

Hebrews

Chapter Six



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Hebrews 6:1

עַל־כֵּן בְּעֶזְבַּ כְּעֵת רִאשִׁית דִּבַּר הַמָּשִׁיחַ
נַעֲבֹר אֶל־הַשְּׁלֵמוֹת וְלֹא נָשׁוּב לְשִׁית יְסוּדֵי
הַתְּשׁוּבָה מִמַּעֲשֵׂי מוֹת וְהָאֱמוּנָה בִּאלֹהִים:

“Therefore, leaving for now the beginning of the word of Messiah, let us press on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith toward God.”

Foundations of the World.

This echoes the Rabbinic concept of primordial foundations. The Sages taught:

“Seven phenomena were created before the world was created, and these are they: Torah, and repentance, the Garden of Eden, and Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah.” (**Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 54a**)

Just as these foundations undergird creation, the basics of the faith undergird the believer’s life in Messiah.

Leaving the beginning.

This means moving beyond elementary instruction into maturity. A child must learn the aleph-bet, but he cannot remain forever at the aleph-bet.

Let us press on to maturity.

The goal is הַשְּׁלֵמוֹת, maturity, completeness, wholeness. This maturity is especially

necessary for understanding Melchizedek, the heavenly sanctuary, and the priesthood of Messiah.

Repentance from dead works.

Repentance, תשובה, is one of the foundations. Teshuvah means returning—returning to HaShem, returning from sin, returning to the path of life.

The phrase “dead works” may refer to sinful deeds that lead to death, or works performed without living faith, or deeds belonging to the old life of impurity and exile.

“What does it help us that eternity has been promised to us if we have done the works of death?” (**4 Ezra 7:119**)

Faith toward God.

Faith, אמונה, is also foundational. In Jewish thought, emunah is not merely belief that God exists. The Talmud says,

“Isaiah then established the 613 mitzvot upon two, as it is stated: “So says the Lord: Observe justice and perform righteousness” (Isaiah 56:1). Amos came and established the 613 mitzvot upon one, as it is stated: “So says the Lord to the house of Israel: Seek Me and live” (Amos 5:4). Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak objects to this: There is no proof that the verse in Amos is establishing all the mitzvot upon one; say that Amos is saying: Seek Me throughout the entire Torah, as the verse does not specify the manner in which one should seek the Lord. Rather, say: Habakkuk came and established the 613 mitzvot upon one, as it is stated: “But the righteous person shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4).” (**Talmud Bavli, Makkot 24a, The William Davidson Talmud, Sefaria.org**)

We will explore this further in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 6:2

וְתוֹרַת הַטְּבִילוֹת וְסְמִיכַת יָדַיִם וְתַחֲיַת הַמֵּתִים וּמִשְׁפָּט עוֹלָם:

“and of the teaching of immersions, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.”

The teaching of immersions.

Delitzsch writes תּוֹרַת הַטְּבִילוֹת, the teaching of immersions or washings. The plural matters. Jewish life includes many washings: mikveh immersions, ritual purifications, priestly washings, and symbolic acts of repentance and consecration.

This should not be reduced only to later Christian baptism. The audience of Hebrews knew the Jewish world of purification. Immersion belongs to the language of cleansing, transition, repentance, and approach to holiness.

Laying on of hands.

סְמִיכַת יָדַיִם, laying on of hands, has deep Torah roots. Hands are laid upon offerings. Jacob lays his hands, and blesses Joseph's two sons. Moses lays hands upon Joshua. In the Messianic community, laying on of hands can relate to healing, commissioning, blessing, and the impartation or recognition of spiritual calling.

וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיַּעֲמֵדְהוּ
לִפְנֵי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְלִפְנֵי כָל־הָעֵדָה: וַיִּסְמַךְ אֶת־יָדָיו עָלָיו
וַיְצַוְהוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה:

“And Moshe did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Yehoshua, and set him before El'azar the priest, and before all the congregation: and **he laid his hands** upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moshe.” (Numbers 27:22-23)

The Rambam says,

“Our teacher, Moses ordained Joshua by placing his hands upon him, as Numbers 27:23 states: “And he placed his hands upon him and commanded him.” Similarly, Moses ordained the 70 judges and the Divine presence rested

upon them. Those elders ordained others, and the others still others in later generations.” (**Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Sanhedrin 4:1, Eliyahu Touger, Moznaim Publishing**)

Laying on of hands in prayer for the sick is done by tzaddikim in a community. (Compare Luke 4:40, Acts 9:17, James 5:14-15)

“Rabbi Yoḥanan fell ill. Rabbi Ḥanina entered to visit him, and said to him: Is your suffering dear to you? Rabbi Yoḥanan said to him: I welcome neither this suffering nor its reward. Rabbi Ḥanina said to him: Give me your hand. He gave him his hand, and Rabbi Ḥanina stood him up and restored him to health.”
(**Talmud Bavli, Berachot 5b, The William Davidson Talmud**)

R' Majeski says,

“The blessing and healing from the tzaddik didn’t come only through words but from the touch of his hand, which was the tool and vehicle through which the blessing was transmitted.” (**A Tzaddik and His Students: The Rebbe-Chassid Relationship, Rabbi Shloma Majeski, Sichos in English Publishing, Pg. 119**)

Resurrection of the dead.

תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים, resurrection of the dead, is central to Jewish hope. Daniel 12 speaks of many who sleep in the dust awakening. The Amidah blesses HaShem as the One who revives the dead.

“Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, others to reproaches, to everlasting abhorrence.” (**Daniel 12:3**)

וְנֶאֱמַן אֶתָּה לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים:

“And You are faithful to restore the dead to life. Blessed are You, Adonoy, Resurrector of the dead.” (**Siddur Sefard, Weekday Shacharit, Amidah, Translation based on the Metsudah linear siddur, by Avrohom Davis, 1981**)

One of the 13 Principles of faith is,

“I believe with a perfect faith that there will be resurrection of the dead at a time when the will shall arise from the Creator, may His Name be blessed and His remembrance exalted for all eternity.” (**Maimonides, Thirteen Articles of the Faith, Article 13**) cited at **Patai, Raphael. The Messiah Texts: Jewish Legends of Three Thousand Years (p. 292). Wayne State University Press. Kindle Edition.**)

R' Chayoun says,

"It is well-known that there will be two resurrections: one for the righteous in the days of Moshiach and the other a general resurrection on the great day of judgment after the Messianic age. (See Radvaz, Responsa, vol 3, ch. 1069; Aruch LeNer on Sanhedrin 90b and Niddah 61b; and Ritva on Taanis 30b and Rosh HaShanah 16b. Also see Meiri, Chibbur HaTeshuvah, p. 386; R. Saadyah Gaon, Sefer HaTechiyah VeHapedus, responsum 6; Tanna DeVei Eliyahu Rabba, chs. 3 and 5, and Zohar, "Shofetim.")" (**R' Yehudah Chayoun, Otzros Acharis HaYamim, When Moshiach Comes, Targum/Feldheim, pg. 85, Footnote 4.**)

Eternal judgment.

מִשְׁפָּט עוֹלָם, eternal judgment, reminds us that the World to Come includes accountability. These foundations are mentioned here as the basics are necessary to understand the *tachlit*, the goal, of the Olam HaBa. Interestingly, these basics are a minority opinion within Christianity today.

“And the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so that no one shall be left. And after seven days the world, which is not yet awake, shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish. And the earth shall give up those who are asleep in it, and the dust those who dwell silently in it; and the chambers shall give up the souls which have been committed to them. And the Most High shall be revealed upon the seat of judgment, and compassion shall pass away, and patience shall be withdrawn; but only judgment shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong. And recompense shall follow, and the reward shall be manifested; righteous deeds shall awake, and unrighteous deeds shall not sleep. Then the pit of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of hell shall be disclosed, and opposite it the paradise of delight. Then the Most High will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead, ‘Look now, and understand

whom you have denied, whom you have not served, whose commandments you have despised! Look on this side and on that; here are delight and rest, and there are fire and torments!' Thus he will speak to them on the day of judgment – a day that has no sun or moon or stars, or cloud or thunder or lightning or wind or water or air, or darkness or evening or morning, or summer or spring or heat or winter or frost or cold or hail or rain or dew, or noon or night, or dawn or shining or brightness or light, but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been determined for them. For it will last for about a week of years. This is my judgment and its prescribed order; and to you alone have I shown these things." I answered and said, "O sovereign Lord, I said then and I say now: Blessed are those who are alive and keep thy commandments!" (4th Ezra 7:30-45)

Hebrews 6:3

וְאֵת-זֹאת נַעֲשֶׂה אִם-יִתֵּן הָאֵל:

“This we will do, if God permits.”

