

PART ONE



THE DOOR INTO THE KINGDOM. The door into the Malchut haYHWH (the Kingdom of YHWH) is Teshuvah (Repentance) and Mikveh (Baptism). Both the neviim and Yeshua preached *Teshuvah*, followed by *Mikveh* (Baptism). Baptism is a requirement that is intrinsic in Hebrew culture. Indeed, when Yochanan the Matbeel began his public ministry, he preached teshuvah and performed baptism and notice that he offered these things as **the only condition of entry into the Malchut**. *"In those days came Yochanan the Matbeel, proclaiming in the wilderness of Yahudah, and saying, Make teshuvah: for the malchut ha Shamayim is offered"* Mattityahu (Matthew) 3:1-2. When Yeshua began his public ministry and began to teach Yisra'el, he did not set aside the foundation of repentance and baptism that Yochanan had preached and that of the prophets but introduced the Kingdom upon the same condition. Observe, *"From that time YHWH began to proclaim, and to say, Teshuvah: for the malchut ha shamayim is offered"* Mattityahu (Matthew) 4:17. *"And saying, the time is fulfilled, and the malchut of YHWH is at hand: make teshuvah, and believe the Besorah"* Marqus (Mark) 1:15. Yeshua himself had undergone water baptism, not as an outward sign of repentance but an inward sign of the Kingdom coming among men. Yeshua said to Yochanan, *"Allow it to be so now: for this will allow us to fulfill all tzedakah (righteousness). Then he allowed Him"* Mattityahu (Matthew) 3:15. The fact is there is no entry into the Kingdom without sincere repentance and full immersion in water, a condition most believers can readily accept because it is a "standard" teaching in most Hebrew-based religions. The confusion here for most believers in the Elohim of Yisra'el is over what Teshuvah and Mikveh are. These terms have suffered much misinterpretation and misinformation; therefore, what do they mean in Hebrew? We quote from a chapter in our book, *The Breach Maker Series 700* on **TESHUVAH**. "Teshuvah is a pinnacle and fundamental principle of the Torah because it is the only pathway appointed by YHWH for His forgiveness and into His Kingdom. Ironically, it is one of the most misunderstood principles or truths of the Torah. In Judaism, it is an elementary term because it explains to Torah keepers the concept of sin, repentance, and forgiveness. Still, few have discovered its revolutionary potential and experienced its transforming power. Teshuvah is required when there is a clear and willful violation of the Torah. In the Hebrew Scriptures, this act is represented by two verbs: שׁוּב *shuv* (to return) and נָחַם *nicham* (to experience conviction). It combines both aspects of forgiveness: turning from evil and turning toward good. Teshuvah, in Hebraic understanding, is mainly about reparation and compensation. It is never a matter of simply apologizing or repenting for the wrong done. Teshuvah is generally not required for sins of neglect or omission. These were covered through the system of sacrifices that YHWH had put in with the Temple, which is fulfilled in the atonement of Yeshua. Through his sacrifice, we can now boldly enter into the sacred place, but not so when we intentionally break the commandments of the Written Torah. The prophet admonished that *"the soul that sins, it shall die"* Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:4. Teshuvah is primarily a spiritual journey, but it is a journey that is interwoven with mitzvah. It is a process involving liturgy, appropriate deeds, and action. Teshuvah always involves three parties when we break a commandment of the Torah: The principal (YHWH), the offender (the transgressor), and the offended (the victim). Teshuvah incurs obligations for both the offender and the offended. We will start by defining the obligations of the offender. **THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE OFFENDER.** Under the Torah, the offender must first settle his obligations with the offender and then with YHWH. When an offense is committed against a person, a CLAIM is incurred against the offender. This claim is in the form of LOSS or DAMAGES incurred when the offender sinned against the offended. The treatment and settlement of the loss or damages define the obligations of the offended under teshuvah. The Torah teaches that there are six essential requirements in the principle of teshuvah. It is these requirements that define the obligation or the

