

Thousands of Witnesses have died for lack of a blood transfusion. The teaching that a person is forbidden by the Mosaic Law to accept a blood transfusion is based on Leviticus 17:14. This verse reads, "You are not to eat the blood of any flesh." There are no Jewish Rabbis today, however, who would accept the Witness's interpretation that this verse restricts blood transfusions. The verse, in fact, has to do with the heathen practice of drinking the blood of animals in their idolatrous worship.

Furthermore, Jesus taught that healing and saving life satisfied the requirements of the Law. The previous article demonstrated that the religious leaders accused Jesus of transgressing the Law of the Sabbath. When confronted, Jesus inquired of the Jewish leaders, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm...to save a life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). This is exactly what the Witness should ask himself when he/she is faced with an accident or disease which requires a blood transfusion.

In the following letter, I continue my argument for blood transfusions.

Hi

It is early in the morning and even though it rained all last week, the pollen count is still high. Green pollen covers my furniture every morning. I am happy anyway because the builders have completed the basement and have started work on framing the house.

In my last letter, I argued that Jesus would not have condoned the withholding of a blood transfusion since this practice results in the death of fathers, mothers, and children. According to Jesus, the Law of the Sabbath was satisfied by doing good and saving a life. Though a Jew was to be stoned for working on the Sabbath, Jesus healed on the Sabbath. Confronting angry religious leaders Jesus inquired, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4).

There is a story in the life of King Saul that exemplifies this merciful reading of the Law. King Saul's men had just been in battle. They were weary and famished. In the narrative found in 1 Samuel 14:31-36, we read that the soldiers, after the battle, "rushed upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground; and the people ate them WITH THE BLOOD." Saul knew that eating the blood of animals was a transgression of the Law. He declares, "the people are sinning against Yahweh by eating with the blood." But a priest atoned for their "sin" through a sacrifice and said, "Let us draw near to the LORD here." No one was stoned because it was a "good" thing. It was done to save lives.

Furthermore, when the religious leaders accused the disciples of breaking the Law by plucking grain on the Sabbath, Jesus condoned the actions of the disciples. He narrated a story from the life of David in order to prove His point that satisfying a need satisfied the requirements of the Law (Mark 2:23-28).

Jesus narrated the story of David's arrival at the sanctuary of the LORD. This arrival occurred when David and his men were fleeing from King Saul. They were terribly hungry. Because there was no other food available, Abiathar the high priest supplied them with the showbread. The Law dictated that only the priests could eat the showbread. Anyone else who ate it was to be stoned. Because there was a need, however, David and his men were given the forbidden showbread by the High Priest. Thus, the Law was not broken when a need was taken care of.

It stands to reason that saving a life through a blood transfusion is a "good" thing. Though the Mosaic Law requires that a person who drinks blood should be stoned, the demands of the Law are satisfied by doing "good" and "saving life." Perhaps Jehovah's Witnesses should consider revising their belief that blood transfusions are against God's Law in light of Jesus' proclamation to do "good" and "save life."

Your friend, Barbara