

2025-09-20 The History of Slichah (Forgiveness)

So much going on that looks like we're heading to or in the last days

Even hoping the Lord will return with His shofar on Tuesday

The Day of Sounding the Shofar

Rather than talk about Israel, Charlie Kirk, anti-Semitism

Ruach Ha Kodesh led me in a very different direction

Talk about subject important, personally to each of our lives - forgiveness

Last Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah is called Selichot Shabbat - Shabbat of forgiveness

Selichot are communal prayers for Divine forgiveness

Recited during the High Holiday season

Because Rosh Hashanah precedes Yom Kippur by 10 days, those 10 days are called Days of Awe

& are times of introspection, repentance & reconciliation

Non-Messianic synagogues have selichot (forgiveness) prayers

Before their daily morning prayer service thru 10 Days of Awe until Yom Kippur

They follow a 75 page booklet of pre-written prayers they recite

"Torah verses and poetically written Hebrew works in which we ask G-d to forgive us on a personal and communal level"

Towards the end they recite Ashamnu – recite a list of sins

That we (as a community) have committed.

Similar to the list we recite on Yom Kippur

In preparation for Rosh Hashanah & 10 Days of Awe, starting Monday at sundown

Ruach Ha Kodesh directed me today to look at the history of forgiveness in our world

You & most everyone in our Western culture sees forgiveness as normal, usual

Something that we expect people to give us & God to do if we apologize

We all take for granted **everyone** believes that people should forgive each other

As if it's something we have a right to, that we expect of people

When someone is injured, physically or emotionally

There are 2 possible responses by the injured party or his loved ones

Revenge or forgiveness

But, Bible records in ancient times there was **no expectation of forgiveness**

Revenge was the norm

Forgiveness also requires repentance, apology & restitution if possible

From the perpetrator of the offense

& those things were also not commonly done in ancient times

Holds for a large part of the world's cultures today under Islam

Important to understand repentance, apology & restitution are much easier

When there's an expectation of forgiveness

Genesis 3 – Adam & Eve disobeyed God, no repentance or apology afterward

No forgiveness, just punishment of curse from God

Genesis 4 - Cain murdered Abel, no repentance or apology afterward,

No forgiveness again, just punishment from God

5 generations later, Lamech killed a man for wounding him

No forgiveness there, just revenge

What's it like when these things are not part of the culture of a people

When they are not taught forgiveness?

Best example is from the documentary of 5 missionaries who were murdered

When they tried to reach out to the Huaorani (Waodani) people

Of the jungle of Ecuador, Jim Elliot, Nate Saint among them

This tribe had no practice, understanding, tradition or history of forgiveness

When a man was wronged, or when a man's a loved one was wronged

He was **obligated** to kill the person who wronged him

Every person in the tribe knew dozens of people who had been killed this way

When good news took hold, this tribe turned to Lord & began forgiving
 In ancient times this culture of revenge was reason God told Moses to establish
 Cities of refuge to protect people who accidentally killed another person
 From the “avenger of blood”, a relative who executed revenge
 Torah commands punishment to be “eye for an eye”

& today most think that’s cruel
 But that command was not given by God to make punishment **harsher**
 But to **limit** the harshness of punishments people were experiencing
 Example: Yaakov’s sons killed every male in Shechem

Because one of them raped their sister
 Some cultures today, especially in Middle East, are still committed to revenge
 They call them “honor killings”
 We find it hard to understand them, why? Because of influence of Bible
 When did forgiveness first appear, forgiveness from other people & from God?
 Not in lives of Adam, Cain, Lamech, or even Abraham or Isaac

Ironically, an individual we generally consider an ungodly man was
 1st person in Bible of whom we have a record that he forgave someone
 In Genesis 25 Jacob stole Esau’s birthright & in Genesis 27 his blessing
 And because of fear of Esau avenging these wrongs, Jacob had to flee
 But, after being away many years, in Genesis 33 Jacob returned to Peniel

