

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

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Where Is Our City of Refuge?

by Frederick W. Haberer

GOD is merciful as well as just. Although the Law of Moses (Torah Mosheh) forbade murder and required that the blood of the victim be atoned for by the blood of the killer, He knows that it is possible for someone to kill another accidentally. Such a killer is a man-slayer rather than a murderer. So God made provision for those who were guilty of manslaughter by setting apart six cities to which they could flee and escape capital punishment.

These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares (unintentionally) may flee thither . . . But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait, or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm: then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: and the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil (Numbers 35:15,22-25).

Those cities of refuge called *arei miklat* in *Bamidebar* 35, were conveniently located so that the manslayer could reach one in time to escape the avenger of blood. But more than speed or luck was necessary, for what says the Law of Moses about the murderer?

Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death (Numbers 35:31).

DID THE LAW OF MOSES PERMIT "FIXING"?

The cynical modern, who thinks it is "all right" to bribe a judge or jury, or to get the right person to "fix" a traffic ticket is far removed from the justice of God's Torah. No corruption was permitted under the Law of Moses. No bribe (satisfaction) could be accepted to circumvent the penalty of the broken Law. The suspect would be tried and if found guilty, he would be executed. No exceptions were allowed. Nothing was said

about juveniles being given any preferred treatment. The life of a murderer was forfeited in order to cleanse the land from blood.

But the unfortunate person who had accidentally killed another was not left unprotected. God said that he, "may flee" to the nearest city of refuge and he would be safe as long as he obeyed God. The manslayer might argue that, after all, he had not intended to kill anyone. It had been entirely accidental and therefore he was not to blame. So why flee to any special place? But such reasoning would be of no avail. If he expected to escape with his life, he must obey God and remain in "the city of his refuge" until the death of the High Priest. Only then was he free to return to his old home in safety. He could not "buy his way out." It was foolish to try to argue with the "avenger of blood." He must obey.

So the manslayer must exercise faith in the Word of God. He must believe what God had said and also he must act on his convictions. He dare not "hope for the best." As long as the High Priest lived he must stay in his city of refuge, because that anointed High Priest was his surety, both in life and in death. During the life of the High Priest he was safe in the city of refuge.

WHEN WAS HE FREED FROM THE PENALTY OF THE LAW?

The Word of God is plain:

...but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession (Numbers 35:28).

Notice that when the anointed High

Priest died, then the manslayer was free to return to his own home. But not before! Since the High Priest had died, that man was now no longer considered to be guilty of the shedding of blood. He need no longer fear the "avenger of blood," because a death had occurred - the death of the anointed High Priest who was the representative of God to Israel. The High Priest's death was accepted by God as a substitute for the death of the manslayer.

The length of time spent in the city of refuge had nothing to do with the matter. After the manslayer was committed to the safety of the city he might be compelled to remain only a short time. Still it might be many years before the High Priest died. In any case, the moment that death occurred, he was a free man.

Throughout the Old Testament (Tenach) the principle of substitutionary sacrifices for the guilt of the sinner is taught. The blood of an animal was accepted as an atonement, which "covered" the sinner, typically, and enabled God to deal with that sinner as if he had never sinned.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (Leviticus 17:11).

What the blood of an animal did for the sinner in *Vayikera* 17, was only a type of what the shed blood of the Messiah (*Hammashiach*) accomplished for us who were sinners before God.

"VEHU MECHOLAL MIPESHAEINU"

Do the above words sound familiar? If you are an orthodox Jew you recited them

OF WHOM DOES ISAIAH 53 SPEAK?

Why is this chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah omitted in the reading in the synagogue? Find out for yourself what it contains and of whom it speaks. "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." If you would like to know to whom this refers write for our free folder, "Of Whom Does Isaiah 53 Speak?"

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on Yom Kippur. They are a quotation from *Yeshiah Hannavi* (Isaiah the Prophet) and they mean, "And He was wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5). The following verse reads,

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 53:6).

Occasionally someone says that he does not believe that anyone can bear the sins of another. Yet for many centuries orthodox Jews have prayed to God to remember "the son that was bound." The reference is to Abraham, who bound his son Isaac, placed him upon the altar and raised the knife to kill him, only to be stopped by God. A ram, which God had provided, was offered instead of Isaac, who lived to a ripe old age and was buried by his sons, Jacob and Esau.

Then why do we have to pray about Isaac as, "the son that was bound"? Perhaps it is because every one of us realizes that he is a guilty sinner in the sight of God, and everyone needs a sacrifice which will be acceptable to God and which will serve as a substitute for his sins.

