

נת יבו רת עולם

עמדו על דרכים וראו ושאלו לנתבות עולם ירמיהו סז

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THE law and the prophets both abound with plain declarations entirely subversive of the Rabbinic doctrine of human merit. But it has pleased God, besides these plain and repeated declarations, to ordain a public and solemn act to instruct even the most ignorant, and to convince the most obstinate, that by human merit there is no salvation. He commanded that, once every year, an atonement should be made by the high-priest, for himself, and for all the people of every class and degree.

וכפר את מקדש הקדוש ואת אהל מועד ואת המזבח
וכפר ועל הכהנים ועל כל עם הקהל יכפר :

"And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar; and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation." (Levit. xvi. 33.) Now, this ordinance implies, that all Israel, the high-priest, the priests, and the people, are all sinners, all need an atonement; and, therefore, utterly annihilates all idea of justification by merits. If Israel could have been justified either by their own merits, or by the merits of their forefathers, the solemn act of annual atonement would have been superfluous. But if this atonement be necessary,—and if it were not, why did God appoint it—then there is no room for the assertion of human merits. But the truth is, as we have already seen, that the rabbies felt that their doctrine was insufficient to quiet the awakened conscience, and gladly fled to any refuge that they could discover; it is no wonder then that they have clung with uncommon tenacity to the shadow of that hope that was held out in the law of Moses. In spite of their doctrine of merit, they are glad to have even the appearance of a day of atonement to reconcile them to the Almighty. It is true they have no high-priest and no sacrifice, yet so convinced are they of the need of an atonement, that rather than confess that they have absolutely none, they teach that repentance and the day itself will atone for all sin.

בזמן הזה שאין בית המקדש קיים ואין לנו מזבח
כפרה אין שם אלא תשובה החשובה מכפרת על כל
העבירות אפילו רשע כל ימיו ועשה תשובה באחרונה
אין מזכירין לו שום דבר מרשעו שנאמר רשעה רשעה
לא יכשל בה ביום שובו מרשעו ועצמו של יום
הנפירים מכפר לשנים שנאמר כי ביום הזה יכפר
גליכם :

"At this time, when there is no temple, and we have no altar, there is no atonement but repentance. Repentance atones for all transgressions, yea, though a man be wicked all his days, and repent at last, none of his wickedness is mentioned to him, for it is said, 'As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby, in the day that he turneth from his wickedness.' (Ezek. xxxiii. 12.) The day of atonement itself also atones for them that repent, for it is said, 'For on that day he shall make an atonement for you.' Lev. xvi. 30." (Hilchoth T'shuvah, c. i. 2.) This is the last refuge of Jewish hope, and we, therefore, propose to consider, whether it is a refuge on which a reasonable man may hazard his hope of salvation? No man of sense would hazard his life or his property upon a statement, of which one part contradicted the other; and such is the statement which we have just read. It first tells us, that in this present time "There is no atonement but repentance," and that "Repentance atones for all transgressions," and yet, immediately after, it adds, that "The day of atonement itself atones for them that repent." Now the latter assertion contradicts the former. If the day of atonement, as is here asserted, be necessary to atone for the penitent, then it is not true, that repentance atones for all sins. But if repentance atone for all sins, then when a man repents, his sins are forgiven, and then the day of atonement is not necessary. There is here, therefore, a palpable contradiction, and it cannot be safe to trust to a hope at variance with itself. But, secondly, as the two parts of which this statement is composed, contradict each other, so each of them is contrary to the law of Moses. The first of them is, that "Repentance atones for all transgressions;" but if so, then the atonement prescribed by Moses is useless, in fact, it is no atonement at all. Moses says, that the two goats were appointed by God for the atonement, but here it is said, that repentance is, in itself, sufficient. If this be true, if repentance can now atone for sins, without any sacrifice, why did Moses appoint such an useless, and even cruel rite, as the taking away the lives of poor innocent animals? If repentance be sufficient now, it was sufficient always, and then it follows, that God commanded what was useless. But if the appointment, the slaying of one goat, and the sending

the other, laden with the sins of the people, into the wilderness, was necessary formerly to procure forgiveness of sins, it must be equally necessary now: unless the rabbies will take upon them to assert, that God is an arbitrary and changeable master, who, to forgive sins, at one time requires, what at another time he does not require. That the slaying of one goat, and the sending away of the other was once absolutely necessary, no man can deny. Moses prescribes it so plainly, that if there be one thing more plain than another, it is this, that when the Jews were in their own land, repentance was not a sufficient atonement for sins. Indeed, Raibam himself says,