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responsibilities of the offender. One is not considered justified or redeemed according to the Torah unless they have fulfilled ALL six requirements. One who follows and completes these steps to teshuvah is called a "penitent" or *chozer be-teshuvah*. The requirements are: 1) Recognition of one's act as transgressions (*hakarat ha-chet*). 2) Contrition (*charatah*). 3) Desisting from sin (*azivat ha-chet*) 4) Restitution where possible (*peira'on*). 5) Confession (*vidui*). 6) Baptism (*mikveh*). The first four requirements pertain to the offender's obligations to their victims, and the last two obligations pertain to the offender's obligations to YHWH. It is important to understand that these requirements are not a formula but a PROCESS since one can start at any stage and move from there to complete the process. Further, this process has no shortcuts or time limits; every requirement is mandatory and must be completed in the proper manner and spirit. Should one fail to complete a stage, there are consequences of which one will learn as one understands the purpose of each stage. Explanatory notes: Teshuvah is a process that always leads to the DELIVERANCE of the transgressor. Tehillim (Psalms) 51 is of special significance here because it demonstrates the right attitude that is required for hakaret ha-chet. Of particular importance in this Psalm is Meleck David's plea; "*Create in me a clean lev, O Elohim; and renew a right ruach (spirit) within me.*" David clearly understood the necessity of having a humble heart and a teachable spirit, without which the Ruach cannot do His work to illuminate hidden sin. Behind every sinful deed is a selfish motive that brings reproach to a believer. It is the action of the Ruach haKodesh that brings enlightenment to the offender about these motives. Even the transgressor's own attempts to understand their actions will be misleading without the illumination of the Set-Apart Spirit. King David recognized this shortfall in his own understanding and confessed, "*Who can understand his own errors? Cleanse me from secret sin*" Tehillim (Psalms) 19:12. It is these secret sins that are the very source of why we continue to transgress the Torah. Shaul, the Apostle of YHWH, called these secret sins "*the hidden things of shame*" Qorintyah Bet (Second Corinthians) 4:2. Hidden within the subconscious of the sinner are behavioral patterns that are the result of forgotten or childhood hurts that only the Ruach can see and reveal to the transgressor. The Torah as a guide enables the offender to intelligently identify these problems as sins and obtain their complete deliverance. **Hakarat ha-chet**. The stage of hakaret ha-chet involves an intelligence analysis of one's actions, and it presumes belief in the moral code. It holds that the offender has thought about what they have done and has reflected on the underlying reasons (motives) for their actions. It involves recognizing such actions in oneself as more than just an accidental lapse. For example, the simple act of lying is breaking the Torah, but the underlying motivation could be fear, anger, covetousness, etc. Unless one acknowledges the real reasons for their behavior, they will not be able to complete hakaret ha-chet and will only go on to offend again. Underlying this stage is the assumption that the offender has a basic knowledge of the Torah; otherwise, they will not know what constitutes sin. Therefore, they cannot do hakaret ha-chet. A person who does not know the Torah or has rejected the Torah has no basis for performing hakaret ha-chet. They may understand the motivation behind their behavior, but without the Torah, they will not consider what they have done to be sin- "*for by the Torah comes the da'at (knowledge) of sin*" Romiyah (Romans) 3:20. It is the Torah that is the basis of true conviction and righteousness. Explanatory notes: Teshuvah is a process that always leads to the ABSOLUTION of the transgressor. Charatah is the point where the transgressor makes that life-changing decision to return to YHWH, expressed in the Hebrew term *aliyah* or to return. It is comparable to the point in the story of the Prodigal Son in Luka (Luke) 15, where he made the decision to return to his father's house and apologize for his wrongdoing. In order for one to arrive at this decision, there must be a humbling of the soul. Traditionally and appropriately, this stage is

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expressed as a humbling of one's body position. For instance, when Melech Dawid realized the sin he had committed with Bat-Sheva, the wife of Uriyah, and that the child he had fathered was destined to die, he fasted and lay all night on the ground (Schmuel Bet (Second Samuel) 12:16. In other words, David did what many others had done in the Scripture; he covered himself in sackcloth and ashes, a Hebraic expression for kneeling and prostrating. In all of the admonishments of the neviim (prophets) where teshuvah is prescribed and the people responded, the acceptable response of the pertinent sinner was always sackcloth and ashes. In every situation, YHWH was always faithful to absolve their sin and to restore His people. The TaNaK provides us with numerous examples. In two notable individuals, King Dawid and King Hizqiyahu (Hezekiah), who sat at death's door, were absolved and delivered of their situation once they repented their transgressions. **Charatah.