

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

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Judaism an "as if" Religion

JUDAISM as it is practiced today is a religion of ritual and ceremony. No Jew, be he orthodox, conservative or reform is asked, on joining the synagogue of his choice, to subscribe to a doctrinal or credal statement.

The recent Jewish High Festivals should have brought this lack of dogma in Judaism into sharp relief to a thinking Jew. Almost without exception the act of observance is regarded by some people as being meritorious in itself and by others merely as a customary form of solidarity by maintaining an age-old tradition which binds all Jews together.

JUDAISM AND RABBINISM

Judaism has been preserved by the rabbinical tradition, and it should be interesting to learn why the practices of the Jewish religion have acquired such prominence to the exclusion of all dogma.

The only foundation for the Jewish faith is the Tenach or Old Testament. Without this source we would know practically nothing of our history or the origins of our religion. In the Tenach we read of God's revelation to Israel and the minute details of the form of worship they were to observe for all time. The Book of the Law of Moses is the only authentic code of religious practice for the Jewish people. This code extends far beyond the Ten Commandments, and consists of 613 rules of ritual observance,

and includes a comprehensive sacrificial system which requires a temple at Jerusalem, a priesthood and real sacrifices which had to be slain, and offered on a real altar.

Today orthodox Judaism consists of mere expedients. There is no Temple in Jerusalem, no true priesthood and no actual sacrifices.

After reading the relevant parts of the Tenach, a thinking Jew must ask the question as to how his religion which is basically a sacrificial system can be adequately followed, and what do the learned sages have to say regarding substitutes for the sacrifices, and from whence do they derive their authority. Let us see what our Prayer Book has to say about this.

THE TRUE BASIS FOR JUDAISM

Let us examine the Tenach which provides the only basis for our religion. The 12th chapter of Deuteronomy, verse 14, states that "... in the place which the Lord shall choose . . . there shalt thou offer thy burnt offerings, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee." This "place" was the Temple at Jerusalem where the people of Israel were to offer the sacrifices. Today it is obvious that as we are without a temple in Jerusalem and without a priesthood, we are unable to bring any sacrificial offerings to God in the manner He commanded. Indeed,

one of the prayers for festivals reads

Because of our sins we have been driven out from our country and removed from our land, so that we are unable to perform our duty in the house thou hast chosen for us, even in the magnificent and holy temple in which thy name was called, because of the hand that was outstretched against thy sanctuary. May it please thee, O Lord our God . . . Most Merciful King, to return unto us in thine abundant mercy, and have compassion on us in thy sanctuary, Oh rebuild it speedily and exalt its glory. . . . O gather our dispersed from among the nations and assemble our outcasts from the ends of the earth. Conduct us to Zion, thy city, with joyful song, and unto Jerusalem, thy sanctuary, with everlasting joy. And then will we prepare the offerings according to their order and the additional sacrifices according to thy law.

As this prayer shows, it is conceded that we were driven out of our land because of our sins, and yet God makes no provision as to how the sacrifices, which are necessary, can be made when the place where they should have been offered has been taken and destroyed because of our sins!

The Rabbis have endeavored to overcome this difficulty by teaching that repeating the passages in Scripture referring to the sacrifices would be accounted as though they had been offered. This they base on Hosea 14:2, "So will we render the calves of our lips." But this is only an expedient and a substitute, and is certainly not inspired of God. He has not changed His commandment.

The pious, observant, orthodox Jew repeats every morning the following prayer:

Lord of the universe, thou hast demanded us to offer the continual burnt offering in its season, that the priests should be in their service, the Levites in their place and the Israelites in their position, and now because of our iniquities the holy temple has been destroyed and the burnt offering has been stopped, and we have no priest in his service. . . . O Lord our God and God of our fathers, that the utterance of our lips may be accounted, accepted and pleasing to thee, as though we had offered the continual burnt offering at its appointed time.

CAN A JEW BE A CHRISTIAN?

Most people assume that one is born a Christian. Do you know that the Bible teaches that the human race is divided into only three categories — Jews, Gentiles and Christians, and also insists that the term "Christian" is a matter of faith not race or birth, and that consequently a Christian may be either Jew or Gentile? Would you like to know more about this interesting subject? If so, send for our free folder, "What is a Christian?"

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Following this prayer the various sacrifices which were to have been offered, are described in detail, and again they pray:

May it please thee, O Lord our God and the God of our Fathers, if thou find me guilty of a sin that requires a sin offering according to thy holy law, let this repetition be accepted before thee as though I had brought a sin offering.

A RELIGION OF SUBSTITUTES

An eminent Jewish theologian has defined current Jewish religious practices as an "as if" religion. Dr. H. J. Schoeps says:

We Jews of the mid-20th century live today in what might be called a post-Jewish situation.....

It is time for us to renounce all fictions of the "as if" kind.... We cannot act as if the laws of the Torah still signified for most of us the rules of conduct;.....