This we will do.

The author intends to press forward into maturity. The difficult teaching of Melchizedek is being delayed only long enough to warn and awaken the community.

If God permits.

This phrase also introduces the seriousness of what follows. It is possible to resist the light so deeply that the path of renewal becomes closed, not because God delights in refusal, but because the heart has become hardened against the only means of return.

Hebrews 6:4

כִּי כָל אֲשֶׁר-נָגַה עֲלֵיהֶם הָאֹר וְטָעְמוּ מִמִּתְּנַת
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנָתַן לָהֶם חֶלְקָם בְּרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ:

“For all those upon whom the light has once shone, and who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and to whom their portion in the Holy Spirit was given,”

Those upon whom the light has shone.

Delitzsch writes אֲשֶׁר-נָגַה עֲלֵיהֶם הָאֹר, “those upon whom the light has shone.” Isaiah says,

“Arise, shine, for your light has come.” (Isaiah 60:1)

In Hebrews, this illumination is connected to Messiah. These are people who have not merely heard rumors. The light of the revelation has reached them.

Tasted of the heavenly gift.

To taste is to experience. The מִתְּנַת הַשָּׁמַיִם, heavenly gift, may refer to the gift of salvation, the gift of Messiah himself, the heavenly calling, or the blessings of the Spirit. In context, it is part of the experience of the powers of the Olam HaBa breaking into the present age.

Partakers of the Holy Spirit.

It means they have shared in the Spirit’s work, tasted the life of the age to come, and participated in the messianic community where the Spirit is poured out. The warning is therefore not about people who knew nothing. It concerns those who had profound exposure to the reality of God.

A pastoral caution.

Sensitive souls often read this passage and fear that every struggle means they are beyond repentance. That is not what Hebrews is saying. The very fear of having rejected God, when it leads one to repentance, is itself evidence that the heart is not hardened in the way described here. Hebrews 6 is not aimed at the broken and contrite. It is aimed at those who knowingly turn from the only atonement after tasting its reality.

Hebrews 6:5

וְטַעְמוּ אֶת-דְּבַר-אֱלֹהִים הַטּוֹב וְכֹחוֹת
הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא וְהֵם נָסוּגוּ אַחֲוֹר:

“and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the World to Come, and then have drawn back,”

Tasted the good Word of God.

They have heard the Word, not as a dead letter, but as good, living, powerful, and true. To taste this Word is to experience its goodness and power.

The powers of the World to Come.

This is the key phrase: כֹּחוֹת הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, the powers of the Olam HaBa. Hebrews 2:5 already told us that the book is speaking about the World to Come. Now Chapter 6 says that some in the audience has tasted its powers.

What are these powers? They include the outpouring of the Ruach HaKodesh, healings, deliverance, signs and wonders, transformation, forgiveness, the life of the resurrected Messiah, and the foretaste of the coming kingdom. These are not the fullness of the Olam HaBa, but they are its firstfruits.

In Jewish thought, the present age and the age to come are distinct, but Messiah causes the powers of the World to Come to enter the Olam Hazei. The sick are healed because the Olam HaBa has no sickness. Demons are cast out because the kingdom of God is breaking in. Sins are forgiven because the final atonement has begun. The Spirit is poured out because the prophetic promise is being fulfilled.

They have drawn back.

The issue is not ignorance or weakness. It is retreat after illumination. It is turning backward after tasting the powers of the coming world. Hebrews later says, “We are not of those who draw back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.” The danger is apostasy: abandoning the heavenly calling and rejecting the Messiah who alone opens the way into the Olam HaBa.