** The stage of charatah involves an inner conviction of the wrong done, and it presumes mental soundness. It holds that the offender has expressed inner sorrow for their actions, knowing that their sin has hurt others and alienated them from their Creator. The offender must express disappointment at having failed to keep YHWH's commandments and one's own moral standards. It may encompass feelings of being lost or trapped, of anguish at one doings, or perhaps silence. For example, after realizing that lying breaks the Torah, one expresses deep remorse for their failure. Underlying this stage is the assumption that the offender is not mentally incapacitated or under any duress; otherwise, they are incapable of receiving charatah. An offender who is mentally unsound is unable to comprehend the intents and consequences of their actions; they are comparable to the state of a child. Likewise, a transgressor who is under duress they are unable to identify with the victim's pain because they are being compelled to act out of fear and preservation. **Azivat ha-chet.** The stage of azivat ha-chet is neither a moral-intellectual analysis nor an emotion; it is an action and presumes physical wellness. It suggests that the offender ceases from sin and any activities that induce that behavior and apologizes for wrongdoing. Desisting from sin involves actually stopping the sinful action, consciously repressing thoughts and fantasies about the sinful activity, and making a firm commitment never to commit the sinful act again. For example, if what motivated the offender to lie was to continue an immoral relationship, then he must immediately stop and apologize to his victims. Underlying this stage is the assumption that the offender is physically well; otherwise, they are incapable of meeting the requirement of azivat ha-chet. A believer who is physically unwell is incapable of doing azivat ha-chet until they have recovered. This is because azivat ha-chet requires that one is physically able to perform their obligations. He who is physically sick does not need teshuvah but healing. Yeshua qualified this action, *"They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"* Mattityahu (Matthew) 9:11. It is the sinner he taught that needs teshuvah and not the sick, hence the reason why he healed them first. Explanatory notes: Teshuvah is a process that leads to the HEALING of the transgressor. When Yisra'el responded to Yeshayahu's call to repentance, YHWH promised that healing would break forth in the land, *"Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health (healing) shall spring forth speedily: and your tzedakah (righteousness) shall go before you; and the tifereth (glory) of YHWH shall be your reward"* Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 58. This is only possible when the transgressor has taken concrete steps to amend their ways. The primary focus of azivat ha-chet is to free the offender from what holds the offender captive. This can be seen in the ministry of Yochanan haMatbeel (John the Baptist). When the Pharisees and Scribes came to Yochanan for Mikveh, he instructed them to first *"Bring forth, therefore, fruits of perfect Teshuvah"* Mattityahu (Matthew) 3:8. Said differently, John taught them that in order to be baptized by him, it was a requirement that they deal with the source of their sin being their pride and arrogance. The act of apologizing for the wrong committed without

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dealing with the cause is hypocrisy. Saying that one is sorry only acknowledges that injury has occurred, but the cause may remain. Without dealing with the root, the fruit will not change. This stage demands that the transgressor takes accountability for the cause of his behavior and takes action to correct the cause; taking responsibility for one's transgressions means removing the cause or source that induces one to sin. **Peira'on**. The stage of peira'on is the act of making good, the loss caused by one's actions, and it presumes a financial ability. It suggests that the offending party restores or makes good the loss that was incurred. In some circumstances, it requires that the offender not only restores what was lost but also compensates for the loss of the victim's time or income. This is in accordance with the commandment in Wayiqra (Leviticus) 6:5 to restore the principal and add a fifth part. For example, if lying caused a loss of property or reputation to the individual, they were required to make it good and compensate the victim's time. Underlying this stage is the assumption that the offender is financially able in the sense that they have the means or at least the ability to repay or restore the loss that was incurred. A poor believer, by circumstances of their situation, would be incapable of performing peira'on if the loss of property was beyond their means to pay. Peira'on requires that one is in a financial condition to make good the loss that has been caused but not to the point where the offender is made destitute, i.e., without a means to live. If the offender is able to compensate in some other way, i.e., voluntary labor, then this is a comparable settlement. Explanatory notes: Teshuvah is a process that leads to the victim's COMPENSATION. In the example of Zakkai in Luka (Luke) 19, the Scriptures testify that Zakkai promised to restore what he had taken by false accusation fourfold. This was in accord with the requirement of the Torah that was stated earlier. Immediately after Zakkai pledged to compensate his victims, Yeshua said that 'salvation had come to this bayit (house).' If the offender refuses to compensate, the victim is entitled to apply for judgment under Scripture. However, it was a great shame among the Netsarim community to have a matter between Torah keepers settled by a secular court. *"How dare any of you, having a matter against another Yisraelite, go to court before the unsaved, and not before a Bet Din of the Yisraelite kidushim (disciples)?"