God is fair. He would never ask more of us than He would be willing to do Himself! If He demanded of Abraham that his son be offered as a sacrifice, would God refuse to give His Son, *Yeshua Hammashiach*, Jesus the Messiah, as a sacrifice for sins?

IF AN ETERNAL FATHER, THEN AN ETERNAL SON

One of the titles given to God is "Eternal Father." But no person can be a father unless he has a child. God could not be a Father unless He has a Son. He could not be an *Eternal* Father unless He has an *Eternal* Son. What - God have a Son? Yes!

A Drink From The Fountain

Isaiah 53:1-10

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 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

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6; *Yeshiah Hannavi* 9:5).

Note that the "child" which was to be born is none other than the "Son" who was to be given. God gave His Son, the Messiah, to be the Saviour of the world. And that same Son is given divine titles by the prophet, who said that He would be called "el gibbor," "The mighty God," and "avi ad," "The everlasting Father."

Dear friend, are you a guilty sinner before God? Have you nowhere to turn? Do you long for a place of security, a City of Refuge, to which you could flee? Wouldn't it be wonderful to know that you are safe for time and eternity from the righteous judgment which God's law has pronounced upon your sins?

God has provided a place of safety for you. Just as He hid Moses in the cleft of the rock, when His glory passed before him in the wilderness, God will hide you in the safety of the Rock, the Mashiach, Who is our great High Priest, and Who died for our sins on the Cross of Calvary. His blood was shed as the Atonement, the payment for the penalty due for our sins. So God could say,

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins (Isaiah 43:25).

Notice that God promises that He will not only "blot out" our sins, but that He will also forget all about them! Will you trust God's promise, accept His Messiah as your own personal Saviour, trusting in His death as the atonement for your sins, and go free? May God enable you so to do.

have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

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וואו איז אונדזער עיר המקלט?

פרעדעריק וו. האבערער

אָבער דער וועלכער האָט געטויט אָן אַני דערן אומגערן, האָט געפונען אָן אַנטרינונג. גאָט זאָגט ער זאָל אַנטלויפן צו דער גאַענטסטער שטאָט פֿון אַנטרינונג און דאָרט וועט ער זיצן אָן מורא. אַפּשר וועט דער טויטשלענער דענקען אַיך האָב דאָך נישט געהרגעט כּמזיד און בין דאָך דעריבער אומשולדיק, פּאַרוואָס זאָל אַיך דען אַנטלויפן? אָבער אזא דענקען איז אין גאַנצן אָן נוי. אויב ער האָט געוואָלט ראַטעווען זיין לעבן, האָט ער געמוזט גאָט האָרען און פּאַר-בלייבן אין דער „שטאָט פֿון אַנטרינונג“ ביז דעם טויט פֿון כּוהן־גדול. נאָר דאָן האָט ער געקענט זיך אַהיימקערן אָן מורא. ער האָט זיך נישט גע-קענט אויסקויפֿן. עס איז געווען נאָריש צו אַר-גרי מענטשן מיטן טויטמאָנער. ער האָט געמוזט פּאַלען.

אזוי אַרום האָט דער טויטשלענער געמוזט גלויבן גאָטס וואָרט. ער האָט געמוזט גלויבן, אַז גאָט האָט עס געזאָגט און טון אזוי ווי עס איז געבאָטן. ער האָט נישט געקענט האָפֿן, אַז ער וועט זיך אַרויסדרייען. אזוי לאַנג ווי דער כּוהן־גדול האָט געלעבט האָט ער געמוזט פּאַר-בלייבן אין דער שטאָט פֿון אַנטרינונג, ווייל דער כּוהן־גדול איז געווען זיין פּאַרוויכערונג. אזוי לאַנג ווי דער כּוהן־גדול האָט געלעבט, איז ער געווען אָן מורא אין דער שטאָט פֿון אַנטרינונג.

נייטיק, ווייל די תורה זאָגט אזוי וועגן אַ טויט-שלענער:

און איר זאָלט נישט אָננעמען אַן אויס-לייז פֿאַר דעם נפש פֿון אַ מערדער, וואָס איז פּאַרשולדיק צום טויט; נייערט טייטן מוז ער געטייט ווערן (כּמדבר, פ' מסעי ל"ה, 31).

צו האָט מען געמעגט נעמען שוחד (שטעקיעלט)?

