1) “We’ve all caused harm, we’ve all been harmed, we’ve all witnessed harm. We are all always growing in our messy, imperfect attempts to do right, to clean up, to repair; to make sense of what’s happened and to figure out where to go from here... Yet any attempt to address harm that does not put the victims of harm and their needs at the center will necessarily come up short.” (p. 16)

2) “The work of repentance, all the way through, is the work of transformation. It’s the work of facing down false stories and engaging with painful reality. It’s the work of being open to seeing ourselves as we really are, of understanding that other people’s needs and pain are at least as important - if not more so - than our own. It’s about figuring out how to be the kind of person who sees others’ suffering and takes responsibility for any role we might have in causing it. It’s about ownership - owning who we have been and what we have done, and also owning the person we are capable of becoming.” (p. 43)

3) “The reason to do repentance work is not because you are BAD BAD BAD until you DO THESE THINGS but because we should care about each other, about taking care of each other, about making sure we’re all OK. Taking seriously that I might have hurt you – Even inadvertently! Even because I wasn’t at my best! – is an act of love and care. It is an opportunity to open my heart wider than it has been, to let in more empathy, more curiosity about how my choices or knee-jerk reactions have impacted you, have impacted others. To care about others’ perspectives. To let your experience matter, deeply to me... It’s an act of concern. And facing the harm that I caused is an act of profound optimism. It is a choice to grow, to learn, to become someone who is more open and empathetic.” (p. 58)

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4) In Hebrew, two different words, each with its own shade of meaning and weight, are used in the context of forgiveness. The first is mechila, which might be better translated as "pardon." It has the connotations of relinquishing a claim against the offender; it's transactional. It's not a warm, fuzzy embrace but rather the victim's acknowledgment that the perpetrator no longer owes them, that they have done the repair work necessary to settle the situation… It doesn't mean that we pretend that the [wrong] never happened, and it doesn't (necessarily) mean that our relationship will return to how it was before or even that we return to any kind of ongoing relationship. With mechila, whatever else I may feel or not feel about you, I consider this chapter closed…

5) Slicha, on the other hand, may be better translated as "forgiveness"; it includes more emotion. It looks with a compassionate eye at the penitent perpetrator and sees their humanity and vulnerability, recognizes that, even if they have caused great harm, they are worthy of empathy and mercy. Like mechila, it does not denote a restored relationship between the perpetrator and the victim… nor does slicha include a requirement that the victim act like nothing happened. But it has more of the softness, that letting-go quality associated with "forgiveness" in English (pp. 171-172).

6) Just as we ask the perpetrator to actually see the hurt person in front of them, we also ask the victim to try to recognize the hard, sincere repentance work that has been done, and to allow it to mean enough to settle accounts. To see the full human being standing there, a sincere penitent.

Maimonides' concern about the victim being unforgiving was likely at least in part a concern for their own emotional and spiritual development. I suspect he thought holding on to grudges was bad for the victim and their wholeness. … And perhaps he believed that the granting of mechila can be profoundly liberating in ways we don't always recognize before it happens (pp. 178-179).

7) Kapparah, in Leviticus, isn't about unification, or reconciliation, or forgiving and letting off the hook. It's a purification. A wiping clean. A sort of spiritual disinfectant. That said, it's often translated as atonement (p. 192).

8) In my tradition, forgiveness is something that people can grant to other people…. But atonement is, in the framework of my tradition, something that happens only in connection with the divine. And, as we've seen, if you've hurt someone else, atonement is up for discussion only after you've done all the work that must be done with regard to repair, apology, and amends. It's not the equivalent of being forgiven by the people you harmed or being off the hook with regard to consequences; it's not a way to force people to turn the page. It's a singular theological concept, at least in my world. (p. 200).