Hebrews 6:6

נִמְנָעוּ מִהִתְחַדֵּשׁ עוֹד לְתִשׁוּבָה כִּי חָזְרוּ לְצֹלַב
לָהֶם אֶת-בֶּן-הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּתְּנוּהוּ לְמַשָּׁל:

“they are prevented from being renewed again to repentance, since they are crucifying again for themselves the Son of God and exposing him to public shame.”

Impossible to renew again to repentance.

This is one of the most difficult warnings in all of Scripture. Delitzsch renders it נִמְנָעוּ מִהִתְחַדֵּשׁ עוֹד לְתִשׁוּבָה, “they are prevented from being renewed again to repentance.” The Greek behind this passage says that it is impossible to renew such people again to repentance.

The Danger of the Wilderness Generation.

The severity of this warning finds a haunting parallel in the debate regarding the “Generation of the Wilderness.” Rabbi Akiva famously argued they had no share in the World to Come, suggesting that there are states of hardened unbelief that sever one from the ultimate inheritance (**Sanhedrin 110b**). Hebrews 6 sounds this same alarm: do not drift into such a state of hardened defiance that the door of Teshuvah is shut.

=A person can harden the heart so severely, after tasting the light, that renewal becomes impossible. Hebrews has already warned us from Psalm 95:

“Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

Hardened unbelief can reach a point of no return like Pharaoh.

“When hearing the words of these sanctions, they may imagine a special immunity, thinking, “I shall be safe, though I follow my own willful heart”—to the utter ruin of moist and dry alike.” (**Deuteronomy 29:18**)

The Mishnah says,

“With regard to one who says: I will sin and then I will repent, I will sin and I will repent, Heaven does not provide him the opportunity to repent, and he will remain a sinner all his days. With regard to one who says: I will sin and Yom

Kippur will atone for my sins, Yom Kippur does not atone for his sins.”
(Mishnah Yoma 8:9)

Rambam Says:

“A person may commit a great sin or many sins, causing the judgment rendered before the True Judge to be that the retribution [administered to] this transgressor for these sins which he willfully and consciously committed is that his Teshuvah will be held back. He will not be allowed the chance to repent from his wickedness so that he will die and be wiped out because of the sin he committed.” **(Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuva 6:3, Trans. by Eliyahu Touger, Moznaim Publishing)**

But what kind of falling away is in view?

The passage is not describing every sin after belief, every season of doubt, every moral failure, or every painful struggle. Peter denied Yeshua and was restored. David sinned grievously and was restored through *teshuvah*. Israel sinned repeatedly, yet the prophets continually called her back. The door of repentance is open to the contrite.

Hebrews 6 is describing something more severe: a deliberate, knowing, public repudiation of the Messiah after having truly tasted the heavenly realities associated with him. These are people who have seen the light, tasted the heavenly gift, participated in the Spirit’s work, tasted the good Word, and experienced the powers of the Olam HaBa—and then knowingly turn against the Son.

Crucifying again the Son of God.

The phrase חָזְרוּ לְצִלֵּב, “they returned to crucify,” is shocking. To reject Messiah after tasting his heavenly priesthood is to participate in the crucifixion of Messiah. Yeshua says that if one cannot see, then they have no sin. However, this verse makes clear that the person’s vision is perfect. They deliberately choose to reject the Messiah. If Yeshua is the only Kohen Gadol who can bring us into the Olam HaBa, then to reject him is to reject the only path into the final Rest.

Exposing him to public shame.

Delitzsch writes וַיַּתְּנוּהוּ לְמַשָּׁל, they make him a proverb, a public spectacle, an object of derision. In a first-century Jewish context, this could involve returning to a posture that treats Yeshua as a false messiah, a deceiver, or one rightly executed. Hebrews views this as placing oneself back among those who mocked the crucified Son.

While they are doing this.

The grammar of the Greek emphasizes ongoing action: they cannot be renewed while they are crucifying the Son of God again and exposing him to shame. This suggests that the impossibility is bound to the posture of *active* repudiation. As long as one rejects the only sacrifice and High Priest, there is no other means of renewal.

Teshuvah and the hardened heart.

Rabbinic tradition recognizes that sin can darken the heart and make repentance more difficult. Pharaoh hardened his heart until judgment hardened it further. The wilderness generation repeatedly refused the voice until they could not enter the Rest. Hebrews stands in this same moral universe. Teshuvah is real, but the heart must respond “today.”

