

On Repentance and Repair: A Reform Movement Program

I'm Rabbi Mary Zamore. My pronouns are she/her/hers, and I'm the Executive Director of the Women's Rabbinic Network. WRN is a partner organization of the Reform Movement. For over 40 years, we've worked on gender justice promoting safety and equity in the Jewish community.

The videos and study materials you're about to view have the potential to be a powerful guide in the process of *t'shuvah*, taking account of our wrongs and creating a path forward to strive to repair the harms we have caused.

I am grateful that Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg will be sharing from her new book *On Repentance and Repair-- Making Amends in an Unapologetic World*. Our tradition teaches us that *t'shuvah* is work in which we can and should engage whenever it is needed.

Each of us will certainly find ways to bring these ancient teachings, so relevant for modern living, into our personal lives. Perhaps we will be able to take ownership of a wrong we recently committed, or perhaps we can revisit something from years ago. These teachings may also give us the voice to communicate to friends or loved ones the pain we have suffered to ask to be heard.

Most of all, I hope the path of repentance and repair will be open to many whenever they are ready for them. There is also a larger context for our study of *t'shuvah*. For members of the Reform Movement, whether we belong to individual congregations or have other connections to our greater movement, together we are in a season of reflection.

Months ago, the three major organizations of the Reform Movement, the Union for Reform Judaism, Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, released separate reports resulting from three independent legal investigations.

These reports document incidents of sexual misconduct, abuse, harassment, and discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, and identity. These reports also document systems, policies, and institutional processes that enable harm.

As a member of the Reform Movement, I personally want to express my deep, deep gratitude to the victim survivors who have come forward to report to these investigations or are now in conversation with these organizations. My deep thanks.

Within the Women's Rabbinic Network, there are many who have been subject to misdeeds and discrimination. However, the victim survivors include all variety of Jewish professionals, employees, laypeople, even children. This is a season of deep reflection. It is a difficult season. We can begin to find comfort in the process of *t'shuvah* itself.

There is power and speaking with transparency. There is hope and being willing to hear and understand the harm done even when it is painful, even when we contributed to that harm, whether we understood that before or not.

There is hope in finding a path to repair as much as it is possible. And I'm grateful that our tradition gives us the opportunity and tools of repentance. Of course, the promise of repair is being able to move forward, to feel seen, heard, and supported, to know that we can make changes so that no one is harmed again.

At the end of Yom Kippur, both the language and music of our prayers shift to a more upbeat tone. This shift reflects that our tradition not only sees great value, but also optimism in the work of *t'shuvah*. Thank you for joining us in this journey of study, reflection, and action.