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THE DOCTRINE OF FORGIVENESS IN THE LIGHT OF BIBLICAL  
HEBREW AND GREEK WORDS

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A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary  
Washington, D. C.

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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Department of Biblical Languages

---

by

Viggo Norskov Olsen

August, 1950

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
The Problem . . . . .	1
Statement of the problem . . . . .	1
Importance of the problem . . . . .	1
Sources . . . . .	2
II. THE HEBREW BIBLE WORDS KAFAR, NASA AND SALAH . . . . .	3
<u>Kafār</u> . . . . .	3
To atone or atonement . . . . .	4
Purge . . . . .	5
Forgive . . . . .	5
<u>Nasa'</u> . . . . .	7
Acceptance . . . . .	7
Forgive . . . . .	8
<u>Salāh</u> . . . . .	9
Summary . . . . .	11
III. APOLYŌ, APHĪMĪ, CHARTIZOMAI AND APHESIS IN THE PAPYRI . . . . .	12
<u>Apolyō</u> . . . . .	12
A discharged veteran . . . . .	12
Cancelling the mortgage . . . . .	13
Release a debtor . . . . .	13
Release from an engagement . . . . .	13
Liberation from performing duty . . . . .	14

## CHAPTER

Discharge from public service . . . . .	14
<u>Aphiēmi</u> . . . . .	15
Let free from slavery . . . . .	15
Freedom from public burdens . . . . .	15
Have left undone . . . . .	16
Forgive us our debts . . . . .	16
Remit money . . . . .	16
<u>Charizomai</u> . . . . .	17
To be gracious . . . . .	17
To deliver over a person to the grace of the people . . . . .	17
Grant one a favor . . . . .	18
To be under obligation to a person . . . . .	18
Show kindness to and graciously bestow upon . . . . .	19
<u>Aphesis</u> . . . . .	19
Freedom from public duty . . . . .	19
Freeing of the harvest . . . . .	20
Release of water . . . . .	20
Summary . . . . .	20
IV. APOLYŌ, APHIĒMI, CHARIZOMAI AND APHESIS IN THE CLASSICS . . . . .	22
<u>Apolyō</u> . . . . .	22
Relieved from military duty . . . . .	22
Delivered from a certain responsibility . . . . .	22
Relieved from an accusation . . . . .	23



## CHAPTER

The release of captives . . . . .	23
Let go . . . . .	24
To loose . . . . .	24
<u>Aphiēmi</u> . . . . .	24
Let go . . . . .	24
To remit . . . . .	25
Shedding . . . . .	25
Released from peril . . . . .	26
To send out soldiers . . . . .	26
Discharged from work . . . . .	26
<u>Charizomai</u> . . . . .	27
Grant a favor . . . . .	27
To appeal to one favorably . . . . .	27
Be gracious . . . . .	28
To grant a person his wish . . . . .	28
Be dear to one's heart . . . . .	28
Give pleasure . . . . .	29
Give freely a gift . . . . .	29
Acceptable sacrifice . . . . .	29
To gratify . . . . .	29
To indulge . . . . .	29
<u>Aphesis</u> . . . . .	30
Release . . . . .	30

CHAPTER	PAGE
Let go . . . . .	31
Leave of absence . . . . .	31
Starting place . . . . .	31
Summary . . . . .	32
V. APOLYO, APHIEMI, CHARIZOMAI AND APHESIS IN THE SEPTUAGINT.	33
<u>Apolyō</u> . . . . .	34
Translated from <u>halāk</u> . . . . .	34
<u>shuv</u> . . . . .	34
<u>gawā'</u> . . . . .	34
<u>Apolyō</u> in the apocryphal books . . . . .	35
<u>Aphiēmi</u> , The translation of sixteen Hebrew words . . . . .	35
<u>hadāl</u> . . . . .	35
<u>yaza'</u> . . . . .	35
<u>kafār</u> . . . . .	35
<u>nūsh</u> . . . . .	36
<u>natāsh</u> . . . . .	36
<u>nasa'</u> . . . . .	36
<u>nathān</u> . . . . .	37
<u>salāh</u> . . . . .	37
<u>'azāv</u> . . . . .	37
<u>pathāh</u> . . . . .	37
<u>kalāl</u> . . . . .	38
<u>rafah</u> . . . . .	38

## CHAPTER

## PAGE

<u>sh'vāk</u> . . . . .	38
<u>shalāh</u> . . . . .	39
<u>shemāt</u> . . . . .	39
<u>sa'ah</u> . . . . .	39
<u>Aphiēmi</u> in the apocryphal books . . . . .	39
<u>Charizomai</u> . . . . .	40
<u>Charizomai</u> in the apocryphal books . . . . .	40
<u>Aphesis</u> . . . . .	40
Translated from <u>yovel</u> . . . . .	40
<u>d'ror</u> . . . . .	42
<u>shamāt</u> . . . . .	43
<u>shilluhhin</u> . . . . .	43
<u>'azēzel</u> . . . . .	44
<u>'afik</u> . . . . .	45
<u>hanahāh</u> . . . . .	45
<u>haf'shi</u> . . . . .	46
<u>pēlēg</u> . . . . .	46
<u>Aphesis</u> in the Apocrypha . . . . .	46
VI. <u>APOLYŪ, APHIĒMI, CHARIZOMAI AND APHESIS IN THE NEW</u>	
<u>TESTAMENT</u> . . . . .	48
<u>Apolyŭ</u> . . . . .	48
Send away . . . . .	48
Let go . . . . .	48



## CHAPTER

## PAGE

Put away . . . . .	48
Release . . . . .	49
Loosed . . . . .	49
Dismissed . . . . .	49
Depart . . . . .	49
Set at liberty . . . . .	50
Divorced . . . . .	50
Forgive . . . . .	50
<u>Aphiemi</u> . . . . .	51
Leave . . . . .	51
Suffer . . . . .	51
Forsake . . . . .	51
Let alone . . . . .	52
Forgive . . . . .	52
<u>Charizomai</u> . . . . .	53
Give . . . . .	53
Freely give . . . . .	53
Deliver . . . . .	54
Granted . . . . .	54
Forgive . . . . .	54
<u>Aphesis</u> . . . . .	55
Remission . . . . .	55
Deliverance and liberty . . . . .	56



CHAPTER	PAGE
Forgiveness . . . . .	56
VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION . . . . .	58
Summary . . . . .	58
Conclusion . . . . .	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	69

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In the Old and New Testaments the verb "to forgive" and its derivatives appear in one-hundred and twelve passages, and the nouns "forgiveness" and "remission" in eighteen passages. In the Old Testament the idea "to forgive" is conveyed by the three Hebrew words kafar, nasa and salah, in the New Testament by four Greek words, namely apolyo, aphiemi, charizomai and aphesis.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The problem was that of examining the three Hebrew and four Greek words translated "forgive" and "forgiveness." It was the purpose of this study to ascertain the specific usage of each word with a view to finding norms of interpretation.

Importance of the problem. Three times "forgive" is the translation of a Hebrew word which occurs altogether in one-hundred and fifty-four passages; in sixteen texts it is the translation of a word which appears in about six-hundred and fifty passages; and thirty-three instances of a Hebrew word that occurs fifty times. In the New Testament "forgive" and "forgiveness" appear sixty-six times as the translation of four Greek words used about two-hundred and fifty

places. On account of these differences in translation, it is important that careful study be made in order to arrive at a full conception of "forgiveness."

Sources. This investigation is based chiefly on primary sources consisting of the Hebrew Old Testament, Greek New Testament, Septuagint, apocryphal books and the classical Greek literature and Greek papyri. The works of Biblical expositors, commentaries, lexicons, and grammars comprise the secondary material.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HEBREW BIBLE WORDS KAFAR, NASA AND SALAH

The words "forgive" and "forgiveness" in the Old Testament of the English Bible<sup>1</sup> are the translation of three Hebrew words, namely kafar, nasa and salah.

#### I. KAFAR

The Hebrew word kafar and its derivatives appear in 154 passages in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>2</sup> The original meaning of this word is "to cover," "to cover over" or "to overspread."<sup>3</sup>

In Gen. 6:14 is given an example which expresses the original meaning, both the verb and the noun are used: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch (kafar) it within and without with pitch (khofer)." As a noun, kafar is used to signify a place of shelter.

A noun formed from it, answering to the modern Arabic Khephr, is sometimes used to signify a village as a place of shelter, e.g. Caper-naum (the village of Nahum).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Authorized King James Version has been used.

<sup>2</sup> Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance, p. 614. Hereinafter referred to as Englishman.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, translator, Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures, p. 411. Hereinafter referred to as Gesenius.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Baker Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament, p. 127. Hereinafter referred to as Girdlestone.



To atone or atonement. In about eighty passages<sup>5</sup> of the one-hundred and fifty-four instances in the Hebrew Old Testament kafār is translated "to atone" or "to make atonement." Most of these eighty passages are found in the Levitical Law. The idea atonement as designated by kafār is typically illustrated in these words:

And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement (kafār) for him concerning his sin.<sup>6</sup>

How a sinner received atonement by the sacrifice of the animal is vividly described by Mrs. E. G. White:

The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the vail, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. . . . As Christ at his ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead his blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministrations sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner's behalf.<sup>7</sup>

This statement brings the idea atonement into connection with the ark containing the ten commandments. It is interesting to notice that the cover of the ark, the mercy-seat, as it is described in Exodus the twenty-fifth chapter and Leviticus the sixteenth chapter, is the noun kāpporeth derived from kafār.

<sup>5</sup> Englishman, p. 614.

<sup>6</sup> Leviticus 5:6.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 354, 357.