* Qorintyah Alef (First Corinthians) 6:1. For this reason, we are commanded to set up *Bet Din* (religious court), and this was generally the task of the elders to choose men who were worthy and capable of the task called *shophtim*. This restriction does not apply to a ger (non-Torah keeper); believers are free to take a ger to a secular court. However, we are also cautioned to settle every matter amicably. *"Do not rush to strive, lest you know not what to do in the end, when your neighbor has put you to shame. Debate your cause with your neighbor himself; and do not disclose a secret to another: Lest he that hears it puts you to shame, and your bad reputation never leaves"* Mishle (Proverbs) 25:8. In other words, the best solution is, to be honest. **Vidui**. The stage of vidui has two forms: ritual and personal. It presumes knowledge of the customs of Yisra'el. Ritual confession is the liturgies of confession that one would say during their set prayer time. On the other hand, personal confession is one's own words of apology that are inserted into the liturgy at designated moments. Underlying this is the assumption that the person knows and observes the customs of prayer in Yisra'el; otherwise, one is incapable of doing vidui. These customs and traditions are outlined in the Siddur (a book of arrangement or order) that sets out the liturgies and order for daily prayer. A believer who does not know the customs of Yisra'el does not understand the appropriate protocols for approaching our Elohim YHWH in prayer. Contrary to the beliefs of the Christian Church, Teshuvah is not something that is done on the spur of the moment and in whatever fashion one desires. In the Hebrew Scriptures, prayer was always an activity that was timed and ordered according to the customs of Yisra'el. Hence, we find that it was the custom of the neviim (prophets) to pray three times a day,

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and they prayed according to the liturgy that the Temple priests had set forth. Teshuvah is a process that always leads to the JUSTIFICATION of the transgressor. The pathway of teshuvah has always included set prayer, and it has been this way in Yisra'el since the days of Moshe. Hence why elongated and spontaneous prayer is generally not encouraged in TaNaK of, which teaches, *"Be not hasty with your mouth, and let not your lev (heart) be hasty to utter anything before Elohim: for Elohim is in the shamayim (heaven), and you upon the earth: therefore let your words be few"* Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) 5:2. It is the custom of Yisra'el to pray with our heads covered and the body anointed. We are commanded to put on tzitziyot, according to Bamidbar (Numbers) 315:37-41, a mitzvah that we now fulfill with the prayer shawl or the tallit, which is representative of the Tabernacle of Moshe. The practice of anointing the person (Shemoth (Exodus) 28:41), the altar (Shemoth (Exodus) 29:36), and the tabernacle (Shemoth (Exodus) 30:26) before undertaking one's priestly duty is a compulsory requirement of the Torah. As believers, we are priests under the order of Melech-Tzedek (Melchizedek) melech of Salem (Beresheeth (Genesis) 14:18), of which is the priesthood of our Messiah Yeshua (Ivrim (Hebrews) 5). One is, therefore, required to anoint his body as a priest unto YHWH and his tallit as his set-apart tabernacle and the place where one prays as his alter in fulfillment of the pattern given to Moshe. The most appropriate time that this was done was during *ha-ma'ariv* (the evening prayer), where prayer could be extended without inconvenience. Explanatory notes: Teshuvah is a process that always leads to the JUSTIFICATION of the transgressor. The pathway of teshuvah has always included set prayer, and it has been this way in Yisra'el since the days of Moshe. Hence why elongated and spontaneous prayer is generally not encouraged in TaNaK which teaches, *"Be not hasty with your mouth, and let not your lev (heart) be hasty to utter anything before Elohim: for Elohim is in the shamayim (heaven), and you upon the earth: therefore let your words be few"* Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) 5:2. It is the custom of Yisra'el to pray with our heads covered and the body anointed. We are commanded to put on tzitziyot, according to Bamidbar (Numbers) 15:37-41, a mitzvah that we now fulfill with the prayer shawl or the tallit, which is representative of the Tabernacle of Moshe. The practice of anointing the person (Shemoth (Exodus) 28:41), the altar (Shemoth (Exodus) 29:36), and the tabernacle (Shemoth (Exodus) 30:26) before undertaking ones priestly duty is a compulsory requirement of the Torah. As believers, we are priests under the order of Melech-Tzedek (Melchizedek) Melech of Salem (Beresheeth (Genesis) 14:18), of which is the priesthood of our Messiah Yeshua (Ivrim (Hebrews) 5). One is, therefore, required to anoint his body as a priest unto YHWH and his tallit as his set-apart tabernacle and the place where one prays as his alter in fulfillment of the pattern given to Moshe. The most appropriate time this was done was during *ha-ma'ariv* (the evening prayer), where prayer could be extended without inconvenience. **Mikveh.