וַיִּחַזֶּק יְהוָה אֶת־לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא שָׁמַע
אֱלֹהִים בְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

“And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not to them; as the Lord had spoken to Moshe.” **(Exodus 9:12)**

Midrash Shemot Rabbah elaborates why his heart was hardened:

“The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh” – when the Holy One blessed be He saw that he did not relent from the first five plagues, from that point on, the Holy One blessed be He said: Even if he wishes to repent, I will harden his heart so that I may exact his entire punishment against him; “as the Lord had spoken to Moses” – as it is written: “But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart” (Exodus 7:3).”
(Shemot Rabbah 11:6, cited at Sefaria.org)

Rabbi Chayim Ibn Attar comments regarding why Pharaoh continued in his obstinance:

“I know you do not yet fear, etc.” Moses meant that Pharaoh’s fear of G’d lasted only as long as the latest plague had not yet been removed. As soon as they would experience relief they would continue in their rebellious ways against G’d as previously. Moses referred to previous examples of Pharaoh reneging on his promise to let the Israelites go as proof for his present lack of faith in Pharaoh’s protestations.” **(Or HaChaim on Exodus 9:30:2, Eliyahu Munk, Lambda Publishers, 1998)**

The pastoral word.

The broken person who wants to return should return. The sinner who grieves should repent. The weak should draw near to the Throne of Grace. Hebrews 6 is not meant to crush the penitent; it is meant to terrify the arrogant and awaken the drifting before hardness becomes final. The safest response to this warning is not despair, but immediate teshuvah and renewed attachment to Messiah, the High Priest of the Olam HaBa.

Hebrews 6:7

כִּי הָאֲדָמָה הַשּׂוֹתָה אֶת־הַגֶּשֶׁם הַיֹּרֵד עָלֶיהָ לְמַכְבִּיר
וּמוֹצִיָּאָה יֵשֵׁב טוֹב לְעַבְדֶּיהָ תִּשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת הָאֱלֹהִים:

“For the land which drinks the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth useful vegetation for those for whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God.”

The land drinks the rain.

Hebrews now gives an agricultural parable. The land receives rain from heaven. Rain in the Tanakh is a sign of blessing, Torah, and divine provision. Moses says his teaching will drop like rain. The prophets speak of righteousness and blessing descending like rain.

Useful vegetation.

The land that receives rain and produces good fruit receives blessing. The image is clear: revelation must produce fruit. The light, the heavenly gift, the Spirit, the Word, and the powers of the Olam HaBa are like rain. They are given so that righteousness may grow.

For those who cultivate it.

Spiritual life requires cultivation. The heart is like soil. The Word must be received, guarded, and allowed to bear fruit.

This echoes Yeshua's parable of the sower. Parallel with the four types of disciples.

Blessing from God.

Fruitfulness brings blessing. The mature life is not merely avoiding apostasy; it is producing righteousness, love, service, endurance, and hope.

Hebrews 6:8

וְאֲשֶׁר תִּזְצִיָּא קוֹץ וְדִרְדָּר נִמְאָסָה הִיא
וְקִרְוָהּ לַמָּאָרָה וְסוֹפָהּ לְהִשָּׂרֵף:

“But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is rejected and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.”

Thorns and thistles.

The phrase קוֹץ וְדִרְדָּר, thorns and thistles, takes us back to Genesis 3. After Adam’s sin, the ground brings forth thorns and thistles. Hebrews is subtly Edenic here. The question is whether the heart receiving heavenly rain will produce the fruit of the restored creation or the thorns of the curse.

Its end is to be burned.

Burning can symbolize judgment and purification. In this image, the unfruitful field that produces only curse vegetation faces destruction. This is the outcome of apostasy and hardened unbelief.

Eden or exile.

The imagery forces a choice: fruitfulness leading to blessing, or thorns leading to curse. Hebrews continues to speak in the categories of Eden, Torah, and the Olam HaBa.

