



DOING TESHUVAH

The Essence of Teshuvah

Teshuva is great, for it hastens the *geulah*. As the Navi Yeshayahu says, *Uva l'Tzion goel, ul'shavei pesha b'Yaakov* – "A redeemer will come to *Tzion*, and to those among *Yaakov* who return from sin."

Chazal underline the connection between those two statements: Why will the redeemer come? – Because the *Yidden* will do *teshuvah*.

(ישע"י נ"ט, יומא פ"ו ע"ב)

The *Alter Rebbe* points out that the essence of *Teshuvah* is simply the regret and the firm decision to leave one's negative ways. All other *tikunim* are to improve one's *ruchniyus'dike* state.

(אגרת התשובה פ' א-ב)

A *Yid* once told the *tzaddik*, *Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin*, "Rebbe, I have committed *aveiros* and I want to do *teshuvah*."

When the *tzaddik* asked him why he didn't do *teshuvah*, the man responded that he didn't know how.

"Well, how did you know how to do the *aveira*?" asked the *tzaddik*.

"I just did it," the man replied.

Advised the *tzaddik*: "So do the same now. Just do *teshuvah* and the accounting will follow."

(סיפ"ו ח זוין מועדים ע' 77)

The holy brothers *Reb Elimelech* and *Reb Zusha* had a third brother, an innkeeper in a distant town. The *talmidim* of *Reb Elimelech* were curious: what kind of a man was this third brother? They decided to pay him a visit, and found him selling whiskey all day long to the local *goyim*. They noticed nothing special about him, except that from time to time he would take out a little notebook and write something in it.

Later, when everyone was asleep, they heard him crying bitterly. They looked inside and saw that he was reading from his little notebook and striking himself on

the chest. When they asked what he was doing, he replied simply that whenever he thought he had done an *aveira* or had even thought of an *aveira*, he marked it down, and did not go to sleep that night until he had done a complete *teshuvah*. When his tears had completely erased the writing in the notebook, he knew that the *aveira* had been erased in Heaven above.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 53)

Sincere Regret

The *tzaddik* *Reb Zushe* of *Anipoli* would travel to faraway *Yiddishe* townships and villages, and indeed to any place where he sensed an impurity, whether caused by an *aveira* that had already been committed or by a misdeed that someone was about to do. On arrival, he would ask the wrongdoer if he could stay in his home overnight, and if necessary would even insist on receiving that favor.

At *chatzos*, *Reb Zushe* would wash his hands, get out of bed, light a candle, sit on the floor, and tearfully recite *Tikkun Chatzos*. With intense feelings of regret and *teshuvah*, he would list in detail the *aveiros* the host had done, as if he himself had committed them. His host, overhearing this account of all the *aveiros* he had committed, would be shaken up with intense remorse. He would jump out of his bed and hurry to *Reb Zushe*: "Rebbe! Enough listing of my sins! I admit to my wrongdoing! I won't do it again! Ask *Hashem* to show me mercy and forgive me for all my *aveiros*!"

However, *Reb Zushe* would not end his *vidui* until the entire household was filled with such fear over the commission of an *aveira* that they sweated and trembled, even more than they would have done in the presence of a king of flesh and blood. And anyone who was brought to *teshuvah* through this approach of *Reb Zushe* would never commit that sin again.

(במעונות אריות)

The *mashpia* *Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman* would caution that one should not suffice with tears of *teshuvah*, rather one must make sure to change his behavior. Just as a person who loses his money is certainly going to be more careful in the future, similarly, one who truly regrets his past *aveiros* must take heed not to return to his old ways.

(טללי תשובה ע' 422)

The *mashpia* *Rashbatz* used to teach *Tanya* in *Tomchei Temimim* in *Lubavitch*. When he arrived at the words of the *Alter Rebbe*, "It is certain that he will ultimately repent, whether in this *gilgul* or another, for 'no one banished from Him will remain banished,'" he would break into tears.

"*Kinderlach!*" he would exclaim, "You must do *teshuvah*. Eventually you will be forced to do so, so what are you waiting for?"

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 273)

Although *teshuvah* is commonly translated as "repentance," the *Rebbe* points out that "repentance" mainly signifies regret (*charata*), whereas the real meaning of *teshuvah* is not "regret," but "return." These two concepts are very different. "Regret" suggests something new: a person feels bad about his past and now wants to follow a new path of conduct. *Teshuvah*, by contrast, emphasizes return. Although at times, for whatever reasons, a *Yid* may act improperly, his basic essence is good. Thus, to do *teshuvah* is to return to his true self.

