

Lesson Seven

The ability of Teshuvah / Repentance

1) In most English Bibles the word “repentance” is translated for the Hebrew term “teshuvah.” Teshuvah cannot be simply equated with repentance. Teshuvah includes repentance but it means more than just repenting. Teshuvah means to “turn from sin and return to the Creator” and more yet.

Repentance is generally a changing of the mind with a hope to do right someday. Repentance is regret and saying you’re sorry. Repentance is a mental decision not to do something. Repentance is a sad event.

Teshuvah on the other-hand is greater than repentance. True teshuvah is a total abandonment of an evil act and a direct effort to correct the wrong and do the right. True teshuvah includes regret and sorrow but does not stop there. Teshuvah is characterized by joy – joy found in the renewal to connection with YHWH. True teshuvah doesn’t just promise to do better next time; it rights the wrong and really does do better next time. And true teshuvah is a direct command for every follower of the Bible, “Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices,” Ezekiel 14:6. Notice this verse includes repenting and turning from sin also notice the use of the word “repent.” Though teshuvah is more than just simply repenting, it is the English word “repent” found in most English Bibles.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Ezekiel 14:6

Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices

2) The Scriptures declare that we have all sinned or broken the Torah and therefore are in need of forgiveness. Forgiveness is given from YHWH as a person does teshuvah.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of YHWH is eternal life.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

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Acts 17:30

Truly, these times of ignorance YHWH overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

3) Teshuvah was the first message preached by Y'shua. Teshuvah is the first message given by His disciples. It should also be our message.

Ezekiel 18:30-32

“Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Yahweh. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign YHWH. Repent and live,”

Matthew 4:17

From that time on Y'shua began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near

Mark 1:15

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of YHWH is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Mark 6:7-13

And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts— but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

Acts 26:20

First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to Elohim and prove their repentance by their deeds,” said Sha'ul (Paul)

Revelation 2:5.

Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place

Revelation 3:3

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you

Isaiah 1:18

Come now, let us reason together,” says YHWH. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

4) Teshuvah is characterized by sorrow. This evidence of sorrow leads to a changed life. A ba'al teshuvah, or master of teshuvah, is compared in rabbinical writings as totally being born anew or "born again." The Messiah spoke of this when he said, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of YHWH unless he is born again" Yochannan (John) 3:3. And Kefa (Peter) also wrote of this, "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of YHWH."

Through trusting belief, the ba'al teshuvah has died to his sins and torah breaking and is born anew into the kingdom of light through totally rejecting a life of rebellion and accepting Torah obedience in return. "What is a ba'al teshuvah?," Rabbi Yehudah said, "a ba'al teshuvah is one who has the opportunity to do the same sin and this time he does not do it. This is a true ba'al teshuvah."

This born again person is brought near to YHWH, under the wings of the Almighty. "Repentance brings man under the wings of YHWH, the words of Ezekiel, 'They had the hands of Elohim which extended beneath the wings of the cherubim to receive the penitents from the power of judgment,'" says the Talmud. This rabbinical reference clearly points to how Teshuvah brings man near to YHWH as found in Psalm 91:1, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the wings of the Almighty." The person doing teshuvah submits himself to the rule and reign of YHWH.

This closeness is only possible by a person being truly sorry for their sin and changing their behavior. It's the sin that prevents this closeness from occurring. This born anew, master of teshuvah, turns from the sinful act and returns to a new life with YHWH, reminiscent of that in the Garden of Eden.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a YHWH manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

5) True teshuvah begins with an acknowledgement of sin. This issue of sin presents a perplexing problem without some type of way to bridge the gap between holy and sinless YHWH and unclean /sinful man. A bridge is needed to cross the chasm to connect man with YHWH.

Teshuvah is that bridge. Teshuvah is the bridge YHWH has graciously provided man for relationship and closeness. Teshuvah is the bridge, built by Y'shua Himself.