Purge. Nine places in the English Bible kafār is translated "purge." Psalms 79:9 is an illustration of this: "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away (kafār) our sins, for thy name's sake." When the words "purge away," are given as the translation of kafār, then it is suggested that the "making atonement" is strongly connected with "purging sins." The same is true in these few passages where kafār is translated "be merciful," "put off," "be pacified" or "pardon." Of a few other renderings of kafār Girdlestone says:

The word reconciliation has been adopted by our translators instead of atonement, and must be considered identical with it in Lev. 6:30, 8:15, 16:20; Ez. 45:15,17,20; Dan. 9:24.

The form Copher has been rendered satisfaction in Num. 35:31, 32; bribe in 1 Sam. 12:3; Amos 5:12; sum of money in Ex. 21:30; ransom in Ex. 30:12; Job 33:24; 36:18; Ps. 49:7; Prov. 6:35; 13:8; 21:18 and Isa. 43:3. The usage of the word in these passages, many of which were not ceremonial or symbolical, conveys an idea of costliness as an element in atonement, and thus allies it with redemption.<sup>8</sup>

Forgive. In the English Bible kafār is used three times to express the idea "forgive."

Be merciful, O Lord, unto the people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven (kafār) them.<sup>9</sup>

When the first innocent blood was shed God said to Cain, "thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10). Literally

<sup>8</sup> Girdlestone, pp. 130-131.

<sup>9</sup> Deut. 21:8.



it is said to Israel "the blood shall be covered (kafar)" and the means of covering is that "the blood shall be atoned (kafar).<sup>10</sup> In the Psalms we find the second use of kafar to express the idea "forgive."

But he, being full of compassion, forgave, (kafar) their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away and did not stir up all his wrath.<sup>10</sup>

The seventy-eighth Psalm describes God's wonders toward Israel both in Egypt and in the desert. It is literally said that God because of his compassion "covered (kafar) their iniquity" or "made atonement (kafar) for their iniquity."

The third passage where we find "forgive" given as the translation of kafar is in the book of Jeremiah:

Yet, Lord, thou knowest all their council against me to slay me: forgive (kafar) not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal thus with them in the time of thine anger.<sup>11</sup>

In this verse Jeremiah speaks against those who make devices against him as God's prophet. Literally, he says to God, "thou shalt not cover (kafar) their iniquity." By the use of kafar Jeremiah indicates that he has in mind God's atoning i.e., covering of sin.

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<sup>10</sup> Psalms 78:38.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremiah 18:23.

## II. NASA

Nasa and its derivatives appear in the Hebrew Bible about six hundred and fifty times.<sup>12</sup> The meaning of this verb is first "the lifting up; secondly, the carrying; and thirdly, the taking away of a burden."<sup>13</sup>

The three basic ideas of nasa are illustrated by the following verses:

Deut. 32:40 "For I lift up (nasa) my hand unto heaven, and say, I live for ever."

Gen. 46:5 "And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried (nasa) Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons, which Pharoah had sent to carry (nasa) him."

Amos 4:2 "The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away (nasa) with hooks and your posterity with fishhooks."

Acceptance. It is interesting to notice that nasa is one of the Hebrew words used to represent acceptance. This is the case 13 times. Its use is illustrated in the story of Lot praying for Sodom, where God says to Lot, "See, I have accepted (nasa) thee concerning this thing also" (Gen. 19:21).

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<sup>12</sup> Englishman, p. 840.

<sup>13</sup> Girdlestone, p. 137.



Num. 14:18 ". . . forgiving (nasa) iniquity and transgression. . . ."

When nasa is translated "forgive" it implies that the sin is "taken away" as exemplified in Hosea 14:2: ". . . take away (nasa) all iniquity." Nasa means "forgiveness" or "taking away sin" only because it implies an "atonement" is made. The Levitical law states that if a man transgresses the law then "shall he bear (nasa) his iniquity" (Lev. 5:17).

Cain is an illustration, who said after he had killed his brother: "My punishment (the sin and its consequences) is greater than I can bear (nasa)" (Gen. 4:13).

In the Levitical law it is thought that the priest made atonement for the congregation by "eating the sin-offering in the holy place" and in this way did "bear (nasa) the iniquity of the congregation" (Lev. 10:17). Prophetically it is said of Christ: "He bore (nasa) the sins of many" (Isa. 53:12).

When the idea "forgiveness" is expressed by nasa then the three basic meanings of this Hebrew word are interpreting in an expressive way one aspect of the doctrine of forgiveness. Nasa stands for the "lifting up" and "bearing away" of the burden of sin; Christ lifts it up, and in this sense it is "taken away."

### III. SALAH

Salah and its derivatives appear approximately fifty times. This root is translated thirty-three times "forgive," twice "forgiveness,"

once "spare" and fourteen times "pardon."<sup>15</sup> Gesenius says about this word: "The primary idea seems to be that of lightness, lifting up."<sup>16</sup>

It has been noticed that in each place salah is used it expresses the Divine pardon extended to the sinner. No other idea has been assigned to it. In no case has the word been used of human forgiveness between men. The following two passages exemplify the use of salah:

Exod. 34:9 "And he said, if now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon (salah) our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance."

1 King 8:30 "And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place; and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place; and when thou hearest, forgive (salah)."

Salah is given to those who "turn to God," "give supplications" or "that seeketh the truth." To the one "whose heart turneth away from the Lord," it is said: "The Lord will not spare (salah) him . . ." (Deut. 29:20).

The full use and application of salah is summarized by Girdlestone:

It appears on the whole, that the process represented by this word Salah is the Divine restoration of an offender into favor, whether through his own repentance or the intercession of another. Though not identical with atonement, the two are

<sup>15</sup> Englishman, p. 877.

<sup>16</sup> Gesenius, p. 588.

nearly related. In fact, the covering of the sin and the forgiveness of the sinner can only be understood as two aspects of one truth; for both found their fulness in God's provision of mercy through Christ.<sup>17</sup>

#### IV. SUMMARY

In the Hebrew Bible it is found then that God "covers" the sin or "makes atonement" for the sinner; that the sin is "lifted up," "taken away" or "borne" by the one who makes atonement for the sinner, and that the sinner is "restored into favor" by God. The English word "forgive" is used to express these three essential aspects of "forgiveness" and "acceptance" that are inherent in kafar, salah and nasa.

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<sup>17</sup>

Girdlestone, p. 136.



## CHAPTER III

### APOLYŌ, APHIĒMI, CHARIZOMAI AND APHESIS IN THE POPYRI

The popyri show that the Greek of the New Testament is not a language which stands by itself<sup>1</sup> but "its main feature was, that it was the ordinary vernacular Greek of the period."<sup>2</sup>

In the study of the New Testament, whether doctrinal or devotional, a word study of the popyri becomes valuable,

For a great part of the essence of the New Testament lies hidden in its language. Whoever has understood the nature of the language of the New Testament has also understood a great deal of the essence of the New Testament and of Early Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

The writers of the New Testament use four different words to express the idea "to forgive" and "forgiveness." These words are: apolyŏ, aphiĕmi, charizomai and aphesis. Their use in the popyri was examined.

#### I. APOLYŌ

A discharged veteran. In a contract for a loan of 38 dracmae addressed to a certain Pallas, apolyŏ conveys the idea of "discharge." The Papyrus is from A.D. 81.

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf Deissmann, The Philology of the Greek Bible, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> George Milligan, Here and There Among the Popyri, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Adolf Deissmann, The New Testament in the Light of Modern Research, p. 74.



To Pallas, priest, archidicastes, and superintendent of the chrematistae and the other courts, from M. Longinus Castresius, an honourably discharged (apolyō) veteran, . . .<sup>4</sup>

Cancelling the mortgage. From a late second century papyrus apolyō is translated "cancelling." The papyrus describes a modification of an agreement:

I acknowledge that the contract of representation has been made with you for the sole purpose of your issuing a receipt to the officials without receiving anything, and for cancelling (apolyō) the mortgage, . . .<sup>5</sup>

Release of a debtor. An official of fairly high rank requests of his brother in a letter from about 100 B.C. to take steps for the release of some one who had been arrested for debt:

As soon as you receive this letter go with Horus son of Kotys to see Hermdias the komogrammateus about the person he has arrested, and to Chaeremon the collector, and let him be released (apolyō) and not be troubled by anybody.<sup>6</sup>

Release from an engagement. From B.C. 114 is a letter containing a request that certain keepers of the sacred crocodiles, who

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<sup>4</sup> Bernhard P. Grenfell and Arthur T. Hunt, editors and translators, The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. 12, p. 207. Hereinafter referred to as The Oxyrhynchus Papyri.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., vol. 3, p. 240.

<sup>6</sup> Bernhard P. Grenfell, Arthur T. Hunt and Gilbert Y. Smyly, editors and translators, The Tebtunis Papyri, vol. 1, p. 129. Hereinafter referred to as The Tebtunis Papyri.

had given security for a payment of wheat, should be released from that engagement:

The keepers of crocodiles from whom you took security for the payment of 2 artabae of wheat each have never made the payment. Please therefore to release (apolyō) them and return the articles pledged, in order that they may be able without hindrance to furnish the supplies of food for the sacred animals.<sup>7</sup>

Liberation from performing duty. A physician in a letter of A.D. 140-143 requests to be relieved from some compulsory duties:

. . . wherefore I entreat you my preserver to have pity on me, and order me to be released (apolyō) from my duties so that I may be able to recover from the effects of my labours.<sup>8</sup>

Discharge from public service. In another letter the same idea of being released from duty is illustrated. This papyrus is of an early date, namely, B.C. 244-3:

Niceas to Argaeus, greeting. Though I have often written to you about Zoilus and Praximachus, to release (apolyō) them when they are called upon to serve, you have never listened to me. So now at last be careful to release (apolyō) them from their present service at Alabastropolis because it is not at present their turn to serve; and if people are being chosen from the Osyrynchite name release (apolyō) Zoilus.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 167.

