

In light of these facts, also remember that Israel said with one voice and a promise to YHWH and to Moses:

“...All that YHWH has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!” So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which YHWH has made with you in accordance with all these words” (Shemot [Exodus] 24:7-8).

YHWH and His eternal Torah are truth; neither one can lie. Accordingly, because Israel (both houses) made a contract with YHWH and subsequently did not keep the contract nor did they repent, but continued as an adulteress in a sustained behavior of sin called **פשע** *pesha*, which basically is criminal activity worthy of **כרת** *karet* (being blotted out of Heaven’s *Book of Life*/spiritual excision, no participation in our future resurrection), the nation of people (individually and collectively) had no choice but to face a divine death sentence decreed in the Heavens. Here is where the New Testament record picks up on the story. On one side of Yeshua’s ministry, he tenaciously taught all Israel to do *teshuvah* (repentance) and to never again repeat the grave sins of the previous generations. He doggedly educated all Israel to make good on their national promise to obey the Torah, as stated above in Exodus 24:7-9. However, the other side of his ministry, and one that I believe is seriously misconstrued, or in some cases, altogether abandoned as something “pagan,” because of a supposed lack of precedent in the Tanakh, was that of Yeshua bringing about **כפרה**—*kaparah* (atonement) for Israel, thus Paul’s words:

...And I do not frustrate the grace of Elohim, for if righteousness came by the law then Messiah died for nothing.

Forgiveness and Atonement

According to the written Torah, crime deserves punishment, and damages from crime require restitution.¹ Even if the Torah would perpetually overlook punishment with one’s confession and repentance, we would be theologically amiss to say or even imply that it would also overlook restitution, which is an atonement. Forgiveness (**סליחה** *s’lichah*) is a characteristic trait of YHWH, but this is not the same thing as making proper restitution in order to satisfy a debt. Even with divine forgiveness, pardon, and mercy readily available, there must always be **כפרה** (*kaparah*) atonement (covering or payment). One cannot simply say “*forgive me*” without paying for damages, if damage was done. Torah demands that something must be put up for payment when an injury is inflicted.

¹ *B’midbar (Numbers) 5:5-8. Also, this concept is found throughout the Book of Exodus.*

Concerning the sins of Israel—individually and collectively as a nation, divine forgiveness is always available through confession and repentance;¹ nonetheless, there is the need to make amends or reparation in order to satisfy the Torah teaching on atonement.² This was the purpose of the animal offerings and priestly functions of the family of Aaron. They served a very important role and involved numerous types and shadows of something much, much greater; something that was yet to come—the personal and voluntary choice of Yeshua who would willingly die for the nation in order to provide **כַּפָּרָה** (*kapharah*) atonement (covering) for the sins of Israel.³ **Some believe that this is a concocted pagan Christian concept. I say, absolutely not.** Yeshua was a righteous man, completely obedient to our Father in Heaven and to His written commandments. Yeshua committed no crime against YHWH. But, it appears that he was a willing servant of Heaven, to do whatever it was that would satisfy the judgment of Elohim. In this, he was prepared to exchange his righteous soul-life for that of unrighteous Israel, through death. This process of exchange was to be offered in the name of all Israel as restitution for damages against YHWH and the Torah contract.⁴ This was necessary because Israel had no means or merit to satisfy its debt to the Master of Heaven. Although some might think I am “reaching” here, I can assure you that it is not at all as far-fetched as it might sound. In fact, I ran across three Rabbinic sources that discuss this concept (and I bring this up only because there are some who may feel the need to see it from the Rabbis before they will believe it), one from a Yom Kippur prayer, “...banished is the reward of superior beings,”⁵ and two from *Berachot 62b* and *Mo’ed Katan 28a*. Let us take a look at these sources, just to show you that even the Rabbis were thinking about it:

Yom Kippur Prayer on Superior beings, i.e., the Patriarchs. As a result of Israel’s sins, the merit of the Patriarchs was used up. Previously, people could be rewarded or spared from punishment as a result of Patriarchal merit. Now, we no longer have that merit. Nevertheless, God’s covenant with them not to destroy their offspring remains in effect for all time. A covenant, by definition, remains permanent.

