Q4b. Why do the Jews need a Redeemer to reverse their impossible spiritual condition, as Adam, Abraham, and David had realized? Why can’t Jews redeem themselves by the Law?

In their long history as a people, Jews have faced the direst of threats from an often hostile humanity. Yet, they have survived. It is no wonder that Jews see redemption as a problem to be addressed with earnest ingenuity, for Jewish survival is at stake.

But, consider the fact that the Jewish line traces to the line of humanity’s first father, Adam. Starting with Adam, then Abraham, then David, the fathers faced not just hardship but impossible conditions and certain extinction. Adam’s sin and the pall of spiritual death which clung to his naked flesh. Abraham’s powerless flesh and his lack of a son in the midst of a foreign and hostile people. And, despite having a heart for God, David’s fall into adultery and murder, incurring God’s judgment.

At any number of critical points in the lives of Israel’s *avot,* the future of the nation could have been certainly terminated. But, faced with threats and conditions which could not be fixed by human ability, these fathers turned in helpless faith to the Lord God and His promise of a redemptive Seed, a chosen Mashiach. Only one anointed with both earthly right and spiritual might could defeat threats which were not just earthly but spiritual in power. Consider the impossibly threatening conditions endangering Jewish survival, and their need for the Lord God’s **redemptive Mashiach** and not human self-redemption.

First, consider how Adam’s first sin yoked him and his generations to an **infinite debt to sin** and its **dark lord**, the deceiving serpent, whose “head” could only be bruised by the **spiritually victorious** **Zera** of the Woman (Gen. 3:15). Remember that in Egypt, each Israelite owed Pharoah a **life-debt** following the practice Joseph established during the famine (Ex. 47:18-9), and it was this life-debt which enslaved the Israelites to Pharoah. However, when Adam sinned, he **died** spiritually (Gen. 2:17), incurring an **infinite sin** **debt.** For, when Adam and Eve died spiritually, they defiled with death the glorious “image” and “likeness” of God, which had been entrusted to them. They traded life with God as his heirs for spiritual death, a state in which they were crushed under their infinite sin debt and pressed into the servitude who enticed them to sin, the dark serpent. Thus, Adam and his generations were saddled with an infinite sin debt to death, and this spiritual condition darkened their lives on earth.

If, under their indebted servitude to Pharoah, the Israelites were compelled to live godless lives of unbelief, for they could not hear the words of the Lord due to their “broken spirit” and “harsh slavery” (Exodus 6:9). How much more does humanity’s **infinite indebted servitude** to **spiritual death** leave no choice but for Godlessness and unbelief? Facing this hopeless loss, Adam and Eve could only give up their own works to rely on the Lord God’s provision, letting the Lord God “clothe” them in freshly sacrificed garments (Gen. 3:21) rather than insisting on wearing their Self-made “fig-leaves” (Gen. 3:7). As Adam’s generations, we all are also burdened by an infinite, indebted servitude to death. Rather than relying on our own Self-works to cover up our nakedness, we are to turn to Lord God alone and His promise of Redemption in the anointed *Zera,* the Seed of the Woman, who alone is appointed to “crush” the Serpent’s head, breaking His dark power over us (Gen. 3:15). Adam and Eve had such a **faith** in the **promised “Seed,”** for the rabbis in Genesis Rabbah suppose Eve is referring to Mashiach when she talks of “another Seed” in Genesis 4:25.

Second, consider that the **deadness** of Abraham’s **flesh** made it humanly impossible for him to achieve the Lord’s good purpose for himself, so Abraham could only **believe** in the spiritually **Life-giving** **Seed** to be multiplied as a blessing to all nations (Gen. 22:17-18). When Adam’s sin introduced “death” into our line (Gen. 3:6), this “death” about which the Lord had forewarned would immediately cast humanity into a **spiritual condition** of death, a state of *tsalmaveth* or death’s shadow (Is. 9:2) and eventually an **earthly decay** which would return the flesh to the dusty earth (Gen. 3:19). Because the *deadness* of Abraham’s aging flesh made it impossible for him to accomplish God’s purposes on his own, he had to “believe” the Lord in dependent faith, and this faith was “counted” to him as “righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). In helpless “flesh,” Abraham had to trust in the Lord’s power alone and **the Redemption** of the **anointed Zera** to bring the **promised abounding life** to multiply like the stars and bring the Lord’s blessing to all earth’s families.

In the flesh, Abraham could only focus on and “**believe**” in the redemptive *Zera* to bring to pass all God’s promises, and this faith was “counted” to him as “righteousness” (15:6). Yet, Abraham’s children face an even graver obstacle, the **spiritual deadness** of their **flesh** absent of the Lord’s spiritual life. Yet, Israel, furnished with God’s Law, presumes to attain a *spiritual life* and earn a Self-righteousness, even though they are still helpless in their spiritually dead flesh. But, does the Law have the power to bring spiritual life to those in dead flesh? Indeed, the Law reveals the commands of God that constitute “life” and the evil that brings “death” (Deut. 30:15). The Law is a roadmap to life, but can this roadmap actually transport to their destination those trapped in the wreckage of dead flesh? Sinai itself demonstrates the powerlessness of the Law to give spiritual life, for the Israelites were still “naked” in their spiritually dead flesh even after receiving the Law, saying, “do not let God speak to us, lest we die” (Ex. 20:19). Even Moses, the author of Torah himself, is powerless in his flesh to keep God’s commands perfectly, even if he has the Law to help him, for God warned him that he would “die” because: “you broke faith with me… you did not treat me as holy” (Deut. 32:51).

Thus, when a person seeks to hold on to a **Self-righteousness**, earned by keeping the Law perfectly, they are judged when they fall into sin as Moses did, for the Lord God warns that when a self-righteous person relies on the Law but breaks it, then “None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die” (Ezek. 18:26). However, when a person well aware of their powerless condition of their **dead flesh** so trust in the Lord God and His chosen *Zera,* the Mashiach, for life, then that person’s redemptive faith is “counted” to them as “righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

Finally, consider David, a man after God’s heart whose righteous words filled the *Psalms*, but whose spiritual condition of dead flesh and life among others of dead flesh eventually fell to the encompassing spiritual darkness by sinning against God in adultery and murder. Yet, his recognition of his fallen state, saying “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (Ps. 51:3) and his repentance led him to **trust** in the Lord God’s promised *Zera* (2 Sam. 7:12) who would bear God’s “discipline” for sin (7:14) to build an eternal house for David and God (7:16). For, it was this Davidic Mashiach who would himself be David’s “righteousness” (Jer. 23:6) for he would take away his sins and give his people an “everlasting righteousness” (Zech. 3:9 and Dan. 9:24).

To conclude, the *avot* proved to be the people of God because they were the people redeemed by God. The Lord God’s redemption was not to equip his people with the right tools so that they could achieve Self-Redemption by earning a Self-Righteousness. Instead, such a striving for Self-Redemption echoes the original fall into unbelief, where our first parents were enticed to usurp the Lord’s position to Self-determine and establish “good” and “evil” of their own design, a Self-determined righteousness apart from God’s Lordship. Such a Self-Righteousness would mean Adam and Eve would still be covered in fig leaves, Abraham would discover a fertility drug, David would spending an eternity to self-atone for his own sins. Instead, these *avot* accepted their own *neediness* and trusted in the promised *Zera*, God’s Mashiach, alone to redeem them and bring about God’s good purposes. Obeying *Torah* not as a tool of Self-Righteousness but as interacting with their holy God, who alone redeems.