& his brother Esau came to meet him with 400 armed men
 No reason for 400 armed men other than to take revenge on his brother
 Jacob did t’shuvah (repentance) grabbing hold of God, wrestling with Him
 Acknowledging that only God could save him from his brother’s wrath
 When Jacob demonstrated repentance by his actions
 Humbling himself before God & then humbling himself before Esau
 Calling him Lord & giving him gifts

God did a miracle in Esau’s heart & he did not take vengeance on Jacob
 He received Jacob’s repentance & forgave him
 Because Esau was such an ungodly man we know his changed heart
 Could only have been a work of Ruach Ha Kodesh in response to Jacob’s prayers
 So, first example of human forgiveness in history was brought about **by God**

He introduced it into the human race that only practiced revenge
 Next example of person forgiving was Josef one of most Godly men in Bible
 He forgave his brothers

After they had sold him into slavery many years before, out of envy
 They, like Jacob, demonstrated repentance in Genesis 45 in genuine way
 They changed their behavior when they all returned to Egypt
 to plead for their brother Benjamin
 & one brother, Judah, offered to sacrifice himself for Benjamin

Because Josef was such a godly man we can see
 His forgiveness was obviously inspired by God

*Genesis 45:7 But God sent me ahead of you to ensure a remnant in the land and to keep you alive for a great escape.
 8 So now, it wasn't you, you didn't send me here, but God! ...*

Josef was able to forgive his brothers because he saw God’s hand
 In all that he had suffered, bringing about good

In spite of all the evil his brothers had intended for him
 Esau & Yosef are examples of **men** forgiving
 But, what about **God’s forgiveness**, when did that first happen?
 No record of God forgiving Josef’s brothers or them asking God’s forgiveness
 First account of anyone asking God to forgive is also from very ungodly person
 Following the plague of locusts Pharaoh asked Moses

Exodus 10:17 Now forgive my sin, only this once, please! So pray to ADONAI (the LORD) your God—just so He would take this death away from me!

No record of God forgiving the Israelites for not trusting God

To protect them from Egyptians at the Red Sea

For grumbling over the lack of water at Marah & several other transgressions

But, after Israel's fall into idolatry, making & worshipping the golden calf

Moses was the second person to ask for God's forgiveness

Not for himself, but for the people of Israel, who had sinned

Exodus 32:32 Yet now, please forgive their sin. But if not, please blot me out of Your book that You have written.

Lesson here on how to obtain forgiveness for others

Moses offered himself as atonement

But, interestingly God didn't actually forgive the idolaters

Exodus 32:33-35 He said those who sinned, I will punish & destroy by plague

But, a little later we see **for the first time** God's forgiveness manifested

33:1-6 God said He would **not** go with Israel into PL but send an angel

33:12-13 Moses continued to plead with God to consider Israel

Still as His people, then God said

Exodus 33:14 My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

God agreed to go with Israel, thus forgiving the rest of the people

Moses asked to see God's glory & God appeared to Him & declared His name

34:6 Then ADONAI passed before him, and proclaimed, "ADONAI, ADONAI, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth,

7 showing mercy to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means leaving the guilty unpunished, but bringing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and fourth generation.

In this declaration of His long name God made His first statement

Of forgiveness being part of who He is

It was the first time God spoke of Himself forgiving anyone

6 of the 13 attributes of God He declared in His name are the basis of

Selikhot Prayers—forgiveness, compassion, grace, love, kindness, mercy

Then God spoke to Moses & put His forgiveness into His Torah in sin & guilt

Offerings in Leviticus, which made atonement for Israel's sin

Which enabled God to go to the PL in the midst of Israel

Cover 2 important points about forgiveness in Leviticus

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives—for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life.

Atonement – kippor, covering of the sin, forgiveness

So God could dwell in the midst of the camp of Israel

Prior to building Tabernacle in the desert & establishing priesthood

God's manifest presence dwelt outside the camp of Israel

Exodus 33:7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the Tent of Meeting...