שעיר המשתלח מכפר על כל עבירות שבחורו
דקלות והחמירות בין שער בודין בין שער בשגגה
בין שהודע לו בין שלא הודע לו הכל מחכר בשער
המשתלח הוא עשהו חשובה אבל אם לא עשה
השובה אין השער מכפר לו אלא על הקלות

"The goat that was sent away atoned for all the transgressions mentioned in the law, whether light or grave. Whether a man transgressed presumptuously or ignorantly, consciously or unconsciously, all was atoned for by the goat that was sent away, if a man repented. But if a man did not repent, then the goat atoned only for the light offences." (Hilchoth T'shuvah, *ibid.*) We do not agree with the whole of this doctrine, but we cite it to show, that formerly repentance was not a sufficient atonement for sins, but that besides repentance, the goat, as appointed by God, was also necessary. And we infer, that as an atonement, besides repentance, was once necessary, it is necessary still, unless the rabbies will affirm that God has changed his mind, and abrogated the law of Moses. If repentance without any atonement be now sufficient to procure forgiveness of sin, then, beyond all doubt, the law of Moses is abrogated or changed. If the law of Moses be not abrogated and not changed, then repentance alone cannot atone for sins; and, therefore, this assertion of the oral law is false.

But the oral law endeavours to prove its assertion, by a citation from Ezekiel, "As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness." And it might be further urged, that Ezekiel here mentions repentance only, and omits all notice of sacrifice and the day of atonement. But the answer is easy. Either Ezekiel meant, in this declaration, to repeal the law of Moses, or he did not. If he meant to repeal the law of Moses, then the law is repealed, and a new way of obtaining forgiveness, not taught by Moses, has been introduced, and then the whole Jewish nation is, on their own showing, palpably in the wrong in adhering to that which is repealed. But if he did not mean to repeal the law of

Moses, then he made this assertion with that implied restriction which the law of Moses required; that is, he implied the necessity of sacrifice: and then this passage does not prove what the oral law asserts. But in every case, this first assertion is contrary to the law of Moses.

It is, however, evident, that the rabbies themselves were dissatisfied with their own assertion, for they immediately add to it a second, "That the day of atonement itself atones for them that repent, as it is said, 'For on that day he shall make an atonement for you.'" Notwithstanding the confidence of their assertion about repentance, they did not feel easy without some appearance of an atonement, and as they had no priest and no victim, they say, that the day itself atones, and endeavour to prove this assertion by a citation from Moses. But, unfortunately, this citation entirely overthrows their assertion. Moses does not say,

דיום הזה יכפר עליכם

"This day will atone for you," but he says,

ביום הזה יכפר עליכם

"On that day he (the priest) shall atone for you." Moses ascribes no virtue whatever to the day itself, but only to the rites on that day to be observed, and the person by whom they were performed. Moses prescribes, first, a high-priest; secondly, a goat, whose blood was brought into the Holy of holies; and thirdly, a goat to be sent away: so that where these three are wanting, nay, where any one of the three is wanting, the conditions prescribed by Moses are not fulfilled, and there is, therefore, no atonement. Without these three things the day itself has no virtue, and is nothing different from the commonest day in the year; and now, therefore, as they are all wanting, Israel has no atonement. The assertion about the day itself, is a mere invention of the rabbies, the only value of which is to show how deeply they felt the insufficiency of repentance, and the necessity of a real atonement, in order to procure remission of sins.

But the rabbies always betray themselves by adding something to make up for the deficiency, of which they are sensible. We have seen this in their assertion about merits, and so we find it here in their assertion about atonement. They assert, that "The day of atonement itself atones for the penitent," but in spite of this, they have felt the need of something more, which would a little better resemble real sacrificial atonement; and hence has arisen the custom of sacrificing a cock on the eve of that solemn day. The following account of this custom is given in the קהלות שלמה, of which we have before us an edition published at Breslau, so late as the year 1830; and it is selected, partly on account of its

recent publication, and partly because the directions how to act are given in Jewish-German, which shows that they are intended even for the most illiterate, and that the custom is not confined to a few speculators, but is general amongst the people.