¹ Ezekiel Chapter 18

² Vayikrah (Leviticus) Chapter 16; B’midbar (Numbers) Chapter 15; D’varim (Deuteronomy) 32:39-43.

³ Yochanan 11:49-52: ...But a certain one of them, Caiaphus, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.” Now this he did not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Yeshua was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of Elohim who are scattered abroad.

⁴ Colossians 2:14.

⁵ Artscroll Mesorah Series, *The Complete Artscroll Machzor Yom Kippur*. Brooklyn, N.Y., 1986, p. 614.

Talmud on the Righteous and Atonement. And He said to the Angel that destroyed the people, “It is enough.” [rab] R. Eleazar said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to the Angel: “Take a great man [rab] among them, through whose death many sins can be expiated for them.” At that time there died Abishai son of Zeruah, who was [singly] equal in worth to the greater part of the Sanhedrin.

Talmud on the Righteous and Atonement. Said R. Ammi, “Wherefore is the account of Miriam’s death placed next to the [laws of the] red heifer? To inform you that even as the red heifer afforded atonement [by the ritual use of its ashes], so does the death of the righteous afford atonement [for the living they have left behind].” R. Eleazar said, “Wherefore is [the account of] Aaron’s death closely followed by [the account of the disposal of] the priestly vestments? [To inform you] that just as the priest’s vestments were [means] to effect atonement, so is the death of the righteous [conducive to procuring] atonement.”

I find it fascinating that within the ranks of Rabbinic learning, **even they teach that the death of a very righteous man can gain atonement for the living.** On this note, let us now ask an all-important question that needs to be addressed: *Is there a Torah precedent that teaches the possibility that a righteous man can give up his soul life for the soul life of the unrighteous, for purposes of acquiring כפרה (kapharah) atonement for them?* In other words, *is there a Torah teaching that would support a righteous man’s willingness to lay down his righteous life and pay restitution on behalf of a bankrupt nation of unrighteous people, so that he might win atonement for those that lack the means to pay their own restitution?* Is there such a concept found in the Torah itself? I believe the answer is yes. There appears to be a precedent of this nature, and it is found in Exodus 32:30-35.

Recall that, after the incident of the golden calf at Mount Sinai, Moses himself said he was going to return to YHWH and try to gain כפרה (kapharah) atonement for the people. He had it in his mind and heart to approach YHWH and to ask for one of two things: 1) Forgive the nation for their sin and consider their actions as though it had no bearing on the overall plan of YHWH or 2) In the event that this type of forgiveness was not possible, then Moses was prepared to offer his own righteous self up and make himself the instrument that would satisfy an atonement requirement for Israel. If accepted, Moses would lose his place in *The Book of Life* in order to transfer his righteousness to the nation, so that they could live in the resurrection, and he would not. But, YHWH did not accept that approach from Moses, for reasons that would play out later in divine prophecy:

...And it came about on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to YHWH, **perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.**" Then Moses returned to YHWH, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, **please blot me out from Your book which You have written!**" And YHWH said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My angel shall go before you; nevertheless **in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them**" (Shemot 32:30-34).

It is clear that YHWH had a plan. It is clear that there was to be a future visitation to gain national atonement for all Israel and to fulfill Torah prophecy. This is likely the basis for Luke 19:43-44 and Daniel 9:24:

*For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, **because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.***

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.

There is nothing indicating that YHWH rejected the request of that righteous man Moses, to be restitution for Israel, on the basis of it being wrong or pagan. Rather, Moses' request was rejected because YHWH favored a future event, as if shrouded in a mystery; a day that would later unfold with the coming of YHWH's servant Yeshua, the prophet like Moses:¹

...blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear (Mattityahu 13:16-17).

