

פרשת
נשא
Parashat Naso

*Bamidbar / Numbers 4:21-7:89, Judges 13:2-5
John 11:1-54*

Repentance and Confession a Torah Perspective

In this week's Torah portion we read the following, *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:6-8*, וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: וּ דְבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אִישׁ אוֹ-אִשָּׁה כִּי יַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל-חַטָּאת הָאֲדָמָה לְמַעַל מִעַל בִּיהוָה וְאָשָׁמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא: ז וְהִתְוַדוּ אֶת-חַטָּאתָם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ וְהִשִּׁיב אֶת-אָשָׁמוֹ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְחָמִי-שָׁתוֹ יִסַּף עָלָיו וְנָתַן לְאִשֶּׁר אָשָׁם לוֹ: ח וְאִם-אִין לְאִישׁ גֹּאֵל לְהִשִּׁיב הָאָשָׁם אֵלָיו הָאָשָׁם הַמּוֹשֵׁב לִיהוָה לִכְפֹּהוּן מִלְּבַד אֵיל הַכִּפְּרִים אֲשֶׁר יִכְפֹּר-בּוֹ עָלָיו: *5:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5:6 'Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the Lord, and that person is guilty, 5:7 then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged. (NASB)* The text states, איש או- אשה כי יעשו מכל-חטאת האדם *"man or woman does from any of the sins of man"* suggests this refers to all sins, any sin, and the Hebrew text goes on saying וְהִתְוַדוּ וְהוּא הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא וְאָשָׁמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ *"his soul is guilty and confess."* This means that the first step for a sinner must be his confession of having committed a sin. This is the idea of owning up to what we have done. The confession before God is a necessary part of Teshuvah (Repentance), and after one has admitted his sins he is to

make restitution and add one-fifth to the restitution and give it to the one who was wronged. The *Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 35a* states the following concerning this verse.

Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 35a Part 8

§ The mishna further teaches: And with regard to all prohibitions, whether or not they are time bound, both men and women are obligated to observe them. The Gemara asks: From where are these matters derived? Rav Yehuda says that Rav says, and likewise the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: The verse states with regard to a guilt-offering: “When a man or woman shall commit any sin that a person commits” (Numbers 5:6). The verse equates a woman to a man with regard to all punishments in the Torah, as a woman is also required to bring an offering for atonement.

The point the rabbis are making is both men and women (אִישׁ אוֹרֵב) are guilty when sinning and women are also required to bring an offering for atonement to the Tabernacle, standing before God, and confess their sins and making restitution if necessary. Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah, Repentance 1:1* states

Mishneh Torah Repentance 1:1

“ those who bring sin-offerings or trespass-offerings, when they offer their sacrifices, whether for their errors or for their spitefulness, find no atonement in their sacrifices, unless they repent, and deliver themselves of a verbal confession, even as it is said: “He shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing” (Lev. 5.5) So, too, are the guilty upon whom the tribunal pronounced either a sentence of death or of stripes, who find no atonement either in their death or in being lashed unless they do repent and make verbal confession. Even he, who injures his friend or causes him damages in money matters, although he makes restitution of what he owes him, finds no atonement, unless he makes ver-

bal confession and repents by obligating himself never to repeat this again, even as is said: “Any sin that man commits” (Num. 5.6).”

This illustrates the importance of repentance, a sacrifice is only qualified for atonement if one repents and confesses his sins before God. This same condition is applicable to us today who have faith in Yeshua the Messiah (read *Hebrews 10*). His sacrifice does not atone until we repent and confess our sins before God. I have heard it taught by the hypergrace movement that one does not need to repent, all one has to do is believe in Yeshua. This is completely inconsistent with what we read according to the Torah and what Yeshua taught concerning these Torah passages. For example, Yeshua said the following according to *Matthew 5:21-26*.