סדר כפרות :

אן ערב יום קדש איז דער אנהאָן כפרות לוי
אזאָן . מן נעמט איין האָן לוי איינע מאָן
און איין העלן לוי איינר פֿרויאָ . און לוי איינר
פֿרויאָ דיאָ מעוברת איז נעמט מן איין העלן
און איין האָן פֿון דס קינר וועגן . דער
בעל הבית זאכט לוי ערטט דיאָ כפרה פֿר
ניק . דען דער כהן הגדול האט ערטט
אכפר גוועגן פֿר ניג און דער נאָך אונט ניין
הויז גינג דער נאָך פֿר כלל ישראָל . און
דער סדר פֿון דיאָ כפרות איז וויאָ איז
זאָן הקודש טטעהט :

ער נעמט דען האָן אין דיאָ האַנד און
זאָט דיאָ פֿסוקים :

בני אדם יושבי חושך וצלמות אסירי עמי וברזל :
ויצאים מחושך וצלמות ומסורתיהם יתקן : אוילים
מדרכ פשעם ומענותיהם יתענו : כל אוכל התעב
נפשם ויגיעו עד שער מות ויעקעו אל "י בשר להם
ממצוקותיהם יושיעם : ישלח דברו ויראם וימלט
משדחתיהם : יודו ל"י חסדו ונפלאותיו לבני אדם : אם
יש עליו מלאך ממיץ אחר מיני אלה לנדיד לאדם ישור :
ויוענו ויאמר פיעדו מדרת שחת מצאתי כושר :

ווער פֿר ניג דיאָ כפרה אונט טאָגט זאָט
דס :

זה הליפתי : זה המורתי : זה כפרתי : זה התרננול
לק למיתה . ואני אכנס ואלק לחיים טובים ארוכים
ולשלום :

דער נאָך היבט מן ווידר אן בני אדם און
זאָן דרייאָ מאָן :

"ORDER OF THE ATONEMENTS.—
On the eve of the day of atonement, the custom is to make atonements. A cock is taken for a man, and a hen for a woman; and for a pregnant woman a hen and also a cock, on account of the child. The father of the family first makes the atonement for himself, for the high-priest first atoned for himself, then for his family, and afterwards for all Israel." The order is as follows:—

He takes the cock in his hand and says these verses:

"The children of men that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; he brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble; and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sendeth his

word, and healeth them, and delivereth them from their destructions. O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (Psalm cvii.) If there be for him an angel, an intercessor, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." (Job xxxiii. 23.)

Whilst moving the atonement round his head, he says,

"This is my substitute. This is my commutation. This is my atonement. This cock goeth to death, but may I be gathered and enter into a long and happy life, and into peace."

He then begins again at the words, "The children of men," and so he does three times.

Then follow the various alterations that are to be made, when the atonement is made for a woman or another person, &c., and is added,

און באַזר זאָט מן סדר הכפרת גאזאָט .
זאָן מן דיאָ הענר דרויף ניגן . וויאָ מן דיאָ
הענר גינג האט אויף איין קרבן און תיכף
דער נאָך לוי דער טחיטה געבן :

"As soon as one has performed the order of the atonement, he should lay his hands on it, as the hands used to be laid on the sacrifices, and immediately after give it to be slaughtered." This custom, extensively prevalent amongst the Jews, proves abundantly the internal dissatisfaction of the Jewish mind with their own doctrines, and the deeply-rooted conviction of their heart, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. If they really believed that repentance, or the day of atonement itself, or almsgiving, or merits, either their own, or their forefathers, atoned for sin, they would never have devised such a custom as this. But the spirit of the Mosaic law has taken too deep a hold on the nation to suffer them to rest satisfied with any thing short of actual sacrifice; and as they have no high-priest and no altar now, they make a sad and desperate attempt to tranquillise the mind with this invention. The custom then, proves, that the rabbinical doctrine respecting the atoning power of repentance is not believed nor heartily received, even by the rabbins themselves, how, then, can a Jew hazard his salvation on a doctrine which is contrary to the law of Moses, and which its professors do not consider satisfactory? Will he rest upon the self-devised sacrifice of a cock? God nowhere promises pardon to this observance; and how can any man of sense be satisfied without a sure promise of the unchanging and unchangeable Creator? This trust is as unsatisfactory as any of those that we have already considered. Every one

