

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

Subscription 50 Cents a Year.

JUNE 1970

Vol. 54 - No. 10

SYMPTOM OR CAUSE?

By RAYMOND COHEN

Most of us are familiar with the symptoms of the common cold: the stuffy nose, the watery eyes, and the general aches and pains. We immediately take the necessary steps to relieve the symptoms but sooner or later they reappear and again we go through the same cycle.

Most of us know the cause of a cold, yet few of us do much about avoiding the circumstances that cause the illness. I would like to apply the same logic to the tragic situation which has developed within our society over the past few generations—"the generation gap." Over the years statistics issued by various levels of government have clearly indicated the rise in the crime rate, drug addiction, premarital sex relations and illegitimate births. The symptoms of our sickness are being announced to us each year. What have we done about them? We have spent billions of dollars in crime prevention, education and improvement of environment and still the crime rates rise. Some continue to agitate for more billions to be spent and cling to the philosophy that improvement in prevention, education and living conditions will be the panacea to answer the problem. This is like taking cold pills to alleviate the suffering of the cold but never getting at the cause which, if not eliminated, only allows the cold to reappear.

We say that we are the products of our environments and stress programs to improve the lot of the less fortunate, and yet many people with problems come from affluent homes and communities. We have come to the sad state of affairs in which we discuss legalizing certain drugs because we have no effective means of eliminating their use. This kind of logic would soon eliminate all crime simply by legalizing it! Or would it?

We continue to treat the symptoms and never admit the cause. Now in all honesty would you apply the same logic to your life? How long would you continue with a doctor who never cured you or found the cause of your ailment, but kept prescribing expensive medicines to alleviate the symptoms? We must face the fact that it is the individual that needs changing. The Scriptures tell us:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9). 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 (Genesis 6:5). For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (Genesis 8:21). King David said, 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me' (Psalm 51:5).

The Bible stresses that we are inherently sinful and will unerringly always do the wrong thing because of our sinful nature. We are inclined to sin! That which we see in the world today is nothing more than the symptoms of the sickness of sin. Do we admit it? No, this is religious fanaticism, and outdated in our day of enlightenment! Yet the proof is available on every hand. The Bible says:

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:10). I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19).

We need to be transformed, not reformed! We need a new heart and a new spirit which comes from God. Do we have evidence of this being truth? Jesus (Yeshua) said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said ye must be born again" (John 3:3, 6, 7). Do we have examples of this truth today? We are told that 99% of drug addicts who kick the habit are sooner or later back on drugs. Yet, drug addicts who have come to Jesus (Yeshua) are 100% cured, made free from the curse of drugs. The same is evidenced in the lives of prostitutes, alcoholics, killers and other criminals. When they come to Jesus they are set free from the power of sin. Yes, the evidence is overwhelming.

The cause of our sickness can be cured in Messiah Jesus. The Messiah says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give thee rest" (Matthew 11:28). And again He says, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:34, 36).

God's promises in the Jewish Bible have come to pass for His Jewish people and all the world. It is written that, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33). "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

It is time to face reality and the truth that we are all afflicted with the disease of sin and our motives in word and deed are governed by this disease. The outlook for the next generation is horrible indeed as this sickness worsens and widens its grip on more people.

Time is short. The Bible says:

Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart (Psalm 95:7, 8).

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven; and will forgive their sin (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Three times the psalmist cries out, "Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psalm 80:3, 7, 19). We are told that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is found in the face of Jesus, the Messiah.

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Only the Messiah can heal. Only the Messiah can cure our malady. Only the Messiah can free us from the prison house of sin. "Come and let us return unto the LORD; for He hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up" (Hosea 6:1).

Which shall it be for you? A continuation of treating the symptoms of your ailment or an acknowledgment of the cause of your malady, and coming to the Great Physician for the cure. Jesus said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Why not turn to Him now?

A MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP

Testimony of Alice Kress

My Jewishness has always been a cultural thing—an appreciation of bagels, knishes and Israeli music.

My Jewishness and my family's had little to do with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. My early concepts of God went something like this: "God, if you're really up there, do this" or "let me be that" or "let me do this." In my teen-age years I came to feel that people who actively believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were wishful thinkers. I felt the same way about Gentiles who believed in Jesus. Jesus was a complication of a concept I had already abandoned—the concept of God.