** The stage of mikveh is the completion of this process. The term mikveh in Hebrew literally means any gathering of waters but is specifically used in Jewish law for the waters or bath for ritual immersion. It presumes knowledge and understanding of kabbalah. Mikveh is not about cleansing sin; it is about removing the impurities of sin; after one has been forgiven of their trespasses, there remains on both the body and soul of the transgressor a residue of sin. Water (*mayim*) has a unique property that is not understood: it removes the hold of these impurities on the soul in the form of reoccurring memories or wounds. Underlying this stage is the assumption that the transgressor understands Jewish Kabbalah. In Kabbalah's teaching, *mayim* is a bridge to the realm of the Divine as water connects the outside of the earth to the inside, so water connects one to His Creator. Sin breaks this link in, which water restores. Kabbalah explains the reason why the High Priest (*Kohen haGadol*) dipped himself five times in water. The first time was for cleansing; the second was for purification; the third was for sanctification; the fourth

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was a new beginning, and the final was to enter into the oneness of the Set-Apart Name. Explanatory notes: Teshuvah is a process that always leads to the PURIFICATION of the transgressor. Ritual immersion in a water bath has been part of Torah observance life for millenniums and is a standard in Judaism. Jewish men took a mikveh each Sabbath. Women took a mikveh after each monthly period. On Yom Kippur, the High Priest took seven mikvot during the ceremonies. Evidence from the Dead Sea discoveries shows that the Essenes and the community of Qumran practiced daily mikveh. In the Talmud, these daily mikveh practitioners are called *tovelei shaharit* or "dawn bathers." To the ancient Hebrews, the mikveh was a process of spiritual purification and cleansing, especially in relation to the various types of *turmah* or ritual defilement when the Temple was in use. Historically, we know that there were many ritual immersion baths (*mikvaot*) on the Temple Mount where both priests and pilgrims would immerse themselves daily in preparation for the Temple, including one in the Chamber of Lepers situated in the northwest corner of the Court of Women where the unclean would immerse. What is less known is the significance of mikveh in teshuvah. Water immersion is symbolic of both spiritual death and rebirth. As the repentant sinner is immersed in water, this represents dying to the old nature that leads one to sin; as one emerges from the water, this represents a new beginning. At mikveh, one reaffirms their acceptance of the Torah by declaring, "I will do, and I will hear" which was a phrase from the oath that was originally taken by the priests not to forsake the Torah (Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29:9-14). During the time of Yochanan's baptism, the Scripture records that everyone was pressing into the Kingdom of Elohim, "The Torah and the neviim were concerning Yochanan: since that time the malchut of YHWH is proclaimed, and every man presses into it" Luka (Luke) 16:16. The obvious question that occurs us here is, how were they pressing into the Kingdom? They were pressing into the Kingdom through the baptism of Yochanan. Why? Yochanan preached baptism as a pre-requirement for entry into the Kingdom, or, in other words, a key to the kingdom. However, to qualify for baptism, Yochanan offered one essential condition for all his followers - Teshuvah. "In those days came Yochanan the Matbeel, proclaiming in the wilderness of Yahudah, and saying, **Make teshuvah (repentance): for the malchut ha shamayim is offered**" Mattityahu (Matthew) 3:1. Repentance was a precondition to baptism but not the key itself. Why, then, is baptism a vital part of the Kingdom? When the Son of YHWH began His ministry, he did not provide another condition or key but reinforced the truth of what Yochanan the Baptizer had declared and performed. "From that time Yeshua began to proclaim, and to say **Teshuvah: for the malchut ha shamayim is offered**" Mattityahu (Matthew) 4:17. Yeshua went on to baptize disciples as Yochanan did, although he did not do it, but his disciples in the name of YHWH (Yochanan (John) 3:22, 4:1). The criteria for a person entering into the