

Yom Kippur: A Time for Humility

The most solemn of the High Holy Days, *Yom Kippur*, or the Day of Atonement, is about God reconciling His covenant people to Himself. Even though we are the offenders, God took the initiative to restore a relationship with us.

He provided all that is needed in Messiah. Regarding *Yom Kippur*, the Old Covenant required the offering of a blood sacrifice (Lev. 16; Num. 29:7-11); for there is no forgiveness without a blood atonement (Lev. 17:11).

Since so much of the atonement of this day is already discussed in Leviticus 16, the *Yom Kippur* portion in Leviticus 23 contains only a brief mention of the sacrifice; this portion instead emphasizes humility:

"You shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the Lord...[because] If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people" (Lev. 23:27, 29, NASB).

The Scripture says, *"you shall humble your souls,"* which means our mind, emotions and will respond to both our sin and God's gracious provision of atonement. Why is humility all that important? *Yom Kippur* reminds us that we are fallen creatures, and rather than trusting in our own good works, we are to rest in the grace, mercy and atonement of God in Messiah.

Works apart from Messiah are self-oriented activities, efforts to prove what we can do. As an expression of faith, our humility accepts the atonement of God. Atonement was based on the offerings that were made for cleansing of sins, but without humility those offerings would have been useless.

Only a humble heart can relate to God. True humility is God-

oriented, not self-oriented. Self-abasement and so-called low self-esteem are not the answer; they are still self-oriented. Only in humility can one apply and enjoy the benefits of forgiveness in the atonement made by Messiah. By humbling our souls in Him we find rest from self-oriented activities and works. Biblical humility is essential to restoring relationships.

Here are five simple steps to reconciliation now and forever.

1. Recognition of sins – Sin breaks a relationship when we selfishly care for ourselves, rather than for others. Recognize the pain you have caused. Don't blame others or look at others' shortcomings, but take responsibility for your own actions and attitudes. Admit your wrong in all humility and honesty (James 5:16a).

2. Remorse over sins – Realize the offense you caused and identify with that offense, as though it happened to you. This will produce remorse and sympathy with the offended party. Don't minimize the offense to others simply because you're insensitive to or unconcerned with those same offenses (Ps. 51:3-4).

3. Repentance from sins – To repent is to turn away from an improper attitude or action. We must deal with sin as sin. Unrepentant sin hurts you by both undermining your integrity, and hardening your heart to the people around you. Many are "sin-sick" from unconfessed, unrepentant sin (Ps. 32:3-5).

4. Repayment for sins – We could never pay for our own sins. Therefore, Messiah chose to die as payment for our sins. This, however, does not negate our responsibility to pay our debts to our fellow man. True humility repays whenever possible. God's grace is not an excuse for irresponsibility. God's grace provides us the opportunity and the enablement to honor Yeshua in all our ways. Like Zacchaeus in the New Covenant, who demonstrated sincerity of faith in a humble attitude of trust

in Messiah (Luke 19:8-9).

5. Dedication beyond sins – Faith and humility are seen in making lifestyle changes that reflect sincere love for others and the Lord.

Messiah stated that to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and might” and “love your neighbor as yourself” is the standard by which we are called to live. When Yeshua invited people to trust in Him it was because of His humility and genuine concern for them:

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

The Mind of Messiah

An attitude of humility is the safest position for sinners to be in: If you lie on the ground you can't fall down! Water rests only at its lowest point. When Messiah's atonement is applied to your life, humility is manifested in your marriage, business and other relationships. This way, God gets all the glory!

Even as Yeshua, the Humble King, came and died that we might live, we are to seek the good of others above our own, even as He Himself did (Phil. 2:3-8). Your acquaintances will likely want to be your friends if you humbly put others ahead of yourself.

Humility is the Key

Through the aspect of humility in light of *Yom Kippur*, we can better see God's plan for reconciling His covenant people to Himself, and us to each other. Do you want your life spiritually fulfilled? God can bring contentment to your soul,

and actually wants your life fulfilled more than you do. Recognize that only God can fulfill your life, and humility is the gateway to the restoration of every relationship. {eo}

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