Yeshua, like Moses, stepped in and saw the severe situation of his people, and offered to gain **כַּפָּרָה** (*kaparah*) atonement on behalf of Israel. It appears that he was able to satisfy what was not given to Moses to fulfill, a theme that is echoed in the *Brit HaChadashah*, when Yeshua said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."² Paraphrased, the idea may have sounded something like this:

¹ D'varim 18:15-19; Acts 3:18-23

² Yochanan 15:13

...Father in Heaven, I voluntarily want to fulfill your plan to provide an atonement exchange with Israel—transfer my righteousness to their account so that according to Your Torah, the judgment for their capital crimes can be satisfied and paid in full. Allow me to receive their deserved penalty of karet (spiritual excision) as required by the written Torah. I desire to satisfy their death judgment with my soul life. Spare all Israel and restore them to their rightful place of honor among the nations. Fulfill your good Word to the Patriarchs that You would give their descendants the inheritance of the Land that you promised them. Although Israel rightfully deserves death, I gladly want to gain atonement for them through my life. Thus, I am offering my blood, my soul life in place of theirs, that they might have a clean slate to begin again, and to never return to the idolatry and ways of their fathers.

According to the *Brit HaChadashah*, YHWH implemented the plan. In this, Yeshua took the “old man” of Israel’s Torah rebellion to the grave, and resurrected a new man of righteousness, paving the way for *Mashiach ben David*, Israel’s reigning King, and his anticipated Messianic kingdom, to bring about a unified Israel. Now, some might say that this “Torah precedent of atonement and exchange,” based on Exodus 32:30-34, is a doctrinal stretch. Still, there are others that might question why I left off verse 35 in my explanation:

Then YHWH smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

Is it possible that the subsequent death and punishment of this people in verse 35 fulfilled the words of verse 34, and made an atonement for the sins of the nation for their part in the worship of the Golden Calf? Not likely. Rather, I would ask the question: is it possible that a wicked person is able to make restitution and atonement on behalf of a nation?¹ Certainly, the people that were punished in Exodus 32:35 were neither righteous nor repentant, and so by virtue of their death, what amount of righteousness could they transfer to the account of their brethren, among the sons of Israel?

On a related note, I might add that the principle idea of forgiveness **and** a payment (as opposed to strictly asking for forgiveness with no payment) is also found in *B’resheet* 32:19-20 and 33:8-11, in the story of two brothers—Ya’acov and Esau. Here, we can see quite clearly that Jacob **WAS NOT** performing an atonement or an act of restitution, but he was nonetheless, seeking forgiveness from his brother Esau:

¹ C.f. *B’midbar* (Numbers) 35:20-34. This category of *כַּפָּרָה* (*kapharah*) atonement, concerns murderers and their life on the physical land of Israel, and in my opinion, has no bearing on the present example.

(Jacob thinking to himself) ...I will appease him (Esau) with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me (B'reshet 32:19-20).

(Conversation between Esau and Jacob) ...Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own." And Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of Elohim, and you have received me favorably. Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because Elohim has dealt graciously with me, and because I have plenty" (B'reshet 33:8-11).

Here is a Torah teaching showing one's gift attached to one's request for forgiveness and reconciliation. Similarly, we ask YHWH for forgiveness for our sin against His Name and His Law, individually and collectively as a nation, but what if we have nothing to bring to the table **WITH** our request for reconciliation and His forgiveness? The only other option is to obtain a wealthy benefactor to bankroll the giving of the gift. That is the idea behind the Offering of Yeshua. We cannot simply say to YHWH, "please forgive me for my sins" only to bring nothing to Him, or perhaps something that costs us nothing, such as what Hosea calls the "bullocks of our lips."¹ This reflects an image of sincere repentance, not atonement. Perhaps I need to give the Rabbi or Rabbis a little credit for coming up with something really truthful, when he (or they) said in their Yom Kippur commentary, "As a result of Israel's sins, the merit of the Patriarchs was used up. Previously, people could be rewarded or spared from punishment as a result of Patriarchal merit. Now, we no longer have that merit." As I see it, this opens the door to Yeshua's payment and gift tendered for the sins of Israel.