An innocent, unblemished sacrificed animal

Had to pay penalty for the repentant person's sin

Leviticus 17:4 & 9 say animal sacrifices can only be made at Temple

Since Temple was destroyed in 70 CE animal sacrifices can no longer be made

& therefore God's forgiveness based on God's instructions in Leviticus

Is no longer available to people through blood of animal sacrifices

This is where non-Messianic Judaism departs from scripture

Teaching that God's forgiveness is still available

Based on what is written in the Talmud, writings of the rabbis

Rather than the Torah inspired by God

From the Chabad website

The Midrash (teaching) relates that King David was anguished when he prophetically foresaw the destruction of the Holy Temple and the cessation of the offering of the sacrifices. "How will the Jews atone for their sins?" he wondered. G-d replied: "When suffering will befall the Jews because of their sins, they should gather before Me in complete unity. Together they shall confess their sins and recite the order of the Selichot, and I will answer their prayers."

Order of the Selichot is the 75 page booklet containing prayers of repentance

Which sounds nice but contradicts Leviticus 17:11 because there is no blood

The penalty for sin is not paid by the sacrificed animal

Non-Messianic Judaism teaches a false hope of forgiveness

Without blood atonement

Messianic Judaism teaches forgiveness is now available

Because of the shed blood of Yeshua

2nd important point about forgiveness in Leviticus

Review 3 Hebrew words often mis-translated in many versions

Best is NKJV or TLV

Avone - iniquity, inclination to evil, flesh, carnal nature, ungodly attitudes

Peshah – intentional, pre-meditated sin

Transgressions/trespasses against God's laws

Chata'ah – sin – missing the mark, unintentional sin

Sometimes used for all 3

Leviticus 4 - 5:21 (6:2) instructions on how to obtain forgiveness from God

Chata'ah sh'gaga, **unintentional** sin can be forgiven

By repenting & bringing an offering

5:22-26 (6:3-7) deals with some intentional sin, peshah

Stating restitution +1/5 required for God's forgiveness

In addition to heart repentance & offering

Brings up 2nd point

There is no provision in Torah for forgiveness of intentional transgressions

When no restitution could be made - for example in case of murder

Why is the fact that there was no forgiveness for intentional sin

For which restitution could not be made, important to us today?

Most of us have not murdered anyone

If we study how Yeshua interpreted the 10 Commandments in Sermon on the Mount

If we can hear our consciences at all, if our hearts are just a little contrite

It will be obvious we have all broken those commandments

We've committed idolatry

By allowing things, people, activities, philosophies

To be more important to us than God

We've failed to always keep 1 day in 7 holy to Him - desecrated Shabbat

We've taken the Lord's name in vain

We've held hatred in our hearts, not loved our enemies

We've lusted over people, things, people's approval and positions

We've judged others, prayed eloquently to impress others

When we break these commands do we do it unintentionally

Or intentionally?

If ignorant of God's commands can claim we've done them unintentionally

If we've read or heard these commands we're all guilty of intentional sin

How can you lust, hate or use God's name in vain unintentionally?

In our society, since it's not a theocracy

The government doesn't punish us for any of these offenses

Government certainly doesn't punish us for how Yeshua interprets

Murder as hatred & adultery as lust

But according to Galatians 6:7-8 we will reap what we sow & bring

Destruction on ourselves when we intentionally transgress God's laws

So, if we're honest enough we all have to admit

We're guilty of intentional sin, transgression, peshah

Also, there is usually no way to make restitution for these sins

So, in what Torah has taught us so far you would not be forgiven

For your intentional sins that you can't make restitution for

Also we've all we've been iniquitous, been led by our old, carnal nature

We've entertained fear, envy, unforgiveness, bitterness, pride

And up to this point in Bible there was no forgiveness

For iniquity, for our inclination toward evil

Later, Leviticus 16 God gave Yom Kippur sacrifices, especially scapegoat

Leviticus 16:21 Aaron should lay both his hands on the head of the live goat (scapegoat) and confess over it all the iniquities of Bnei-Yisrael (Sons of Israel) and all their transgressions, all their sins. He should place them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness.

Notice atonement was made for all 3, sin, transgressions & **iniquity**

Of entire nation of Israel

22 The goat will carry all their iniquities by itself into a solitary land and he is to leave the goat in the wilderness.

This atonement, forgiveness

Enabled God to dwell in the midst of people of Israel

34 This will be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for Bnei-Yisrael once in the year because of all their sins." ...