Kingdom of Elohim did not change when Yeshua came on the scene because baptism remained a fundamental key to the Kingdom of Elohim. This is why Yeshua specifically commanded his disciples to baptize believers so that they could receive the Kingdom of Elohim when the Torah is unveiled before them as it was in the days of Moshe, and when the promise of the Ruach haKodesh was fulfilled, they could be Torah witnesses unto the Olam. Yeshua himself had undergone water baptism, not as an outward sign of repentance but an inward sign of the Kingdom coming among men. Yeshua said to Yochanan, "Allow it to be so now, for this will allow us to fulfill all tzedakah (righteousness). Then he allowed Him" Mattityahu (Matthew) 3:15. Baptisms are also ways YHWH prepares His people. The baptism of Yochanan created a highway in the desert for the coming of the Messiah (Yeshayahu (John) 40:3), and the baptism of Yeshua likewise created a highway for the coming of the Kingdom of Elohim. This brings me to the last part of Teshuvah. **THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE OFFENDED.** Under the Torah, the offended or victim is obligated to the offender and YHWH. When the offender has fulfilled their obligations to

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the offended; a CREDIT is accrued to the offender's account. This credit is in the form of a PARDON or RELEASE that is due to the offender, which only the victim can grant. The treatment and settlement of the pardon or release defines the obligations of the offended under teshuvah. The primary obligation of the offended is to forgive the offender. Thus, in rabbinic thought, it is the responsibility of the offended to allow the offender "room" to settle their debt to them. The offended must, therefore, give the offender sufficient time and space to mitigate the wrong that was done; the more significant the offense and or more the parties injured, the more leeway must be given to the offender to mend the damage done. Within the scope of this primary responsibility, the offended has at all times available to them these options: To withhold the pardon; the offended has the right to withhold their pardon until the offender satisfies the requirements of teshuvah, withstanding that the offended has not made unreasonable demands that the offender cannot fulfill. To forgo the debt the offended has the right to forgo the debt of the offender and the obligation of doing Azivat ha-chet, especially if the offender has become insane, senile, or has died. In such circumstances, the offended may forgo the debt for their own peace of mind. To waive compensation, the offender has the right to waive the obligation of peira'on, which is to make good the loss, especially if the offender is poor, aged, or a minor. The offender must prove to the offended that this is their situation. To relinquish the claim the offender has the right to relinquish their claim altogether, especially in a situation where there is a clear misunderstanding, confusion, or accident. The offender must prove that this was the situation. It is the offender's solemn duty to demonstrate to the offended that they have completed the requirements of teshuvah, especially in relation to the first four requirements of teshuvah that one is expected to perform for the victim; only upon this condition is the offended obligated to forgive and release the offender. Likewise, it is the offended solemn duty to forgive the offender of their trespass. Yeshua clarified this: *"Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespasses against you, rebuke him; and if he makes teshuvah, forgive him. And if he trespasses against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turns again to you, saying, I make teshuvah; you shall forgive him"* Luka (Luke) 17:3-4. If they have been sincere in their repentance, the offender will display all the apparent fruits of teshuvah, whereby their victims can determine the genuineness of the offender's repentance. If the offender has been genuine in their repentance, the offended must not unreasonably withhold the offender's release; to do so is considered cruelty in Judaism. In the situation where the offended refuses to forgive the offender after the offender has duly satisfied their obligations, the offender is forthwith released from their responsibility to obtain the victim's forgiveness, but only after they have made several attempts to ask for forgiveness and were blatantly refused. In such a situation, the Torah requires that the offender obtains a witness to confirm and endorse the victim's refusal. To refuse to forgive an offender of their trespass after they have duly satisfied their obligations is tantamount to the victim punishing the transgressor and is the sin of rebellion. It is a violation of the second commandment, *"to love thy neighbor,"* and the second principle of the Torah, *"to do unto others as you would have others do unto you."* Thus, Yeshua warned, *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Abba will also forgive you: However, if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Abba forgive your trespasses"* Mattityahu (Matthew) 6:14-15. In Judaic understanding, there are three levels of forgiveness, each of which is more pronounced and is an advancement of the other. The first level is called mechilah – the forging of the debt; the second is called selichah – forgiving of the trespass; and the third is called kapparah– the atonement of the trespass. Mechilah and selichah are what men give, but kapparah can only be provided by YHWH. **Mechilah.** The most basic kind of forgiveness is mechilah, or "forgoing the offender's indebtedness." If the offender has done teshuvah