<sup>8</sup> Bernhard P. Grenfell, Arthur T. Hunt, and David G. Hogarth, editors and translators, Fayum Towns and Their Papyri, p. 257. Hereinafter referred to as Fayum Papyri.

<sup>9</sup> Bernhard P. Grenfell and Arthur T. Hunt, editors and translators, The Hibeh Papyri, vol. 1, p. 233. Hereinafter referred to as The Hibeh Papyri.



As an addition to these illustrations of the word apolyō a few more are taken from Moulton and Milligan's collection of Greek words from the papyri. They give examples of this word used to express the idea of "dismiss," "send away on a mission," "release from prison," and "let go."<sup>10</sup>

## II. APHIĒMI

Let free from slavery. An excellently preserved papyrus from A.D. 156 contains the will of a certain Acusilans. This papyrus expresses Acusilans' desire that his slaves obtain their freedom after his death.

But if I die with this will unchanged, I set free (aphiēmi) under sanction of Zeus, Earth and Sun, for their goodwill and affection towards me, my slaves Psenamounis . . .<sup>11</sup>

Freedom from public burdens. Aphiēmi expresses the idea of release. In a petition to a strategus, A.D. 254, the following is read:

. . . by you the most high epistrategi, who not only release (aphiēmi) us from all external offices and burdens but also punish the lawlessness of those who attempt to offend against

<sup>10</sup> James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, p. 66. Hereinafter referred to as Moulton and Milligan.

<sup>11</sup> The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. 3, p. 202.

the Imperial legislation and the judgments of the praefects.<sup>12</sup>

Have left undone. In a letter from a man by name Gemellus to one Egagathus some instructions are given concerning olive-yards. "Up to-day you have left (aphiēmi) it unharvest, wherefore I blame you greatly."<sup>13</sup>

Forgive us our debts. A very interesting text was discovered on a Christian amulet. It contains a petition in which the Lord's Prayer is offered. A part of the prayer is here quoted:

. . . to say the prayer of the Gospel (thus): Our father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth. Give us to-day our daily bread, and forgive (aphiēmi) us our debts, even as we also forgive (aphiēmi) our debtors.<sup>14</sup>

Remit money. In some royal ordinances decreed by Euergetes II, B.C. 118, the idea "to remit" is conveyed by aphiēmi: ". . . and they remit (aphiēmi) to all persons the arrears up to the same period in respects of both rents in corn and money taxes."<sup>15</sup>

Aphiēmi is also used for the following ideas: "allow" as in

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., vol. 8, p. 206.

<sup>13</sup> The Fayum Papyri, p. 267.

<sup>14</sup> George Milligan, Selections from the Greek Papyri, pp. 133, 134. Hereinafter referred to as George Milligan.

<sup>15</sup> The Tebtunis Papyri, p. 21, lines 10-13.



the sentence "aphes auton eisagagein . . . allow him to collect;" "total remission" from "eis telos apheken" and "relieve" as used in the sentence "malista men oyn tēn pasan spoydēn poesai to y aphtēnai se dia telcys . . . above all things, then, make every effort to be finally relieved of your duties."<sup>16</sup>

### III. CHARIZOMAI

To be gracious. The Lord's Prayer which is found on a Christian amulet closes by asking God to be gracious in these words: "Ho phōs ek phōtos, th(eo)s alethinos charison eme ton doulon sou to phos . . . O Light of light, true God, graciously give Thy servant light."<sup>17</sup>

To deliver over a person to the grace of the people. A linguistic parallel to Christ's trial before Pilate as we find it in Mark 15:15 occurs in a Florentine papyrus from the year A.D. 85. This papyrus contains a report of judicial proceedings and quotes the following words of the governor of Egypt before whom the case was tried to a certain Phibion: "axios m e n e s mastigōthēnai . . . charizomai de se tois ochlois, thou hadst been worthy of scourging . . . but I will give thee to the people."<sup>18</sup> In other words, he

<sup>16</sup> Moulton and Milligan, aphiēmi, p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> George Milligan, p. 134.

<sup>18</sup> Adolf Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, p. 269.

will give the man to the grace of the people, to let them do with him what they find good.

Grant one a favor. In a late second-century papyrus is written an interview with an emperor. The interviewer is sentenced to death, but asks a certain favor of the emperor.

Caesar ordered him to be led away. Appianus as he was being led off said, 'Grant me this one favor (charizomai), Lord Caesar.' The Emperor: 'What?' Appianus: 'Order that I may wear the insignia of my nobility on the way.' The emperor: 'Take then.'<sup>19</sup>

Another illustration of charizomai to express the idea of showing favor is found in a papyrus of about A.D. 25. This papyrus is a letter of recommendation.

I have also written to your brother Hermias asking him to communicate with you about him. You will confer upon me a very great favor (charizomai) if Heraclides gains your notice.<sup>20</sup>

To be under obligation to a person. A man by name Petesuchus in a letter from the late second century B.C. asks a certain Marres to do something for him. He closes the letter by stating, that if he does, he will feel under obligation to him. The thought of being under obligation is expressed by the perfect participle of charizomai.

Please therefore in the first place to give thanks to the gods, and secondly to save many lives by seeking out in the neighborhood of your village 5 arourae for our maintenance

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<sup>19</sup> The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. 1, p. 66.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 292.



so that we may thence obtain food. If you do this I shall be eternally obliged (charizomai) to you. Good bye.<sup>21</sup>

Show kindness to and graciously bestow upon. Moulton and Milligan say that "The two meanings usually assigned to this verb 'show kindness to' and 'graciously bestow' can hardly be separated. . . ."22 The papyri show that this is the main idea assigned to this word.

#### IV. APHESIS

In the New Testament "forgiveness" and "remission" with one exception are translated from aphesis. The use of the verb aphiōmi has already been illustrated from the papyri; we now examine the substantive.

Freedom from public duty. A papyrus from A.D. 198-201 contains some imperial rescripts. One of them tells that the prefect in a certain case should give release from a duty in the court. "If you claim the assistance due to immature age, the prefect of the province shall decide the suit for release (aphesis). Published in Alexandria. . . ."23

<sup>21</sup> The Tebtunis Papyri, vol. 1, p. 166.

<sup>22</sup> Moulton and Milligan, charizomai, p. 684.

<sup>23</sup> The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, vol. 7, p. 147.

Freeing of the harvest. In the correspondence of the diocetes in Egypt B.C. 113, mention is made of the official release of the harvest after the claims of the government had been met in the following words:

. . . kai neri to peri tes aphase ōs programma  
ektēthēi ean mē panton hon deon esti paradothentōn  
. . . . and let nothing go until the proclamation concerning the release (aphesis) of the crops is published.<sup>24</sup>

Release of water. The Flinders Petri Papyri and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri give a few examples of aphasis used to express "release of water" through a "channel" or "sluice."

In Egypt aphesis toy hydatos was apparently a technical expression for the 'release' of the water from the sluices of canals for the purpose of irrigation, e.g. P Petr II. 13 (2)<sup>12ff</sup> (B.C. 258-3) 'hina episkeuyasthōsi pro tes toy hydatos aphaseōs, In order that they (sc. bridges) may be finished before the letting loose of the water' (Ed.) ib. III, 39<sup>12</sup>, and 44 verso II.<sup>12f</sup> t on kat a Ptolemaida a phaseōn enoisman b thy ras . In this sense the noun may be concrete, meaning apparently a 'channel' or 'sluice:' P Oxy VI. 918<sup>v</sup>.<sup>20</sup> (II/A.D.) apel(iōtou) hodo(s) dēmosi(a) en hē aphasis lithinē.<sup>25</sup>

#### V. SUMMARY

The word aphesis and its verb form aphiēmi are assigned to express the idea of "release;" it is interesting to notice that

<sup>24</sup> The Tebtunis Papyri, p. 109.

<sup>25</sup> Moulton and Milligan, aphesis, p. 96.



charizomai and apolyō also are used to indicate this idea. Aphiēmi is translated "remit," "set free," and "forgive," but each time it implies the idea of "release." Apolyō seems in the instances examined to be synonymous with aphiēmi, perhaps with a stronger emphasis on separation as in "discharge" and "cancelling." Charizomai is definitely used to express the idea of "granting a favor" or "showing grace."

## CHAPTER IV

### APOLYŌ, APHEMI, CHARIZOMAI AND APHEISIS

#### IN THE CLASSICS

The term "classical literature is usually applied to the literature of Greece and Rome, though separate periods of these and other literatures are also called classical."<sup>1</sup> The term "classic" in this chapter refers to the ancient or classical Greek writings from Homer to Demosthenes covering a period from about 700 B.C. to 300 B.C.

#### I. APOLYŌ

Relieved from military duty. Xenophon describes the special duties of artisans and uses apolyō to express their relief from service.

And they shall be relieved (apolyō) of assignments to duty under arms, but they shall occupy the position assigned to them and there ply their trades for pay at the order of whoever wishes their service.<sup>2</sup>

Delivered from a certain responsibility. A wealthy man by name of Pheraulos is ready to enter military service for another man if

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<sup>1</sup> Charles W. Bain, "Classical Literature," The Encyclopedia Americana, 1942 edition, VII, 51.

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, Cyropaedia, book VI, par. 2, sec. 37. (Translated by Walther Miller, The Loeb Classical Library). Hereinafter referred to as Cyropaedia.

he can only be delivered from the responsibility of caring for his wealth.

And if I secure anything more of value either through my attendance upon Cyrus or from some campaign, I will bring it to you, so that you may have still more wealth at your command. Only deliver (apolyō) me from this care.<sup>3</sup>

Relieved from an accusation. Xenophon in the Anabasis is accused of giving certain false orders. He uses apolyō to describe the declaration of his innocence of this accusation.

