



**TORAH...TORAH...**

**WHAT IS TORAH?**

**Part 17**

**- Quarterly Yeshiva -  
Torah, Spiritual Maturity &  
Personal Accountability**

# Torah – To Obey & To Teach



## Matthew 5

17 **“DON'T THINK that I have come TO ABOLISH [DESTROY] THE TORAH OR THE PROPHETS. I have come not to abolish BUT TO COMPLETE [FULFILL].**

# Torah – To Obey & To Teach



## Matthew 5

18 Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, NOT SO MUCH AS A YUD OR A STROKE WILL PASS FROM THE TORAH — not until everything that must happen has happened.

# Torah – To Obey & To Teach



Matthew 5

19 So whoever **DISOBEYS THE LEAST OF THESE  
MITZVOT AND TEACHES OTHERS TO DO SO**

will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

But **WHOEVER OBEYS THEM AND SO TEACHES**

will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

**ABOLISHING THE TORAH**

=

**DISOBEYING IT AND TEACHING  
OTHERS TO DISOBEY**

**FULFILLING THE TORAH**

=

**OBEYING IT AND  
TEACHING OTHERS TO OBEY**

# A Healthy Congregational Family



How do we measure individual and congregational spiritual maturity?

How do we ensure personal accountability?

# The Solution



Should congregational leaders hold congregational members accountable for their actions?

How?

# The Solution



Should congregational members hold each other accountable for their actions?

How?

# Original “Sin”



## Genesis 3

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any wild animal which Adonai, God, had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You are not to eat from any tree in the garden’?” 2 The woman answered the serpent, “We may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden, 3 but about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, ‘You are neither to eat from it nor touch it, or you will die.’”

# Original “Sin”



## Genesis 3

4 The serpent said to the woman, “It is not true that you will surely die; 5 because God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it had a pleasing appearance and that the tree was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her; and he ate.

# Original “Sin”



What was Adam & Eve’s sinful “act”?

**THEY ATE** of the tree they were instructed not to eat from.

They willfully **ACTED** – they **CHOSE** to reject God’s **AUTHORITY**, to breach God’s **TRUST**, to violate God’s **WORD**.

# Original "Sin"



What was the evil inclination – the root "Sin" of Adam & Eve's heart?

"Pride"

They elevated **AUTONOMY FROM GOD** over surrendering to Him as Creator. They defined good and evil, right and wrong, truth and lies, **ON THEIR OWN TERMS.**

# Original “Sin”



“Avodah Zarah” (עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה)

Literally – “worship that doesn’t belong”

Giving to something else the trust and devotion  
that belongs only to God.

**Loving something other than God more  
than God!**

**\*IDOLATRY\***

# Original "Sin"



## Genesis 3

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. So, they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loincloths. 8 They heard the voice of Adonai, God, walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, so the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Adonai, God, among the trees in the garden. 9 Adonai, God, called to the man, "Where are you?" 10 He answered, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself."

# Original “Sin”

## Genesis 3

11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I ordered you not to eat?”

12 The man replied, “The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” 13 Adonai, God, said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman answered, “The serpent tricked me, so I ate.”



# Original “Sin”



What irreversibly sealed the consequences of their sin?

God to Adam: “Have **YOU EATEN** from the tree that I **COMMANDED YOU** not to eat from?”

Adam: “The woman whom **YOU GAVE TO BE WITH ME** — **SHE GAVE ME** fruit from the tree, and I ate.”

God to Eve: “What is this **YOU HAVE DONE**?”

Eve: “**THE SERPENT** tricked me, so I ate.”

# Original “Sin”

## The Deepest Level of Sin



### Blame-Shifting: Deflecting Responsibility Adam

1. He blames **Eve** — “The woman...she gave me...”
2. He blames **God** Himself — “the woman You gave to be with me...”  
(“This is Your fault for giving her to me!”)
3. “...and I ate”

# Original “Sin”

## The Deepest Level of Sin



### Blame-Shifting: Deflecting Responsibility

#### Eve

1. She blames the nachash: “The serpent deceived me...”
2. “...and, I ate.”

# Original “Sin”

## The Deepest Level of Sin

Provide examples of ways that we blame-shift when we behave wrong, are spiritually unhealthy, or in rebellion?

How Do We Deflect Responsibility?



# To Change Or Not To Change?



Why is this the deepest level of sin?

## TESHUVAH

The opportunity to recognize and own one's sin,  
one's unhealthiness, one's immaturity  
– and **TRULY CHANGE BEHAVIOR** –  
is the **GREATEST GIFT** that God has offered  
humanity!