אין די היינטיקע צייטן דענקען מענטשן, אַז עס איז „אַלרייט“ צו געפינען עמיצן, וואָס קען זיך מיט אַ ריכטער אָדער מיט עמיצן אַנדערש וואָס קען דערליידיקן אָן ענין מיט אַ שטראָף פֿאַר אָפּשטעלן דעם אויטאָ אין אַ פּאַרבאָטן אָרט. אָבער דאָס איז קענן גאָטס תורה, וואו עס איז שטרענג פּאַרבאָטן. קיין שום שוחד האָט מען נישט געטאָרט נעמען, נאָר דער באַשולדיקטער האָט געמוזט שטיין פֿאַר די ריכטער, און אויב ער איז געפונען געוואָרן שולדיק, האָט ער געמוזט ליידן די שטראָף. עס זיינען נישט געווען קיין שום אויס-נאָמען. אפילו יונגע לייט האָבן נישט געהאַט קיין שום פּאַרצוג. אַ מערדער האָט געמוזט באַצאָלן מיט זיין אייגן לעבן, כּדי דאָס לאַנד זאָל זיין גערייניקט פֿון בלוט.

גאָט איז באַרעמהאַרציק און גערעכט. כאָטש תורה משה האָט פּאַרבאָטן יעדן מאָרד און זאָגט, אַז דאָס בלוט פונם דערמאָרדעטן מוז באַצאָלט ווערן מיטן בלוט פונם מערדער, דאָך ווייסן מיר, אַז עס קען געשען אַז עמיצער זאָל דערמאָרדן דעם צווייטן אומגערן. אזעלכער איז אַ מערדער כּשונג. דעריבער האָט גאָט באַוואָרנט, אַז די וואָס וועלן דאָס טון אומגערן, זאָלן האָבן זעקס שטעט וואו זיי זאָלן אַנטלויפן און נישט דאַרפן באַצאָלן דערפֿאַר מיט זייער לעבן.

פֿאַר די קינדער פֿון ישראל און פֿאַרן פרעמדן און פֿאַרן איינגעוואָנדערטן צווישן זיי, זאָלן זיין די דאָזיקע זעקס שטעט פֿון אַנטרינונג, אויף צו אַנטלויפן אַהין פֿאַר איסלעכן וואָס דערשלאָגט אַ נפש דורף אַ פּאַרזען... אויב אָבער ער האָט אים אומגעריכט, אַן פיינסשאַפֿט, אַ שטויס גע-טאָן, אָדער ער האָט געשליידערט עפעס אויף אים אָן כּוון, אָדער מיט עפעס אַ שטיין, וואָס מע קען דערפֿון שטאַרבן, האָט ער געוואָרפֿן אויף אים אומגעזען און ער איז געשטאַרבן, און ער איז אים נישט געווען אַ שונא און נישט אויסן געווען זיין בייז, זאָל די עדה חשפטן צווישן דעם שלענער און צווישן דעם בלוטמאָנער לויט די דאָזיקע געזעצן. און די עדה זאָל חצי זיין דעם טויטשלענער פֿון דעם בלוטמאָ-נערס האַנט, און די עדה זאָל אים אומ-קערן צו זיין שטאָט פֿון אַנטרינונג, וואָס ער איז אַהין אַנטלאָפֿן און ער זאָל זיצן אין איר ביז דעם טויט פֿון כּוהן־גדול, וואָס מע האָט אים געזאַלבט מיטן הייליקן אייל (כּמדבר, פרשת מסעי ל"ה: 22-25).

די דאָזיקע שטעט פֿון אַנטרינונג, וואָס ווערן אָנגערופן אין דער פּרישה „ערי המקלט“, זיינען געווען אין פּאַרשידענע ערטער אינם לאַנד, כּדי דער טויטשלענער זאָל קענען גיך אַהין קומען און אויסמיידן די נקמה פֿון דעם בלוטמאָנער. אָבער מער ווי געשווינדקייט און מזל איז געווען

פֿון וועמען שמועסט דער נביא ישעיה אין קאפיטל נ"ג?

פּאַרוואָס לייענט מען נישט דאָס קאפיטל אין דער הפטורה?
איר קענט אויסגעפינען וואָס עס אַנטהאַלט און פֿון וועמען דער נביא שמועסט.
„ער איז פּאַרוואַונדעט געוואָרן איבער אונדזערע פּאַרבּרעכנס, צעדריקט איבער אונדזערע זינד; די אַפּקומעניש פֿאַר אונדזער גליק איז געווען אויף אים, און דורך זיינע כּוילן זיינען מיר געהיילט געוואָרן.“
אויב איר ווילט וויסן צו וועמען דאָס באַציט זיך, שרייבט אונדז און מיר וועלן אייך שיקן אונדזער כּיכעלע כּחינם, „פֿון וועמען שמועסט ישעיה נ"ג?"
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