(תורת מנחם ח"ז ע' 17)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Is *teshuvah* an *avodah* of the heart or of actions?
- What practical difference does it make if *teshuvah* is translated as "repentance" or "return"?

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YOM KIPPUR

EREV YOM KIPPUR

The Torah commands us to eat on Erev Yom Kippur. This not only gives us the strength to fast, but also provides a way of honoring Yom Kippur with food and drink. Many *tzaddikim* who would usually use only one hand when eating, would use both hands when eating on Erev Yom Kippur.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' תרד, לקו"ש חכ"ט ע' 319)

One Erev Kippur, a Roman officer dispatched his servant to buy him a fish. At the market he found only one fish on sale and agreed to pay one gold coin for it. However, a Yiddishe tailor who was standing there approached the seller and offered a higher bid. He and the servant tried to outbid each other, until the Yid won the fish for the sum of five gold coins.

When the officer was told what had happened, he was understandably upset – but also curious.

He sent the Yid and asked him: "Why did you spend five coins on a fish and not let my servant buy it?"

The Yiddishe tailor answered, "How could I not have bought it, even if it had cost ten gold coins? I bought it to eat on a day on which Hashem commanded us to eat and drink, a day when we are certain that He will forgive our sins."

The officer was so impressed that he sent him off in peace.

(טור או"ח סי' תרד)

On Erev Yom Kippur, תרמ"ט (1888), a vintage chossid called Reb Zalman of Tcherbin walked right into the Rebbe Rashab's study after *shachris* and greeted him with a jovial "Gut Yom Tov!"

The Rebbe Rashab, who was seriously engrossed in a sefer, replied, "Yes, it is Yom-Tov, and Yom-Tov is a time to be happy. But it is also Erev Yom Kippur, and one must be in a state of *hisorerus teshuvah* (arousal to *teshuvah*) from the depths of one's heart. And *teshuvah* consists of regret over the past and undertaking positive resolutions for the future."

Reb Zalman responded, "Rebbe, we are soldiers. Hashem told us that the first half of Erev Yom Kippur is a Yom-Tov, so we need to

be joyful. Only after *chatzot* must one *daven minchah*, say *Al cheit*, and do *teshuvah*."

And he concluded by saying, "Rebbe, give me *lekach*." The Rebbe Rashab, pleased with his answer, took a piece of honey cake from the plate and said, "I am giving you a piece of *lekach*, and may Hashem give you a sweet year."

(סה"ש קי"ז הש"ת ע' 10)

THE KEDUSHA OF THE DAY

Chazal say that if not for Yom Kippur the world would not be able to carry on.

Satan complained to Hashem, "Ribono Shel Olam! You have given me power over all the nations of the world, yet over the Yidden I have no power."

Hashem told him, "I will give you power over them on Yom Kippur, but only if you can find them doing *aveiros*."

Yom Kippur finally came, and Satan could not find any *aveiros*, he told Hashem, "You have a nation like *malochim*: they don't eat, they live in peace with each other and are clean from *aveiros*."

Whenever Hashem hears such words, He cleanses the Yidden of any previous *aveiros*.

(פרקי דרבי אליעזר פ' מ"ה)

If a person wants to be forgiven on Yom Kippur, does he first have to do *teshuvah*? This question is the subject of a *machlokes* in the Gemara. Rabbi holds that even if one does not do *teshuvah*, the essence of the day of Yom Kippur – the mere fact that the day has passed – grants atonement, but the Chachomim say that Yom Kippur atones only for those who do *teshuvah*. The Halachah follows the view of the Chachomim.

The Rebbe explains that everyone agrees that the atonement of Yom Kippur is brought about by the *kedushah* of the day; it is only that to attain that *kedushah* one is required to do *teshuvah*.

(שבועות ג' ע"ב, לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1149)

The Alter Rebbe points out that *kaparah* (atonement) actually means 'scrubbing', scrubbing off the dirt of *aveiros*. The day of Yom Kippur not only cancels punishment, but also

removes any 'stains' or 'dirt.' For on this day the inner bond between the essence of a Yid and the essence of Hashem is revealed, and hence any superficial 'stains' are automatically nullified.

(לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1149)

One year, at the end of Yom Kippur, the *tzaddik* Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev announced: "It is well known that whenever a person is in doubt as to whether a *brachah* is required, he should refrain from reciting it. It therefore clear that since we recite the *brachah* stating that Hashem forgives our *aveiros*, this is surely so, without any doubt whatever."

(אג"ק ח"ד ע' 34)

At the end of Yom Kippur, the custom in every Lubavitcher shul is for everyone to sing a march of *simcha* and victory, to express our certainty that we have been completely forgiven.

When this *niggun* was sung at 770, the Rebbe's face would shine. From atop his chair he would dance and encourage the singing with tremendous joy.

(אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' רמ"א)

MOTZOEI YOM KIPPUR

Motzoei Yom Kippur is so much a Yom-Tov that on that evening we wish each other a "Good Yom Tov!" It is therefore a *mitzvah* to eat and rejoice at this time, when a *bas-kol* announces to the Yidden to "go and eat with joy."

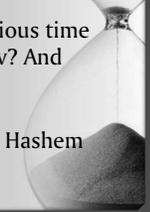
The Rebbeim made a point of washing for a full *seudah*, even though they were no doubt exhausted from their strenuous *avodah* throughout the day. At the table they would sing *niggunim* and share *divrei Torah*.

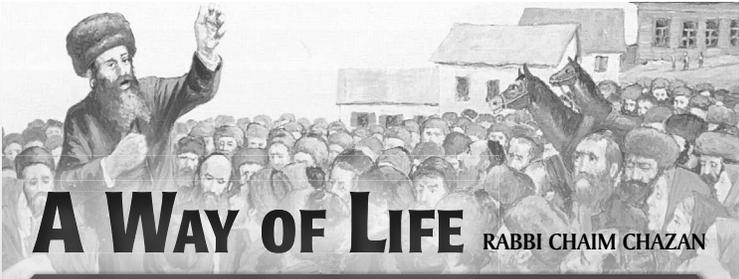
(שו"ע אדה"ז תרכ"ג סי"ב, תרכ"ד ס"ט)

(התועודיות תשמ"ו ח"א ע' 446)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Is Erev Yom Kippur a serious time for *teshuvah* or a Yom-Tov? And Yom Kippur itself?
- Why are we so sure that Hashem has cleansed us?





A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

Does one fulfill the obligation to ask for *mechilah* via the telephone?

- The *teshuvah* done on Yom Kippur only atones for *aveiros* between man and Hashem but not for *aveiros* between man and his fellow. To atone for such wrongdoings one must ask for forgiveness from the offended party. This includes cases where one harmed his fellow financially, insulted him verbally, or otherwise wronged him.
- Optimally one should go oneself to ask *mechilah*, however if it's difficult to meet face to face, one could call on the phone or send a middle man, especially in a case where a intermediary has more chances of succeeding to appease the offended party.
- If one went to ask *mechilah* but the offended party refused to forgive, one must go again with three people and ask *mechilah* in front of them. If he still declines to be *moichel*, he has to go a total of three times together with three people (in addition the first time when he went himself). Each time he should phrase the request differently.
- After being refused the third time he need not to attempt again, but he must to tell ten people that he asked *mechilah*, and his friend turn down his request. The reason is so that people shouldn't suspect that he didn't want to lower himself before his friend and ask *mechilah*.
- When asking *mechilah*, one has to specify what he's asking *mechilah* for, but if his friend will be embarrassed or hurt, he should just ask in general.
- If one was hurt, and his friend that hurt him didn't come to ask *mechilah*, he should approach him, in a manner that will remind the friend to ask *mechilah*.

מקורות: ס' השיחות תשג ע' 177; שוע"ר או"ח סי' תרו ס"א-ה; מטה אפרים שם ס"א-ז.

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י"ג תשרי

REB AKIVA EIGER

Reb Akiva Eiger was born on *Yud Daled Cheshvan*, 1761 (תקנ"ב). After relocating a few times, he was appointed as the Rav and Rosh Yeshivah of Poznan. He was one of the outstanding *Achronim*, and he greatly affected the areas in learning of Gemara and Halacha. He was known to be very modest and exceptionally humble. He passed away on the *Yud Gimmel Tishrei*, 1837 (תקצ"ח).