# To Change Or Not To Change?



## TESHUVAH

Definition: “to turn” or “return” to **RIGHT**  
**BEHAVIOR** and therefore, **RIGHT**  
**RELATIONSHIP** with others and with God!

# To Change Or Not To Change?



What was God's intent when He asked Adam  
"Ayekhah?" ("Where are you?")

Hint: He wasn't seeking information  
He was offering an opportunity for Teshuvah –  
ownership, confession and return.

He was giving Adam opportunity: "I sinned.  
Forgive me."

# To Change Or Not To Change?



What does “Blame-Shifting” or deflecting responsibility do to you?

Hint: What was the fundamental foundation of the entire sacrificial system later given at Sinai?

**ATONEMENT**

Refusing to take responsibility – refusing teshuvah – blocks atonement.

# To Change Or Not To Change?



What does “Blame-Shifting” or deflecting responsibility do to you?

## ATONEMENT

In the entire sacrificial system, atonement requires ownership, confession, and teshuvah.

Leviticus 5:5-6

A person guilty of any of these things is to confess in what manner he sinned and bring his guilt offering to Adonai for the sin he committed

# To Change Or Not To Change?



What does “Blame-Shifting” or deflecting responsibility do to you?

## **ATONEMENT**

Numbers 5:5-7

Adonai said to Moshe, “Tell the people of Isra’el, ‘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; and he must make full restitution for his guilt, add twenty percent and give it to the victim of his sin.

No confession, no ownership, no covering.

By refusing to take ownership of their sin, Adam and Eve refused the very mechanism God was extending to them for restitution.

# The Three Levels of Sin



**Actual Sin  
Disobedience**

**ACTIONS  
---  
WORD or DEED**



**Avodah Zera  
"Pride"**

**EVIL (OR GOOD)  
INCLINATION OF  
THE HEART**



**Declining Or  
Denying  
Responsibility**

**COVER-UP  
---  
DEFLECT**

# Original “Sin”



What does “Blame-Shifting” or deflecting responsibility do to relationships or to societies?

It introduces division, initiates conflict and establishes rebellion.

Blame-shifting is the foundational wedge between humanity and God, between humans, within societies, and even among nations.

# Original “Sin”



What does “Blame-Shifting” or declining to take ownership reveal about yourself?

It reveals an unhealthy heart – a lack of spiritual maturity.

It reveals humanity’s instinct to protect self rather than admit fault.

# A Healthy Congregational Family



How do we measure individual and congregational spiritual maturity?

# Sin



“In all my years of pastoring, I have learned this lesson:  
A person’s spiritual maturity is not truly visible until they DON’T  
get their way. Then you see the person.”

Erik Reed – Pastor, TJC

In my decades of struggling with God and with myself, and also  
watching others struggle, both before and as a congregational  
leader, I have come to terms with this:

Our level of spiritual and emotional maturity is not fully  
transparent until we either don’t get our way, or our unhealthy  
behavior (sin) is exposed.

What lurks in the heart then becomes obvious.

# The Three Levels of Sin



Our level of maturity – spiritual and emotional  
– tracks proportionally with the level of  
reflection, personal responsibility and  
ownership we take over our actions.

# The Second Adam



First Adam	Second Adam (Yeshua)
Doubted God's word	Quoted Torah: <i>"It is written..."</i>
Grasped at being "like God"	Humbled Himself though He <i>was</i> God (Phil. 2)
Disobeyed in a garden of plenty	Obedied in a wilderness of hunger
Blamed the woman God gave him	Took responsibility for sins He didn't commit
Hid from God in shame	Faced the Father openly in Gethsemane

# The Solution



## The Pattern:

1. We doubt God's goodness (heart)
2. We disobey His word (action)
3. We deflect responsibility (cover-up)

## The Remedy:

1. Emunah — trusting God's character and surrendering to His authority
2. Shema — hearing and obeying His voice
3. Teshuvah — owning our sin, confession and true repentance

# The Solution



## Matthew 4

17 From that time on, Yeshua began proclaiming, “Turn from your sins (REPENT – Heb. SHUV) to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!”

## Mark 1

4 After Yochanan had been arrested, Yeshua came into the Galil proclaiming the Good News from God: 15 “The time has come, God’s Kingdom is near! Turn to God from your sins (REPENT – Heb. SHUV) and believe the Good News!”

# The Solution



“He who conceals his sins will not succeed;  
he who **confesses AND abandons** them will  
gain mercy.”

(Proverbs 28:13)

# The Solution



Should congregational members hold each other accountable for their actions?

How?

# The Solution



What do you do when you perceive someone has wronged you, offended you, or outright sinned against you?

# The Solution



What do you do when you perceive someone has wronged you, offended you, or outright sinned against you?

