–Save This Page as a PDF–

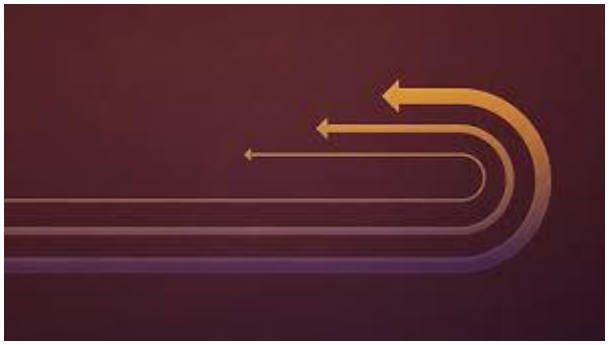
Restitution and Repentance
5: 5-10

Restitution and repentance DIG: How the restitution for sin(s) against ADONAI, against man as well? When is confession of sin inadequate? If your victim is no longer able to receive restitution, to whom should the restitution be paid? When should it have to be paid to the priesthood? How do the commandments regarding *terumah* teach us about "tithes and offerings" today? How do we know that our transgressions will always be forgiven?

REFLECT: What are the two steps required in this passage for restoring relationships with our brothers and sisters? Why do you think ADONAI required(s) someone to make restitution? Do you think this principle can be applied to other areas of life today? Explain. What is the first step toward repentance? To whom should we confess our sins? When might it be necessary to confess "one to another?"

A sinner should turn back from his sin, and should confess his misdeed before God.

It is a mitzvah of the Torah to confess our **sins** and **repent** from **them**. **Sin** is a transgression of the Torah. When we sin, we are not to remain in the **sin**, nor are we to passively accept the fact that we are **sinners (Isaiah 64:5)**. We are to strive against **sin**. We must humble ourselves and confess the **sin** and then turn away from **it**. Therefore, it is a **sin** to leave a **sin** unconfessed! One **sin** leads to another.



The Chofetz Chaim explains the mitzvah of confession and repentance this way: A sinner should turn back from his sin, and should confess his misdeed before YHVH as Scripture says: When a man or woman commits any kind of sin against another person and thus breaks faith with Adonai, he incurs guilt. He must confess the sin which he has committed (5:6-7a). This means a confession in words before the blessed God. He is to say from the depths of his heart, "I beg You (LORD): I have sinned, done wrong, and acted criminally before You. This I did (and he is to describe the sin in detail); and here I have regretted my deed and become ashamed of it. Never will I go back and do this thing again." The main element is remorse of the heart, in truth, over the past and one must take it upon himself not to do such a thing ever again (the Jews do not believe they have a sin nature). This confession is the essential part of repentance; but the more one confesses, the more praiseworthy he is (Chofez Chaim).[85]

The rabbis teach that even the smallest sin should be confessed. They contend that this confession should be made privately, but audibly, directly to God. King David said: **I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide, I said, "I will confess my transgressions to ADONAI; and You forgave the guilt of my sin." Selah (Psalm 32:5). John,** the beloved apostle, says: **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (First John 1:9).**

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** gracious kindness that forgives our **sins** when we confess **(First John 1:9)**. **Sins** are like a heavy burden and **You** are so very merciful to take the burden of our **sin** from those who love **You**. **You** can't just bury it, for **sin's** punishment, a death must be paid. **Your** faithful love put our **sin** and shame on **Yeshua** and then marvelously **You** gave **Messiah's righteousness** to all who love **You**! **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness***

of God (Second Corinthians 5:21). *That is such a fantastic gift!* ***You*** *are so worthy of our love! Not only are our* ***sins*** *forgiven, but then to also receive* ***Messiah's righteousness*** *is a gift greater than all the water in all the oceans of the world! There could be no greater gift than our* ***sins*** *forgiven and given* ***Messiah's*** *Perfect* ***righteousness****!*

Praise ***You*** *for being so wise that* ***You*** *know the attitude of my heart. I know I get to heaven not by what I do, but what I believe (****Ephesians 2:8-9)****. Real heart love for* ***You****,* ***God,*** *our wonderful Heavenly* ***Father,*** *is the key* ***(Matthew 22:37-38). You*** *will not open heaven's door to just anyone.* ***The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you – not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance. (Second Peter 3:9). Repentance*** *is a first step in attaining salvation. It involves turning away from wrong and turning to* ***God*** *in love and trust as* ***Lord*** *and* ***Savior****.* ***For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation (Romans 10:9-10).*** *Thank* ***You*** *for forgiving those who love* ***You*** *and* ***repent****. We love* ***You*** *and desire to always live to please* ***You****! In* ***Yeshua's*** *holy name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*

Remorse for sin (5:6): There are some who think that reading admission of guilt has little or nothing to do with one's feelings, that is just a formal statement of the wrong committed. They insist that a person does not need to "feel" **guilty** or remorse for his **sin**. Such thinking is based on the idea that feelings have very little place, if any, in our spiritual life. However, we need to remember that **God** gave us feelings. When we are angry, we feel angry; when we are happy, we feel happy. Subsequently, did not **God** also give us feelings that express the sense of guilt?