For my own part, therefore, - for I hear that Dexippus is saying to Cleander that Agasias would not have done what he did if he had not given him the order, - for my own part, I say, I relieve (apolyō) both you and Agasias of the accusation.<sup>4</sup>

The release of captives. One named Diphridas is described by Xenophon as a successful warrior in Asia, where he received a large ransom for release of some captives.

Diphridas accordingly set about these things, and he was successful not only in his other undertakings, but particularly in capturing Tigranes, the husband of Struthas' daughter, and his wife also, as they were journeying to Sardis, and in obtaining a large ransom for their release (apolyō).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., book VIII, par. 3, sec. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, Anabasis, book VI, par. 6, sec. 15. (Translated by O. J. Todd. The Loeb Classical Library.) Hereinafter referred to as Anabasis.

<sup>5</sup> Xenophon, Hellenica, book IV, par. 8, sec. 21. (Translated by Carleton L. Brownson, The Loeb Classical Library.) Hereinafter referred to as Hellenica.



Let go. In speaking of the demobilization of soldiers Xenophon uses the word apolyō. It is translated "let go," but the idea is that they are "set free," "discharged," "released" or "dismissed" from service: "And after he had arrived in Laconia, he let the Spartiatae go (apolyō) home and dismissed the Perioeci to their several cities."<sup>6</sup>

To loose. Another illustration of the use of apolyō is found in the *Odyssey* of Homer where he uses it to express the idea of loosing one thing from another.

Now when the fair lady had come to the store-room, and had stepped upon the threshold of oak, which of old the carpenter had skilfully planed and made straight to the line - thereon had he also fitted door-posts, and set on them bright doors - straightway she quickly loosed (apolyō) the thong from the handle.<sup>7</sup>

In the Classics we also find illustrations where apolyō has the connotation "to divorce," "to be separated or detached," "acquit of the charge," "to be annulled" and "remove."<sup>8</sup>

## II. APHEMI

Let go. Homer describes a meeting of Odysseus with his wife

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., book VI, par. 5, sec. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Homer, The Odyssey, book 21, lines 42-46. (Translated by A.T. Murray, The Loeb Classical Library). Hereinafter referred to as Odyssey.

<sup>8</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 208. Hereinafter referred to as Liddell and Scott.

after having escaped some dangers. "Even so welcome to her was her husband, as she gazed upon him, and from his neck she could in no wise let her white arms go (aphiōmi)."<sup>9</sup>

Aphiōmi in this case could also have been translated "take away." The idea "let go" is used by Demosthenes: "Men of Athens, you must not let slip (aphiōmi) the opportunity that offers, nor make the blunder you have so often made before."<sup>10</sup>

To remit. Demosthenes in his oration against Dionysodorus speaks of certain creditors and uses aphiōmi in the following connection:

If any man has remitted (aphiōmi) to you any part of what was due him, no wrong is suffered by either party to the arrangement. But we have not remitted (aphiōmi) anything to you, nor have we consented to your voyage to Rhodes, nor in our judgment is anything more binding than the agreement.<sup>11</sup>

Shedding. The idea "to cast off" or "to throw off" is assigned by Homer to aphiōmi in describing a vineyard: ". . . but in front are unripe grapes that are shedding (aphiōmi) the blossom, and others that are turning purple."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The Odyssey, book 23, lines 239-240.

<sup>10</sup> Demosthenes, Olynthiacs, part 1, par. 8. (Translated by J. H. Vince, The Loeb Classical Library). Hereinafter referred to as Olynthiacs.

<sup>11</sup> Demosthenes, Against Dionysodorus, oration LVI, par. 26. (Translated by A. T. Murray, The Loeb Classical Library). Hereinafter referred to as Against Dionysodorus.

<sup>12</sup> The Odyssey, book VII, line 126.



Released from peril. The Greek historian Thucydides tells about a certain proclamation given in Thrace after it was conquered and makes use of aphiēmi

" . . . the general multitude, because they were not to loose their civil rights but to retain them as before and also, contrary to their expectation, were to be released (aphiēmi) from peril."<sup>13</sup>

To send out soldiers. Thucydides also uses aphiēmi to express "send out." ". . . The Corinthians sent out (aphiēmi) 500 hoplites."<sup>14</sup>

Discharged from work. Aristotle seeks to define a citizen in the absolute sense, and mentions old men, who have been aphiēmenous.

. . . but these are only citizens in the manner in which children are who are as yet too young to have been enrolled in the list and old men who have been discharged (aphiēmi) must be pronounced to be citizens in a sense . . .<sup>15</sup>

Liddell and Scott also assign to aphiēmi the idea "to loose," "set free," "put away," "divorce" and "get rid of."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, book 4, par. 106, sec. 1. (Translated by Charles Foster Smith, The Loeb Classical Library). Hereinafter referred to as Thucydides.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., book VII, par. 19, sec. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, Politics, book 3, par. 1, sec. 4. (Translated by H. Rackham, The Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>16</sup> Liddell and Scott, pp. 289-290.



## III. CHARIZOMAI

Twenty-two passages have been examined in the Classics, where charizomai and its derivatives appear. It is interesting to notice that in nine of these charizomai is translated "show or grant a favor." In the other passages the underlying idea is still the same even though it is translated "to please," "to indulge," "to gratify," "to be obliged to," etc.

Grant a favor. A few quotations are given to exemplify this most common idea assigned to charizomai. Xenophon says: "For violence, by making its victims sensible of loss, rouses their hatred; but persuasion, by seeming to confer a favor (charizomai) wins goodwill."<sup>17</sup>

From Plato the following sentence is taken: "Don't be obstinate but do me the favor (charizomai) to reply."<sup>18</sup>

To appeal to one favorably. Homer speaks about Icarus and his daughter, who is ready to be married and says: ". . . give her to whom he will, even to him who meets his favor (charizomai)."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Xenophon, Memorabilia, book I, par. 2, sec. 10. (Translated by E. C. Marchant, The Loeb Classical Library). Hereinafter referred to as Memorabilia.

<sup>18</sup> Plato, Republic, book I, par. 338a. (Translated by Paul Shorey, The Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>19</sup> The Odyssey, book II, line 54.

Be gracious. Another idea often assigned to charizomai is "to be gracious." An illustration is taken from Homer:

Verely thou art a god, one of those who hold broad heaven.  
 Nay then, be gracious (charizomai) that we may offer to thee  
 acceptable sacrifices and golden gifts, finely wrought; but  
 do thou spare us.<sup>20</sup>

To grant a person his wish. In Herodotus an example is given of charizomai to express the idea of granting a person his wish. The quotation is taken from Cleisthenes' wedding feast for his daughter, at which he became so angry toward his son-in-law, that he broke up the wedding feast.

Then Cleisthenes bade them all be silent, and spoke to the company at large. 'Suitors for my daughter's hand,' said he, 'I thank you one and all; and were it possible I would grant (charizomai) each of you his wish, neither choosing out one to set him above another nor disparaging the rest.'<sup>21</sup>

Be dear to one's heart. Homer speaks of a young girl whom the goddess loved, and makes use of charizomai in the following way:

" . . . and spoke to her, taking the form of the daughter of Dymas, famed for his ships, a girl who was of like age with Nausicaa, and was dear to her heart (charizomai)."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The Odyssey, book 16, line 184.

<sup>21</sup> Herodotus, book 6, par. 130. (Translated by A. D. Godley, The Loeb Classical Library). Hereinafter referred to as Herodotus.

<sup>22</sup> The Odyssey, book 6, line 23.



Give pleasure. In the *Odyssey* Demodocus is playing on his lyre and Homer commends his music by saying, ". . . he gives pleasure (charizomai) with this song."<sup>23</sup>

Give freely a gift. Charizomai is also used by Homer to express the idea "give freely." Alcinous is to give a speech at a feast for Odysseus and asks the people to bring a gift to Odysseus and then it is said, ". . . it were hard for one man to give freely (charizomai), without requital."<sup>24</sup>

Acceptable sacrifice. As a perfect participle charizomai is used as an adjective. This is illustrated in the *Odyssey*: "It was a god himself that had given him this skill, even Hermes, for to him he was want to burn acceptable (charizomai) sacrifices of the thighs of lambs and kids."<sup>25</sup>

To gratify. Xenophon says that all which is good and honorable in conduct is the result of training; then he asks all the good to ". . . make haste to gratify (charizomai) us."<sup>26</sup>

To indulge. In the *Anabasis* Xenophon exemplifies another use

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., book 8, line 538.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., book 13, line 15.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., book 19, line 397.

<sup>26</sup> Memorabilia, book 1, par. 2, sec. 23.



of charizomai. He speaks to his soldiers about the result that will follow ". . . if we indulge (charizomai) our anger."<sup>27</sup>

#### IV. APHESIS

Release. Demosthenes in his oration "Against Stephanus" tells how Stephanus had made false accusations and said that he was released from all claims. Then Demosthenes says:

If, then, you should believe in the genuineness of the release (aphesis), this, more than anything else, would prove that the fellow has given false testimony, and has deposed to a will that is forged. For who would be so senseless as to give a release (aphesis) in the presence of witnesses, that his discharge might be binding, and yet to suffer the articles of agreement, the will, and other documents regarding which he gave the release (aphesis) to remain under seal as evidence against himself?<sup>28</sup>

Another example of aphesis used to express the idea "release" is taken from the writings of Polybius in speaking of the release of certain captives:

'It is not,' he said, 'with the intention of sparing their lives that he has taken this course regarding his captives, but by releasing (aphesis) them he designs to get us into his power, so that he may take vengeance not on some, but on all of us who trust him.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Anabasis, book 7, par. 1, sec. 25.