When Reb Akiva Eiger came to the city of Poznan, where he was to become Rav, he was brought in a chariot, harnessed to strong stallions. With him, sat his son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, who had married his daughter two years prior. The entire city came out to greet them and stood cheering at the sides of the road.

The Chasam Sofer, who understood that this entire honor was meant for his father-in-law, on his appointment as Rov, climbed down the chariot and joined the crowds at the road side. But after a bit of time, he looked up at the other side of the wagon and to his astonishment saw his father-in-law, Reb Akiva Eiger also walking at the side of the now empty wagon, apparently convinced that all this honor was being given to his illustrious son-in-law...



In the year 1831 (תקצ"א) a deadly plague of cholera hit east and central Europe, and Poznan was among the cities that were very strongly affected by the plague. Many areas in the city were cordoned off, and deemed dangerous to enter. But Reb Akiva paid no heed to the warnings and went into the infected areas to help the sick people and comfort them. The King of Prussia, Fredric the Third, who heard of the Rov's heroic actions, honored him with a special badge of excellence.

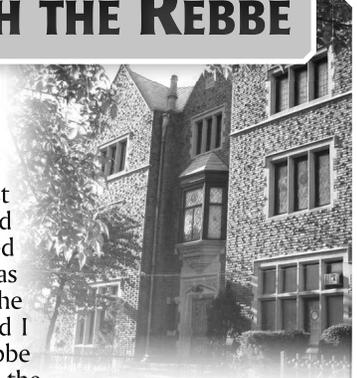
לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

BIRKAS HABONIM

The chozer, Harav Yoel Kahan relates:

"It was in the year 5712, the first Erev Yom Kippur after the Rebbe had accepted nesius. The Rebbe benched the chassidim after minchah, as was the minhag of the Rabbeim. After the bracha, the Rebbe called me over, and I approached with trepidation. The Rebbe told me to tell the bochurim to enter the Rebbe's holy room before Kol nidrei.



We were a very small group. When we entered, the Rebbe was already dressed in a kittel and tallis, and his holy face was aglow. The Rebbe turned to us, and said in a voice choked with emotion:

"You learn in the Rebbe's yeshivah, so you are the Rebbe's children ... Yevarechecho Hashem v'yishmerecho ... Yoer ... Yiso..."

From that year on, it became the *minhag* that the Rebbe benches the *yeshivah bochurim*, his children, on *Erev Yom Kippur*.

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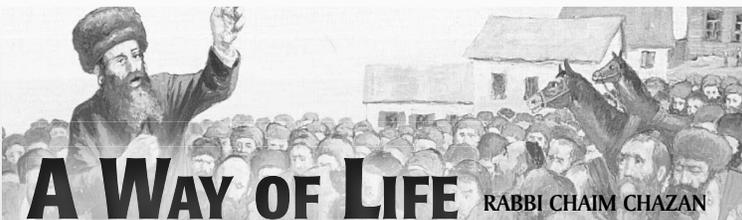
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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

Havdalah on Motzoei Yom Kippur

What conditions are required for the candle for it to be permitted to make the *brocha borei meorei hoeish* on *Motzoei Yom Kippur*?

- One may not make the *brocha borei meorei hoeish* on *Motzoei Yom Kippur* on a flame that was lit that night. The *brocha* must be recited over a flame that was in existence on *Yom Kippur* that was not lit in a manner involving a *melacha*, meaning that the flame must be kindled before *Yom Kippur*. This candle is known in *halacha* as *a'ner sheshovas'*.
- The reason for this requirement is that the *brocha* over fire on *Motzoei Yom Kippur* is celebrating the fact that it is now permissible to benefit from fire to its fullest extent, after kindling and other uses of fire were prohibited on *Yom Kippur*. This point - that it was forbidden to use fire and now it is permissible - is only conveyed if the fire was in existence on *Yom Kippur* and no *melacha* was done with it.
- However, the *brocha* on fire on *Motzoei Shabbos* is recited for a different reason: since the first time a fire was lit by *Odor Horishon* was on *Motzei Shabbos*. Therefore there is no need for a *ner sheshavas* on *Motzoei Shabbos*.
- One may only recite the *brocha borei meorei hoeish* on a flame that's purpose was to provide light¹, but not if it was kindled for another purpose such as a *ner neshama* lit when saying *yizkor* (*yartzeit licht*), the candles in *shul* lit for *kovod*, a flame on a gas range etc². Therefore optimally one should light a candle on *Erev Yom Kippur* for the specific purpose of using it for *havdalah* on *Motzoei Yom Kippur*³.
- The *rishonim*⁴ are in dispute whether it is permitted to make a *brocha* on a new flame that was lit that night from a *ner sheshavas*. The *Alter Rebbe*⁵ rules that one may, but one should preferably take the opinion that one may not into consideration, and therefore make the *brocha* on the original *ner sheshovas*.
- If one only has a *ner sheshavas* that was not lit to illuminate (e.g. a *yizkar licht*) the *Alter Rebbe* writes that one should light another candle from the *ner sheshavas* and recite the *brocha* on both candles, thereby having both requirements: a *ner sheshovas* and a candle that was lit for its light⁶.

