

# THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

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## THE ETHICS OF JUDAISM

By HENRY J. HEYDT

IN CHAPTER three of the "Ethics of the Fathers" in the book of Daily Prayers (English translation by Philips) we read:

Akabia, the son of Mahalalel, said, Reflect upon three things, and thou wilt not come within the power of sin: know whence thou camest, and whither thou art going, and before whom thou wilt in future have to give account and reckoning. Whence thou camest: — from a putrefying drop; whither thou art going: — to a place of dust, worms, and maggots; and before whom thou wilt in future have to give account and reckoning: — before the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

This quotation is taken from the Talmud where it is also written:

Consider three things, and thou wilt never fall into sin: remember that there is above thee an all-seeing eye, an all-hearing ear, and a record of all thy actions.

Let us give thought to the three points as quoted from the book of Daily Prayers.

### A PUTREFYING DROP

1. "Whence thou camest: — from a putrefying drop." There are few people today who are conscious of the depth of their sin. The so-called "refinement" of our society has given us a feeling of repulsion at the idea of being considered sinners. Even Akabia, when it was suggested that he might be elected to the dignity of Ab Bet Din (president of the court) if he yielded his divergent opinion to the demand of the majority, said, "I would rather be called a fool all my lifetime than be a sinner for one moment!"

But look at the history of our race. God placed Adam and Eve in a perfect environment, and yet they sinned. By Noah's time, the human race was so steeped in sin that the Torah says, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (*Bereshit* — Genesis 6:5). In Job 15:14 Eliphaz, one of Job's friends, asks, "What is man, that he should be pure? and that he who is born of woman should be declared righteous?" (Leeser translation). And the *Brit Hadasha* (New Testament) tells us that we "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:3).

### A FAMOUS RABBI IS BAFFLED

There lived, in the time of Jesus of Nazareth, a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus by name. He went to Jesus by night and was told "Ye must be born from above." It was not enough that he was born a Jew. Being thus born did not alter the fact that he came "from a putrefying drop." The only way to alter this is to be born into God's family by faith in Jesus the Messiah as the substitute for sin. This was the purpose of the coming of the Messiah, whom many Jews and Gentiles know to be Jesus. At Messiah's death He became our substitute and so paid the penalty for sin. The Scriptures teach both in Old and New Testaments that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22). It is written in the *Brit Hadasha*:

But as many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12, 13).

Although there is little teaching in Judaism today about the sinfulness of man, the consciousness of sin is seen in the Jewish Prayer Book, especially in the service for the Day of Atonement. Take, for example, the following confession:

We have trespassed, we have been faithless, we have robbed, we have spoken basely, we have committed iniquity, we have wrought unrighteousness, we have been presumptuous, we have done violence, we have forged lies, we have counselled evil, we have spoken falsely, we have scoffed, we have revolted, we have blasphemed, we have been rebel-

lious, we have acted perversely, we have transgressed, we have persecuted, we have been stiff-necked, we have done wickedly, we have corrupted ourselves, we have committed abomination, we have gone astray, and we have led astray.

There is also a deep consciousness of sin seen in the prayer,

O my God, before I was formed I was nothing worth, and now that I have been formed I am but as though I had not been formed. Dust am I in my life, how much more so in my death.

This brings us to our second point.

### A PLACE OF MAGGOTS — IS CREMATION THE ANSWER?

2. "Whither art thou going: — to a place of dust, worms, and maggots." So horrible is the thought of worms eating the body that many people today request cremation. This is true among the Jews as well as the Gentiles. The well-known Jew, Dr. Gotthard Deutsch, was cremated. The Central Conference of American Rabbis adopted the following resolution as early as July of 1892:

Be it resolved, That in case we should be invited to officiate as ministers of religion at the cremation of a departed co-religionist, we ought not to refuse on the plea that cremation be anti-Jewish or irreligious.

According to "Ben Ami" the United Synagogue of London permits ashes to be buried in Orthodox cemeteries, but they must be in coffins. Ashes from cremation have been buried in Tel Aviv. What is behind this about face on the part of the Jews who have been opposed to cremation through the centuries?

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Expressed in the words of Rabbi Samuel Koch of Seattle, Washington, the answer is as follows:

The belief in bodily resurrection has been abandoned by some Jews since 1800. . . . To them therefore cremation is not taboo on theological grounds. In recent years intensely religious and conscientious Jews expressed in their wills the desire for cremation.