<sup>28</sup> Demosthenes, Private Orations, oration 45, sec. 41. (Translated by A. T. Murray, The Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>29</sup> Polybius, The Histories, book 1, sec. 79, par. 12. (Translated by W. R. Paton, The Loeb Classical Library).

Let go. Plato in his work "The Statesman," tells how the universe received only good things from its Creator, but

. . . in becoming separated from him it always got on most excellently during the time immediately after it was let go (aphesis) but as time went on and it grew forgetful, the ancient condition of disorder prevailed more and more."<sup>30</sup>

Leave of absence. In "The Athenian Constitution" of Aristotle, aphesis is used to express "leave of absence" from governmental duty:

A member of the Council not coming to the Council-chamber at the time previously announced to be liable to a fine of a drachme for each day, unless he obtain leave of absence (aphesis) from the Council.<sup>31</sup>

Starting place. A very interesting use of aphesis is found in Pausanias' "Description of Greece." The starting place for the runners and the race-horses is expressed by aphesis.

Maidens are not debarred from looking on at the games. At the end of the stadium where is the starting-place (aphesis) for the runners, there is, the Eleans say, the tomb of Endymion. . . . Each side of the starting place (aphesis) is more than four hundred feet in length.<sup>32</sup>

When aphesis is used to express "starting place" then it is no doubt that it contains the idea of release. The horses at the starting

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<sup>30</sup> Plato, The Statesman, sec. 273 C. (Translated by Harold N. Fowler and W. R. M. Lamb. The Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>31</sup> Aristotle, The Athenian Constitution, sec. 30, par. 6. (Translated by H. Rackham. The Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>32</sup> Pausanias, Description of Greece, book 6, sec. 20, par. 9, 11. (Translated by W. H. S. Jones. The Loeb Classical Library).



place were kept behind some barriers. At the moment of the start, those barriers were taken away and the horses began to run. This method of starting the horses was called hippaphesin;<sup>33</sup> literally translated it means "horse-release," but is used to express "starting-post in a race-course."<sup>34</sup>

#### V. SUMMARY

In the investigation of the Classics it has been noticed that as a whole they make use of the four Greek words under examination in the same way as the papyri. Charizomai stands alone by conveying the idea "grant a favor" or "be gracious." Apolyō and aphiōmi seem to correspond to each other in their usage. The basic idea of aphesis is "release."

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., par. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Liddell and Scott, p. 833.



## CHAPTER V

### APOLYŌ, APHIĒMI, CHARIZOMAI AND APHESIS

#### IN THE SEPTUAGINT

The New Testament writers often make use of the Septuagint version<sup>1</sup> instead of the Hebrew text. There is a close connection between the general phraseology of the LXX and the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> "Thus we may see that the study of the Septuagint is almost needful to any biblical scholar who wishes to estimate adequately the phraseology and usus loquendi of the New Testament."<sup>3</sup>

The four Greek words which have been studied have also been examined in the apocryphal books. The value of this is stated in the following words:

These books called Apocrypha, though destitute of all authority, have much value in connection with the Hellenistic phraseology of the New Testament. The Septuagint version had been formed on a Hebraic mould, so that Hebraisms were sure to manifest themselves; but in those books of the Apocrypha which were originally written in Greek, we find just the same Hebrew cast of thought and expression. Thus the Hellenistic phraseology of the New Testament was not a new thing, even when applied to original composition.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Barclay Swete, The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint, 3 vols. His edition has been used. Hereinafter referred to as LXX.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, Introduction R.V., p. v.

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. xv-xvi.

## I. APOLYŌ

The translation of halāk. The Hebrew word halāk conveys the idea "to go," "to walk," "to go along," "to go away" or "to vanish."<sup>5</sup> Only once is apolyō given as the translation of this word, namely, in Gen. 15:2: "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go (apolyō) childless, . . ."

Shuv. The LXX reveals only one text which gives apolyō for shuv: "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned (apolyō) again into the camp."<sup>6</sup> Gesenius says, that shuv signifies "to return," "to restore," "to bring back," or "to renew."<sup>7</sup>

Gawā'. The third place apolyō appears in the LXX is in Nu. 20:29: "And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead (apolyō), . . ." The idea of the Hebrew word gawā' is "to expire," "to breathe out one's life;"<sup>8</sup> when this takes place the person, in a metaphorical sense, is said to "have gone" (apolyō), or as the English Bible expresses it "was dead."

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<sup>5</sup> Gesenius, pp. 224, 225.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 33:11.

<sup>7</sup> Gesenius, pp. 807, 808.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

Apolyō in the apocryphal books. The twenty-seven passages in which apolyō appears in the apocryphal books have been examined. It has been noticed that the ideas assigned to apolyō are "put away," "release," "discharge," "set free," "dismiss" and "be delivered from death," that is to say, apolyō in the apocryphal books expresses the general ideas conveyed by this word in the Papyri and the Classics.

## II. APHIEMI, THE TRANSLATION OF SIXTEEN HEBREW WORDS

Hadal. In three passages aphiēmi is the translation of hadal. They are found in Judges 9:9,11,13; here aphiēmi conveys the idea "to leave" and "to forsake," which is synonymous with hadal.<sup>9</sup>

Yaza. The LXX reveals only one text in which aphiēmi is used for yaza, namely Gen. 35:18: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (aphiēmi), . . ." Aphiēmi here closely expresses the meaning of yaza, which is "to go out," "to go forth."<sup>10</sup>

Kafar. Gesenius says that this word signifies "to cover" or "to cover over."<sup>11</sup> Once the LXX gives aphiēmi for kafar. "And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 359.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 411.



purged (aphiēmi) from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts."<sup>12</sup>

Nūāh. This word is said by Gesenius to denote "to rest," "to sit down," and in the Hiphil, "to set down," "to lay down."<sup>13</sup>

Eighteen times aphiēmi is the translation of nūāh; and with one exception nūāh is in the Hiphil. These passages have been examined, and it is found that the idea expressed is "separation." The King James Version gives us "to leave," "withhold" or "let him alone," as the translation of this verb.

Natāsh. Four times the LXX uses aphiēmi to translate natāsh, namely 1 Sam. 17:20,22,28; and Jer. 12:7. Aphiēmi is here synonymous with natāsh conveying the idea "to send away," "to let go."<sup>14</sup>

Nasa. The meaning of this word is rendered "to take up," "to lift up," "to bear," and "to carry."<sup>15</sup>

In eight passages the LXX has aphiēmi for nasa. Six times it is translated "forgive" and the other two times, namely, Gen. 4:13 and 18:26, "forgiveness" or "release" is implied. Gen. 4:13 reads: "And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear (aphiēmi)." Gen. 18:26 is rendered: "And the Lord said, If I find

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<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 22:14.

<sup>13</sup> Gesenius, pp. 538, 539.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 547.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 567, 568.

in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare (aphiēmi) all the place for their sake."

Nathān. The eight times aphiēmi is given as the translation of nathān it conveys with that verb the sense of "to give."<sup>16</sup>

Salāh. The meaning of this word is "to pardon" and "to forgive."<sup>17</sup> Fifteen times aphiēmi is given for salāh. In the examination of these fifteen passages it is noted that aphiēmi in each case expresses "forgiveness," but a forgiveness which only can be granted because somebody has made atonement.

'Azāv. Gesenius says of this word that it means "to loosen bands," "to leave," and "to cease from anything."<sup>18</sup> In each of the six passages where aphiēmi is the translation of 'azāv it is rendered "leave."

Pathāh. Psalms 105:20 is the only text where aphiēmi is the word used for pathāh. The verse reads as follows: "The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free (aphiēmi)."<sup>19</sup> This verse speaks of Joseph and how he was freed from prison. The root idea of pathāh is "to open," "to let loose" or

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 572.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 588.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 617.

"to begin."<sup>19</sup> In this text aphiēmi approximates in idea the Hebrew word of which it is the translation.

Kalāl. Before Rehoboam was elected king, the people told him: ". . . ease (aphiēmi) thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father . . . and make thou it somewhat lighter (aphiēmi) for us."<sup>20</sup> The idea here assigned to aphiēmi is "to make less" their burdens. The Hebrew word kalāl conveys this idea.<sup>21</sup>

Rafah. Twice is aphiēmi given for rafah, namely, Prov. 4:13 and Cant. 3:4. In both passages it is rendered "let go" in connection with a person. Rafah signifies "to cast," "to throw," "to let fall" or "to be let down,"<sup>22</sup> and this idea is retained in the Greek.

Sh'vāk. In the book of Daniel it is said in connection with the insanity of king Nebuchadnezzar, ". . . leave (aphiēmi) the stump of his roots. . ." (Dan. 4:23). Aphiēmi here expresses for sh'vāk the thought "to leave" or "to allow to remain."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 696.

<sup>20</sup> II Chron. 10:4,10.

<sup>21</sup> Gesenius, p. 733.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 776.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 803.



Shaläh. Shaläh is in the intensive form in the two passages in which the LXX translated it by aphiēmi. It has the sense of "to dismiss," or "to let go." These texts are Ex. 22:5 and Job 39:5. The meaning is "to leave" or "to allow" one's property to be destroyed, and "to send out" a wild ass as free.

Shamät. This Hebrew word signifies "to smite," "to throw down," "to fall," "to let be," and "to remit."<sup>24</sup> The last meaning is conveyed by aphiēmi in the one passage where it is the translation of shamät. The text is Deut. 15:2 and speaks about the release of remission of the debt of a poor person each seventh year.