"Turn thou us unto thee, O YHWH, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old," Lamentations 5:21. Through teshuvah sinful and disobedient man is returned to the state of obedience and righteousness. It is teshuvah that stops man from being overcome by evil and wickedness and restores man to the life before the sin occurred.

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“Repent, then, and turn to Elohim, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come,” Acts 3:19. Each individual must do teshuvah, yet it requires YHWH’s power to do so. The book of Ya’akov hints towards this also when it says to “Come near to YHWH and he will come near to you.”

Psalm 51:3

For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.

Hosea 5:15

I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense.

Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a YHWH manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

1 John 3:4

Everyone who sins breaks the Torah; in fact, sin is torah-lessness.

1 John 1:5-10

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that YHWH is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Y’shua HaMoshiach His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Proverbs 28:13

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy

Lamentations 5:21

Turn thou us unto thee, O YHWH, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old

6) Teshuvah includes confession of sin. Teshuvah is like restoring the relationship of man and YHWH before sin entered the world in Gan Eden. Teshuvah returns man to the state before the fall, before the curses, and before the eviction from the garden of Yahweh. For teshuvah totally wipes out all remembrance of sin and returns the individual to the actual point and stage of where the idea of sin is worthless and empty. Teshuvah is not only crossing the bridge to the past but also erasing any memory of the past. It is totally returning and starting over. One Rabbi has written,

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“Teshuvah is changing the past so that yesterday is no longer yesterday.” This is not natural – it is supernatural. True Teshuvah includes a person forsaking their sinful lifestyle.

Romans 6:12

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts

Isaiah 1:16-18

Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. “Come now, and let us reason together,” says YHWH, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

Proverbs 28:13

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy

7) Teshuvah results in a hatred of sin a life of obedience.

Ezekiel 36:31

Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.

Job 42:6

Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes

Matthew 3:8

Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance

James 2:20

But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Ephesians 4:24

Put on the new man which was created according to YHWH, in true righteousness and holiness.

8) Teshuvah may also include restitution for wrongs committed. This means that you may need to physically make amends for sins that have occurred.

Leviticus 6:1-7

And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying: “If a person sins and commits a trespass against YHWH by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears

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falsely—in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering. And he shall bring his trespass offering to YHWH, a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering, to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him before YHWH, and he shall be forgiven for any one of these things that he may have done in which he trespasses.”

Luke 19:8-9

Then Zacchaeus stood and said to Y’shua, “Master, Master, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.” And Y’shua said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;

9) Now is the time for Teshuvah. We should continually repent from our sinful ways, turn from our problems and return to YHWH.

Teshuvah is essential for a believer to have a relationship with YHWH, for it encompasses the broken and contrite heart the Almighty seeks in His people. During these end times, it will be the restoration of teshuvah in the lives of Bible believers that reaches the heart of Elohim and the hearts of man. To prove this point, the word “repent” can be found more times in the Book of Revelation than in any other book in the Bible. Teshuvah will play a huge part as the events of the end times unfold in the coming future.

“Great is Teshuvah for it makes the redemption of the Messiah come near,” says the Talmud. Teshuvah will also usher in the coming full restoration of the nation of Israel, “and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong and acted wickedly’; and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their captivity where they were taken, and pray toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and toward the temple I have built for your Name; then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their pleas, and uphold their cause. And forgive your people, who have sinned against you,” 2 Chronicles 6:37-39. The great teacher Rambam once said, “Israel will be redeemed only through teshuvah. The Torah has promised that ultimately Israel will return towards the end of her exile.”

2 Corinthians 6:2

In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Revelation 2:21

And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent

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Hebrews 12:17

For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

Hebrews 9:27

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment

2 Chronicles 6:37-39

They have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity and say, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong and acted wickedly'; and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their captivity where they were taken, and pray toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and toward the temple I have built for your Name; then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their pleas, and uphold their cause. And forgive your people, who have sinned against you.