Matthew 5:21-26

5:21 “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ 5:22 “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. 5:23 “Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 5:24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 5:25 “Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 5:26 “Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent. (NASB)

The context that Yeshua is making is in relation to one’s heart, hav-

ing hatred towards other, even to the point of calling a person a fool, suggests pride and arrogance as opposed to being humble and broken before God when seeking atonement and forgiveness of sins. What we are to have is a broken heart for having (i) disobeyed God's Word, being concerned with having hurt the Lord in heaven and (ii) for hurting a fellow human being. Here Yeshua raises the bar in regards to the interpretation and application of the Torah. Murder is an act that can be committed in the heart being guilty in the heavenly court and the one who says "*you fool*" is guilty of "*pride and arrogance*" leading one to the danger of being cast into hell. This is paralleled then to the one who brings his offering to the altar of God and remembers that he has something against his brother, he is to leave the offering and go make reconciliation first. This going and making restitution is part of the act of repentance, and the offering becomes effective when we make good on our intentions of repentance by following through (making restitution). The idea presented here is to make reconciliation quickly such that you are not handed over to the judge who will cast judgment and be thrown into prison. These things speak of this verse from Parashat Nasso which states that the one who sins has broken faith with God in heaven. The first aspect of this breaking of faith is related to those who are in a covenant relationship with God as opposed to those who are not. Notice how one brings a sacrifice to the Tabernacle because he/she is already in a covenant relationship with God by faith. This is related to Yeshua's Words in *John 3:36* which state *3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.* (*NASB* ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον· ὁ δὲ ἀπειθῶν τῷ Υἱῷ οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν, ἀλλ' ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ μένει ἐπ' αὐτόν.) Note how Yeshua says the one who believes has eternal life, but the one who does not "*obey*" (ἀπειθῶν, apeithōn, "*not obeying*") the Son will not see life. The rabbis say all of the commandments of the Torah, whether they are mandatory or prohibitive, if a man violates any one of them, either presumptuously or erroneously, then he must repent and turn away from his sinful ways, according to *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:6* he is obliged to confess before God! As it is said, "*When a man or woman shall commit any sin ...*" then they shall confess their sin which they have done (*Bamidbar / Numbers 5.6-7*), this is a confes-

sion of words, and our confession is to be followed with turning from sin. This is why the words of confession of faith in *John 3:36* is coupled to obedience to the Son which is coupled to the Torah command.

The Scriptures we are looking at for this week are from *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:1-10*.

Bamidbar / Numbers 5:1-10

5:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5:2 'Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of a dead person. 5:3 'You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst.' 5:4 The sons of Israel did so and sent them outside the camp; just as the Lord had spoken to Moses, thus the sons of Israel did. 5:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5:6 'Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the Lord, and that person is guilty, 5:7 then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged. 5:8 'But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution which is made for the wrong must go to the Lord for the priest, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him. 5:9 'Also every contribution pertaining to all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they offer to the priest, shall be his. 5:10 'So every man's holy gifts shall be his; whatever any man gives to the priest, it becomes his.' (NASB)

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב צוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ מִן-הַמַּחֲנֶה כָּל-צָרוּעַ וְכָל-זָב וְכָל טָמֵא לְנֶפֶשׁ: ג
מִזְכָּר עַד-גִּקְבָּה תִשְׁלְחוּ אֶל-מַחֲוִץ לַמַּחֲנֶה תִשְׁלְחוּם וְלֹא
יִטְמְאוּ אֶת-מַחֲנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שׂוֹכֵן בְּתוֹכָם: ד וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן

בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אוֹתָם אֶל-מַחֲוִיץ לַמַּחֲנֶה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בֶּן עֲשׂוֹ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: פ ה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה
אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ו דִּבֶּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אוֹ-אִשָּׁה כִּי
יַעֲשׂוּ מְכַל-חַטָּאת הָאֵדָם לְמַעַל מֵעַל בֵּיהוָה וְאֲשַׁמָּה הַנֶּפֶשׁ
הַהוּא: ז וְהִתְוֹדוּ אֶת-חַטָּאתָם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ וְהִשִּׁיב אֶת-
אֲשָׁמוֹ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְחִמִּישְׁתּוֹ יִסֹּף עָלָיו וְנָתַן לְאֲשֶׁר אָשָׁם לוֹ: ח
וְאִם-אִין לְאִישׁ גֹּאֵל לְהִשִּׁיב הָאָשָׁם אֵלָיו הָאָשָׁם הַמוֹשֵׁב
לִיהוָה לִפְנֵיהֶן מִלְּבַד אֵיל הַכִּפְּרִים אֲשֶׁר יִכְפֹּר-בוֹ עָלָיו: ט
וְכָל-תְּרוּמָה לְכֹל-קִדְשֵׁי בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵיהֶן לוֹ
יְהִי: י וְאִישׁ אֶת-קִדְשׁוֹ לוֹ יִהְיֶה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִתֵּן לִפְנֵיהֶן לוֹ
יְהִי:

Notice how these Scriptures from *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:6* are juxtaposed next to *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:1-3*, א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, ב צו אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ מִן-הַמַּחֲנֶה כָּל-צָרוּעַ וְכָל-זָב וְכָל טָמֵא לְנֶפֶשׁ: ג מִזְכָּר עַד-נִקְבָּה תִשְׁלְחוּ אֶל-מַחֲוִיץ לַמַּחֲנֶה תִשְׁלְחוּם וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ: *5:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5:2 'Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of a dead person. 5:3 'You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst.'* (NASB) The correlation to the leper, the discharge, and being unclean due to a dead body to the one who sins confesses before God is a significant point. According to Midrash Rabbah *Devarim / Deuteronomy Parashat 6, Part 8* the rabbis say “*the sages learned: All [tzaraat] blemishes can a man see except for his own blemishes.*” The idea here is that one is in denial seeing a sore at the surface that everyone else can see. This act of denial goes deeper when we consider the source of our sins as the midrash further draws out, seeing the blemish of others calling this being “*through an evil (stingy) eye.*” One has a judgmental attitude, and is connected to evil speech (Lashon Hara) which leads to other forms of evil, *i.e. not lending to a neighbor if they are in need, etc.* It is interesting how the witness of two or three is circumvented by the one who is judged of his own (*i.e. seeing everyone else’s blemishes*). Note also

the parallel to Yeshua's words on the evil eye and not seeing our own sins. (*Matthew 7:3-5*) The point is how in *Matthew 5:27-28*, Yeshua said that any man who looks upon a woman and lusts for her has already committed adultery and is guilty. Similarly, the act of adultery is "heavy" and the penalty is death, whereas our thoughts are considered light, consider how today we are very lenient on the way we think, the thoughts of our minds as compared to our actions. This is closely related to our relationship with others and with God, especially with regard to our hearts, the very thing that we judge leniently upon (the thoughts of our hearts) is the very dwelling place of God's Holy Spirit. All of these things are paralleled to the Lord speaking to Moshe to tell the people to remove the leper, the one with a discharge, and the one who is unclean by touching the dead. Rabbinic opinion on the leper is considered as having contracted his leprosy due to his sins catching up with him, the sin that is within comes to the surface. These things teach us that we must repent before going before the Lord in prayer or bringing a sacrifice because unrepentance may be a serious hindrance to our prayers. Remember back in Parashat Tazria, the leper, the discharge, and touching the dead are extrinsic uncleanness, whereas, those sins that come from the heart are known as a form of intrinsic uncleanness. Understanding the origins of uncleanness before God and the differences between extrinsic vs. intrinsic uncleanness, we learn based upon the Torah that the intrinsic uncleanness can only be removed by a miracle of God through faith in His Messiah Yeshua. The uncleanness that is from within is removed when the Lord God Almighty changes our hearts. Note also this is what the author of the book of Hebrews is trying to explain to us. He isn't providing a teaching on doing away with the Torah command, he is explaining the weightier spiritual significance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua in relation to cleansing us from the intrinsic impurity that is in all of us! The sacrifice Yeshua made for us is coupled to repentance and the confession of sins before God just as we are studying here from this week's Torah portion, Parashat Naso.

The Apostolic Writings states the following concerning the confession of sins before God.

1 John 1:9

But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing. (NASB)

James 5:16

So then, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you will be healed. The prayer of a good person has a powerful effect. (NASB)

Mark 11:25

And when you stand and pray, forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive the wrongs you have done. (NASB)