The great turning point in Jewish history, the real breach of the historical tradition, was the destruction of the temple by the Romans under Titus in the year 70 C.E. It is generally agreed that we have the pharisaic theologians of the time to thank for the fact that this rupture of the historical tradition did not prove fatal and put an end to Jewish history altogether. It was the sages of Jabneh, of Lydda, of Caesarea, and of Benei Brak who were the first to develop the concept of "as if" into an enduring principle of Jewish History.

The theocracy no longer existed, but its constitution remained in force as if it did. The Temple no longer existed, but Jews the world over bowed in prayer in its direction, as if it did. The High Priest no longer made his expiatory sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, but the ritual formula was learned and recited on that day as if he did. Meanwhile, other things took the place of the actual sacrifice.

On the Day of Atonement, that great day of the year when the High Priest should have entered into the Holy of Holies of the Temple with the blood of the goat which he sprinkled upon the mercy seat, as we have it described in the 16th chapter of Leviticus, the people of Israel today fast from sunset to sunset. They beat their breasts in anguish and recite long lists of sins of omission and commission that they have made or conceivably committed during the year, and beg God to forgive them for these. Why do they fast? There is nothing in the divine command for the Day of Atonement, as we have it in the book of Leviticus, that provides for fasting. The fasting is actually based upon the words, "ye shall afflict your souls" (Leviticus 16:31). Fasting is regarded as being a fulfillment of this command. Actually the word *Anah*, translated here "afflict," is nowhere in the Scriptures used for "fast," although it occurs some sixty-eight times. Centuries ago Jews understood

the real purpose of the fasting. They did not say that they fasted to afflict their souls, and in a prayer book of the middle ages we came across this prayer in the service for the Day of Atonement:

Accept the fat that has diminished in our bodies this day through fasting in place of the blood that should be sprinkled.

On the eve of the Day of Atonement in some Jewish communities a fowl is taken and slain. It is even called *kaporah*, which means "atonement." Behind the fasting and the repetition of many prayers on the Day of Atonement is a tacit admission that without the shedding of blood there is no atonement.

Paul, a Jew who believed in Christ, says of Israel, his people, in the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, that "they have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge." Indeed, there is a veil over their minds when Moses is read, and they do not see the true purpose of the sacrifices or the feast days as we have them in the book of Leviticus. They were to be the means of leading man to see his own shortcomings, his need of salvation and his own inadequacy. All they do is to repeat formulae, maintain customs, and then plead that God will accept all these in place of the things that should be done so that their sins may be forgiven.

THE MEANING OF THE SACRIFICES

The main and most important question that should come to the mind of a Jew is not so much why it is necessary to have an "as if" religion — to find expedients and substitutes for the real thing, but what was the divine purpose of the sacrifices. Why did God order them?

The answer to this is to be found in the account of the death of the Messiah, as we have it in the New Testament. In this connection also read what the prophet Isaiah said:

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (*Isaiah 53:3,4,5,6*).

The sacrifices in themselves had no merit or value. They were to teach us the lesson of God's righteousness and our sinfulness. Indeed the whole Law of Moses was but a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Galatians 3:24).

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to make known to the Jewish people the truth concerning the Messiah of Israel.
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Meetings are held regularly also in Philadelphia, Camden, and many other locations throughout the U.S.A. and Canada. If you would like to visit one of these meetings just drop us a post card and we will let you know the meeting place nearest to your address.

Well has the Christian song-writer summed up the situation most adequately in the words of his well-known hymn:

Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Nor wash away the stain.
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sin away —
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

אנכי
הוא
הרעה
הטוב
יחנן 11-10

רעה ישראל

הקמת
עליהם
רעה
אחר
יחפאל 23, ד

א מאנאטליך בלאט צו ערקלעחרען צו ישראל דעם אמת'דיגען משיח

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יודאייזם-א רעליגיע פון נישט רעאליטעט

מיר: "... אין דעם פלאץ וועלעך נאָט וועט אויס-
קלויבן דאָרט זאָלט איר מקריב זיין אייערע קרבנות
און דאָרטן זאָלט איר טאָן אלץ וואָס איר וועל איך
הייסן."

דער דאָזיקער פלאץ איז געווען דער טעמפל אין
ירושלים, וואו אהין די יידן פלעגן קומען מקריב
זיין זייערע קרבנות. דעריבער איז קלאָר אז היינט
ווען מיר האָבן נישט קיין טעמפל און נישט קיין
כהנים קענען מיר נישט דינען נאָט אזוי ווי ער
האָט אונז געבאָטן. א זייער וויכטיקע תפילה פון
די יומים טובים ליענט זיך אזוי:

"ווייל מיר האָבן געזונדיקט זיינען מיר פאר-
טריבן פון אונזער לאַנד און מיר קענען מער
נישט דינען דיך ווי דו האָסט אונז געבאָטן, ווייל
מיר האָבן נישט קיין בית המקדש וואו דיין הייר
ליקער נאָמען איז גערופן געוואָרן. זיי וויליס, אָ
נאָט, דער בעל החמים, ווידער צו קערן זיך צו
אונז מיט דיין גרויס רחמים און לאָמיר צוריק
קויגן דיין הייליק הויז. אָ, בוי אויף צוריק דעם
בית המקדש, און זאָל איר כבוד דערגרויסט ווערן.
זאָמל איין די צעשפרייטע צווישן די פעלקער און
נעם צוזאמען די פאָרוואָרפענע פון אלע ווינקע-

דאָס היינטיקע אַרטאָדאָקסישע יידישקייט באַד-
שטייט פון א רעליגיע פון „צופאַסונג". ווייל אזוי
ווי עס איז קיין טעמפל, מיט כהנים, מיט מזבחות,
מיט קרבנות נישטאָ, פאַסט מען זיך צו די אומד-
שטענדן און מען זאָגט: „זאָל זיך אונז דאַכטן אז
עס איז יאָ דאָ א בית המקדש." ווען א ייד ליענט
דעם תנ"ך און ער געפינט אויס אז די יידישע רע-
ליגיע איז א רעליגיע פון מקריב זיין קרבנות מוז
ער זיך שטעלן די פראַגע: צו קען ער טאַקע זיין א
פרומער ייד און נישט טאָן וואָס די תורה לערנט
אים צו טאָן? און אזא ייד ווערט אינטערעסירט
צו וויסן וואָס די יידישע חכמים האָבן געזאָגט וועגן
די קרבנות וועלכע מען איז נישט מקריב. לאָמיר
דעריבער זען וואָס דער יידישער סדרו האָט צו זאָגן
וועגן דעם אויבן דערמאָנטן.

די אמת'ע באַזע פון יודאייזם

לאָמיר עקזאַמינירן די תורה וועלכע איז פראַק-
טיש די איינציקע באַזע פון דער יידישער רעליגיע.
אין דעם קאפיטל צוועלף אין ספר דברים ליענען

די יידישע רעליגיע איז היינט צו טאָג א רעליגיע
פון צערעמאָניעס. איינער וואָס וויל געהערן צו די
סינאגאָגע דארף נישט צו דערקלערן אין וועלכע
קאַטעגאָריע ער גלויבט.

כמעט אָן אויסנאַמען קען מען זאָגן אז דאָס
דורכפירן די צערעמאָניעס אין די סינאגאָגעס זיינען
א זאך וואָס האָט צו טאָן מיט מנהגים און ווערן
באַטראַכט אלס א מיטל צו דערהאַלטן די יידישע
סאָלידאַריטעט, אָבער א טייל באַטראַכטן די יידישע
מנהגים אויך אלס מצות פאר וועלעך זיי וועלן האָבן
א חלק לעולם הבאָ.

יודאייזם און רבנים

יודאייזם איז אויפגעהאַלטן געוואָרן ביי די רבנים
אלס טראַדיציעס. עס איז דעריבער אינטערעסאַנט
צו וויסן פאָרוואָס האָבן די רבנים אַרויסגענומען
אלע דאָגמעס פון דער יידישער רעליגיע?

דער איינציקער קוואַל פון וואָס די רבנים שפּען
מאַטעריאַל פאר די יידישע טראַדיציעס איז דער
תנ"ך, ווייל אָן דעם קוואַל וואָלט מען נאָר נישט
עוואָוסט פון דער יידישער געשיכטע און פון דעם
אפּשטאַם פון דער יידישער רעליגיע. אין דער תורה
עפינען מיר די אַנטפּלעקונג פון נאָט צו די יידן,
ווי אזוי זיי האָבן געדינט נאָט און ווי אזוי זיי
אַרפּן דינען נאָט היינט צו טאָג. די תורה איז די
איינציקע אויטענטישע אויטאָריטעט ווי אזוי די
יידן דאַרפן דינען נאָט. עס איז אין דער תורה
אַראָן זעקס הונדערט מיט דרויעצן געזעצן וועלכע
זיי יידן דאַרפן אָפהיטן. עס שליסט אויך איין די
אַדעם פון מקריב זיין די קרבנות אין דעם בית
מקדש, געזעצן וועגן די כהנים און די מזבחות.

צו קען א ייד גלויבן אין דעם געבורט אויף ישוע דורך א נס?

צו ווייסטו אָן עס איז נישט אונגלויבליך אז מרים די מוטער פון ישוע האָט
אים געבוירן אָן א מאַן? און אז א ייד קען אין דעם גלויבן? אויב דו וואַלט געוואָלט
מער וויסן דערפון, ביטע שרייבט צו אונז וועלן מיר איך אַרויס שיקן אַ ספּעציעלע
בראַשור דערוועגן. מיר וועלן גערן ענטפּערן אויף אלע בריוו וועלכע מיר וועלן
דערהאַלטן.

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