Furthermore, biblical scholars have done a lot of research on the different connotations of biblical words. One such Hebrew word is *asham,* meaning *to be guilty.* It seems hardly necessary to add that the one who commits **sin** and trespasses against **YHVH** is, or becomes, **guilty**. It can hardly be conceived that such a person would be innocent. **ADONAI said to Moshe, "Tell the people of Isra'el, 'When a man or woman commits any kind of sin against another person, acting unfaithfully against ADONAI, that person is guilty' (5:6)."** Thus, the text seems to be saying that the first step along the way of **restoration** is remorse for one's **sin**.[86]

When we find ourselves ensnared in habitual **sins** or locked into destructive patterns of behavior, it is good for the heart to seek out a trusted brother or sister in whom one can confide. **Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed (James 5:16).** By **confessing** our transgression to a trusted friend and expressing our deep remorse over our behavior, a level of accountability is introduced.

The mitzvah of confessing our sins before **YHVH** is one we can carry out confidently in **Messiah**. Thanks to the sacrifice of **Messiah** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Lv – Jesus' Second Three Hours on the Cross: The Wrath of God**), we know that our **confession** and **repentance** will always be received **He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions (Colossians 2:13).**

When we **sin** against another person, causing them some loss, it is not adequate to merely **confess** the **sin** to **God**. We must **confess** the **sin** and **repent** by making **restitution**. In most cases our **restitution** should include a sincere **confession** and apology to the individual we have wronged. We must seek their forgiveness before we seek **God's**. However, if it may happen that the person we have wronged has not suffered a loss, is unaware of the offense committed against them and would be unnecessarily hurt to hear one's **confession**. In such cases, we might weigh the situation carefully. Seek counsel and prayer. It may not be best to wrong them further by revealing our malice toward them. In most cases, however, the clear and certain thing to do is to seek out the person you have wronged and apologize.

Agreeing with God (5:7a): After remorse and the admission of **guilt** from a **repentant** heart, the Bible teaches us to **confess** our **sin**. **Confession** and **repentance** work together. The Torah says: **He must confess the sin which he has committed and repent (5:7a).** When **John** called **Isra'el** to be baptized as a sign of **repentance**, **they** came to be **baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins (Mark 1:5).**

Adding twenty percent (5:7b): Along with the apology comes **restitution**. **And he must make full restitution for his guilt; add twenty percent, and give it to the victim of his sin (5:7b).** We have already learned the mitzvah of **restitution** in **Leviticus 6:5**. The same mitzvah is repeated here with two additional details. First, we learn that **confession and repentance** is part of a process.

Giving the Terumah (5:8-10): Second, we learn that if a victim is no longer available and he has no kinsman redeemer to whom the restitution can be paid **(Leviticus 25:25-31)**, then it was to be given to the priesthood as if it was *terumah*. *Terumah* was the sacred portions separated out from the crops such as the tithe and the first fruits. The Torah goes on to lay down the mitzvah about the transfer of *the terumah*: **But if the person has no relative to whom restitution can be made for the guilt, then what is given in restitution for guilt will belong to ADONAI, that is, to the priest – in addition to the ram of atonement through which atonement is made for him. Every contribution which the people of Isra'el dedicate and present to the priest will belong to him. Anything an individual dedicates will be his own [to allocate among the priesthood], but what a person gives to the priest will belong to him.**

In its simplest reading, this passage teaches that *the terumah* portion given to **the priests** becomes the property of **the priesthood**. Another reading, based upon the use of pronouns in this passage, teaches another important rule. One might read it as if the first two possessive pronouns refer to a farmer (for example) who is giving **the priest** *the terumah.* In that case the passage means to teach us that *the terumah* portions of the farmer's crop belong to **him** until **he** gives *it* to **the priest**. **The priest** cannot come and demand **his** portion or help **himself** to *it*. *The terumah* would not be **his** until the farmer had willingly given *it* to **him**.

Shepherds would do well to remember this mitzvah. People in leadership positions often look at people's salaries tithes as if it were already their own. They begin to anticipate it, and if it does not arrive on time, or if it's smaller than they felt it should be, they become angry. It is not uncommon to hear congregational leaders beat the sheep over such matters. In extreme cases, the leaders want people's bank account information so they can draw out the "proper" amount. This kind of behavior presupposes that the money rightly belongs to the congregation. However, if **the priests** could not lay claim to *the terumah* until *it* was voluntarily given to **them** (even though *it* was mandated by the Torah), how much less should today's leaders lay claim to people's money (which is not mandated by the Torah). It does not belong to the leadership until the person gives it to the ministry. Thus, **Simon Peter** said to **Ananias and Sapphira, "Before you sold it, the property was yours; and after you sold it, the money was yours to do as your pleased" (Acts 5:4a).**[87]

What is striking about this mitzvah is the identification of wrongdoing against

another person is compared with **acting unfaithfully against ADONAI (5:6)**. Harming or unjustly taking from another person in the community is an act of human injustice, but it is also an act that breaks the relationship with **YHVH**. This moral guilt, like ritual impurity (see the commentary on **Leviticus Bk – Ritually Clean and Unclean Animals**), also threatens the holiness of the community. But also like ritual impurity, there is a process by which the guilt can be atoned for and forgiven. The involvement of the priest in the process of restitution provides a tangible reminder that the holiness of **God** is intricately connected, not only with what went on in the Tabernacle, but also with the everyday business and commerce of human interactions. To wrong another human being is to threaten the health and well-being of the whole community and its relationship with **Ha'Shem**.[88]