School was important to me. I made the honor society in high school and won a scholarship and went on to college. I was going through an awkward stage and was painfully shy. I began to date after a while, but did not find a meaningful relationship until my sophomore year at college. By then other problems were developing. My studies didn't mean as much to me as before, in fact, I lost my scholarship. What I needed from people wasn't realistic. I needed the kind of love that only God could give, but didn't recognize my need.

I hitchhiked with a friend to San Francisco and we arrived broke, hungry and tired. We were filled with a sense of gloom. The despair I felt then never yielded to anything substantial to hope for. I didn't have any goals and only wanted life to be an adventure. I worked in San Francisco for two years and thought of my life as drudgery. I "turned on" but this rather exciting experiment did not answer any of my deep needs. There would be occasional profound discussions with people. I dated several people seriously and had a few close girl friends; but, still my life was without happiness. People interested in reincarnation theories or astrology attracted my attention but none of them gave me a feeling of conviction about what they held to be true. I began to regard these theorists as eccentric people, and that was all.

After two and a half years in the Bay

Area, I decided that I was really in a rut, or a "bind" as they say in Berkeley. I was increasingly discontented with my life, and more than willing to stop working if that could be arranged. The friend with whom I had hitchhiked to San Francisco called me long distance from New York with a glowing report of a commune where people shared a life in common. He said that they had found the meaning of life by living together. It didn't take me long to hurry to New York City. When I arrived, I met the people of the commune. I felt that they had nothing to offer, and were, in fact, as eccentric as the people I had left behind in San Francisco! I left, terribly disappointed. I decided to stay in New York for awhile and renew my ties with my family. I moved into a women's residence hall and got a glamorous job at *Seventeen Magazine*. My parents were pleased and so was I, since I had learned to love fashion. I thought this would be a meaningful world for me, associating with people in the fashion industry, but this job, too, grew tiresome.

About this time I met Mary Ann Sleichter. She works at Beth Sar Shalom, and was living in the same residence hall as I was. We met at supper and she began telling me about the Lord. I was intrigued by her work. Here was a person who really seemed to have something—a strong conviction that Jesus was the Son of God. For the first time I became curious about Jesus. I met Jewish people who shared the belief that the Messiah had come. I was confused but intrigued. Jesus was not just for Gentiles, as I had imagined. I was equally surprised to learn that Christians worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and revere the Old Testament as holy. The Messianic prophecies in Isaiah 53 were pointed out to me.

Mary Ann urged me to read the New Testament and made one available to me. Nevertheless, I was reluctant to believe in Jesus. I didn't want to do anything silly or impulsive which would dismay my family. I told her that I wanted to wait until I had read the entire New Testament before thinking seriously about Jesus. As I read the New Testament a strange thing happened. I became convinced that it was true that Jesus had come to save man from sin. No one was standing over me trying to influence me. I, who had been a skeptic, was filled with joy by the Gospel and was myself surprised by the strength of my feeling. Soon I slipped a note under Mary Ann's door telling her that I had received Jesus as my Messiah.

I have never felt so much inner peace and joy and freedom from uncertainty about myself and the world as I do now. Relativism is gone from my life. I know what's right and what's wrong, and I know what is proper and improper. In all my attempts to make life an adventure, I know now that I could never have succeeded. Only in Jesus can life be truly meaningful, rich in emotional value and exciting.

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Subscription 50 Cents a Year.