The thrice repeated order, "Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3:19; Ecc. 12:7; Psa. 104:29) is laid aside because the truth of the resurrection is rejected in liberal Judaism. But Job tells us, "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:26). Rashi translates the last phrase, "in my flesh shall I see the judging God." Job bases this resurrection on the living Redeemer, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (19:25). Three days after His crucifixion the Messiah came forth out of the grave, even as He said!

From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day, (Matthew 16:21).

The concept of Rashi, "In my flesh shall I see the judging God" is very close to that expressed by Paul, a greater than Rashi, in the New Testament:

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

This ties in with the third point of Akabia,

#### THE DAY OF RECKONING

3. "Before whom thou wilt in the future have to give account and reckoning." This One, before whom we must stand, as Akabia himself expressed it, is "the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One." It has been revealed in the *Brit Hadasha* that the Father has committed all judgment to the Son, the Messiah (John 5:22). In Rev. 19:16 He is called the "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and in Psalm 16:10 He is called the "Holy One." Thus the two expressions of Akabia are applied to the Lord Jesus Christ in Scripture.

That we must all give account and reckoning is a very solemn fact. What makes it especially solemn is the fact that it is the Messiah before Whom we must stand. What shall they say to Him in that day who have rejected Him now? Excuses will fade as the mist before the morning sun. In that day it will be too late to accept Him, for it is written:

Yea, this day, if ye will hearken to his voice; harden not your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day of the temptation in the wilderness (Psalm 95:7, 8 Leeser).

After quoting Isaiah 49:8, "At an ac-

ceptable time I hearkened unto thee, and in the day of salvation did I succor thee," Paul, who sat at the feet of Gamaliel, added, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). It is also written "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

#### ARE YOU READY?

One of the names for *Rosh Hashanah* is *Yom Haddin*, Day of Judgment. The Jewish Encyclopedia says,

Rosh ha-Shanah is the most important judgment day, on which all the inhabitants of the world pass for judgment before the Creator, as sheep pass for examination before the shepherd.

Every Jew has this annual reminder of the coming judgment. Of all the people of the world, he should be ready for it. And yet he is not! It is written in the *Kethubim* "For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecc. 7:20), and again "There is none that doeth good" (Psa. 14:1). How then can there be any righteousness in us to commend us to Him? How can the unrighteous perform acceptable acts of righteousness? We have absolutely no ground upon which to stand except the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. If we reject Him we are lost. If we die in that rejection we are hopelessly, helplessly, and irretrievably lost. Now is the acceptable time. Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts! Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin, even as the Torah says, "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11).

## A DRINK FROM THE FOUNTAIN

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

(Romans 3:20-26.)

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## יירישע עמית

הנרי י. הייט

טיפה סרוחה", אָבער ווען מען ווערט אויפסטיי געבוירן ווערט מען אַ מיטגליד אין גאָטס משפּחה דורך אמונה אין ישוע המשיח וואָס איז געוואָרן אונדזער קרבן פאר זינד און עבירות. דאָס איז געווען דער ציל פונעם קומען פון ישוע המשיח. ווען ער איז געשטאַרבן אויפן קרויץ (צלב) איז ער געוואָרן אונדזער מליץ, אונדזער שטעל פאַר-טרעטער און באַצאַלט פאַר אונדזערע זינד מיט זיין שטאַרבן. די תורה זאָגט אז זינד-פאַרגעבונג קומט דורך בלוט פאַרניסונג. (זע אין ספר ויקראַ "י"ז 17:11; אל העברים 9:22). מיר לערנען אינעם ברית חדשה אזוי צו זאָגן:

אָבער וויפל עס האָבן אים אויפגענומען, זיי האָט ער געגעבן מאַכט צו ווערן קינדער פון גאָט, טאַקע די, וואָס האָבן געגלויבט אין זיין נאַמען; וואָס זיינען געבוירן גע-וואָרן ניט פון בלוט, אויך ניט פון דעם באַ-גער פון פלייש, אויך ניט פון דער תאַוה פון אַ מאַג, נייערט פון גאָט (יחזק'ל 12:1, 13). כאַטש היינט צו טאָג רעדט מען ניט פיל וועגן די זינדיקייט פון מענטשן, דאָך זענען מיר קלאָר אינעם סידור, אויב מיר דאווענען, אז דאָרט ווערט זייער פיל געשריבן וועגן זינד און עבירות, און בפרט אין די יום כיפור תפי-לות. למשל ווען מיר זיינען זיך מתוודה:

לאָמיר זיך פאַרטראַכטן איבער דער גע-שיכטע פון דער מענטשהייט. גאָט האָט באַשאַפן אָדם און חוה און זיי געגעבן דעם גן עדן, דאָך האָבן זיי געזינדיקט. אין נח'ס צייטן זיינען מענטשן געווען אזוי זינדיק אז די תורה זאָגט אונדז, „גאָט האָט געזען אז די שלעכטקייט פון מענטשן איז געווען זייער גרויס אויף דער ערד, און אַלע זיינע טראַכטענישן אין זיין האַרץ איז געוואָרן נאָר אויף שלעכטס אָן אופהער" (בראשית ו, 5:6). אין ספר איוב פרעגט אליפז איובס פריינט, „וואָס איז אַ מענטש, קען ער דען זיין ריין? אָדער דער וואָס איז געבוירן פון אַ פרוי קען ער זיין גערעכט?" אויך דער ברית חדשה לערנט אונדז אז מיר זיינען פון דער נאָ-טור קינדער פון צאָרן, אזוי ווי אנדערע זיינען (עפעזער בריוו 3:2).

### דער רבי ווייס ניט דעם תירוץ

אין די צייטן פון ישוע המשיחן האָט גע-לעבט דער גרויסער רבי נקדימון. ער איז געקומען צו ישוע המשיחן בינאכט און ישוע האָט מיט אים געלערנט אזוי צו זאָגן: „איר דאַרפט אויפס-ניי געבוירן ווערן". עס איז ניט געווען גענוגענד דאָס וואָס ער איז געווען אַ ייד מיט באָרד און פּאות. ווען מען איז געבוירן קומט מען פון אַ

אינעם דריטן קאפיטל (פרק) פון מסכת אבות, וואָס געפינט זיך אינעם סידור, לערנען מיר:

עקביה בן מהלאל זאָגט: דענק וועגן דריי זאַכן און דו וועסט ניט זינדיקן: ווייס פון וואָנען דו קומסט, און וואו אַהיו דו גייסט, און פאַר וועמען דו וועסט דאַרפן אָפ-געבן אַ דין וחשבון אין דער צוקונפט. פון וואָנען דו קומסט: פון אַ פאַרשטונקענעט טראַפן זע; וואו אַהיו דו גייסט: — צו אַן אָרט פון שטויב, ווערים, און פאַרפּוילטקייט; און פאַר וועמען דו וועסט דאַרפן אָפגעבן אַ דין וחשבון אין דער צוקונפט: — פאַרן מלך המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא.

ווייטער געפינען מיר אין דער גמראַ די פאַלגענדע ווערטער:

טראַכט וועגן די פאַלגענדע דריי זאַכן און דו וועסט ניט זינדיקן: געדענק אז אויב אי-בער דיר איז דאָ אַן אַלזעענד אויג, אַז אַל-הערענדיק אויער, און אַלע דינוע מעשים ווערן פאַרשריבן.

לאָמיר זיך פאַרטראַכטן וועגן די דאָזיקע דריי זאַכן וואָס מיר זאָגן פונעם פרק:

### אַ פאַרפּוילטער טראַפן

1. „פון וואָנען קומסטו? — פון אַ פאַר-פּוילטן טראַפן". היינט צו טאָג האָבן מיר זייער ווייניק מענטשן וואָס קענען די טיפּקייט פון זייער ערע זינד. די אזוי גערופענע „אידלקייט" פון אונדזער געזעלשאַפטלעכן לעבן באַוועגט אונדז ניט צו טראַכטן דערפון אז מיר זיינען זעלבסט זינדיקע מענטשן. אפילו עקביה זעלבסט, ווען מען האָט אים געזאָגט אז ער וועט ווערן אויסגעוויילט צום אָב בית דין אויב ער וועט מיטשטימען מיטן רוב, האָט ער געזאָגט, „בעסער מען זאָל מיר רופן אַ נאַר מיין גאַנצן לעבן, איידער איך זאָל זיין אַ חוטא איין מינוט".

### אַ הערלעכע מתנה!

אַ זייער שיינער לוח מיט יידיש אַרטיסטישע בילדער פאַר דעם יאַר תש"ל (5730) מיט פּסוקים פונעם תנ"ך פאַר יעדן טאָג באַזונדערס. נאַטירלעך וועט איר דאַרט געפינען אַלץ וואָס מען דאַרף וויסן וועגן די יום טובים.

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