Hebrews 6:9

אֲמַנִּים יְדִידֵי מִבְּטָחִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ כִּי טְבוֹת מַאֲלָה
בָּכֶם וְקִרְבוֹת לִישׁוּעָה אֵף כִּי־דַבַּרְנוּ כִּזְאֹת:

“But, beloved, we are persuaded of better things concerning you, and things belonging to salvation, though we speak this way.”

Beloved.

After the severe warning, the author addresses them as יְדִידֵי, beloved. The warning was not given from contempt, but from love.

Persuaded of better things.

The author does not assume the audience has committed the apostasy described in verses 4–6. He believes better things about them. The warning is real, but it is preventive. This continues the theme of “better” within this letter.

Though we speak this way.

Severe warnings and deep encouragement belong together. The prophets did this. Moses did this. Yeshua did this. Love warns because love wants life, as the Sages said,

“It would have been fitting that the rebukes (in the book of Deuteronomy) be pronounced by Balaam, and that the blessings (in the Parshah of Balak) be said by Moses. . . . But G-d said: Let Moses, who loves them, rebuke them; and let Balaam, who hates them, bless them.” (Yalkut Shimoni cited at Chabad.org)

Hebrews 6:10

כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים לֹא-יִעֲזֹב צֶדֶק לְשֹׁכְחֵי אֶת-מַעֲשֵׂיכֶם
וְאֶת-עֲמַל אֲהַבְתְּכֶם אֲשֶׁר הָרֵאִיתֶם לַמַּעַן
שְׁמוֹ שֶׁשִׁרְתֶּם אֶת-הַקְּדוֹשִׁים וְעוֹדְכֶם מִשְׁרָתִים:

“For God is not unjust to forget your work and the labor of love which you showed toward His Name, in that you served the holy ones and still serve.”

God is not unjust.

HaShem is righteous. He does not forget faithful service. The warning of judgment does not erase the reality of reward. The community has shown love in action. Biblical love is not sentiment alone. It serves. It bears burdens. It helps the holy ones.

Toward His Name.

Their service to the community is service toward the Name of HaShem. This reflects a deeply Jewish principle: love of God is expressed through love of His people.

You served and still serve.

Their present service is evidence that the author sees life in them. This is why he is persuaded of better things. Fruit is visible. **Cite Pirkei Avot of the service of sages.**

“Seven times a righteous person falls and gets up, while the wicked are tripped by one misfortune.” (**Proverbs 24:16**)

Hebrews 6:11

וְחִפְצָנוּ שְׂכָל-אֶחָד מֵכֶם יִשְׁקֹד לְהִיּוֹת
נָכוֹן לְבוֹ בַּתְקוּהָ עַד-הַקֵּץ:

“We desire that each one of you show the same diligence, so that your heart may be made firm in hope until the end.”

Diligence.

The word שִׁקְדָּה means to be diligent, watchful, earnest. One must guard the heart from laziness and despair.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי הִיטַבְתָּ לִּרְאוֹת
כִּי-שִׁקְדָּה אָנִי עַל-דְּבָרִי לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ:

“HaShem said to me: You have seen right, **for I am watchful** to bring My word to pass.” (**Jeremiah 1:12**)

The Mishnah says,

“Rabbi Pinehas ben Ya’ir says: Torah study leads to care in the performance of mitzvot. Care in the performance of mitzvot leads to diligence in their observance. Diligence leads to cleanliness of the soul. Cleanliness of the soul leads to abstention from all evil. Abstention from evil leads to purity and the elimination of all base desires. Purity leads to piety. Piety leads to humility. Humility leads to fear of sin. Fear of sin leads to holiness. Holiness leads to the Divine Spirit. The Divine Spirit leads to the resurrection of the dead.” (**Mishnah Sotah 9:15, Koren - Steinsaltz**)

In list format, the ten levels are as follows:

1. Zehirut – Watchfulness
2. Zerizut – Alacrity
3. Nekiyut - Cleanliness

4. Perishut - Abstention
5. Tahara - Purity
6. Chassidut - Piety
7. Anava – Humility
8. Yirat Chet - Fear of Sin
9. Qedusha - Holiness
10. Ruach HaQodesh – Holy Spirit

These correspond to ten spatial levels of holiness,

1. Eretz Yisrael — the Land of Israel
2. Walled cities in the Land
3. Yerushalayim — Jerusalem
4. Har HaBayit — the Temple Mount
5. The Cheil — the surrounding sacred rampart/area
6. Ezrat Nashim — the Women's Court
7. Ezrat Yisrael — the Israelites' Court
8. Ezrat Kohanim — the Priests' Court
9. Between the Ulam and the Mizbeach between the Porch and the Altar
10. The Heikhal / Sanctuary, with the Kodesh HaKodashim, Holy of Holies — as the highest point in the sequence

Until the end.