JUNE 1970

Vol. 54 - No. 10

אן אורזאך אָדער אַ סימפּטאָם

פון ריימאָנד כהן

12:51). און איר וועל זיי געבן איין האַרץ, און אַ ניי געמיט וועל איר אַרײַנגעבן אין אײַך; און אײַך וועל אָפּטאָן דאָס האַרץ פון שטיין פון זײַער לײב (יחזקאל י"א 19:11). מיר דאַרפן אַ ניי לעבן ניט נאָר רעפּאַרם. מיר דאַרפן אַ ניי האַרץ און אַ נײַעם גײסט וואָס קומט פון גאָט. איז עס ניט דער אמת? ישוע המשיח לערנט אונדז, „סידן איר ווערט געד בורן אויפסניי, קאָנט איר ניט זען דאָס מלכות פון גאָט. דאָס וואָס איז געבוירן פון דעם פּליישי, איז פּליישי; און דאָס, וואָס איז געבוירן פון דעם גײסט, איז גײסט. הידוש דײַך ניט, וואָס איך האָב דיר געזאָגט: איר מוזט געבוירן ווערן אויפסניי" (יוחנן 3:3, 6, 7). קענען מיר באַ ווייזן אז דאָס איז טאַקע דער אמת? מען זאָגט אז 99 פּראָצענט פון די וואָס נעמען סמים און דערנאָך וואַרפן זיי עס אַוועק קענען זיך ניט באַפּרײַען אינגאַנצן, און פּאַלן ווידער אַרײַן אין דער דאָזיקער געוואוינהייט. אָבער ווען אַזאַ איינער קומט און גלייבט מיטן נאַנצן האַרצן אין ישוע המשיחן ווערט ער אויסגעהײלט 100 פּראָצענט. אַזוי איז עס אויך מיט אַנדערע בעלי עברה. ווען זיי קומען צו ישוע המשיחן ווערן זיי באַפּרײַט פון דער קראַפט פון זינד אין פון שטן. אונדזער קראַנקהייט קען פּול־ קאַמען געהײלט ווערן דורך ישוע המשיחן. ער לערנט אונדז אַזוי צו זאָגן: „קומט צו מיר אַלע, וואָס האַרעוועט און זענט שווער באַלאָדן, און איך וועל אײַך געבן רו" (מתיא 11:28). ווידער לערנט ער אַזוי: „יעדער איינער, וואָס באַנייט אַ זינד, איז דער קנעכט פון זינד. דע־ ריכער, אויב דער זון וועט אײַך מאַכן פּרײַ, וועט איר באַמת זײַן פּרײַ" (יוחנן 8:34, 36). גאָטס הבטחות זײַנען דערפּילט געוואָרן פאַרן ייִדישן פּאָלק און פאַר דער גאַרער וועלט. מיר לערנען אין די נביאים, „איך גיב אַרײַן מיין תּורה אין זײַ, און אויף זײַער האַרצן וועל אײַך זי אויפּשרײַבן; און אײַך וועל זיי זײַן צום גאָט. און זיי וועלן מיר זײַן צום פּאָלק"

אונדזער אומגעבונג און מיר באַמײַען זיך צו פאַרבעסערן די לאַגע פון די נויטבאַדערפטיקע און דאָך האָבן מיר פּיל מענטשן פון רײַכע הײמען און אויך זיי האָבן מאַראַלישע פּראָב־ בלעמען און שווערדיקייטן. מיר זײַנען שוין דער־ צו נעקומען אַז מען רעדט שוין וועגן מאַכן לעגאַל די סמים ווײַל מען קען זיי ניט אויס־ מײַדן. דאָס קען פירן דערצו אַז מען וועט מאַכן לעגאַל פאַרברעכנס! חס וחלילה. מיר הײלן די סימפּטאָמען אָבער מיר טוען נאָרניט וועגן דער אורזאך. אָבער צי טויג עס טאַקע אַזוי? ווי לאַנג וואָלט איר געאַנאָגען צו אַ רופּא וואָס פאַרשײבט אײַך נאָר טײַערע מעדיצינען כדי צו הײלן די סימפּטאָמען אָבער טוט נאָרניט צו הײלן די קראַנקהייט זעלבסט? מיר מוזן איינזען אַז דער מענטש זעלבסט מוז זיך אומבײַטן און תּשובה טאָן. דער תּנ"ך לערנט אונדז אַזוי:

פּאַרדרייטער פון אַלץ איז דאָס האַרץ, און שוואַך איז עס — ווער קען עס קאָנען (ירמיה י"ז 9:17). און גאָט האָט געזען אַז דאָס בײַז פון דעם מענטשן איז גרויס אויף דער ערד, און די גאַנצע סראַכטונג פון די מחשבות פון זײַן האַרצן איז רק צום בײַז אַ גאַנצן טאָג (חומש בראַשײת ו' 5:6). דוד המלך זאָגט, יזע איז זינד בין אײַך געבאַרן געוואָרן, און איז חסא האָט מײַך מײַן מוטער אַנפּאַנגען (תהילים ג"א 7:51).

