to your companions"; 1:10 and, "In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth; heaven is the work of your hands. 1:11 They will vanish, but you will remain; like clothing, they will all grow old; 1:12 and you will fold them up like a coat. Yes, they will be changed like clothing, but you remain the same, your years will never end." (CJB)*

Yom Kippur is the holiest of all the appointed times God established in his Torah. It is set apart even from the other holy days. The reason is the other days are filled with feasting and celebration. On Yom Kippur we are commanded to fast and exercise discipline through abstinence. So stringent was God in his command for Yom Kippur that he said the following in Leviticus 23:29.

***Leviticus 23:29***

*23:29 Anyone who does not deny himself on that day is to be cut off from his people; (CJB)*

On Yom Kippur the Avodah remembering the Temple service is performed. The word Avodah literally means “work” but in a modern context refers to business type activities, agricultural work and more traditionally serving the Lord. In the original traditional sense “avodah” was applied to sacrifices offered in the Temple in Jerusalem. A recitation of the sacrificial service of the Temple in Jerusalem traditionally features the liturgy and the religious thought of the holiday. The Avodah or Service in the musaf prayer recounts the sacrificial ceremonies in great detail.

The tradition is found in the Babylonian Talmud [1] in its description of how to attain atonement following the destruction of the Temple. It is found in the Talmud tractate Yoma in the absence of a Temple Jews are obligated to study the High Priest’s ritual on Yom Kippur and this study helps achieve atonement for those who are unable to benefit from its actual performance. In this we find a rabbinical devised obligation which Jews are required to fulfil if seeking atonement for sins. The idea implies that whoever involves himself in the study for the sin-offering is regarded as if he had actually brought the sin-offering. [2]

There is a serious problem here one which has eternal consequences because God’s Torah always points to the actual sacrifice. The Torah is a picture and image of the things to come, predicting the role the Messiah would play in our atonement. God foresaw the destruction of the temple and provided a means for both the Jew and the Gentile to come under the grace and mercy of God to receive forgiveness of sins. God had a plan which resolves the problem of sin and redemption and completed that plan in the messiah 2000 years ago. The culmination of the Torah is revealed in John 1:1-14 Yeshua is the living Torah, the word of God that has become flesh. We can see this in the book of Ephesians in the Apostle Paul’s exhortation to husbands to love their wives.

**Ephesians 5:25-26**

האנשים אהבו את נשיכם כאשר גם המשיח אהב את העדה ויתן את נפשו בעדה׃ 25

למען קדשה בדברו אחרי אשר טהרה ברחיצת המים׃ 26

**Ephesians 5:25-26**

5:25 Ba'alim, have ahavah for your nashim, as also Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach has ahavah for the Brit Chadasha Kehillah and gave himself up on behalf of her, 5:26 that he might bring her to kedusha, having given her tohorah (purification) by the tevilah of the mayim in the dvar, (OJB)

Husbands love your wives just as the messiah loved the congregation and gave his life on her behalf, for the purpose of making her holy, purifying her by the washing of the water in the word. The word is Yeshua (Jesus). It is his blood that was shed for the washing away of our sins. In the fulfilment of the Torah’s requirements Yeshua made an offering on our behalf and entered into the holy of holies in heaven making atonement for us. All we have to do is believe.

***Hebrew 9:11-12***

*9:11 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), 9:12 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. (CJB)*

In conclusion, Yom Kippur has a huge significance for Believers in Yeshua (Jesus). The significance is knowing our Messiah Yeshua is the “atoning sacrifice for our sins” and not only for us, but also for the sins of the world. (*1Jo2:2 Also, he is the kapparah for our sins - and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world. (CJB)*) Yeshua is our great and perfect High Priest who offered himself as our substitutionary atonement. The prophet Isaiah said: *Isa53:6 We all, like sheep, went astray; we turned, each one, to his own way; yet ADONAI laid on him the guilt of all of us. Or: and in fellowship with him (CJB)* Yeshua was taken outside of the camp (outside of Jerusalem) to be destroyed, and his blood was presented in the heavenly Holy of Holies once and for all. God calls us to humble ourselves before Him (this is what is meant by the days preceding Yom Kippur), to repent and turn to him in faith. This is a time for us to remember our calling, rest from our works, and to turn from our attempts to be accepted as righteous in his eyes … but to turn and personally receive the Messiah Yeshua and his sacrifice for our sins. (*Heb. 1-12, Titus 3:4*) So in this most Holy of days, why not take the time to reflect upon the awesome majesty of God, and the finished work of Yeshua and the impact it has had upon your life both now, and for all eternity.

**Have a Blessed Yom Kippur in Yeshua!**

**References**

1. *Schottenstein Edition, Talmud Bavli*. 1997, New York: Mesorah Publications, LTD.

2.  *Menachos 110a, Schottenstein Edition, Talmud Bavli.*