1. You discuss the issue with several people other than the individual because, “in the multitude of counsel is wisdom.”

(Recruiting people to your side)

2. You broadcast on Social Media how they have wronged you, especially if it’s your Pastor or Rabbi.

3. You pout, hold a grudge, don’t talk to them, leave the congregation, or just do nothing.

4. **NONE OF THE ABOVE**

# The Solution



What do you do when you perceive someone has wronged you, offended you, or outright sinned against you?

1. You discuss the issue with several people other than the individual.  
**“Lashon Hara” - The Evil Tongue** dom.”

(Recruiting people to your side)

2. You tell the person who wronged you, especially if it's your father or rabbi.  
**“Lashon Hara” - The Evil Tongue**

3. You pout, but don't say anything, leave the congregation, or just do nothing.  
**The Root of Bitterness**

4. NONE OF THE ABOVE

# The Solution



What do you do if someone comes to you for advice – to discuss a perceived wrong that another person has done to them?

1. You let them vent so that they can discuss the issue with you and get it off their chest.

(Gossip)

2. You advise them to talk to the Pastor, rabbi or an elder for advice.

3. You empathize with them, but tell them they must forgive and forget, and just let it go.

4. **NONE OF THE ABOVE**

# The Solution



What do you do if someone comes to you for advice – to discuss a perceived wrong that another person has done to them?

1. You let them tell you what happened, you listen with you and get it on their chest.

**“Lashon Hara” – The Evil Tongue**

(Gossip)

2. You let them tell you what happened, you listen for advice.

**“Lashon Hara” – The Evil Tongue**

3. You empathize with them, you must forgive and forget, and just let it go.

**The Root of Bitterness**

4. NONE OF THE ABOVE

# The Solution



What do you do when you perceive someone has wronged you, offended you, or outright sinned against you?

## 1. Forgive

Matthew 6:14-15 – “For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will not forgive yours.”

# The Solution



What do you do when you perceive someone has wronged you, offended you, or outright sinned against you?

## 2. Assess Yourself

Matthew 7:1-5 – “Don’t judge, so that you won’t be judged. For the way you judge others is how you will be judged — the measure with which you measure out will be used to measure to you. Why do you see the splinter in your brother’s eye but not notice the log in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the splinter out of your eye,’ when you have the log in your own eye? You hypocrite! First, take the log out of your own eye; then you will see clearly, so that you can remove the splinter from your brother’s eye!”

# The Solution



What do you do when you perceive someone has wronged you, offended you, or outright sinned against you?

3. Hold yourself and the other person accountable

Go To Them And Them Alone...First

Matthew 18:15-17 – “Moreover, if your brother commits a sin against you, go and show him his fault — but privately, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he doesn’t listen, take one or two others with you so that every accusation can be supported by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to hear them, tell the congregation; and if he refuses to listen even to the congregation, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-collector.”

# The Solution



What do you do if someone comes to you for advice – to discuss a perceived wrong that another person has done to them?

Hold yourself and the other accountable.

Shut it and them down immediately and advise them in no uncertain terms to go directly to the person and discuss it with them face to face.

# The Solution



Should congregational leaders hold congregational members accountable for their actions?

How?

# The Solution



What do you do if you're a congregational leader and...

One of your congregational family member exhibits repeated unhealthy behavior or overt sin and does not provide any evidence of insight, ownership, or sincere repentance despite repeated counseling?

Proverbs 27:5-6 – Better open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend are **[SHOULD BE?]** received as well-meant, but an enemy's kisses are insincere.

# The Solution



What do you do if you're a congregational member and one of your congregational family who has left or been removed...

They tell you how much they would like to return and hopes things can mend, but exhibits no intention of making amends or changing behavior?

Romans 16:17 – I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put snares alongside the teaching in which you have been trained — keep away from them. For men like these are not serving our Lord the Messiah but their own belly; by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the innocent.

# The Solution



1 John 1

5 And this is the message which we have heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him — none! 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him while we are walking in the darkness, we are lying and not living out the truth. 7

But if we are walking in the light, as he is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of his Son Yeshua purifies us from all sin.

# The Solution



1 John 1

8 If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we acknowledge our sins, then, since he is trustworthy and just, he will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing. 10 If we claim we have not been sinning, we are making him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us.

# The Solution



## Matthew 12

30 “Those who are not with me are against me, and those who do not gather with me are scattering. 31 Because of this, I tell you that people will be forgiven any sin and blasphemy, but blaspheming the Ruach HaKodesh will not be forgiven. 32 One can say something against the Son of Man and be forgiven; **but whoever KEEPS ON SPEAKING AGAINST the Ruach HaKodesh will never be forgiven, neither in the ‘olam hazeh nor in the ‘olam haba.**