John writes in his epistle to confess our sins before God and he will keep His promise to forgive us our sins and purify us from wrongdoing. God's promise John is referencing to forgive us from our sins and to purify us as it is connected to confession is based upon the Torah perspective. James writes that we are to confess our sins to one another and to pray for one another so that we are healed. Yeshua said in [Mark 11:25](#) that we are to forgive others their sins so that when we stand and pray, our Father in heaven will also forgive us. When the Torah discusses the sinner confessing his sin it uses the plural, וְהִתְוַדָּהוּ. Note that the Torah did not write that the soul (נַפְשׁוֹ) of the sinner is guilty, but it writes הִנֵּפֶשׁ הַהוּא. The rabbis say the reason this is written in this way is because this is a reference to the collective soul of the people which has become tarnished through one of its members committing perjury. ([Or HaChaim on Bamidbar / Numbers 5:6 Part 2](#)) This introduces the concept of the Torah speaking about a soul other than merely that of the sinner in question. This is the idea behind Yeshua's words in [Mark 11:25](#), to forgive others their sins such that the Lord God our Father in heaven will also forgive us. The point is that we live amongst other people, so when we sin, others may be involved, such as family or friends, or acquaintances that we come in contact with on a continual basis. Others will be effected in some way by our sins because sin has consequences. ([Romans 6:23](#)) This

is the principle that was laid down according to the Creation account, that every thing created that has seed will propagate after its kind (see *Bereshit / Genesis 1:11, 1:21, 1:25*). This is also connected to what Yeshua meant when he said *“For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as you ...”* (*Matthew 23:15*) For example, one does not plant grapes and get apples instead. When sin is planted, even in private, it will reap a harvest of consequences. These consequences have a way of spilling over into the life of someone else. So we are able to either bless or hurt someone who is in association with us by the choices that we make, both private and public. This is the reason James speaks about confessing our sins to one another (*James 5:16*), and Yeshua said to forgive others so that our Father in heaven will also forgive us (*Mark 11:25*). What is interesting is how Yeshua also taught when we pray we are to go into a room, close the door, and pray to our Father who is unseen. When our Father in heaven sees what we have done in secret, he will reward us. This is so men do not perceive we are fasting, only our Father in heaven will know. (*Matthew 6:6 and 6:18*) The principle that Yeshua is teaching us here is related to the heavenly court. Take for example, the Torah states, אִישׁ אוֹ-אִשָּׁה כִּי יַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל-חַטָּאת הָאֲדָמָה לְמַעַל לְמַעַל *“anyone committing any of the sins people are liable to commit”* the Torah uses the expression *“and have committed a trespass;”* as explained in the *Talmud Bavli Baba Kama 110*, the sages say that the verse speaks about a case of someone who perjured himself after having denied being in possession of money belonging to his neighbor. The very denial is considered sinful as it leads to the person having to swear an oath if his accuser takes him to court. The rabbis say if the accused is not taken to court he is able to make amends (restitution) for his denial at any time. The verse says כִּי יַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל-חַטָּאת הָאֲדָמָה to inform us that the moment one does so one is considered as about to also trespass against God, by rendering a false oath. (*Or HaChaim on Bamidbar / Numbers 5:6 Part 1*) This is connected to what Yeshua said in *Matthew 6:6 and 6:18*, by the principle of the Lord God in heaven seeing what we do both in private and in public. If what we do in secret is rewarded openly, then it stands to reason that if we sin in secret, we shall also be *“rewarded”* openly for that action too. In any case, God sees and

knows about sin, whether private or public, and He does not let sin go unpunished. This is why the Scriptures describe the sins that we are to be atoned for in the blood of Yeshua the Messiah, are to be listed out one to another, before our Father in heaven, and also to forgive others of their sins. *Bamidbar / Numbers 5:6* states that the one who commits sin against a fellow man breaks faith with the Lord God. This is why the greatest consequence of private, personal sin is to our own mortal soul. *Ezekiel 18:4* states “*the soul that sins shall die,*” and Paul wrote to us saying in *Romans 6:23* saying “*the wages of sin is death.*” For those who are the people of God, both Jew and Gentile, there is a standard of conduct, both in private and in public, and this is the Torah! This is why Paul wrote saying, “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*” (*1 Corinthians 10:31*) We are given the desire to glorify God in our lives according to His Word by His indwelling Spirit. The Lord also provided a way to have fellowship with Him. He has promised that “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness*” (*1 John 1:9*). As you can see, the Torah and the understanding of repentance and confession of sins are intimately coupled in NT text. So when we are told to repent and turn from our sins in the NT, this is a Torah based concept. This is what Yeshua was doing, he was teaching the Torah as he began his ministry according to *Mark 1:14* *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 1:15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. (ESV)* This Gospel is the revealing of God’s Messiah, the miraculous deliverance of Israel, and the writing of God’s Word upon our hearts, that is coupled to God literally dwelling in our presence! This is why the Torah and the Gospel Message go hand in hand!