Again the phrase ׀ַדְּוֹךְ, until the end, appears. The promise is eschatological. The journey continues until the Olam HaBa is fully inherited.

Hebrews 6:12

שְׁלֹא תַעֲצִלוּ כִּי אִם-תֵּלְכוּ בְּעִקְבוֹת יוֹרְשֵׁי
הַהִבְטָחוֹת בְּאֱמוּנָה וְאַרְךְ נֶפֶשׁ:

“so that you may not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Do not become sluggish.

Spiritual laziness can lead to drift, and drift can lead to hardness.

Inheritance.

The language of inheritance connects to the Land, the promises to Abraham, and the Olam HaBa. Messiah is heir of all things, and those joined to him inherit salvation.

Hebrews 6:13

כִּי בְּהִבְטִיחַ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-אַבְרָהָם נִשְׁבַּע בְּנִפְשׁוֹ
יַעַן אֲשֶׁר-אֵין גָּדוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ לְהִשָּׁבַע בּוֹ:

“For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself.”

The promise to Abraham.

Hebrews now turns to Avraham Avinu. The hope of Hebrews is rooted in the Abrahamic covenant: seed, blessing, inheritance, and the blessing of all nations.

No one greater.

Human beings swear by something greater than themselves. HaShem can swear only by Himself because there is none greater. His promise rests upon His own unchanging character.

“As Moses continues his prayer, he says: “Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel Your servants, to whom You swore in Your name” (Exodus 32:13). What is the

meaning of in Your name? Rabbi Elazar said: Moses said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, had You sworn to them by the heavens and the earth, I would say: Just as the heavens and the earth will ultimately be no more, so too Your oath will be null and void. Now that You swore to them by Your great name, just as Your name lives and stands for all eternity, so too does Your oath live and stand for all eternity.” (Talmud Bavli, Berachot 32a)

Hebrews 6:14

וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־בֵרֶךְ אֲבָרְכְּךָ וְהִרְבֵּה אֲרַבֶּה אוֹתְךָ:

“saying, ‘Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.’”

Blessing I will bless.

The Hebrew intensifies the promise: בֵּרֶךְ אֲבָרְכְּךָ, blessing I will bless you. HaShem’s blessing is certain because it rests on His oath. The multiplication of Abraham’s seed includes Israel, the Messiah, and the nations blessed through the seed.

Hebrews 6:15

וַיְהִי בְּהֶאֱרִיד נַפְשׁוֹ וַיִּנָּחַל אֶת־הַבְּטָחָה:

“Thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”

Patient endurance.

Abraham obtained the promise through endurance. He waited years for Isaac. He lived as a stranger in the Land of promise. He died without seeing the fullness, yet he trusted HaShem.

He obtained the promise.

Abraham received Isaac and the oath, but the fullness of the promise still stretches forward. Hebrews will later say that the patriarchs died in faith, not having received the fullness of what was promised, but seeing it from afar.

Hebrews 6:16

בְּנֵי הָאָדָם יִשָּׁבְעוּ בְּגָדוֹל מֵהֶם וְהִשְׁבֹּעָה
לָהֶם קֹץ כָּל־מַחֲלָקֶת בְּקִיּוֹם הַדִּבָּר:

“For men swear by one greater than themselves, and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation.”

Human oaths.

Kal va-chomer. The logic is from lesser to greater. If human oaths provide confirmation, how much more the oath of HaShem Himself?

Hebrews 6:17

עַל־כֵּן כַּאֲשֶׁר רָצָה הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִרְאוֹת בְּיוֹתֵר אֶת־יְרֵשֵׁי
הַהַבְטָחָה שֶׁלֹא־תִשְׁתַּנֶּה עֲצָתוֹ עֲרַב אֹתָהּ בְּשִׁבְעָה:

“In this way, when God desired to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His counsel, He guaranteed it with an oath.”