Sa'ah. The LXX has only one text where aphiēmi is the translation of sa'ah. "Therefore said I, Look away from (aphiēmi) me; I will weep bitterly, . . ." (Isa. 22:4). The idea expressed by sa'ah is "to look."<sup>25</sup> When the LXX translates it by aphiēmi, then it is no doubt in order to emphasize the thought of "look away from."

Aphiēmi in the apocryphal books. Thirty passages have been examined, and it has been noticed that the general ideas expressed by aphiēmi in the apocryphal books are the same as in the LXX.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 834.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 841.

## III. CHARIZOMAI

In the LXX charizomai only appears once, namely in Esther 8:7:

Then the King Ahasuerus said unto Esther the Queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given (charizomai) Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

The Hebrew word of which charizomai is the translation is natan. The basic idea of natan is "to give," "to place" and "to make."<sup>26</sup> When the LXX makes use of charizomai in Esther 8:7 then the reason is, no doubt, to express the favor the king extended to Esther.

Charizomai in the apocryphal books. Ten times charizomai appears in the apocryphal books. All of these passages have been examined, and the usages are as in the Classics and in the Papyri.

## IV. APHESIS

Aphesis appears in about forty-two passages in the LXX, and is the translation of nine different words.<sup>27</sup>

Yovel. Aphesis is given twenty times for yovel and each time is translated "jubilee." Outside Leviticus, aphesis appears only in

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 572, 573.

<sup>27</sup> Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament, p. 182.

Numbers 36:4. Yovel appears twenty-six times in the Hebrew Bible and is translated "jubilee" twenty times, once "trumpet" (Ex. 20:13) and "ram's horn" (Jos. 6:5), and five times as "ram's horns" (Jos. 6:4,6, 8,13). "The word yovel is . . . an onomatopoetic word, signifying, if I judge aright, jubillum or a joyful sound, then applied to the sound of a trumpet, a trumpet signal. . . ."<sup>28</sup>

According to Lev. 25:9 a loud trumpet should proclaim liberty throughout the country on the 10th day of the 7th month each fiftieth year. The Hebrew Bible calls this year the "year of yovel." The translators of the LXX call this year "the year of aphesis," and thus express the religious significance of the year, namely that it was "the year of liberty," or "the year of release." This twofold purpose of the Jubilee is stated in Leviticus 25:10:

And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty (aphesis) throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee (aphesis) unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his family.

The year of jubilee restored personal liberty to those who had become slaves.<sup>29</sup> A full restitution of all property also took place.<sup>30</sup> So far as the tillage of the land went, the Jubilee was to have the same effect as a sabbatical year.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Gesenius, p. 339.

<sup>29</sup> Lev. 24:39-41, 54.

<sup>30</sup> Lev. 25:23-28, 31, 47-54; 27:17-25.

<sup>31</sup> Lev. 25:11, 18-22.



The Jubilee year, being the crowning point of all sabbatical institutions, gave the finishing touch as it were to the whole cycle of sabbatic days, months and years. It is, therefore, quite appropriate that it should be a year of rest.<sup>32</sup>

D'ror. The seven times aphesis is rendered "liberty" in the English Bible it is the translation of d'ror. Gesenius<sup>33</sup> says that d'ror signifies "swift flight, gyration," "free or abundant flow" or "liberty, freedom." The seven instances are herewith quoted:

- Lev. 25:10 "Proclaim liberty (aphesis) throughout all the land."
- Ez. 46:17 "It shall be his to the year of liberty (aphesis)."
- Isa. 61:1 "To proclaim liberty (aphesis) to the captives."
- Jer. 34:8 "Proclaim liberty (aphesis) unto them."
- Jer. 34:15 "In proclaiming liberty (aphesis) every man to his neighbor."
- Jer. 34:17 "In proclaiming liberty (aphesis), every one to his brother."
- Jer. 34:17 "Behold, I proclaim a liberty (aphesis) for you."

Lev. 25:10 and Ez. 46:17 refer to the liberty granted in the year of Jubilee. Isa. 61:1 is a prophecy of Christ, His work and preaching, as it is evident from Luke 4:18, and yet it primarily refers to Isaiah proclaiming the message of deliverance to the Jews. Jer. 34:8 has been commented upon in the following way:

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<sup>32</sup> William Bauer, "Jubilee Year," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, pp. 1756-57.

<sup>33</sup> Gesenius, p. 207.

The phrase, a very peculiar one, is taken from the law of jubilee (Lev. 25:10), though the prescription on which the covenant was based refers exclusively to the 7th year of the slave's servitude (v. 14).<sup>34</sup>

Shamat. Seven times aphesis is given as the translation of the Hebrew word shamat. It is said by Gesenius<sup>35</sup> to convey the idea "to smite," "to strike," "to cost," "to fall," "to let lie," or "to remit." As a noun it has a sense of "remission" or "release." Outside Deut. 15:1, 2, 3, 9, aphesis is only given for shamat in Ex. 23:10 and Deut. 31:10; six times the English Bible renders it "release" and once "rest" in connection with the Sabbatical year. Like the year of Jubilee, the laws respecting the Sabbatical year embrace three main rules: first, the soil is to have perfect rest; secondly, the growth of the field is to be free for the poor, and thirdly, remission of all debts.

Shilluhhim. The Hebrew noun shilluhhim, from the verb root shalak appears only in three places. Gesenius renders the original meaning as: "dismission," "sending away."<sup>36</sup> The LXX reveals only one text which gives aphesis as the translation of shilluhhim: "Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had

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<sup>34</sup> H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, Comment on Jer. 34:8. The Pulpit Commentary, XXVI, 86.

<sup>35</sup> Gesenius, p. 834.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 825.

sent her away (meta tēn apheisin autēs).<sup>37</sup> Here aphesis expresses the idea of "divorcement."

Aza'zel. Concerning this word Gesenius says: ". . . only found in the law of the day of atonement (Lev. 16:8, 10, 26), respecting which many conjectures have been made."<sup>38</sup> Only once does the LXX translate it with aphesis. "And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat (eis apheisin) shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water and afterward come into the camp."<sup>39</sup> The importance of the scapegoat for the whole religious life of the Israelites is described by Mrs. E. G. White:

Once a year, on the great day of atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed, completed the yearly round of ministration. . . . Not until the goat had been thus sent away, did the people regard themselves as freed from the burden of their sins. . . . And as the goat bearing these sins was sent away, they were with him regarded as forever separated from the people.<sup>40</sup>

The important fact is that by sending away the scapegoat the Israelites were separated from their sins. It is interesting to notice that literally the LXX speaks of the scapegoat as the goat "for the purpose of remission," "for the purpose of letting go" or "for the purpose of

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<sup>37</sup> Exodus 18:2.

<sup>38</sup> Gesenius, p. 616.

<sup>39</sup> Leviticus 16:26.

<sup>40</sup> Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 355, 356.



separation." The Greek preposition eis conveys the idea "for the purpose of," "to the end of."

'Afik. This word conveys the idea of "a channel," "end of a stream," "a brook" and "a valley itself," especially as "watered by a stream."<sup>41</sup>

The three times the LXX translates this word by aphesis are:

2 Samuel 22:16 (LXX 2 Kings 22:16) "And the channels (aphesis) of the sea appeared."

Joel 1:20 ". . . for the rivers (aphesis) of waters are dried up."

Joel 3:18 ". . . all the rivers (aphesis) of Judah shall flow with water."

The Hebrew word 'afik has the "idea of containing,"<sup>42</sup> and when the LXX translates it by aphesis, it may well be because of the departure of the water.

Hanahah. The idea of this word is "rest" or "grant of rest."<sup>43</sup>

Only in Esther 2:18 is it translated by aphesis:

Then the king made a great feast unto all the princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release (aphesis) to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.

Lewis Boyles Paton gives different readings and interpretations of this verse:

<sup>41</sup> Gesenius, p. 71.

<sup>42</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

Apparently this banquet followed immediately after the choice of Esther as Queen in the seventh year of Xerxes. - And T2 + when Xerxes heard this word he made a release T1 + from paying tribute for L L J + all the provinces. Release, lit. a causing to rest, although understood by T1 and many comm. of a release from tribute, probably means a release from prison (cf. I Mac. 10:33, Mt. 27:15, see Haupt a. 6.) Others think of a release from work, a holiday (so S. J. Bert, Sieg.), or a release from military service, as Her. III:67. (Drus.). <sup>44</sup>

Haf'shi. This word has the force of being "free, as opposed to a slave or captive."<sup>45</sup> Only in Isa. 58:6 is this word translated by aphesis: ". . . to let the oppressed go free (en aphasei). . ."

Pēlēg. Gesenius gives the meanings of this word as "a stream," "a river," but adds "I suspect, however, the root pēlēg also to have the meaning of flowing, fluctuating, bubbling up."<sup>46</sup> No doubt it is this last idea which made the translators of the LXX use aphesis for pēlēg in Lam. 3:48, "Mine eye runneth down with rivers (aphesis) of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people."

Aphesis in the Apocrypha. Four places in the Apocrypha<sup>47</sup> have been examined and they reveal the general use of aphesis. The English translation is the A. R.

<sup>44</sup> Lewis Boyles Paton, Comment on Esther. The International Critical Commentary, XII, 184, 185.

<sup>45</sup> Gesenius, p. 298.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 674.

<sup>47</sup> Hatch and Redpath, p. 182.

- 1 Es. 4:62 "And they praised the God of their fathers,  
because he had given them freedom and liberty  
(aphesis)"
- Judith 11:14 "And they have sent some to Jerusalem, because  
they also that dwell there have done this thing,  
to bring them a license (aphesis) from the senate."
- 1 Mac. 10:34 "Let them all be days of immunity and release  
(aphesis) for all the Jews that are in my  
Kingdom."
- 1 Mac. 13:34 "And Simon chose men, and sent to King Demetrius,  
to the end he should give the country on  
immunity (aphesis), because that all what  
Tryhon did was to plunder."