It had to be repeated every year because many in Israel would surely sin

Transgress & walk in iniquity in the next year

&, of course this sacrifice could only be made by the high priest at Temple

& it ceased being made when both priesthood & Temple were destroyed

But, did the Yom Kippur atoning sacrifices atone for a repentant individual's

Iniquity & intentional sin for which restitution could not be made?

Speaking of the Yom Kippur atoning offerings the author of Hebrews wrote

Hebrews 10:1 For the Torah has in it a shadow of the good things to come, but not the actual manifestation of the originals. Therefore, it can never, by means of the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, bring to the goal those who approach the Holy Place to offer them.

2 Otherwise, wouldn't the offering of those sacrifices have ceased? For if the people performing the service had been cleansed once and for all, they would no longer have sins on their conscience.

In vs. 1 what is the "goal" the animal sacrifices could **not** bring them to?

Answer is in Vs. 2 "*they would no longer have sins on their conscience*"

The Yom Kippur animal sacrifices according to Laws of Moses

Still left "sins on their consciences"

Guilty consciences; remorse, sorrow, guilt, shame

For what people had done wrong, especially what was intentional

They still carried around a load of guilt, regrets, blame

Their consciences were not clear, cleansed

Even though they had brought the commanded sacrifices

That's a big problem, many people today are greatly burdened, tormented

Because their consciences are not "cleansed once and for all"

Where did revelation of there being a way to be forgiven by God go next?

Micah had prophetic revelation of the future of forgiveness when he wrote

Micah 7:19 He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

That's about total cleansing of all sins, including iniquity

Not covering them as the animal sacrifices did

Later Isaiah had the most powerful revelation of the future of forgiveness

Isaiah 53 Messiah would make atonement even for intentional sin

For which there could be no restitution, & for iniquities

Messiah's atonement would be different from the Yom Kippur atonement

In that it would be available to **every individual** who could experience

Personal cleansing even from intentional sin

& iniquity - cleansed consciences

How do we know Messiah's atoning sacrifice would be for individuals?

(NKJV) Isaiah 53:11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

By His knowledge – meaning, not the entire nation, but those who

Know Him will be justified & have their iniquities borne, carried away

Next page in history of forgiveness was when Messiah walked the Earth

Forgiveness was part of what He did

Matthew 9:2 Some people brought him a paralyzed man lying on a mattress. When Yeshua saw their trust, he said to the paralyzed man, "Courage, son! Your sins are forgiven."

Yeshua had the authority to forgive sins while He was on Earth

At His last Seder, just before He made His atoning sacrifice He said

Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood, which ratifies the New Covenant, my blood shed on behalf of many, so that they may have their sins forgiven.

When we confess even our transgression, intentional sin, pesha to God

& ask His forgiveness

& ask Him by the power of Yeshua's sacrifice to remove our sins

His sacrifice fulfills the prophesy of Micah 7:19

Our sins are remove like bread crumbs

Being washed into the depth of the sea

Which is what the Tashlich ceremony in the afternoon on Rosh Hashanah is about

That's the power of the blood of Yeshua, meaning His sacrificial death

Because of His sacrifice God casts our sins into the depths of sea

Even if we **can't** make restitution

This means He cleanses our guilty consciences

Sets us free from the shame for the wrongs we've done intentionally

& from our iniquity when we've given in to our old nature, even in thoughts

& we are able to go on with our lives without the awful burden of shame

It is part of what Yeshua paid for when He made His atoning sacrifice

Just like healing, deliverance, peace, Ruach Ha Kodesh, eternal life

He can break cycle of reaping what we've sown by intentional sin & iniquity

Yeshua also made forgiving **each other** an important part of His teachings

Matthew 18:21 Then Kefa came up and said to him, "Rabbi, how often can my brother sin against me and I have to forgive him? As many as seven times?"

22 "No, not seven times," answered Yeshua, "but seventy times seven!"

And He demonstrated the ultimate in forgiving others

Luke 23:34 Yeshua said, "Father, forgive them; they don't understand what they are doing."...