10) The well known Torah teacher and physician, Maimoinides, has developed a Biblical four-step process for believers when mistakes are made. Again, YHWH is looking for sincerity in the effort, yet this short outline and guide definitely helps. The result of this teshuvah is growth, forgiveness, and atonement.

Step 1: Stop.

Acknowledge your sin area and stop whatever destructive or sinful action you are engaged in. If, for example, you are stealing, you must stop. You simply cannot continue in sin if you want forgiveness.

Step 2: Regret.

You should indeed feel regret for your error. It's wrong to steal. Theft is breaking Yahweh's Torah and hurting others. You should be sorry for the harm you have cause both man and the Almighty. There should be absolutely NO excuses for the sin – take responsibility and understand how what you have done has hurt people and has hurt Yahweh.

Step 3. Verbalize.

Explain your regret to YHWH out loud. This doesn't have to be done at a worship center; it can be done in the confines of your home. Just talk to YHWH in at least an audible whisper, not just in your head. Of course, YHWH already knows, but you need to hear it. Tell Him that you are sorry for whatever you have done wrong. If you need help overcoming this sin or addiction, now is the time to tell someone and seek advice or help. If your sinful and wrong actions have harmed other people it is absolutely necessary to go the offended person before coming to YHWH. (Y'shua also taught this in Mattityahu 5:24-26) There is power in confessing out loud, as the book of Ya'akov says, "Confess your sins to one another that you may be healed."

Step 4. Make a Plan.

How can you be sure the mistake or sin won't happen again? Make a practical plan of action. This last step is helping you "make no provision for the flesh" as the word says. If you know that certain subjects are sources of conflict or areas of temptation simply avoid these places. Your plan might include memorizing scripture verses to combat the evil desire. (Y'shua also battled the enemy with "It is written" statements.)

This four-step process is so simple and elementary that it may seem meaningless. This is just not so. The heartfelt teshuvah of an individual erases the sinful act from YHWH's memory and affects both the earthly and the heavenly realms. When a person does teshuvah about a certain sin and then brings the sinful act up again in prayer to YHWH, it's as if YHWH cannot remember the event ever happening. It's like YHWH says, "what sin?" Even the book of Micah speaks of this, "You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea." One person has written "Repentance requires changes. It requires an increased commitment to live according to YHWH's will. As you change, you will recognize that you are a child of YHWH and that you need not continue making the same mistakes. If you sincerely repent, your desire to follow YHWH will grow stronger and deeper. You will feel YHWH's forgiveness and His peace in your life, and guilt and sorrow will be swept away, allowing you to feel the influence of the Spirit in greater abundance."

Lesson Six
Study and Discussion Questions

- 1) Define “teshuvah” according to the scriptures. What is the difference between teshuvah and repentance?

- 2) What does Isaiah 1:16-18 mean to you? Explain how you can apply this passage to your life?

- 3) Ezekiel 18:30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says YHWH. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin." What is the relationship between repentance and sin?

- 4) Read I Samuel 15:24-30. Did Saul repent? What indicates he did or did not?

- 5) Explain the idea of restitution as found in Leviticus 6:1-7. When have you in the past paid or given restitution to correct a problem or make up for a sin?

Lesson Seven
The Letter Zayin



This is the Hebrew letter “zayin.” It was once a picture of a weapon or cutting instrument used for harvesting.



In modern Hebrew this letter has the “z” sound as in “zebra” or “hits.”



When the zayin is written in the Torah scroll is adorned with tagin or tags atop the letter. This letter is similar to the vav in it’s design. Don’t get confused between the two.



This is the seventh Hebrew letter and the number “seven.”



The word “zayin” literally means “crown.” The zayin is the seventh letter and is symbolic of the seventh day Shabbat. The Shabbat is the crown of creation.



A few words that begin with a zayin are:

Zah-yee – olive tree

Tzion - zion

Zachor – remember

Zaken – elder

Zeraim – seeds

Zeroa YHWH – arm of YHWH