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and is sincere in their repentance, the offended is required to offer mechilah; that is, the offended person should forgo the offender's debt and relinquish their claim against the offender. This is not a reconciliation of heart or an embracing of the offender; it is simply reaching the conclusion that the offender no longer owes the victim anything for whatever they did. This represents a partial forgiveness of the offender. Mechilah is the obligation of the offended party, but only if the sinner is actually repentant. For example, if the wife in the previous example was also physically abused by her husband, she may never reach total forgiveness; she is not obliged, nor is it morally necessary for her to do so. This is especially applicable in a situation where there is no previous connection between the parties. Nevertheless, the consequence of not extending selichah is an "unhealed wound" that can become the cause of other problems in the life of the victim. Inevitably, the victim must proceed to the next level of forgiveness for their own healing. **Selichah**. The second kind of forgiveness is selichah, or "forgiveness." It is an act of the heart. It is reaching a deeper understanding of the sinner. It is achieving empathy for the troubledness of the other. It is recognizing the fact that all have sinned and fallen short of the perfect standard of the Torah. Selichah, too, is not reconciliation or an embracing of the offender; it is simply concluding that the offender, too, is human, frail, and deserving of sympathy. It is closer to an act of mercy than to an act of grace. This represents a total forgiveness of the offender. Selichah is not a legal obligation of the offended party, but out of the victim's own goodness and peace of mind, it is extended to the offender. For example, if the husband in our previous example is repentant, having fulfilled the requirements of teshuvah, there is no further reason why his wife should not grant selichah. She is morally bound to give her husband selichah. However, she is entitled to do it at her own pace, meaning when she is able and ready to do so, because it must come from the heart. It is this heart response that leads to the next type of forgiveness. **Kapparah**. The third kind of forgiveness is kapparah, or "atonement." This is a total wiping away all sinfulness and our transgressions of the Torah. It is an existential cleansing or purification. Kapparah is the ultimate form of forgiveness, but it can only be granted by Elohim. No human being can "atone" the sin of another; no human can "purify" the spiritual pollution of another. YHWH, in the likeness of Yeshua, atoned for the sins of Yisra'el through His ultimate sacrifice. He satisfied the Torah's judgments that were against every transgressor of the Torah, which no human being could remove. Sin and our transgression of the Torah disrupt our lives on the human level; it distorts our relationships with other persons, social institutions, and ourselves. Sin and transgressions also disrupt our spiritual lives; they distort our relationship with our Abba YHWH and our deepest inner spiritual being. Because sin and transgression alienate us from humanity and Elohim, there is more than one kind of forgiveness that is required to restore the offender. Kapparah is the final stage of teshuvah and is completed when we go through the vidui and cleansing of the mikveh. Explanatory notes: Many believers are oblivious to the fact that the repentance that the Church teaches does not lead to forgiveness or cleansing because it falls desperately short of the standard of the Torah- Teshuvah. Repentance, as it is dispensed in the Church, is a "quick fix" to sin, cheap grace, so to speak, where the unmerited favor of YHWH has been made into a license to sin, again and again, not knowing that the grace of Elohim leads one to terminate sin. For this reason, few people receive total absolution and justification. In teshuvah, there is always forgiveness of sins, but it comes at a price that few are really willing to pay. As believers, we must take hold of the fact that forgiveness is something we must earn and deserve because it is provided at the cost of its victims and YHWH's dear Son. Grace is thus never free nor cheap to the transgressor of Torah, but at the end of the pathway of teshuvah, those that do the will of YHWH, i.e., teshuvah, will most certainly inherit the Kingdom of YHWH." End of Quote.