## CHAPTER VI

### APOLYŌ, APHIĒMI, CHARIZOMAI AND APHEISIS

#### IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament we find the verb "to forgive" and its derivatives in sixty passages. The nouns "forgiveness" and "remission" appear sixteen times. Both words are the translation of aphesis with one exception.

#### I. APOLYŌ

Apolyō appears sixty-eight times in the New Testament, all of which have been examined.

Send away. Thirteen times apolyō is translated "send away."

A typical illustration of its use is Matt. 14:15:

And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away (apolyō), that they may go into the village, and buy themselves victuals.

Let go. In thirteen passages apolyō is translated "let go."

Its use is exemplified in the following: "And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go (apolyō)."<sup>1</sup>

Put away. In all the fourteen passages where apolyō is translated "put away" it is in connection with divorce. A typical text is

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 14:4.

Matt 5:31: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away (apolyō) his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement."

Release. Apolyō is translated seventeen times "release," and each time in connection with the release of Barabbas or Christ in the court of Pilate; it is illustrated in Matt. 27:17: "Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release (apolyō) unto you? Barabbas or Jesus which is called Christ?"

Loosed. Twice apolyō has "loosed" as its translation; in both instances it expresses what Christ does for a person when He forgives him.

Matt. 18:27 "Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed (apolyō) him, and forgave him the debt."

Luke 13:12 "And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed (apolyō) from thine infirmity."

Dismissed. The word "dismiss" appears twice in the New Testament as the translation of apolyō. In both passages, namely Acts 15:30 and 19:41, apolyō conveys the idea of dismissing an assembly.

Depart. In the three passages where apolyō is translated "depart" it corresponds closely to the form "let go."

Luke 2:29 "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart (apolyō) in peace, according to thy word."

Acts 23:22 "So the chief captain then let the young man depart (apolyō)."

Acts 28:25 "And when they agreed not among themselves they departed (apolyō)."

Set at liberty. Twice it is found that apolyō conveys the idea "set at liberty" from prison.

Acts 26:32 "Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty (apolyō), if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Heb. 13:23 "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty (apolyō), with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you."

Divorced. Only once does the word "divorced" appear in the New Testament and is the translation of apolyō.

Matt. 5:32 "But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away (apolyō) his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced (apolyō) committeth adultery."

Forgive. The only text in which apolyō is translated "forgive" is in Luke 6:37: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned, forgive (apolyō), and ye shall be forgiven (apolyō)."

Man's part in obtaining divine forgiveness is here emphasized: he must have the attitude expressed by apolyō towards his enemies before he can receive a similar apolyō from God.



## II. APHIEMI

Aphiemi appears in the New Testament in approximately one hundred and forty-six passages. In forty-two of these it has been translated "forgive."

Leave. Aphiemi is translated "leave" fifty-one times. Its uses are illustrated in the following examples:

- Matt. 4:22 "And they immediately left (aphiemi) the ship and their father and followed him."
- John 14:18 "I will not leave (aphiemi) you comfortless: I will come to you."

Suffer. In each of the thirteen passages where aphiemi is translated "suffer" it gives the idea "permit" or "allow." This is exemplified in Jesus' request to John the Baptist for baptism:

- Matt. 3:15 "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer (aphiemi) it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered (aphiemi) him."

When a person permits something, resistance on his part has ceased. This could be the philosophy behind the use of aphiemi to express the idea "permit."

Forsake. In six passages aphiemi is translated "forsake." The following is an illustration:

- Luke 5:11 "And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook (aphiemi) all, and followed him."

Let alone. Aphiēmi is translated in six passages "let alone." This conveys its basic idea, i.e., "send away" or "let go," as it is illustrated in the following text:

John 11:48 "If we let him thus alone (aphiēmi) all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

In eight passages aphiēmi is translated "let" in connection with the verbs "go," "pull" or "bury":

John 11:44 "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with gravecloths: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let (aphiēmi) him go."

A few other renderings of aphiēmi in the English Bible have been found. Examples are "let go," "remit" or "put away." They only appear once or twice and imply the basic thought of the Greek word.

Forgive. It is interesting to notice that out of the sixty passages in which the English New Testament reads "forgive," forty-six are given for aphiēmi. Each time the idea is that of being "taken" or "sent away."

Luke 5:21 "And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive (aphiēmi) sins, but God alone."

Rom. 4:7 "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven (aphiēmi), and whose sins are covered."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive (aphiēmi) us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."



## III. CHARIZOMAI

Charizomai appears twenty-three times and has five different renderings in the English Bible.

Give. In six passages it is found that charizomai is rendered "give." In each case God or Christ is the Giver. The context as well as the use of charizomai show that the receiver has been given a favor.

- Luke 7:21 "... he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits: and unto many that were blind he gave (charizomai) sight."
- Acts 27:24 "... Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given (charizomai) thee all them that sail with thee."
- Gal. 3:18 "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave (charizomai) it to Abraham by promise."
- Phil. 1:29 "For unto you it is given (charizomai) in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him but also to suffer for his sake."
- Phil. 2:9 "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given (charizomai) him a name which is above every name."
- Philemon 22 "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given (charizomai) unto you."

Freely give. Twice charizomai is translated "freely give."

This rendering is equivalent to the previous one, where the translation "give" really implies "freely give."

- Rom. 8:32 "He that spared not his own Son, But delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give (charizomai) us all things."



1 Cor. 2:12 "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given (charizomai) to us of God."

Deliver. Two other texts correspond in thought to the preceding ones. They appear in the story of Paul before the judgment seat of Festus.

Acts 25:11 ". . . I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver (charizomai) me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar."

Acts 25:16 ". . . It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver (charizomai) any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face."

Granted. Charizomai, when it expresses the thoughts "to give," "freely give" or "deliver," has the significance of "to grant."

Acts 3:14 "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted (charizomai) unto you."

Forgive. In twelve passages it is found that charizomai is translated "forgive," and in each one it is possible to read the basic idea assigned to charizomai, namely, "to show grace" or "grant a favor." Forgiveness expressed by charizomai is "pardon."

Luke 7:42 "And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave (charizomai) them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?"

Luke 7:43 "Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave (charizomai) most."

- 2 Cor. 2:7 "So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive (charizomai) him and comfort him."
- 2 Cor. 2:10 "To whom ye forgive (charizomai) any thing, I forgive also; for if I forgave (charizomai) any thing, to whom I forgave (charizomai) it, for your sake forgave I it in the person of Christ."
- 2 Cor. 12:13 "For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive (charizomai) me this wrong."
- Eph. 4:32 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving (charizomai) one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven (charizomai) you."
- Col. 2:13 "And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven (charizomai) you all trespasses."
- Col. 3:13 "Forbearing one another, and forgiving (charizomai) one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave (charizomai) you, so also do ye."

#### IV. APHESIS

Aphesis appears in seventeen passages in the New Testament.

Remission. Nine times it is found that aphesis is expressed by "remission."

- Matt. 26:28 "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission (aphesis) of sins."
- Mark 1:4 "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission (aphesis) of sins."



- Luke 1:77 "To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission (aphesis) of their sins."
- Luke 3:3 "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission (aphesis) of sins."
- Luke 24:47 "And that repentance and remission (aphesis) of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
- Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (aphesis) of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
- Acts 10:43 "To him give all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission (aphesis) of sins."
- Heb. 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission (aphesis)."
- Heb. 10:18 "Now where remission (aphesis) of these is, there is no more offering for sins."

Deliverance and Liberty. Two different renderings are given of aphesis in Luke 4:18:

... he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance (aphesis) to the captives, and recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty (aphesis) them that are bruised."

The idea of aphesis in this verse corresponds closely to the significance of the Jubilee.

Forgiveness. In six texts aphesis is found to be translated "forgiveness."



- Mark 3:29 "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness (aphesis), but is in danger of eternal damnation."
- Acts 5:31 "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness (aphesis) of sins."
- Acts 13:38 "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness (aphesis) of sins."
- Acts 26:18 ". . . that they may receive forgiveness (aphesis) of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
- Eph. 1:7 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness (aphesis) of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
- Col. 1:14 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness (aphesis) of sins."

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### I. SUMMARY

The English words "forgive" and "forgiveness" are the translation of the Hebrew words kafār, nasa' and ṣalāh. The original meaning of kafār is "to cover;" as a noun it signifies a place of shelter; it is mainly used to express the idea "make an atonement." The basic meaning conveyed by nasa' is "to lift up," "to carry" and "take away." It is also one of the Hebrew words used to represent "acceptance." Ṣalāh expresses the divine pardon extended to the sinner.

The writers of the New Testament used four different words to convey the thought "to forgive" and "forgiveness." These words are apolyō, aphiēmi, charizomai and aphesis. Illustrations of their use in the Papyri and the Classics were examined. It was noticed that both the Papyri and Classics as a whole make use of the four Greek words in the same way. The basic use of aphesis and the verb aphiēmi is "release." Apolyō in the instances examined expresses in a stronger way the idea of "separation" than aphiēmi does. This is illustrated by its use to "annul," "divorce," "discharge" and "be delivered from." Charizomai gives us the idea "grant a favor" or "be gracious."

To provide a base for the religious application of the four Greek words under examination the Septuagint and the Apocrypha were



consulted. Apolyō in the Septuagint suggests the idea "to go away," "to vanish," "to turn" and "to expire"; in the Apocrypha it conveys the same general sense as appears in its use in the Papyri and Classics. Aphiēmi is the translation of sixteen different Hebrew words, but its basic meaning is maintained, namely, "to leave," "let go" and "send away." The same sense is the case in the apocryphal books. Charizomai is found only once in the Septuagint. In this place as well as in the Apocrypha it gives the thought "to grant or show a favor." The Year of Jubilee in the Septuagint is translated by aphesis to stress the significance of that year, which is restoration of personal liberty and property lost. Aphesis is also used to carry the idea "liberty," "remission," "dismissal," and "release" both in the Septuagint and the apocryphal books.