Denial of the Torah

For one to deny the Torah of Yeshua (which was nothing short of the written Torah of Moses restated), it meant the same thing as to deny Moses, YHWH, and the coming Torah restitution through Yeshua. The plan, as revealed through Yeshua's talmidim and Paul was this: to deposit an undeniably huge sum of righteousness to the credit and name of all Israel. Israel's account, resting in a place somewhere transparent to the human eye, was to be filled up with more righteousness than Israel could ever imagine. An audit of this account would show that **כַּפָּרָה** (*kaparah*) atonement/covering, was accomplished and a one-time lump-sum restitution applied against an unpaid balance.

¹ O Israel, return unto YHWH your Elohim; for you have fallen by your iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to YHWH: say unto him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the bullocks of our lips" (Hosea 14:1-2).

What is interesting, is that this transfer of Yeshua's great righteousness was not based on the Aaronic priesthood, its animal offerings, and frail kohanim, who were all subject to aging and death. Yeshua's transfer was based on a different system, called *the Order of Malki-tzedek* (Psalm 110:4). This Order was destined to produce a kohen or priest of a different class, a different grade. As a priest of this category, Yeshua gained merit, first for himself in another dimension because of the capital sins of Israel, that fell upon him on the execution stake. Then, once purified, he moved to gain merit for the people, which utilized his blood and not the blood of bulls and goats. Officiating as a *Malki-tzedek* (*King of Righteousness*), Yeshua was able to forever take his place at the right hand of the Father, in a mysterious Temple of Heaven, unseen by any human eye, and there, act as an ongoing kohen for all Israel.¹ Now, it appears clear to this author that it is up to Israel to accept the gift of restitution for damages done to YHWH and thus, to return to the commandments.

If I understand the scenario correctly, it appears that the many who repented and returned to the commandments of the Torah while living prior to Yeshua, looked forward to the atonement that would be accomplished through him and received a reward because of their faith in YHWH. Likewise, it is the duty of those who repent and return to the commandments of the Torah while living after the finished work of Yeshua, to look backwards to the day when the atonement was accomplished through Yeshua. This is one good reason why we must continue to perform the annual fast of *Yom Kippur* in the seventh month on the 10th of the month.² In finalizing my thoughts, I would like to weave for you an analogy that fastens all these ideas together.

Analogy of the Time-Sensitive Deposit

Suppose that you are a worthless person with no kindness, no morals, no values, no love for anyone, no desire or conviction to keep Yehovah's commandments. Furthermore, because of your bad choices in life, your bank account is deeply in the minus, so much so that you are essentially bankrupt and unable to make even one payment towards the debt. Now, suppose you were notified that someone came along, unknown to you, and satisfied the debt, made restitution for you, and turned your account into an asset account in good standing. But, in order to get full credit in your account, you were required to meet some conditions. You were required to amend your ways and to learn to keep Yehovah's commandments. What would you do? I would think that you would want to act on such a gift by turning your life around.

¹ *These are all concepts that I gleaned from reading in Leviticus and its related teachings in the New Testament book of Hebrews.*

² *Vayikrah 23:26-32*

Suppose the same basic scenario existed as above, but in this case, because of your empty debt-filled life and unwillingness to amend your ways, you always treated the news of the deposit with great scorn. Whenever you received bank statements showing the deposit with its conditions for acceptance, you always threw them away, because you were unwilling to change your ways. Perhaps, in a similar scenario, you willingly accepted the deposit and only pretended to meet the conditions, but in fact, never changed. In either case, it would not modify the fact that the debt had been paid; it would not alter the fact that the transaction, in reality, occurred. So, what happens? The deposit made to your credit will just sit there, waiting for you to accept it and meet its conditions requiring you to amend your ways; to turn your worthless behavior into righteous behavior, keep Yehovah's commandments, and start anew. But, if your time is up and you go to your grave without ever having taken the gift with its conditions for change, then it becomes your loss. In other words, use it or lose it.