of the Rabbinic hopes has proved unsafe on examination. Personal merit, the merit of ancestors, the blowing of the ram's horn, repentance, the present observance of the day of atonement, the sacrifice of a cock, all are either directly opposed to, or unwarranted by, the Word of God. How, then, is a Jew to obtain pardon for his sins? The custom which we have just considered, speaks the sense of the Jewish nation upon this subject, and plainly declares, that an atoning sacrifice is the only real hope. It expresses, in the first place, the heartfelt conviction, that every human being is guilty and needs an atonement. It prescribes a victim for man, woman, and child, yea, even for the unborn babe, thereby teaching that the nature of man is corrupt, and that the hereditary guilt, even where there is no actual transgression, must be washed away by the blood of atonement. It expresses, further, the Jewish opinion as to the nature of sacrifice, that the sins are laid upon the victim, and that the victim is substituted for the guilty. Nothing can be plainer than the prescribed formulary, "This is my substitute. This is my commutation. This is my atonement." It declares, further, that he who offers an atonement for another, must himself be free from guilt, for it requires the father of the family first to atone for himself, and then for those of his house. These are the recorded sentiments of the Jewish nation, expressed not only in words, but embodied in a solemn religious observance on the eve of their most sacred season. By this act, the Jews declare that an atonement by blood is absolutely necessary. The law of Moses makes the same declaration, by the appointment of all the rites for the day of atonement. Is it, then, likely that the God of Israel would leave his people without that which their hearts desire, and his law declares to be necessary for salvation? Judaism says, Yes. It affirms, by an act repeated every year, that sacrifice is necessary, and yet confesses, in its solemn prayers, that they have none. It asserts, therefore, that God has left them without that which is indispensable to procure forgiveness. Christianity presents a more merciful view of the Divine character. It does, indeed, acknowledge the necessity of atonement, but it presents a victim and a high-priest, whose one offering is sufficient for the sins of the whole world. It says, that God has left neither his own people nor the Gentiles without the means of forgiveness, but sent his righteous servant, the Messiah, to bear our sins in his own body upon the tree. The Priest after the order of

Melchisedek needed no atonement to take away his own sins first, for he had none. Born in a miraculous manner, by the power of God, his humanity inherited nothing of the guilt of Adam, and as the Lord our Righteousness, he could contract no taint of sin. He is, therefore, every way qualified to make an atonement for us all. Our Christian hope, therefore, is not in a cock, the sacrifice of which God never commanded, but in that great atonement which He appointed. Our faith, our hope, our trust, are all built upon God's promise, and cannot be better expressed than in his most holy words:—

הוא מחולל משעינו מדיכא מעונותינו מיסר
 שלומנו עליו ובחברו נרפא לנו :

"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."

It cannot, therefore, be said, that we Christians rest our hope upon an invention of our own. Our hope rests, not upon the dictates of our priests or rabbies, but upon the words which God himself spake by the mouth of his prophet. We can, therefore, confidently appeal to the Jews themselves to decide, which of the two hopes is the most reasonable. Both agreeing that an atonement, by the shedding of blood, is necessary for the remission of sins, Rabbinism tells its disciples to trust to a species of sacrifice nowhere mentioned in the Word of God. Christianity tells us to trust in the sacrifice of that great Redeemer, for whose salvation Jacob waited, whose atonement the Mosaic rites prefigured, and the Jewish prophets predicted. Their hope rests upon the unwarranted words of men; ours is built upon the Word of the living God, and is involuntarily confirmed by the rabbies themselves in the very custom which we have just considered. Even the nature of the victim is pointed out in the selection of the animal. גבר (gever) signifies both "a man" and "a cock," and thereby signifies, that a righteous man must be the sinful man's substitute: and so some of the rabbies say, that this animal, "a cock," was selected,—

כין ששמו גבר חמור' גבר בגבר :

"Because, as its name signifies 'a man,' there is a substitution of a man for man." (Orach Chaiim, 605.) The principles exactly agree, but Christianity is directed in their application by the Word of God, to Him who is, indeed, very man, but also THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and צדקו

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