He even forgave those who were murdering him as he was dying

These words of Yeshua have often inspired me to believe

Those who have hurt me do not understand what they have done

& that helps me forgive them

After His resurrection & led by Ruach Ha Kodesh Yeshua's followers made forgiveness

From God a cornerstone of the Good News they proclaimed

Acts 2:38 Kefa answered them, "Turn from sin, return to God, and each of you be immersed on the authority of Yeshua the Messiah into forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh!"

Also 4X more in Acts – 5:31, 10:43, 13:38, 26:18

Paul refers to it 11 times, Hebrews 3X, Peter 3X, John's epistles 5X

Hopefully you now understand that forgiveness from God is

Not a right you deserve or something that's been here since creation
But an incredibly precious gift from God who is source of forgiveness

Who brought forgiveness into a world full of revenge

When I realized that I needed God's forgiveness 48 years ago

I humbled myself & repented of having disobeyed Him

& put my trust in Yeshua's sacrifice, His blood, to make atonement for me

& His forgiveness was poured out on me

& He cast my sins into the depth of the sea

Cleansing my conscience, it was so a real I can still feel it today

Also I'm so thankful for all the people who have forgiven me over years

I often needed forgiveness from family/friends & will continue to need it

If you have not received this gift of forgiveness from God

I pray your heart would be open to receive it today

I also pray that if you have asked God for forgiveness & are still burdened

By guilt & shame you'll make decision

You will exercise your free will & choose to **believe** God has forgiven you

Of all sin, iniquity & transgressions

If you've asked & don't believe He's forgiven you, that's actually iniquity

Unbelief, doubt

What do you need to be forgiven of? We looked at how far we fall short

Of the standards Yeshua set when He interpreted

the 10 Commandments in Sermon on the Mount

So, we're all guilty of intentional sin, transgression, pasha

We all still struggle with iniquity, our flesh, carnal nature

We have seen how precious the gift of God's forgiveness is

It's important to understand that it also comes with a high price in 3 ways

1st, God paid an enormous price to purchase your forgiveness

By coming as a man & sacrificing His life to make atonement for you

2nd there's another price you have to pay for God to forgive you

Matthew 6:14 For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;

15 but if you do not forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will not forgive yours.

This is a very serious instruction from Yeshua

When you understand how precious God's gift of forgiveness is

You will find it easier to forgive others

Remember – you can forgive without having to trust

A person who has hurt you whom you have forgiven

Must still earn your trust & that takes time

Forgiveness is a decision you make, not based on your feelings

3rd price is if God forgives you, you have to forgive yourself

If you are carrying a burden of guilt & shame you need to lay it down

By forgiving yourself

If you don't, your thinking is ungodly, iniquitous & opens door for satan

We're going to share the Lord's Supper, S'udat Adonai

It is similar to the 10 Days of Awe in that it is a ceremony

That requires introspection, repentance & reconciliation

Distribute matzah & juice

Invite visitors to join with us – if partakers of Brit Hadashah or if want to do it for 1st time

Seek the Lord for any action, words, thoughts for which you need to repent

Encourage people to be reconciled with each other if any have been offended

If possible right now apologize & offer reconciliation, restitution if needed

To anyone you have offended or who has offended you who's present

If they are not present make a decision to do that asap

Bracha over the juice – Elizabeth

Yeshua said *"This cup is the New Covenant, ratified by my blood, which is being poured out for you."*

Give thanks for Your blood - it was given for the forgiveness of sins

Thanks that you wash our hearts as white as snow

Pray for true repentance, turning from sin, making Yeshua Lord,

Washing away guilt & shame

This is the cup of the BH in my blood shed for the forgiveness of sins

Take & drink

Bracha over the matzah – Elizabeth

Yeshua said *"This is my Body, which is being given for you; do this in memory of me."*

Give thanks for Your broken Body

Broken so we could be made whole individually

It was given for the healing of our broken bodies

Pray for healing of bodies & souls, emotions, minds

Broken so we could be made whole corporately

We recognize we are all part of the one Body, one mishpokhah

So we must be in right relationship with each other

We can't get away from each other we must work out our issues

Heal any divisions, factions, breaks among us

This is My Body broken for you, take & eat.

Eat the matzah