Now, let us take a look at how this analogy might translate for us in the *Brit HaChadashah*. Here, Yeshua made a large deposit of an asset called righteousness, into your name. It follows the pattern of what Moses tried to do for the nation after the incident of the golden calf, but YHWH had another plan for a prophet like Moses to complete the transaction at a later time. Because of Yeshua's status, producing the transfer of an asset called righteousness to your credit, your name is penciled into the Book of Life. Why only penciled in? Because with this gift, you have a choice. If you accept the righteousness with its conditions for change then your name is permanently written into the Book and you will gain entry into the resurrection and coming kingdom of *Mashiach ben David*, when that time arrives. If you never repent and never return to Yehovah and His commandments, as Yeshua taught, but you continue in the religious traditions and ways of your unrepentant fathers, then even though there was full credit made to your account and it is waiting for your acceptance signature, it will nonetheless fade away with your death, and when *Mashiach ben David* comes to establish Messianic rule, you will be refused entry into His Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven.¹

So, in a sense, the deposit is time-sensitive. It is based on your life in this world. If you make confession and return to Yehovah's commandments while alive in this life, then it is like signing your name on the line, to take full credit for the deposit, which you will be able to use in the resurrection. If you do not repent to Yehovah, then you will be bankrupt when the resurrection occurs. The choice is yours.

¹ *Daniel 12:1-2. Mattityahu 7:21-23. Also, the parable of the "ten virgins" in Matt 25.*

For Paul, there could be no compromise as to what had been shown to him, which is why he said, “...And I do not frustrate the grace of Elohim, for if righteousness came by the law (*Pharisaic works of the law*) then Messiah died for nothing.” If one were able to gain righteousness by observing laws and traditions contrary to what was written down for us in the commandments of the Torah of Moses, then certainly the atonement and restitution made by Yeshua would have produced nothing significant. On the other hand, if no one is able to gain righteousness by observing laws and traditions contrary to what was written down for us in the commandments of the Torah, then the atonement and restitution made by Yeshua is very important and very much needed. The scribes and Pharisees through their *works of the law* could not produce what Yeshua gained for national Israel. Likewise, the *goyish* nations with their religious traditions and customs could not produce what Yeshua gained for national Israel. For Paul, it was either the written Law or the Pharisaic oral law; it could not be both. If one follows the traditions of man, then one is a friend of the world, and thus, an enemy of YHWH. James, the brother of Yeshua was in agreement with this, saying:

You adulteresses (an allusion to both houses of Israel as referenced in Jeremiah 3:6-25), do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward Elohim? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of Elohim (Ya’acov 4:4-5).

Indeed, if enough righteousness could be gained to pay down our death judgment and to make restitution, by keeping the laws of mankind, whether Rabbinic *halachot* or Christianity’s traditions, then Messiah’s transfer of righteousness to the name of Israel—individually and collectively as a people (and all those who join its ranks according to Isaiah 56)—will prove to be of no benefit. Only when you meet the condition to turn back to the written Torah and choose life, only then do you gain **כפרה** (*kaparah*) atonement (payment and satisfaction of debt), a clean slate, forgiveness of sins against the covenant, and enough righteousness to grant you a benefit in the life of the world to come. But, you must return to the Torah to gain these rewards. Again, either use Yeshua’s deposit of righteousness or lose it. It is a special time deposit that cannot be accessed from the grave. Of course, we know that no one keeps the Torah perfectly, nor is there a Torah commandment that requires us to keep its Laws without failure. But, what we do know is that YHWH credits with righteousness, any and all who turn to Him in trusting faith and follow His written commandments from the heart, and as best as they can. This produces an eternal reward accessible in the life of the world to come. Then, with the faith of those who do this, there will be a great benefit from the transfer; your life will be reckoned as righteous. Turn now to the commentary that follows for Galatians Chapter Three.