Guaranteed with an oath.

The oath is not because God’s word is unreliable. It is an act of condescension and mercy. HaShem gives additional confirmation for the sake of the heirs.

Hebrews 6:18

לְמַעַן בְּשָׁנֵי דְבָרִים בְּלֹתִי מִשְׁתַּנִּים אֲשֶׁר חָלִילָה
לְאֱלֹהִים מִשְׁקֹר בָּם יִהְיֶה לָנוּ אֲשֶׁר נִסְנוּ אֵלָיו
מִבְּטָח-עַז לְאַחֵז בַּתְקוּהָ הַנִּתּוּנָה לְפָנֵינוּ:

“so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to Him might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.”

Two unchangeable things.

These are God’s promise and God’s oath. Both are unchangeable because HaShem Himself is faithful and does not change his mind.

Impossible for God to lie.

וַיְהִי הָאֱלֹהִים אֱמֶת הוּא-אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וּמֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם
מִקִּצְפוֹ תִרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא-יָכֻלוּ גוֹיִם זָעֲמוּ: {פ}

“But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his anger the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.” (Jeremiah 10:10)

Rashi comments on this passage:

“But the Lord God is true. Why? Because He is a living God and the King of the world. Therefore, He can make His words come true. A mortal person, however, plans to do something and dies or becomes weak or loses his property, and has no ability to execute his plans.” (Rashi, Jeremiah 10:10, cited at Sefaria.org)

We who have fled to Him.

The language of fleeing may evoke the cities of refuge. The manslayer fled for protection from the avenger of blood. The faithful flee to HaShem for refuge, grasping the hope set before them.

The hope set before us.

The hope is the Olam HaBa, the eternal inheritance, the final Rest, the New Jerusalem, and the presence of God. This hope is not behind us only; it is set before us as the destination.

Hebrews 6:19

אֲשֶׁר-הִיא לְנַפְשֵׁנוּ כְּעֹגֹן נָכוֹן וְחֶזֶק
וּמִגֵּיעַ אֶל-מִבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת:

“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entering into that which is within the veil.”

An anchor of the soul.

Hope is called עֹגֹן, an anchor. An anchor holds a ship steady in storm. The community of Hebrews is under pressure, but hope keeps the soul from drifting away. This connects back to Hebrews 2: “lest we drift away.” The remedy for drifting is the anchor of hope.

Within the veil.

Now the imagery becomes explicitly priestly. The hope enters מִבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת, inside the veil. This evokes the Holy of Holies. In the earthly Temple, only the Kohen Gadol entered beyond the veil on Yom Kippur. Our hope is anchored in the heavenly Holy of Holies because Yeshua has entered there as High Priest.

The heavenly Temple.

This again shows that Hebrews is not anti-Temple. Its hope is Temple-shaped. The veil, the inner sanctuary, the High Priest, and atonement are the categories through which the book explains our access to the Olam HaBa.

Hebrews 6:20

אֲשֶׁר-בָּא שָׁמָּה בְּעֵדְנוּ יֵשׁוּעַ הָעֹבֵר לְפָנֵינוּ
וַיְהִי-כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל לְעוֹלָם עַל-דְּבָרְתִי מֶלְכִי-צֶדֶק:

“where Yeshua entered for us as a forerunner, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Yeshua entered for us.

The chapter ends with Yeshua inside the veil. He has entered the heavenly sanctuary on our behalf.

The forerunner.

The redeemer goes ahead of the people. Joshua crossed ahead into the Land. The High Priest entered ahead into the Holy of Holies. A forerunner does not merely enter where others cannot follow. He enters in order to open the way for those who belong to him.

High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The phrase כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל לְעוֹלָם returns to Psalm 110. This priesthood belongs to the eternal order of the World to Come.

The chapter ends where Chapter 7 will begin. The author has warned, encouraged, anchored, and brought us within the veil. Now he is ready to explain the mysterious priest-king of Genesis 14 and Psalm 110.