1. שוע"ר סי' רצח סעי' טו-יח.
2. בכל זה ראה שוע"ר סי' תרכד סעי' ה-ח.
3. דרך החיים קסטו, הובא במ"ב סי' תרכד וייל סי' קצא.
4. ראה ב' הדעות ברמ"א שם סעי' ה. דעה א' מהרב המגיד פכ"ט מהל' שבת הלכה כז בשם הרמב"ן ואבודרהם עמ' רצ בשם ה"ר
5. שם סעי' ח כפי שיבנו במ"מ במהדו' החדשה. ובזה מיושב מה שהקשה על שוע"ר באג"מ או"ח ח"ד סי' קכב.
6. שם. ויש לייין מדוע לא נהגו להקפיד על

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OUR HEROES

י"ב תשרי

Reb Avraham Hamalach

Reb Avraham, known as Reb Avraham Hamalach, was the son of the Mezritcher Maggid and the grandfather of the "Ruzhiner." He was called "the malach" due to his extraordinary loftiness in *avodas Hashem*. He had a close relationship with the Alter Rebbe and they learned together when the Alter Rebbe was in Mezritch. Reb Avraham later lived in the town of Pastuv, near Kiev, and after his passing on the 12th of Tishrei תקל"ז (1776), he was buried there.



Once after learning a deep *inyan* in Chasidus, Reb Avraham Hamalach found the Alter Rebbe eating a bagel with butter. In response to Reb Avraham's surprise, how one could sit and eat a good tasting piece of food after having been involved with the sublime, the Alter Rebbe explained: While learning, he had felt that he was reaching the point of *klos hanefesh*, the expiration of the soul, and in order to halt this and keep his soul down here, he ate a bagel with butter.

The Rebbe explains: Being that the Alter Rebbe brought *Elokus* to this world, he was therefore not called a *malaach*. Consequently, it was he and not the malaach who ate the bagel, for the *inyan* of the malaach was "heaven" and the Alter Rebbe was bringing *Elokus* into the world.

(לקוטי שיחות חכ"ז ע' 273 ואילך)



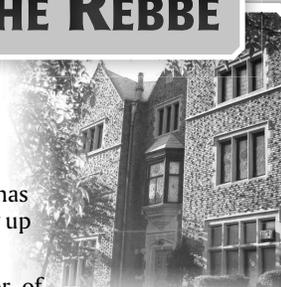
After the *histalkus* of Reb Avraham, Reb Shlomo Karliner took custody of the Malaach's two children, Reb Sholom and Reb Yisrael Chaim and placed their beds right near his own. As happens by *tzadikim*, different *neshomas* would come to Reb Shlomo for a *tikun*. Once, a certain *neshama* came and, afraid to wake the tzaddik, awoke instead the two children who were about 8 years old. The children woke up frightened, and Reb Shlomo warned the *neshama* not to bother the Rebbe's children, threatening to chase him even further away.

ליכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

In the Middle of Yom Kippur...

Yom Kippur 5737 at *Seven Seventy*. The Rebbe has finished davening *mussaf*, and has made his way up to his holy chamber.



Suddenly, Reb Shlomo Maidanchik, the mayor of Kfar Chabad is summoned. Harav Chodakov has an important message for him from the Rebbe. "The Rebbe has just told me to pass on the message, that he wishes a new organization be founded in the Kfar. This institution should assist woman who have just given birth, *mit a vindel un a vegaleh* (with diapers and strollers).

"Everyone should enjoy the assistance of this institution, even the very wealthy, in order to prevent embarrassment of anyone receiving aid. The name should be '*Shifrah and Puah*', after the midwives in *mitzrayim*."



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