

Once we stop forgiving, we stop living, we stop growing and we start to die spiritually. Unforgiveness can become a great dark weight of wrath we begin storing up in the depths of our souls, for that glorious Day of Judgment when the hidden secrets of men's hearts are revealed for all to see. Sadly, it is often easier to find more forgiveness among alcoholics, murderers and prostitutes than among most believers.

Far too often, believers like to use the truth as a weapon to hurt each other, instead of doing what Aslan did in Narnia and use the deepest magic before the dawn of time – He died in the place of a traitor and released forgiveness, which is the only weapon capable of defeating the White Witch, or any other servant of the enemy. May we learn to release forgiveness in our lives and in our world.

Forgiveness allows us to see each other as G-d sees us and allows us to be set free to reach our **full spiritual potential** in a cold, cruel world full of **spiritual deception** and **religious hypocrisy**. How is your forgiveness doing on this, the last day of 2005? Have you stopped forgiving yourself, because we all know that you really are a loser, full of evil and anger – but that has never stopped G-d from loving you and in believing in your potential to rise above the Dark Side and to walk in the light as He is in the light, so that the blood of His Son can cleanse you from all iniquity (I John 1:7). **When will we learn to give other people the same slack which G-d gives to us?** Pouting and cringing in the darkness and gnawing endlessly on the remnants of wrath and hatred is something which a Gollum does, not a believer, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

But where do you go from there, once you have forgiven the slime bag? Prov. 26:11 says that as a dog returns to that which he has vomited, so a fool returns to his folly. Forgiveness does not leave the one forgiven and allow him to jump back into the mud from whence he came. It takes him to the flip side of the coin.

You see forgiveness paves the way for obedience, for learning to undo those habits of inner darkness which eventually snared Anakin Skywalker and dragged him into the Dark Side. Are you a wrath-a-holic? Are you a cess pool dweller? Being judgmental is just as evil as being lustful, or idolatrous – the Bible actually says that the one who hates his brother is a **murderer** (I John 3:15) and a **liar** (I John 4:20) – and that **neither of these spiritual, religious slime bags has eternal life dwelling in them.**

Principle number two says that we need to learn to move on and discover **(#2) the redemptive solutions** which G-d is always prepared to offer for every fallen situation the evil condition of mankind encounters (I Cor. 6:9-11 and I Cor. 10:13) – not just those for the evil ones who have hurt us, **but also for the Evil Heart of Unforgiveness in each of us which elevates the sinfulness of mankind above the power of the Cross of our beloved Messiah's forgiveness.**

I want to move on from always hearing how many times: "*somebody done somebody wrong*" and wrestle with my own soul until I discover what the L-rd of Heaven (Adonai Tse-va-ot) wants me to do about the situation – **defensively** (to prevent further damage) and **offensively** (to actually make progress). I want to hear from the L-rd of Heaven, until the pain and anguish of my soul becomes a song, at least as lovely as the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and until with Job I can truly say: "The L-rd giveth and the L-rd taketh away, blessed be the Name of the L-rd this day".

Now this is not an easy place to reach, and it is not an easy place to live, but it is the only place where G-d will truly meet with believers and teach them the secrets of His love and grant them the **fountain of the living waters of His Spirit** – to spring up within them and grant healing and give life, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. As believers, we need to understand that we live in two worlds at once – the **physical world**, whose glory is passing away and the **spiritual world** which is yet to come, but whose glory is eternal and forever durable (Rom. 8:18). What is flowing in your life and growing in your heart? **Bitter zeal** (James 3:13-18) and **spiritual isolationism** (Heb. 10:24,25), or the **love which has no limit** and the **peace which passes understanding** (Phil. 4:6,7)?

Which brings me to my third point (I know the Latkes are calling to you, as deep calls to deep, or as fat calls to the hips): **(#3) Judgment Day is coming** when all the secrets of all the hearts of all the generations, and nations of mankind will be laid bare before the Highest Court of No Appeals, No Exceptions and No Escape. Now this doesn't give me the vindictive pleasure of considering how everyone who has ever hurt me is going to roast in the flames of G-d's eternal wrath, it gives me the greater pleasure of wallowing in the pleasure of **eternal resolution, healing and closure.**

You see, until we can see sinners as victims of their own wrath, lust, greed and pride, then we victimize ourselves by being dragged into the same hell. For, if the truth be known, we have too often also felt the same evil inclinations which they have become ensnared by. ***We must hate evil in all of its forms, but never any of its victims.*** Now, this is a tall order for a Messianic Jewish rabbi whose study of history reminds him of the intense, repeated cruelty of all the generations of mankind. **All the pain which all of the people of this world have ever suffered pales when compared to the eternal suffering of those who have been conquered by the evil which really caused it all.** There is a day coming when all the wrongs of this world will be righted, and all the evil will be repaid, **believers need to be content with G-d's forgiveness and dwell in the light of His love (I Cor. 4:5) – and leave the final judgment to Him.**

We are not to call down flames of judgment on our enemies, we are to call them to the light, so that they too may escape the judgment which we too so richly deserve. Mishpocah, do you know which spirit works in your heart (Luke 9:54-56)? Redemptive solutions exercise discipline and judgment to provide a safe haven and a context where spirituality can flourish, but believers should never wish that any should perish, but that all should come to a knowledge of repentance (2 Peter 3:9). ***Temporal Consequences*** need to reflect our commitment to ***Eternal Consequences***, both for us and for those we would presume to judge – which brings me to my fourth point and that much closer to our latkes.

G-d has provided each of us with **(#4) an indestructible calling** (Phil. 2:13 and Eph. 2:10), no matter what horror and tribulation we may encounter on our pilgrimage through this life. ***It is our duty and our privilege to make our lives turn around our calling and not around our problems.*** G-d will work on our hearts (the heart of your rebbe included), until we learn to see each problem as **a solution under construction**, and until we learn to do that which is probably the toughest spiritual discipline for believers to exercise – to the Jew first and also to the Gentile – **keeping our own noses clean and not participating in the sins of others** (I Tim. 5:22).

A true spiritual hero keeps his or her eyes on the Kingdom which is to come and measures every action, every reaction, every attitude and every consequence from this perspective – this is what it means to seek first His ***Kingdom*** and His ***Righteousness***. Judah the Maccabee followed in his father's footsteps and died battling the forces of evil which threatened to extinguish the light of Israel and prevent the coming of Messiah – **may we live fighting the same battle and so prepare for the Return of that Same Messiah, for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.**

So here's my summary:

- Principle #1: Endless forgiveness.
- Principle #2: Redemptive Solutions Forever
- Principle #3: Leave Final Judgment to the Final Judgment
- Principle #4: Mind your own spiritual business

(and thus avoid the contagious spiritually communicable diseases [2 Cor. 7:1] which are a believers true enemies)

Let's pray.