די תורה לערנט אונדז אַז מיר זײַנען זינד־ ריקע מענטשן און האָבן אַ זינדיקע נאַטור. מיר זײַנען גענייגט צו זינד! דאָס וואָס עס טוט זיך הײנט אין דער וועלט זײַנען די סימפּ־ טאָמען און באַווײַזן אַז די וועלט איז קראַנק. זענט איר איינשטימיק? אָדער אפשר זאָגט איר, נײַן דאָס איז אײַער רעליגיעזער פּאַנאַטוזם, אַן אַלטע באַבע מעשה! אָבער מיר האָבן אַלע באַווײַזן דערויף. דער תּנ"ך לערנט אונדז:

אַ רײַן האַרץ באַשאַף מיר, גאָט, און אַ פּעסט געמיט באַנײַ אין מיר (תהילים ג"א

מײסטע מענטשן ווייסן וועגן די סימפּטאָ־ מען פון פאַרקילונג: אַ פּולע נאָז, עס רינט פון די אויגן, און עס טוט וויי אומעטום. מיר באַ־ מײַען זיך עפעס צו טאָן כדי צו האָבן אַ רפּואה, אָבער מיט דער צײַט קומט עס ווידער צוריק, והוור חלילה. מײסטע מענטשן ווייסן די אורזאך וואָס פאַרשאַפט אַ פאַרקילונג, אָבער ניט פּיל מענטשן טוען עפעס עס צו פאַרמײַדן. דאָס זעלבע ווײַל אײַך אַנווענדן צו אונדזער טראַגישער לאַגע אין אונדזער געזעלשאַפט וואָס מען רופּט עס — „די שפּאַלטונג פון דורות". פאַראַן סטאַטיס־ טישע באַווײַזן וועגן דעם וואַקס אין פאַר־ ברעכנס, באַנוצונג פון סמים, לעבן ווי פּאַר־ פּאָלק פאַר דער חתונה און ניט לעניטימיע גע־ בורטן פון ממזרים. מיר הערן וועגן דעם יע־ דעם יאָר. אָבער וואָס טוען מיר כדי עס צו פאַרמײַדן? מיר גיבן אויס ביליאָנען דאָלאַרן פאַר דער פאַרמײַדונג פון פאַרברעכנס. פאַר אַויסבילדונג און צו פאַרבעסערן אונדזער אומ־ געבונג און דאָך וואַקסט די פאַרברעכערשאַפט. אַ טײַל ווײַלן מער געלט כדי עס צו פאַרשווענדן ווײַל זיי האַלטן זיך מיט דער פּילאָאָפּיע אַז פאַרבעסערונג אין אײַסמײַדונג, אײַסבילדונג און גוטע לעבנס־באַדינגונגען, וועט זײַן די רפּואה אויף פּיל צרות. וואָס איז אַזוי ווי למשל מען נעמט אַ מעדיצין כדי מען זאָל ניט לײַדן קײַן ווײַטיק פון דער פאַרקילונג אָבער אויב מען פאַרמײַדט ניט די אורזאך פון דער פאַרקילונג קומט די פאַרקילונג ווידער צוריק. למשל, מיר גיבן אויס מיליאָנען דאָלאַרן אויף אײַסבילדונג כדי צו לערנען מענטשן אַז זיי זאָלן זיך גוט אויפּפירן, אָבער מיר דאַרפן ניט אויסגעבן קײַן גראַשן כדי אימײַצן צו לער־ נען שילעכטס צו טאָן. אַט למשל: אַ קינד דאַרף מען ניט לערנען צו זאָגן אַ לײַגן, פון זיך זעלבסט וועט שוין דאָס קינד זאָגן אַ לײַגן ווען עס וועט אים לײַגען. מיר זאָגן אַז מיר זײַנען דער פּראָדוקט פון