In the New Testament apolyō appears sixty-eight times, but only once is translated "forgive." It is translated "send away," "let go," "put away," "release," "loosed," "dismissed," "depart," "set at liberty," and "divorced." Of the sixty passages the verb "to forgive" appears in the New Testament thirty-three are translations of aphiēmi. Aphiēmi is also translated "leave," "suffer," "forsake," and "let alone." Charizomai is found in nineteen passages and has five different renderings, "give," "freely give," "deliver," "granted," and "forgive." The last translation appears in eight passages. Aphesis is given nine times as "remission," once as "deliverance" and "liberty" and six times as "forgiveness."



## II. CONCLUSION

It is the object of the conclusion to point out that the application and significance of each Hebrew and Greek word translated "forgive" and "forgiveness" express the essence and the nature of the doctrine of forgiveness. The conclusions arrived at are compared with the writings of Mrs. E. G. White.

By using the Greek word charizomai to express the idea "to forgive" the writers of the New Testament emphasize that forgiveness is a gift freely bestowed and a favor or grace bounteously granted.) This idea inherent in charizomai points to the fact that "the ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God."<sup>1</sup> (That the Divine pardon extended to the sinner is different from human forgiveness is suggested by the usage of the Hebrew word salah, for in no case has this word been used of human forgiveness between men, but only to express the Divine favor and pardon toward a sinner. The Divine forgiveness as a gift is portrayed in the following way:

Forgiveness, reconciliation with God, comes to us, not as a reward for our works, it is not bestowed because of the merit of sinful men, but it is a gift unto us, having in the spotless righteousness of Christ its foundation for bestowal.<sup>2</sup>

When the Old Testament of the English Bible has "to forgive" as the translation of the Hebrew word kafar, then a close connection and

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 169.

conception is suggested between forgiveness and justification. In the Psalms it is said of God, "But he, being full of compassion, forgave, (kafar) their iniquity, and destroyed them not." Literally this verse says, "But he, being full of compassion, covered their iniquity." The idea that sin can be covered does not seem strange to the writers of the New Testament. The apostle Peter says "love covers up a host of sins."<sup>3</sup>

Christ describes in the parable of the wedding garment in the twenty-second chapter of Matthew, how God covers our sins. This parable is commented on by Mrs. E. G. White:

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided, can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. . . . Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. . . . Then as the Lord looks upon us, He sees not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the Law of Jehovah.<sup>4</sup>

When a person's sins are forgiven, then it implies that he stands covered by the righteousness of Christ and is in the eyes of God justified. The Swedish bishop and theologian Gustaf Aulen discusses the subject of forgiveness and describes "justification" saying: "From a positive point of view, when this word is used in its deepest meaning, its content is the same as 'forgiveness of sins.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 4:8, The Complete Bible. An American Translation.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 311-312.

<sup>5</sup> Gustaf Aulen, The Faith of the Christian Church, p. 291. Hereinafter referred to as Aulen.



For this reason Aulen calls "justification," "in reality a technical theological word."

Not only does the Hebrew word kafār point to a synonymous conception of forgiveness and justification, but also suggests a close connection between forgiveness and atonement. The idea "to make an atonement," as it is found in the Old Testament of the English Bible, is a translation of kafār. In the Levitical law the following command was given to the sinner:

And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement (kafār) for him ('alayw) concerning his sin.<sup>6</sup>

Literally it is said, "and the priest covered over him concerning his sin." The death of Christ has its source in God's desire to forgive and its effect the covering of sin as suggested by kafār, which describes forgiveness as the atoning covering of sins. This mutual relationship between forgiveness and atonement is described in this way:

God in Christ gave Himself for our sins. He suffered the cruel death of the cross, bare for us the burden of guilt, the 'just for the unjust,' that He might reveal to us His love, and draw us to Himself.<sup>7</sup>

The Hebrew word nasa', and the Greek words apolyō, aphiēmi and aphesis, when used to express forgiveness, suggest a broad conception

<sup>6</sup> Leviticus 5:6.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 372.



of the doctrine of forgiveness, namely the actual reclaiming from sin. Mrs. E. G. White speaks about a deeper understanding of forgiveness in the following manner:

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He 'will abundantly pardon,' He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, said the Lord. For as heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.' God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. He is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me,' and again he says, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.'<sup>8</sup>

In the Psalms David prays: "Forgive (nasa') all my sins."<sup>9</sup>

Literally the prayer is "lift up or take away my sins." The Hebrew word nasa' is also one of the words used to convey the truth of acceptance of God. This twofold purpose of forgiveness suggested by nasa' is beautifully portrayed by Mrs. E. G. White:

David's repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his crime. No desire to escape the judgment threatened, inspired his prayer. But he saw the enormity of his transgression against God; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. David did not in despair give over the struggle. In the promises of God to repentant sinners, he saw the evidence of his pardon and acceptance.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 167.

<sup>9</sup> Psalms 25:18.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 725.

David's conception of sin reached down to the sphere of his perverted will and the evil inclination of his heart. He not only asked for release from the guilt and the punishment of sin but from the sin itself. It is interesting to notice that this positive conception of forgiveness of sin is advocated by Aulen, a present day Lutheran theologian:

Forgiveness does not imply simply a remission of punishment. As long as the relationship between God and man is conceived of in juridical terms, the question is principally about acquittal and freedom from punishment. . . . What happens is simply that the punishment is remitted and the accused is set free. It is quite a different situation when it is a question about a purely personal relationship. . . .

The question is whether the former confidential and intimate personal relationship can be reestablished and continued anew. This can be done in only one way - forgiveness. . . . According to the testimony of the history of Christian thought the principal danger is that forgiveness might be interpreted negatively as simply a remission of punishment. Such an interpretation is not satisfactory and does not exhaust the rich content of this idea. The essential element is the positive re-establishment of the broken fellowship. When Luther so consistently uses forgiveness as the principal word in his Catechisms and elsewhere, he pours into it this full positive significance: where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and blessedness.<sup>11</sup>

When the writers of the New Testament convey the idea "to forgive" by apolyō and aphiēmi, then they make use of words which strongly emphasize separation. This is illustrated by their usage to express "divorce," "put away," "liberation" and "release" or "freedom." Much "evangelical" preaching disregards this significant fact of forgiveness and gives it the character of laxity, but Aulen says:

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<sup>11</sup> Aulen, pp. 290, 291.



No approach could be more foreign to faith than the assertion that forgiveness has the character of laxity and palliation. Even though human forgiveness often may have this character, divine forgiveness is immensely different. On the contrary, it is clear to faith that forgiveness does not weaken or cancel God's opposition to evil, but that this is expressed most emphatically in the very act of forgiveness.<sup>12</sup>

The actual "taking away" of the sin makes forgiveness a regenerative power in the sinner's life. This is beautifully illustrated in Jesus' healing of the paralytic. The actual taking away of the sin by forgiveness as a recreative power is stated in the following words:

The same voice that spoke life to man created from the dust of the earth had spoken life to the dying paralytic. And the same power that gave life to the body had renewed the heart. He who at the creation 'spake and it was,' who 'commanded, and it stood fast' (Ps. 33:9), had spoken life to the soul dead in trespass and sins. The healing of the body was an evidence of the power that had renewed the heart. Christ bade the paralytic arise and walk, 'that ye may know,' He said, 'that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.'<sup>13</sup>

The recreative power which outflows from forgiveness is not to be considered as a separate gift or grace, but is a part of forgiveness in its work of reclaiming from sin. This fact is very clearly brought out by bishop Aulen:

When Christian faith conceives of the salvation obtained through forgiveness as life, the meaning is not that 'life' is something added to forgiveness, so that we might speak of two separate 'gifts.'<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, pp. 269-270.

<sup>14</sup> Aulen, p. 304.



It has been noticed that in the writings of Mrs. E. G. White forgiveness as a rule in some form or another is tied up with the regenerated life as illustrated in the following lines:

The 'new covenant' was established upon 'better promises,' - the promise of forgiveness of sins, and of the grace of God to renew the heart, and bring it into harmony with the principles of God's law.<sup>15</sup>

The positive aspect of forgiveness as a regenerative power is expressed by Aulen:

The opposition between God and evil is apparent in the fact that forgiveness becomes a regenerating power in human life. . . . Forgiveness cannot be explained on the basis of regeneration, but is caused solely by divine love and includes regeneration.<sup>16</sup>

The Greek word aphesis, which in the New Testament is translated "forgiveness" and "remission" also is translated "deliverance" and "liberty." In the Epistle to the Colossians an illustration is given of the use of aphesis. Paul writes of Christ, saying: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness (aphesis) of sins."<sup>17</sup> Literally translated this verse would read: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, that will say, release (liberty, freedom or deliverance) from sins." The plural tōn hamartiōn "the sins" is considered an ablative expressing separation. Understood in this way the actual reclaiming from sin is also expressed by the use

<sup>15</sup> Ellen G. White, The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 372.

<sup>16</sup> Aulen, p. 296.

<sup>17</sup> Colossians 1:14.

of the Greek word aphesis.

When considered in its fulness it can be said that forgiveness of sins is that divine act through which divine love, as it is manifested in the crucified Savior, covers the sinner with the righteousness of Christ; then by the same loving act subdues sinful man and makes him actually free from sin. Redemption is an objective fact as seen in the atonement, redemption is a subjective experience as is seen in justification.

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